UEFA may lift

Atletico Madrid's Champions League tie against Liverpool may finally go ahead at their Vicente Calderon stadium next Wednesday as originally planned, Spanish

UEFA on Tuesday ordered Atletico to play their next two European matches at a stadium at least 300 kilometres (200 miles) from Madrid as punishment for crowd disturbances and racist insults against Marseille players during a Champions League match

Deportivo reported on its web site elsewhere at such short notice.

Gaillard, asked about the reports by Spanish public radio RNE, said a decision on the game's venue would be made Thursday.

decision regarding where the Atletico-Liverpool match will be held," he said.

public and the teams our maximum priority," he added.

Aguirre said he expected UEFA would suspend its sanction against the club and allow the match to go ahead at Vicente Calderon sta-

Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez has said the late change in venue for the match against

leaders in Group D of the Champions League having both won their opening two matches.

Becks pays tribute to Sir Bobby

taking Sir Bobby Charlton to become England's third most capped player by paying tribute to the influence the Manchester United and England legend has had on his career.

lot," Beckham said after winning his 107th cap - one more than Charlton managed -- with an the 3-1 win over Belarus here on Wednesday.

"Sir Bobby Charlton was a hero of my dad's and also of mine. I went to his soccer school when I was a boy. With him being a Manchester United legend I'm very honoured to be above him in the list and as close to him as I am."

bly in a friendly in Germany next month -- would see the 33-year-old Beckham equal 1966 captain Bobby Moore's tally of 108 caps, the highest total by an outfield player.

some way to go to match former goalkeeper Peter Shilton's record of 125 appearances for England, although he will almost certainly do it if he achieves his ambition of World Cup in South Africa.

World Cup.

place

AFP, Sydney

Josh Kennedy said Thursday hi performance in Australia's crushing victory over Qatar had helped him cement the place he took from injured Mark Viduka.

The 1.94 metre (6 foot, 4 inch) Karlsruhe target man, who is thriving under coach Pim Verbeek, scored one goal and had a hand in two others in his team's 4-0 drubbing of Qatar.

their World Cup qualifying group. after an Achilles tendon injury put

Newcastle United striker Viduka out of action. Hitting the back of the net against Qatar in Brisbane means the 26-year-old has now scored five

goals in just nine games for the Socceroos. Every game I play in the Aussie team is a big step in consolidating that striker position for me and the future," Kennedy said | lucky-theballalwaysfalls to me." Thursday.



media reported.

on October 1. But Spanish sports daily Mundo

that European football's governing body was poised to announce that the match could go ahead in Madrid after all because of the logistical difficulty of staging it UEFA spokesman William

"We still have not made any

"We will make the security of the

Atletico's Mexican coach Javier

"That seems to me to be the most reasonable to avoid problems with the movement of supporters and for all that organising a match in so little time implies," he told Spanish media.

plane tickets to go to Madrid.

Atletico and Liverpool are joint

AFP, Minsk

David Beckham celebrated over-

"Without a doubt it means a appearance as a late substitute in Brussels.

Paraguay move clear

One more appearance -- possi-

Beckham however still has staying in the squad until the 2010

Most pundits see that as unlikely but Beckham has defied the odds before, most notably by coming back after being dropped at the start of Steve McClaren's reign in the aftermath of the last

Kennedy cements

The victory means Australia top

Kennedy came into the squad on the night. "The team did not play well - we

were rather nervous - but we have three points worth their weight in gold. This is another step along the road. But we have not qualified yet," said Martino.

