

C'Ron is a slave: Blatter

Football

AFP, London

FIFA president Sepp Blatter has urged Manchester United to stop treating Cristiano Ronaldo like a 'modern-day slave' and let the Portuguese player join Real Madrid if he wants to.

Ronaldo, a boyhood Real fan, has been linked with a move to the Spanish capital since the end of last season even though he scored a hugely impressive 42 goals in all competitions last term as United won both the Premier League and Champions League trophies.

Wading into the protracted wrangle over the 23-year-old's future, Blatter said that the current practice of tying players to long contracts amounts to 'modern slavery'.

And he urged Manchester United and Real Madrid 'to sit together' if Ronaldo wants a move to the Spanish club.

"The important thing is, we should also protect the player," Blatter told Sky News on Thursday.

"If the player wants to play somewhere else, then a solution should be found because if he stays in a club where he does not feel comfortable to play then it's not good for the player and for the club."

"I'm always in favour of protecting the player and if the player, he

wants to leave, let him leave." Blatter believes the issue raises questions about the way transfers and contracts are dealt with in the game.

"I think in football there's too much modern slavery in transferring players or buying players here and there, and putting them somewhere," he continued.

"We are trying now to intervene in such cases. The reaction to the Bosman law is to make long-lasting contracts in order to keep the players and then if he wants to leave, then there is only one solution, he has to pay his contract."

United issued a swift rebuke to Blatter's outburst, insisting that all their players were happy to sign contracts with the club and knew the consequences of entering into such an agreement.

A United spokesperson said: "All our players - like at other clubs - enter into their contracts after an open and free negotiation."

"Most of whom do after taking advice from a FIFA-registered agent."

"Many do so on a number of occasions and enjoy long and successful stays at Old Trafford."

UEFA's communications director William Gaillard, who serves as special advisor to European football governing body president Michel Platini, was also impressed by Blatter's outburst.

"It would be useful to remind

people that slaves in all of the slavery systems never earned a wage," said Gaillard.

In contrast, Gaillard fears the Bosman ruling, which allows for free transfers at the end of contracts, has given players the upper hand and contributed to spiralling wages.

"It seems that both clubs and players are trying to negotiate an exit before the player is free," Gaillard said.

"It is a consequence of the Bosman ruling - there is nothing we can do about that."

"It is obvious that today players have a lot more power than they did 20 years ago, undoubtedly, and agents have a lot more power than they did 20 years ago."

"It is true that salaries are spiralling out of control. Many clubs have pointed that out."

Meanwhile, Blatter went on to dismiss the Premier League's much-criticised '39th step' proposals, insisting plans to play competitive matches overseas - either in the league or domestic cups - was doomed to fail.

He said: "The 39th game as presented will never happen. To my knowledge what they (the Premier League) want to do is perhaps to play some of the League Cup matches somewhere outside of England. That's the last information I got."

"They should just forget about that."

Barca agree Hleb fee

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona have reached an agreement with Arsenal to sign Belarusian midfielder Alexander Hleb for 15 million euros (23.5 million dollars), Spanish sports media reported Thursday.

The Catalan side could announce the transfer of the 27-year-old, who has also been linked with a move to Italian champions Inter Milan, as soon as Thursday afternoon, the reports said.

Hleb said during an interview in Russia earlier this week that he had told Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger that he did not like living in London and wanted to leave the club.

"I can't get used to the chaotic way of life in London, where everyone is racing around 24 hours a day. It is uncomfortable and I'm mentally tired. I told Wenger that at our two recent meetings," he said.

Hleb, who joined Arsenal from VfB Stuttgart in 2005, scored only 10 goals in his three seasons at the English side.

Real offer 20m euros for Vaart

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid have offered 20 million euros (31.4 million dollars) to sign Hamburg midfielder Rafael van der Vaart for five seasons, Spanish sports daily Marca said Thursday.

The report comes one day after rival sports daily AS reported that the Spanish champions' cross-town rivals Atletico Madrid had offered 15 million euros for the 25-year-old Dutch international.

Real Madrid and the Dutch player are in "total" agreement over the transfer, Marca reported without citing sources.



Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez (C) unveils the club's new signings -- Swiss defender Philipp Degen (L) and Italian defender Andrea Dossena -- at their Melwood training ground on Thursday.

Betis snap up Aurelio

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Betis have agreed to sign Brazilian-born Turkey midfielder Mehmet Aurelio who was out of contract with Fenerbahce, the Primera Liga club said on Wednesday.

The 30-year-old, who represented Turkey at Euro 2008 and who has 23 caps, will take a medical on Thursday before completing the move, Betis said on their website (www.realbetisbalompie.es).

Spanish media reported he would sign a three-year deal, and he will become the Seville-based club's first new recruit of the close season.

Benitez warns Babel

Football

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez has warned Dutch winger Ryan Babel that playing in the Beijing Olympics could wreck his first-team prospects.

Babel has returned from an ankle injury faster than expected and is now in contention for a place in Holland's Olympic squad for the Games in August.

If the 21-year-old is selected he will miss the start of the Premier League season as well as the Champions League qualifiers. Benitez believes that could damage Babel's chances of becoming a key player at Anfield.

"Obviously, we are really pleased that Ryan is coming back to training because he is an important player for us and he has worked hard to recover from the injury he suffered with Holland," Benitez said.

"But we are really worried because after getting him fit it is likely that we could lose him again if he is selected for the Olympics."

"This is a big problem, we prepare him and then he goes away with the national team."

"This season is very important for him. In his first season he was settling in but this time he has more experience and we are looking for him to give something from the beginning, so it is really important for him to start working with his team."

Babel isn't the only Liverpool player who could swap Anfield for China next month. Argentina's Javier Mascherano is also keen to play in the Games and Benitez is unhappy with the potential damage to his pre-season preparations.

"This is a strange pre-season because we have to wait for players to return from the Euros at the start and then at the end we are going to lose players to the Olympics," he said.

Scotland's match with Argentina in doubt

AFP, Glasgow

Scotland's proposed friendly against Argentina in November could be called off after fans refused to foot the bill for playing the South Americans.

With the cost of hosting Argentina believed to be around one million pounds (1.2 million euros), Scottish Football Association chief executive Gordon Smith polled Scotland's supporters to see if they would be prepared to pay higher than usual ticket prices for the Hampden Park clash.

But, despite the chance of seeing stars like Lionel Messi and Carlos Tevez, many supporters were unhappy with the potential price increases, leaving Smith faced with substantial losses if the match goes ahead.

"I have to say I'm disappointed by their reaction so far and it's beginning to look negative as far as the game is concerned," Smith told the Daily Record on Thursday.

A final decision is expected next week after Smith has canvassed further opinion.

Fans show their might

REUTERS, Milan

Woe betide soccer clubs who ignore the views of their supporters.

Italian top-flight side Atalanta decided to re-sign former striker Christian Vieri during the close season and unwittingly unleashed a wave of protests from angry fans.

The ex-Italy international played for the Bergamo side two years ago but then quit to join the more glamorous Fiorentina.

After a largely unsuccessful season in Florence, the much-travelled forward has ended up back at Atalanta but the supporters are far from impressed.

Around 50 fans gathered at the training ground to heckle the 34-year-old Vieri on his first day back at the club.

A huge banner criticising his perceived lack of loyalty and humility was unveiled and some fans surrounded his car.

It was not the usual welcome a new signing receives at a club but Vieri was unperturbed.

"These things don't interest me. Everyone is entitled to think what they like. It is not a problem," he told reporters. "But I did not expect a reaction like that

from the fans."

Soccer fans the world over have begun to feel underappreciated and ripped off in recent years.

Prices for match tickets and merchandise have risen and fans have seen their beloved clubs sold to rich foreign owners with no connection to their city. Highly-paid foreign coaches and players come and go.

Some supporters have protested but their collective voice has been drowned out by assurances that financial security in a global village is more important than a club's heritage.

In Italy, fans are fighting back. Atalanta supporters failed to prevent Vieri's return but Luciano Zauri's move from Lazio looks to have been stopped by Fiorentina fans angry that he once stopped a Fiorentina goal with a handball.

