

# FIFA blasts Brazil's WC preparations

REUTERS, Bagshot

FIFA general secretary Jerome Valcke made a scathing attack on Brazil's preparations for the 2014 World Cup on Friday, saying "not a lot is moving" and organisers needed "a kick up the backside".

Valcke, who has continually raised concerns about the tournament, said time was running out and there was no "Plan B" in place.

However, Brazil's sports minister Aldo Rebelo hit back, telling reporters in Brazil that his priority was for native Indians and low-income families to be able to go to matches, while FIFA wanted to make a profit.

Soccer's ruling body is particularly concerned about transport and accommodation issues and the sluggish movement through Brazilian bureaucracy of World Cup laws relating to the sale of alcohol is also worrying FIFA.

"I don't understand why things are not moving," Valcke told reporters. "The stadiums are not on schedule any longer - and why are a lot of things late?"

"The concern is nothing is made or prepared to receive so many people. I am sorry to say but things are not working in Brazil.

"You expect more support," added Valcke who is in England for the annual meeting of the International Football Association Board, FIFA's law-making body.

"We should have received these documents signed by 2007 and we are in 2012. You have to push yourself, get a kick up the backside and just deliver this World Cup."

Brazil was awarded the World Cup in 2007 although the decision had been on the cards since 2003 when the other nine South American federations agreed to support the country as their only candidate.

That decision was taken after the tournament had been ear-marked for the South America under FIFA's short-lived rotation system.

Valcke said the tournament would go ahead but warned the fans could suffer. "There are not enough hotels," he added.

DAY'S EVENT



Bangladesh Premier League

Mohammed v Sk Jamal

Time: 3:30pm

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium



Arsenal star Robin van Persie (L) celebrates the first of his two goals against Liverpool during their Premier League encounter at Anfield yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Van Persie shatters L'pool

AFP, Liverpool



Robin van Persie delivered a huge blow to Liverpool's Champions League prospects as Arsenal secured a dramatic 2-1 win at Anfield on Saturday.

Dirk Kuyt missed a penalty for Kenny Dalglish's side before Laurent Koscielny's own goal gave the hosts the lead.

But Arsenal skipper Van Persie equalised before half-time and then hit a stunning stoppage time winner - his 31st in all competitions - to secure a fourth straight league win for the Gunners.

Liverpool's first home defeat of the campaign leaves them 10 points adrift of fourth-placed Arsenal and in need of a miracle to qualify for the Champions League.

On a bitterly frustrating day for the new League Cup winners, Liverpool twice hit the woodwork.

Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard showed off the club's first silverware for six years before kick-off when he paraded the League Cup, secured after a penalty shoot-out win over Cardiff last Sunday, in front of a sell-out crowd.

Unfortunately for home fans, that was the last they saw of Gerrard.

The inspirational midfielder's hamstring injury while on England duty

against the Netherlands in midweek meant he was unable to take part in a match his team had to win to stay in contention for a Champions League spot next season.

Victory at Wembley last week guaranteed the club a place in next season's Europa League but Dalglish wants his side to end the season with a flourish and secure a return to the Champions League stage for the first time since 2009.

Arsenal arrived on Merseyside with confidence sky high following their incredible 5-2 north London derby win over Tottenham, having trailed 2-0.

Arsene Wenger's side started from where they finished against Spurs as Pepe Reina was forced to produce a fine save to prevent Theo Walcott from firing the visitors into an eighth minute lead following Mikel Arteta's 50-yard pass.

Liverpool responded with Suarez almost capitalising on an error by Koscielny before the Uruguay striker earned his side an 18th minute penalty after being fouled by Arsenal keeper Wojciech Szczesny.

But Szczesny, who escaped a yellow card, made amends by keeping out Kuyt's spot kick before the Polish keeper produced a second stop to deny the Dutchman's follow-up.

Liverpool had failed to score in their previous two Premier League home games but they took a 23rd minute lead

when Koscielny sliced Jordan Henderson's low cross from the right into his own net at the near post.

Suarez was denied by the woodwork before Arsenal conjured up an equaliser out of nothing in the 31st minute after sloppy defending by the hosts.

A fine cross by Bacary Sagna found Van Persie who nodded home from five yards out.

The drama continued as Suarez was denied by another fine Szczesny save after a brilliant solo run by the former Ajax man, while Kuyt hit the woodwork on the stroke of half-time after connecting with Charlie Adam's cross from the left.

Arsenal's cause was not helped by the untimely departure of midfielder Arteta on a stretcher in the 53rd minute after running into Jordan Henderson. Defender Martin Kelly, starting in place of the injured Glen Johnson, missed a glorious chance from inside the six-yard to earn Liverpool victory after Henderson delivered a fine 70th minute cross into the six-yard area.

At the other end, Reina's outstretched leg prevented Walcott from winning it for Arsenal.

An entertaining match looked set to end in stalemate before Van Persie unleashed a terrific volley from an acute angle following a great ball from Alex Song deep into eight minutes of stoppage time.

# Fergie fears Spurs

AFP, London



Sir Alex Ferguson believes Tottenham's players will be unaffected by the links between manager Harry Redknapp and the England

vacancy.