Benitez, nicknamed the Parrot.

he had a claim on the goal. "The goal is what matters, not who scored it. I got to (the ball) and obviously the better performances | he (Cardozo) clipped my foot. It and more goals can only help me in | doesn't matter who got it. I am



Atletico was unfair amid reports that over 3,000 supporters of the English side have already bought plane tickets to go to Madrid. Top teams avoid trouble

AFP, Paris



respected in Europe on Wednesday night as top nations Italy, England, Germany and Spain all claimed

victories to round off the year's 2010World Cup qualifiers. England had the most to smile about as their 3-1 victory in Belarus meant they had won four matches out of four, while Germany beat

Wales 1-0, world champions Italy had a 2-1 win over Montenegro, and European champions Spain won 2-1 in Belgium. On a worse note for Spain and

his Liverpool club, Fernando Torres suffered a torn muscle in his thigh after being taken off in the match in

Spain team doctor Oscar Celada said on Spanish television: "He has intense pain in the back part of the thigh. It is difficult to diagnose now exactly the extent, if it is a question of a strain or a small tear. If it is a nothing for granted in the wake of

strain then he could be out for about a week."

The disciplined regime of Fabio Capello has spelt an unblemished reign at the helm of England so far, a far cry from the previous tenure of Steve McClaren, who was a great number two under Sven-Goran Eriksson but had problems coming into the hotseat and failed to get qualification for Euro 2008.

with the performance lit up by a Wayne Rooney double and Steven keep competing." Gerrard's opener.

"I am very happy because as I said before the game it was a very important game for us.

play like a team, not like single players. It is very important and tonight I saw one team.

work, creating a group, creating the mentality and the confidence. This is very important because the players are very good players."

group, but Capello was taking

"There is no secret -- it is about

The win left England five points clear of Croatia at the top of the

England's failure to reach Euro as unconvincing Italy edged out No more qualifiers till the spring

means players can concentrate on made a goalscoring return to club football, have a Christmas Lecce, where he played for five break, then get back into World Cup action on March 28, though a few nations have games in February. Rio Ferdinand, who captained the side in the absence of the

injured John Terry, added: "The Capello said he was delighted half-time talk was quite simple. He said push up from the back and Joachim Loew's Germany side

took a sizeable step towards claiming the single guaranteed place at South Africa 2010 from Group Four "If we want to win, we have to with three more points against a victory was very important and was spirited Welsh side.

Winger Piotr Trochowski unleashed a superb second-half strike to seal the 1-0 win to put them four points clear. Their third win from four quali-

fying games means Germany are now on ten points with Russia who beat Finland 3-0 in Moscow on Wednesday - and plucky Wales lagging behind on six each.

Alberto Aquilani netted a brace solid team."

WORLD CUP 2010 QUALIFYING RESULTS

EUROPEAN ZONE

At Ta'gali, Malta Malta 0 Hungary 1 (Torghelle 23) AtLisbon

Latvia 1 (Kolesnicenko 89) Israel 1 (Benayoun 50) At Piraeus, Greece Greece 1 (Charisteas 68) Switzerland 2 (Frei 42-pen, Nkufo 77)

Spanish striker David Villa, who **At Luxembourg** hit a late winner in their 2-1 win Luxembourg 0 Moldova 0 against Belgium, was delighted with their victory in Brussels. "This At Teplice, Czech Republic a serious test for us. We absolutely Slovenia 0 just had to get the three points, At Belfast

And on his goal, his 23rd which put him level with the same haul for Spain as Real Madrid legend Alfredo Di Stefano, Villa added: "These types of statistics are always nice to know. But I think the main thing was that the goal meant we earned three points against a very

Iran defeat

N Korea

Villa said.

Montenegro 2-1 in Group Eight.

AS Roma striker Mirko Vucinic

years but he left disappointed as

UEFA's newest nation lost their

first ever competitive away match.

and in control of the group with 10

It means Italy remain unbeaten

(Smolarek 70) Group 4 At Moscow Russia 3 (Pasanen 23-og, Lampi 65-og

Arshavin 88) Finland 0 At Moenchengladbach, Germany Germany 1 (Trochowski 72) Wales 0 Group 5 At Zenica, Bosnia

At Tallinn Estonia 0 Turkey 0 here on Wednesday. At Brussels Iran went into this game with the psychological edge, having defeated

ing for the 2006 World Cup. Eintracht Frankfurt's Mehdi

Javad Nekonam who plays for Osasuna in Spain, doubled up in the 65th minute when he latched onto Osasuna teammate Masoud Shojaei pass, this time from inside

North Korea's consolation goal came from a header scored by Jong Tae Se in the 70th minute when he received a pass from a free kick outside the penalty area.