Juventus fans were instrumental in the club shelving plans to sign midfielder Dejan Stankovic from fierce rivals Inter Milan.

When news leaked in June that Stankovic was being tracked, bedlam ensued.

Internet message boards demanded the idea be dropped and banners were unfurled at the team's pre-season retreat.

"We always respect the opinion of our fans," Juve chairman

Giovanni Cobolli Gigli told reporters.

In fact, Juve largely ignored fans' anger in 2004 when they appointed former AC Milan and AS Roma coach Fabio Capello as manager.

The club won two titles under Capello but they were revoked after Juve were embroiled in a match-fixing scandal and demoted two years ago, before rising back to Serie A.

"When I was a fan I was also very perplexed by the arrival of Capello, who had always been a rival of Juventus. Then we saw what he succeeded in doing," Cobolli Gigli said.

In the past, Italian supporters were heavily linked to their clubs with some of the right-wing 'ultra' fan groups having real power in how things were run.

The situation has changed and Italian fans have suffered more than most in recent years, with hooliganism by a minority leading to a crackdown on travel and ticket allocations.

Kick-off times are switched or away fans banned at short notice for matches played thousands of kilometres away.

Now, it seems, the fans have had enough and are making themselves heard.

Trezeguet quits int'l football

AFP, Rome

French striker David Trezeguet has announced his retirement from international football following news that Raymond Domenech is to stay on as national coach, the Gazzetta dello sport reported on their website Wednesday.

"The bad Euro situation and the confirmation of coach have forced me to make this irreversible decision," the Juventus striker said at the club's training ground.

"The Euro was very negative but what annoyed me the most is the confirmation of Domenech,"

in his abilities. The striker - who scored 20 goals for Juventus last season - was outraged recently when he failed to make the 30-man preliminary squad for last month's Euro 2008 after Domenech dropped him.

"What's happened to me is unacceptable and inexcusable," Trezeguet said in May. "On the pitch I've shown that I deserve my place. The choices made are incomprehensible, I deserve to go to the Euros."

The 30-year-old had earmarked the 2010 World Cup finals in South Africa as his last chance to feature



DAVID TREZEGUET

added Trezeguet, who has been capped 71 times, scoring 34 goals.

"These decisions are more political than they are footballing and public opinion, which was favourable towards me, was not respected."

Trezeguet had a successful international career, winning the 1998 World Cup and the 2000 European Championships, where he scored a spectacular golden goal to secure a dramatic late win over Italy.

But Trezeguet and the national coach have had strained relations, with the player recently claiming that Domenech had no confidence

for his country in a big tournament, saying: "I hope that for my last opportunity - the World Cup in South Africa - something will change."

Domenech took over from Jacques Santini as France manager after Euro 2004 and two years later guided the team to the World Cup final where they lost on penalties to Italy.

Despite France's poor showing at Euro 2008, Domenech last week got the backing of the French Football Federation, effectively ending Trezeguet's hopes of making an international comeback.

FACTFILE

Factfile on French striker David Trezeguet who announced his international retirement on Wednesday:

Age: 30 years
Date of birth: 15 October 1977
Place of birth: Rouen
Nationality: French
Height: 1.87m
Weight: 75kg
Clubs: Platense (Argentina, 1994-1995), AS Monaco (1995-2000), Juventus (since 2000)

TITLES
French champion (2000 and 1997) with AS Monaco

Italian Serie A champion (2006, 2005, 2003 and 2002) with Juventus
Italian Serie B champion with Juventus (2007)
Top Italian scorer (2002) with Juventus
Italian Supercup winner (2002 and 2003) with Juventus
Champions Trophy winner (1997) with AS Monaco

FRANCE
71 caps, 34 goals scored

TITLES
World Cup: 1998
European championship: 2000
European junior championship: 1996

UNFPA VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

UNFPA Bangladesh invites applications from the eligible candidates for the following position:

Position: Project Assistant cum Finance Assistant
Type: Service Contract
Reporting to: Assistant Representative/NPPP
Location: Project Office (Planning Commission)
Duration: Initially one year

Duties:

- Maintain records of all expenditures of the project under the supervision of NPPP and Project Director.
- Prepare periodical reports keep liaison with other project staff of UNFPA and GOB staff.
- Prepare correspondence related to financial activities of the project
- Translates the component projects into activities and provides technical assistance for implementation in line with GoB Priorities and according to UNFPA programme policies and procedures.
- Coordinates and liaises with government, UNFPA and other stakeholders.
- Takes responsibility for fund management, fund disbursement, follow-up and monitoring of funds and expenditure related with project activities.
- Provides and manages data inputs, logistical support, monitors project implementation and follow-up recommendations.
- Maintains information and database and developing database of project profiles for presentation to concerned parties.
- Any other administrative and accounting activities as and when required.

Qualification and Competencies:
Graduate in Accounting/Economics/Business Administration. At least 3-5 years of professional experience in the field of Population and Development. Experience of working with Government and NGO is desired. Experience in the United Nations system will be an asset
Languages: Excellent command of oral and written English in essential

Computer skills: Has good computer skills and proficiency in current office software applications.

Remuneration: 47,757 BDT

Interested candidates are requested to apply with one page justification of suitability for the post along with a detailed CV and P11 form and a passport size photograph on or before 24 July 2008 to The Representative, UNFPA Bangladesh, IDB Bhaban (15th Floor), E/8-A Rokeya Sharani, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. Details TOR and P-11 Form can be obtained from UNFPA Website <http://www.unfpa-bangladesh.org/php/vacancy.php>. Please mention the name of the position on the top of the envelop. Qualified women candidates are encouraged to apply.

"Only short-listed candidates will be contacted"

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With our rapid expansion, we invite high caliber candidates to apply for the following position:

QA Inspector

Requirements:

- Graduate from reputable university or textile institute.
- Minimum 6 years experience in garment products including tops, bottoms, outerwear and jeanswear.
- Sound experience with quality control on woven and knit gained from buying house.
- Be able to monitor production closely and provide technical support to ensure quality meet specifications.
- Good knowledge on pattern and pattern grading.
- Fluent in spoken and written English.
- Excellent inter-personal and communication skills.
- Good computer skill on Microsoft Office Applications, Lotus Notes and internet.

Merchandiser

Requirements:

- Minimum 5 years in garment field.
- Sound woven and knit garment technical knowledge & experience.
- Knowledge of dry & wet processes will be an advantage.
- Able to follow up orders with vendors, customers and internal departments to ensure customer satisfaction and on-time delivery.
- Able to handle and communicate customers' requirements to factories promptly and effectively.
- Know how to review cost packages and purchase orders thoroughly.
- Good negotiation & communication skills, self-motivated, well organized and attention to details.
- Able to meet tight deadlines.
- Fluent in spoken and written English
- Excellent inter-personal and communication skills.
- Good computer skill on Microsoft Office Applications, Lotus Notes and internet.

To apply for the above positions, please email your full resume and expected salary to Mr. Saful Alam, HR Department. Email address: saful_alam@vfc.com

Senior Human Resources Officer

Reporting directly to the Country Manager and Regional Sr. HR Manager, the successful candidate will be responsible for managing the full spectrum of human resource administration in our Bangladesh Liaison Office.

Requirements:

- Minimum 5 years experience in HR Management in multi-national company. Garment buying office experience would be useful but not essential.
- University graduate with major in Human Resources Management preferred.
- Well versed in local labor laws and good knowledge of HR practices in the local market.
- Well networked with HR practitioners, HR consultants and recruitment agencies.
- Able to work independently and act proactively.
- Well experienced in competency based interviewing skill
- Proficient in MS Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Access).
- Good command of spoken and written English.
- Able to communicate effectively with all levels.
- Confident with "Can do" attitude.
- Strong interpersonal skill
- Good analytical mind and problem solving skill

To apply for the Sr. HR Officer position, please email your full resume and expected salary to Ms. Lancy Kwan, Sr. HR Manager. E-mail address: recruit_yfasia@vfc.com

Candidates who are not contracted within one month from sending the application should consider your application filed for future opportunities. All applications will be treated in strict confidence and used for recruitment purpose only.