Jose turned down **England** job

AFP, Milan

Inter Milan coach Jose Mourinho revealed on Tuesday that he was once offered the England manager job but had turned it down.

Speaking ahead of his team's Champions League clash against Chelsea on Wednesday at Milan's San Siro, Mourinho was asked about John Terry being removed from the England captaincy but then went on to reveal other information.

"I'm not England manager so I don't want to comment (on Terry) just as I'm not the Cheslea president so I don't comment on (Roman) Abramovich's decisions," he

"I could have been England manager but I didn't want to, I have no chance of owning Chelsea, though.

"When England came looking for me I was the proudest coach in the world. "I thought about it a lot. On

the one hand I wanted to do it, on the other I knew that it wasn't the right job for me because I love training every

"Hence I decided not to do it and England chose a coach with great experience who I wish my best to."

Mourinho did not say when he was offered the England job but his last comment was in the present, suggesting his best wishes were directed at Fabio Capello. Mourinho was a free agent

was dismissed and replaced by Capello at the end of 2007. The Portuguese had just left

at the time that Steve McLaren

Chelsea by mutual consent.



Barcelona striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic jumps for joy after scoring the equalising goal against Stuttgart during their Champions League encounter in Stuttgart on Tuesday.

Blanc's men.

Maresca free-kick.

Advantage Bordeaux

AFP, Athens



Bordeaux took a big s t e p towards the Champion s League

ls after beating Greek champions Olympiakos 1-0 in the first leg of their last-32 clash here on

Tuesday. "We're happy to score away from home, perhaps we could have scored a second but at least

we got the victory," Bordeaux coach Laurent Blanc said after the game. The Girondins' victory the Olympiakos defence

means they remain unbeaten in cancelled out the attacking Stade Chaban-Delmas. the competition and hands the Greek giants their first European home defeat of the season, thanks to a solitary Michael Ciani goal and some goalkeeping heroics from Bordeaux's Cedric Carrasso.

Referee Howard Webb incurred the wrath of the Olympiakos fans when he denied the home side an equalising goal on 94 minutes for a push on Carrasso.

Former Newcastle striker Lomana LuaLua had an earlier opportunity to level the score on 81 minutes when he went clean through from a Matt Derbyshire pass but Carrasso reacted quickly

to push his shot around the post. LuaLua had two further shots saved as the 28-year-old custodian scurried both efforts to safety.

Italian midfielder Enzo Maresca missed a glorious chance to level when he headed a Raul Bravo cross over the bar

with the net gaping wide. After a quiet first period, Yoann Gourcuff was a constant threat for the French titleholders, providing the inspiration for much of their attacking play.

The 23-year-old former AC Milan man was at the centre of a move that set up Czech

England manager Fabio

Capello warned his World

Cup squad Tuesday that

players with high-profile

personal problems could

Capello, who stripped

be left behind.

John Terry of the England captaincy earlier

this month over a private affair that snow-

balled into a tabloid scandal, said he

planned to talk to the players about the

want," he said "If they want to stay in the

squad then they will have to listen. I need to

create a group feeling in the squad and the

most important part is that we speak about

Cup coaches visiting South Africa just over

100 days before the June 11-July 11 World

Capello was among a group of World

He toured Royal Bafokeng Sports

"The players have to understand what I

matter prior to the event.

it before.'

Cup starts.

AFP, Sun City

midfielder Jaroslav Plasil, who blasted well over from 22 yards

A foul by Ieroklis Stoltidis handed Gourcuff his own scoring chance when he wildly challenged Fernando with a high boot on 46 minutes but the French international struck the resulting free-kick straight at the

The visitors opened the scoring when centre-back Ciani headed home his third Champions League goal of the season from a pinpoint Gourcuff

cross just before the break. Bordeaux's trademark freeflowing football had deserted

Bordeaux's marking was found wanting again on 29 minthem for most of the first half as

utes when Stoltidis found himself unmarked but his header was tipped over by Carrasso.

threat from the French for-

by former Aston Villa man Olof

Mellberg, the home side

dropped deep throughout the

first half with a display of reso-

lute defending that frustrated

The Swedish centre-back

should have opened the scoring

himself inside three minutes

when he headed over from a

With a backline marshalled

The return leg takes place on March 17 at Bordeaux's



Bordeaux defender Michael Ciani celebrates his all-important goal against Olympiacos during their Champions League tie in Athens on Tuesday.