The match was watched by more than 40,000 spectators in Tehran's Azadi stadium. The win upheld Iran coach Ali

taking all three points. Iran have an unbeaten record over North Korea, winning 10 times

In Group B's other game Wednesday South Korea, who made the semi-finals on home turf in 2002, eased past winless United Arab Emirates 4-1 in Seoul.

and North Korea and South Korea on four points from two games. North Korea has four points but from three games. The Saudis had a night off. United Arab Emirates, the fifth

managed a 1-1 draw away to Saudi Arabia. Iran made it to the finals in 1978, 1998 - when they beat the The side that places fifth will United States in France - and 2006. in the finals in South Africa in 2010 while the fifth-placed side play off

Portugal 0 Albania 0

Group 2

Czech Republic 1 (Libor Sionko 63)

43, Lafferty 56, St. Davis 75) San Marino 0 At Bratislava

Bosnia-Herzegovina 4 (Spahic 31 Dzeko 39, Muslimovic 56, 89) Armenia 1 (Minasyan 85)

Belgium 1 (Sonck 7) Spain 2 (Iniesta 36 Villa 88) Group 6

Croatia 4 (Rakitic (16, 87, Olic 32, Modric 75) Andorra 0 Belarus 1 (Sitko 28) England 3 (Gerrard

11, Rooney 50, 74) Group 7 At Kaunus Lithuania 1 (Danilevicius 20) Faroe Islands 0

Austria 1 (Janko 80) Serbia 3 (Krasic 14 Jovanovic 18, Obradovic 24) Group 8

At Tbilisi Georgia 0 Bulgaria 0 At Dublin Republic of Ireland 1 (Keane 5) Cyprus 0

At Lecce, Italy

Italy 2 (Aquilani 8, 29) Montenegro 1 (Vucinic 19) Group 9 At Oslo

Norway 0 Holland 1 (van Bommel 63) At Reykjavik Iceland 1 (VP Gunnarsson 16) Macedonia 0

SOUTH AMERICAN ZONE

AtAsuncion Paraguay 1 (Cardozo 81) Peru 0 At Santiago Chile 1 (Orellana 35) Argentina 0 At Rio de Janeiro Brazil 0 Colombia 0 At Puerto La Cruz Venezuela 3 (Maldonado 47, Moreno 56, Arango 67) Ecuador 1 (Mina 10) Tuesday At La Paz Bolivia 2 (Martins 15, 41) Uruguay 2

(Bueno 64, Abreu 88)

4 0 0 4 0 11 0 Malta Group 2 4 0 0 4 1 12 0 Andorra

EUROPEAN ZONE TABLES

Group 5

Group 7 Luxembourg 4 1 1 2 3 7 Group 8

Liechtenstein 3 0 1 2 0 8 No Loew points

AFP, Monchengladbach

AFP, Paris

Albania

Moldova



Joachim Loew said it was mission accomplished as his side took a four-point lead in tain way, even if we didn't get fortheir World Cup qualifying group thanks to

Wales. Hamburg winger Piotr Trochowski unleashed a superb second-half winner here as Loew's side took a sizeable step towards claiming the single guaranteed place at South Africa 2010 from

Wednesday night's 1-0 win over

first half but maybe we tired a little Group Four. Their third win from four games, and three more points against a spirited Welsh side after last Saturday's 2-1 win over Russia, means Germany will finish the year on ten points

are on six. "With six points from the last two matches, we are absolutely content," said Loew. "We are the group leaders, which is a good foundation to build on for next

"We expected the Welsh would

defend deeply, but in the second-

ahead of Russia and Wales who

half we invested more and our team was mentally very strong."