Ever since Fabio Capello stood down last month, Redknapp has been the overwhelming favourite to take over as national coach.

And ahead of Manchester United's trip to White Hart Lane on Sunday, Ferguson agrees that Redknapp should be given the opportunity.

"I think the people who will be more concerned are the directors, they'll be worried," said Ferguson.

"I'm sure they'll be wondering what the next step is in relation to the contact the FA make and when they make it because I don't think you can dismiss that eventuality. It's going to happen and they'll be more worried than the actual players.

"The thing about judging any manager is his longevity -- Harry's survived all the different types of challenges,

"I think experience helps too, he never seems to panic. Harry seems to be calm about the various parts of games, he never seems to get in a tizzy about things unlike myself."

Ferguson has identified the game at Spurs as vital to United's hopes.

The champions visit Manchester City in the third last game of the season but after their match at Tottenham, they have a run of games that could pile the pressure on

Roberto Mancini's men.

Ahead of that game at the Etihad Stadium at the end of April, they face West Brom, Wolves, Fulham, Blackburn, QPR, Wigan, Aston Villa and Everton.

Tottenham were beaten 5-2 by neighbours Arsenal last weekend and are now eight points adrift of a United team that has won five of its last six Premier League games.

But Ferguson is in no doubt about Tottenham's quality despite their recent slump.

"Up until about three weeks ago they were playing the best football in the league. They've hit a little bit of a plateau at the moment but we know that going down there on Sunday is a big game for us and it's the most important game for us so far."

Chris Smalling is a doubt for the game after suffering a head knock during England's 3-2 defeat to Holland in midweek.

Wayne Rooney returns after a throat infection but Tom Cleverley and Antonio Valencia are still out, while the match is likely to come too soon for Michael Owen, who has been out for five months with a thigh problem.

Tottenham will go into the game without the suspended Scott Parker, but Redknapp is hopeful Gareth Bale will have shrugged off a hamstring problem in time to feature.

Spurs are seeking a first league victory over Ferguson's side since 2001 as they attempt to consolidate their hold on third place.

"We will have to be at our very best if we are going to get a result from the game but we have a good chance," Redknapp said.



Shanghai Shenhua forward Nicolas Anelka (C) fights for the ball during a friendly match against Shanghai East Asia in Shanghai yesterday. The match ended in a scoreless draw.

PHOTO: AFP

# Blatter wants goal-line tech

Football

AFP, London

FIFA president Sepp Blatter said on Friday that he is desperate to see goal-line technology introduced to football as quickly as possible.

Blatter is in England for a meeting of the rule-making body the International FA Board (IFAB), which is due to receive reports on the testing of various goal-line systems ahead of a final decision in July.

The FIFA supreme had been opposed to goal-line technology, but a goal by England midfielder Frank Lampard that was controversially not given against Germany at the 2010 World Cup was enough to change his mind.

"We don't want a repeat of the last World Cup," he said.

"I think I can convince the IFAB board that we must go forward with technology. We cannot afford to just wait and see what happens."

UEFA president Michel Platini has expressed a preference for extra officials behind either goal-line, but Blatter is determined to press ahead with more high-tech alternatives.

"Platini doesn't want it but I wouldn't want to be at a World Cup again and witness another situation," he said. "I would die."

The IFAB is made up of FIFA, who have four votes, and representatives from the Football Associations of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

FIFA say the new system must pass strict accuracy criteria and deliver an instant verdict to the match referee on whether or not the ball has crossed the line.

One of the systems being considered by IFAB has been developed by British company Hawkeye, whose technology is already used at major tennis and cricket events.

# FA to wait on hiring new coach

AFP, London

The Football Association (FA) revealed on Friday that they intend to wait until the "back end of the season" before appointing a successor to Fabio Capello as England coach.

Alex Horne, the governing body's general secretary, told BBC Sport that, despite having several candidates in mind, the FA did not want to be rushed into making a decision.

"There's definitely a list," he said. (We) talk about it regularly. It's a back end of the season decision for us.

"A lot of the managers on the list are employed and we don't want to interrupt anyone's season."

His comments follow similar remarks made by FA director of football Trevor Brooking.

"I think we'll take our time, and try to make sure we're not locked into any particular time scale," said Brooking.

Tottenham Hotspur manager Harry Redknapp is the strong favourite to take up the role, having received widespread backing in the media and from members of the current England squad.

SPORTS POLL

Which youngster has impressed you in BPL?

Anamul Haque 47.6%

Mominul Haque 43.9%

TOTAL VOTES: 169

WEEKLY QUESTION

Do you think BPL was a successful tournament?

Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote

Follow The Daily Star Sport on

twitter

www.twitter.com/dssport

What to WATCH

ESPN & STAR Cricket

Australia v Sri Lanka

Tri-Series, 1st Final

Live from 9:20am

ESPN

English Premiership

Newcastle v Sunderland

Live From 6:00pm

Fulham v Wolves

Live From 8:00pm

Tottenham v Man United

Live From 10:00pm

TEN Action

La Liga

Real Zaragoza v Villarreal

Live from 4:55pm

Serie A

Fiorentina v Cesena

Live from 7:55pm