Campus near Rustenburg, which has been

camp, saying that construction work on the

hotel was behind schedule, pitches were

the progress that had been made since a

improved because when we stayed here the

behind the hotel need some work. We

decided to bring English people over to try

and improve them and that seems to have

promised the England training camp would

be completed in time and would be up to

they will be able to stay there - everything is

working there already," he said. "If the road

to the hotel is not great then so what?

FIFA Secretary General Jerome Valcke

"I'm not trying to defend it but at least

sub-standard and infrastructure poor.

last time they were terrible," he said.

Media reports have been critical of the

But Capello said that he was pleased with

"Surprisingly the level of the pitches had

"The first pitches are okay but the ones

confirmed as the England training camp.

Capello warns players

previous visit.

worked."

FIFA standards.

Rio out of League Cup final

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand will miss Sunday's League Cup final against Aston Villa due to a

back injury. Ferdinand's injury stopped him taking part in United's 3-0 league win over West Ham at Old Trafford on Tuesday and boss Sir Alex Ferguson confirmed the England captain won't be fit

in time for this weekend's

match at Wembley. "He felt a twinge in his back this morning (Tuesday) when we did a warm-up at (United's training ground) Carrington. We can't take any chances. He won't be playing on Sunday,' Ferguson told Sky Sports

"Rio has been training great too. There have been no mishaps at all. But when you get these twinges you can't take a chance."

The former Leeds star has played just three times in 2010 as a result of injury and suspension.

Ferdinand's injury also casts doubt over his ability to play in England's friendly against Egypt at Wembley on March 3, which was due to be his first international outing since replacing John Terry as England captain.

Ferguson could also be without Brazilian midfielder Anderson for the Villa clash after he limped off with a serious knee injury during the win over West Ham.

"We have sent him for a scan," Ferguson said. "Hopefully it is not too serious but it did not look good."

"At this stage, we cannot play at Soccer

City (the main World Cup stadium) because

it is not ready - we have 108 days to go and

even if we have to stay awake all day and

training camp, much to the frustration of

there wasn't going a base camp," said the

where we were meant to stay and normally

as World Cup hosts we should have the best

place available. If you ask me where it went

have been at Sun City for two days to discuss

arrangements for the tournament. Chief

Executive of the Local Organising

Committee Danny Jordaan promised them

withstanding speculation that they would

"All of the stadiums are complete, not-

Nineteen of the 32 World Cup coaches

Hosts South Africa are still looking for a

"When I came here no one told me that

"The logistics were not implemented at

night to make sure it is."

wrong, I can't tell you."

a successful tournament.

not be ready.

Brazilian.

coach Carlos Alberto Parreira.

Barca keep their cool

AFP, Stuttgart



Stuttgart gave reigning champions Barcelona all they had in their Champions League last-16 clash on Tuesday, but the Spanish side kept their cool to draw 1-1 and

enter the second leg as clear favourites. The high-tempo German side had by far the best first half, with Brazilian-born striker Cacau, fresh from four goals against Cologne on Saturday, stunning the Catalans with a goal on 25 minutes.

A perfectly delivered cross from Timo Gebhart found Cacau on the far post, who headed it powerfully past Victor Valdes' outstretched arm. Three minutes later Stuttgart had a

strong shout for a penalty for handball turned down by referee Bjorn Kuipers as Pavel Pogrebnyak's cross hit Gerard Pique's arm. A string of other chances followed in the Mercedes-Benz Arena as the home

side ran rings around the ragged defending European champions. On 18 minutes, in one of Barca's surprisingly rare forays into the Stuttgart half,

Argentinian star Lionel Messi had a shot blocked, but their best chance came on 39

minutes as Messi shot from just outside

Arsenal old boy Jens Lehmann got a hand to it, and the ball rolled perilously close to the target, only to hit the post and bounce back into the arms of a grateful 'keeper.