John Toshack's team held the Germans team to 0-0 until the 72nd minute and had some chances to silence the 44,500 crowd. "We came here to play in a cer-

ward as much as we would have liked in the first half," said Toshack. "They had chances, but I thought we contained them well. "But the way they set up with

their four in midfield they can all hit them from 25 yards out and so it proved. "We had restricted them in the

Trochowski chose the perfect time to score his first goal for Germany, but admitted his side should have finished with more

"We should have scored more goals - we certainly created the chances, but the main thing was toget the three points," said Trochowski.

"It's been a while since I shot so many times on goal, the ball had to go in at sometime. I am just over the moon we won the

Torres limps out

Football

AFP, Madrid

Liverpool's Spanish striker Fernando Torres faces a battle to be fit for next week's Champions League outing against former club Atletico Madrid after he picked up a thigh injury in Wednesday's 2-1 win over Belgium, Spanish team doctor Oscar Celada said.

Torres, who went off after just 16 minutes, was later to report to the Liverpool medical staff to check on his condition.

Fellow forward Ryan Babel is a further doubt after he hurt his ankle in Holland's win in Norway.

As well as the Atletico game, Torres and Babel are anxious to be ruption to travel plans.

kilometres from Madrid after UEFA hit them with a stadium ban as punishment for crowd disturbances and racist insults against Marseille players during a

Champions League match on

English rivals at a stadium 300

fit for the match four days later

away to Chelsea in the English

Atletico may have to host their

Premiership.

October 1. However, reports from Spain late Wednesday said the match may yet go ahead at the Vicente Calderon stadium because of the logistical difficulty of staging it elsewhere at such short notice.

Liverpool fans have already complained of the potential dis-

Uzbeks thank Zico

AFP, Tokyo



coach Mirjalol Kasymov has thanked Brazilian legend Zico for FIFA giving him inside tips ahead of his

Uzbekistan's

draw with Asian giants Japan. Zico, whose playing career ended in Japan, was the country's had done a lot of homework on head coach at the 2006 World Cup me." finals. He has doubled as technical advisor to Kasymov since joining

the Uzbek club Kuruvchi as coach reach the ball," he said. last month. "Ihad a long talk with him (Zico) that Zico had named as danger

loss of their first two qualifiers. He said Japan and Celtic playmaker Shunsuke Nakamura unsuccessful World Cups as a made great passes with his left player, won the Turkish league title foot, as we had feared."

"We yielded a goal in the first moving from Japan. half due to Nakamura's fine play and a mistake on the part of our took over from Rauf Inliyev after the Central Asian side's two defeats in Group 1.

"God may have been somewhat Kasymov.

on our side but our players believed in their potential and I believed they could do it."

Maksim Shatskikh opened the

scoring on a counter-attack in the 27th minute but Nakamura's lofty cross led to Keiji Tamada's crucial equaliser in the 40th minute. Yuji Nakazawa, one of Japan's two centre-backs, said: "I felt they

"I couldn't find a space to move in on set pieces and I could not

The Uzbek coach said earlier

in Tashkent. Each and every piece men Nakamura, Nakazawa and of his information has helped me a another centre-back, Marcus Tulio lot," Kasymov said after the Central Tanaka, as well as two other Asian country earned a precious midfielders -- Gamba Osaka's point on Wednesday following the Yasuhito Endo and Makoto Hasebe of VfL Wolfsburg. Zico, 55, who led Brazil in three

with Fenerbahce last year after

coach and was an excellent defender," said the coach, who player before. I will work with him as a matter of course. His experience will definitely help the Uzbek national team," said

Argentina lose, Brazil draw AFP, Montevideo Paraguay streaked six points clear in from the bench. the South American World Cup qualifying FIFA standings with a As the Paraguayans celebrated, heads with Argentine defender goal claimed by

both Edgar Benitez and Oscar Cardozo nine minutes from time enough to edge Peru 1-0 at the Estadio Defensores del Chaco. Benitez got the crucial touch with his left foot for a strike which sent the

who could only draw 0-0 at home to Colombia in Rio. But even Brazil were on form compared with a lacklustre Argentina, who went down to a first-half goal from debutant midfielder Fabian Orellana which brought Chile a 1-0 win that leaves them level on points with the