"We could have beaten Barcelona tonight," said Lehmann.

And Stuttgart coach Christian Gross, who has turned his side's fortune around after taking over from Markus Babbel before Christmas, agreed the Bundesliga side had blown their chance to beat the defending champions.

"We should have scored a second goal in the first half," coach Christian Gross said. "We had clear chances."

Zlatan Ibrahimovic made it 1-1 on 52 minutes, heading it past Lehmann at close range after the German managed to block his first attempt.

Ibrahimovic admitted that the Germans had outperformed them in the first-half.

"They (Stuttgart) created good chances and controlled the game in the first-half," said the Swedish striker.

"In the second-half we improved and I scored the goal which is good for the team. 1-1 is a good result.

"However, we made too many mistakes in the first-half, though the pitch

don't agree that we are a class apart, we are a team like anyone else. And as for the phy....absolutely it is still on."

dream of retaining the tro-Barca never looked like losing as Ibrahimovic's goal knocked the stuffing

didn't help as we were slipping a lot. I

out of Stuttgart and they became increasingly desperate. In the last 10 minutes, Barca slowed the tempo right down, and the tired Germans

hardly got a look-in. On 67 minutes, a shot from Ibrahimovic hit Italian defender Cristian Molinaro on the upper arm on the goal line, but no handball was given.

The Catalans were almost back to full strength with the return from injury of midfielder Xavi Hernandez, who had had a thigh strain, and Ibrahimovic. Still absent though was defender Dani

Alves, out of action since earlier in the month with a leg muscle problem, as well as Malian midfielder Seydou Keita and French defender Eric Abidal.

Despite scoring Barca's second of four against Racing Santander on Saturday, fellow Frenchman Thierry Henry started on the bench, a place becoming painfully familiar to the 32-year-old former Arsenal

But he came on early in the second half, replacingYayaToure.

Rooney destroys Hammers

AFP, Manchester



Wayne Rooney scored twice as Manchester United kept the pressure on Premier League leaders Chelsea by defeating West Ham 3-0 at Old

United's sixth successive home league win saw the champions move to within one point of Chelsea, having played a game more, as England striker Rooney made it 19 goals in 19 outings and 27 in all competitions this season.

Substitute Michael Owen added a third 10 minutes from time within moments of climbing off the bench to seal a comfortable win after a sluggish start. It was just the send-off Sir Alex Ferguson

had demanded as the United manager goes in search of his 20th piece of major domestic silverware in Sunday's League Cup final against Aston Villa at Wembley. Starting the match four points behind

leaders Chelsea, Ferguson opted to bring Ben Foster back in from the cold for a match United simply had to win. It was Foster's first start since he was

dropped after United's shock 1-0 Champions League home defeat to Besiktas on November 25.

Fit-again Nemanja Vidic, Darron Gibson, Paul Scholes and Anderson also returned to the side while first-choice stopper Edwin van der Sar did not even

make the bench.

But Anderson's match was cut short inside the opening 20 minutes, the Brazilian going off with a twisted knee which could wreck his hopes of appearing at Wembley at the weekend. His departure hardly helped United as

they struggled to get out of second gear for much of the first half. The visitors had won only once on

their league travels since the opening day of the campaign yet Valon Behrami went close with an effort which flashed across the six-yard area in the 20th minute. After the 3-1 defeat away to Everton at

the weekend, the home supporters were looking for a lift from their team. But the first half was played out in a largely subdued atmosphere as the hosts

struggled to trouble the West Ham defence. It took 26 minutes for United to force Robert Green into his first serious The England stopper blocked a fierce effort by Antonio Valencia only for the ball

to fall kindly for Republic of Ireland midfielder Gibson just outside the area. His effort took a deflection off Dimitar

Berbatov and appeared to have wrongfooted Green before the keeper stuck out a leg to save his side from falling behind. While Rooney and Berbatov struggled

to unlock the visitors defence, Gibson's long range efforts were causing concern.