Argentines - one behind the It was Chile's first ever qualify-

first of any description since 1973. won five home games on the trot and coach Gerardo 'Tata' Martino said he was happy to have three more points on the board, particu-

chalk the goal up to Benitez, who

God it went off well," Benitez

crowd into raptures as Paraguay moved onto 23 points from 10 games - six clear of an inconsistent Brazil,

ing success over the albiceleste and

Paraguay's 'Guaranies' have larly after a laboured performance

said he did not care if Cardozo felt

Brazilian referee Salvio

Fagundes ultimately decided to Basile admitted afterwards. was making a debut appearance

"I have always dreamed of wearing the national shirt - thank



FABIAN ORELLANA Argentina found themselves looking in vain for inspiration from talisman Leo Messi, going down in

Santiago to Marcelo Bielsa's Chile. Alfio Basile's visitors succumbed after Gary Medel set up Orellana's solitary strike ten minutes before the break and but for wayward finishing the margin could have been greater.

respects. They chased down every

ball - it was like 15 against ten,"

South America zone World Cup stand ings after midweek matches (played won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against Paraguay 10 7 2 1 18 6 23

10 4 5 1 15 4 17

10 5 1 4 14 13 16

Argentina 10 4 4 2 13 6 16

Uruguay 10 3 4 3 19 10 13

Ecuador 10 3 3 4 12 17 12

"This was an important win but we have to carry on like this if we are to reach South Africa," said Chilean keeper Claudio Bravo. Marring the win, Chilean forward Mark Gonzalez had to be taken

to hospital following a clash of

Nicolas Burdisso which left the former Liverpool man unconscious. Medical staff said he was in a satisfactory condition. Brazil boss Dunga said his side had come up against a determined side in Colombia as he struggled to

impress his critics following a

goalless draw which followed a

canter in Venezuela. "They made it very tough for us, closing things down. Before, it used to be hard to win, now we have to get back to winning the home games," said Dunga as he shrugged off chants of 'bye bye Dunga' from some frustrated fans fed up that the likes of Kaka and Robinho had failed to unlock the visitors'

defence.

coach two years ago from Carlos Parreira despite a lack of experience "They were better than us in all even at club level. "We have to keep plugging away," he said following a match of

"I'm not the first to have been

booed. People need to keep things

in perspective - anyone would think

we were last in the group," reflected

Dunga, who won the World Cup as a

player in 1994 and who took over as

few highlights. Elsewhere, Venezuela came from behind to beat Ecuador 3-1 in Puerto La Cruz to edge back above Bolivia, who threw away a two-goal lead on Tuesday in La Paz against a Uruguay side which clung onto fifth spot on the table, a point ahead of Ecuador.

earn a home-and-away playoff

with the fourth placed team from

Caribbean zone.

the North, Central America and

points from four games but once again they failed to set pulses racing and it was only a wildly deflected shot that won the match.

Northern Ireland 4 (D Healy 30, McCann

AFP, Tehran Iran inflicted a 2-1 Asian zone 2010 World Cup qualifier defeat on North Korea at the Azadi stadium

Mahdavikia headed the hosts' into a ninth minute lead when he picked up a pass from Iran side Esteghlal's Mojtaba Jabbari from outside the penalty area.

the penalty area.

Daei's pre-match prediction of

Iran now level with Saudi Arabia

against a team from Oceania.

Group 1

Slovakia 2 (Sestak 85, 86) Poland

the North Koreans twice in qualify-

and drawing three matches

table with no points. Previously in the qualifiers, Iran Asia has four automatic berths

team in group B are footing the

side's 1-1 World Cup qualifying

"Zico is a very excellent