The United midfielder again went close from 20 yards, his powerful effort

turned behind by Green for a corner before Rooney's breakthrough effort seven minutes before the interval.

Fergie had used his programme notes to lavish praise on Rooney's form this season and the 24-year-old had his manager applauding from the sidelines as he headed home from eight-yards after connecting with Valencia's superb volleved cross.

slumber. Rooney almost doubled the lead moments later with a spectacular longrange effort which landed on the roof of the net as Ferguson's side finally began to stamp their authority.

than they had during the previous 45.

bar with a right-foot effort within seconds of the re-start.

the game out of West Ham's reach when he pulled away from his marker to meet Valencia's excellent 55th minute cross to

nine-and-a-half-hour mark since they from Paul Scholes' 80th minute pass.



AFP, London

baller Ashley Cole and his pop star wife Cheryl have split, her publicist said Tuesday, following allegations of his infidelity. One of Britain's best-known

celebrity couples, the Coles recent days.

Cole," her spokesman Sundraj Sreenivasan said. "Cheryl asks the media to respect her privacy during this difficult time. We have no further comment

26, first found fame as a member of girl band Girls Aloud.

1-0 lead to Romanian champions Unirea Urziceni, David Moyes's men are 2-1 up as they play away at Sporting Lisbon and Roy Hodgson's Fulham meet the winners of the last ever UEFA Cup, Shakhtar Donetsk, with the London side

also taking a 2-1 lead to told Sky Sports that, while Everton's main priority is to Ukraine. qualify for Europe, the players

English face away test

Three

Premier

League sides



AFP, Paris

face tough away tests in the second leg of their League as they look to protect precari-

ous single-goal leads. Liverpool, Everton and Fulham are all one goal up following the first matches of the competition's knockout

phase and for the two Merseyside clubs this remains the last chance of winning silverware this season. Rafael Benitez's side take a

> Liverpool's bitter rivals Everton are enjoying a minirevival of late after beating domestic title challengers Chelsea and Manchester United in recent weeks.

Hamburg. Claudio Ranieri's Roma saw their 20-match unbeaten run come to an end when they lost their first-leg match against Greece's Panathinaikos 3-2.

want to win what would be the

club's first honour since their

"We'd love to win a trophy,"

"At the start of every season

we look to win a trophy and for a

club that's progressing like ours

it's always the next step -- this

team's got to be winning tro-

matches, Juventus will hope to

protect a 2-1 lead at home to

Dutch giants Ajax, while PSV

Eindhoven bid to overturn a 1-

0 deficit at home to Ruud Van

Nistelrooy's new club,

In the pick of the other

1995 FA Cup triumph.

Neville said.

phies."

Roma's on-loan Bayern Munich striker Luca Toni is set to miss the game in the Italian Toffees captain Phil Neville capital with a calf problem.

The goal awoke United from their

United finally took command of the contest as they proved more of a threat in the opening 10 minutes of the second half

South Korea's Park Ji-Sung rattled the

And man-of-the-moment Rooney put nod past Green.

There was no way back for the Hammers with United having past the last conceded a league goal on home soil and Owen came off the bench to put the result beyond doubt with his first league goal since September - a clinical finish

Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney (R) heads in the second goal against West Ham during their Premier League clash at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

Cole, pop star wife split

Chelsea and England foot-

wed in 2006 but their relationship has been the subject of frenzied media interest in "Cheryl Cole is separating from her husband Ashley

to make." The former Cheryl Tweedy,

She went on to become a solo recording artist -- one hit was titled "Fight For This Love" -- and to become a popular judge on "The X-Factor," a television talent show launched in Britain by Simon Cowell.

The Europa League is the English rebranded successor to the

trophy won by the Ukrainian side last year. It would be something of a consolation prize for Liverpool after their group-stage elimination from the Champions

Benitez knows he needs to win round-of-32 matches this week a trophy to quell growing supporter unrest as his side trail 16 points behind Chelsea in the Premier League. "When you win a European

League, but Reds manager

competition it is always very important," the Spaniard said. "If you cannot be in the

Champions League, you have to do your best in this tournament and we would love to give a trophy to our fans. We want to do something important."