

Bielsa quits Bilbao

AFP, Madrid
Marcelo Bielsa has quit Athletic Bilbao after a row with the Spanish club's board, Marca reported on its website Friday.

According to the sports daily Bielsa and his assistants have walked out after a public row over Athletics's new training centre.

The club published a statement on Friday disassociating itself from Bielsa's criticism at what he perceived was a delay in the construction of the facilities.

"Athletic does not share in any way the personal and subjective view expressed by Marcelo Bielsa at a press conference yesterday (Thursday) concerning the progress of the work (on the centre)....," the statement read.

Bielsa, who led Athletic to last season's Europa League final and Spanish Cup final, extended his contract with the side last month until June 2013.

Silvestre joins Inter Milan

AFP, Rome
Palermo's Argentina defender Matias Silvestre on Friday signed for Serie A rivals Inter Milan in a deal worth an estimated eight million euros.

The 27-year-old will replace Juventus-bound Brazilian Lucio in northern Italy.

Silvestre is reported to have signed a two-year loan deal worth two million euros with an option to buy fixed at six million euros, according to the Italian press.

He becomes Inter's third recruit for the new season after Argentina striker Rodrigo Palacio (Genoa) and Slovenia goalkeeper Samir Handanovic.

Meanwhile, Uruguayan striker Diego Forlan is on his way out of the San Siro after signing a three-year deal with Brazilian side Internacional.

"Diego Forlan is a player of Internacional," read the Brazilian club's website.

Park leaving Man United

THE GUARDIAN

QPR are set to complete the signing of the Manchester United midfielder Park Ji-sung. The South Korea international will move to Loftus Road for £2m once the relevant paperwork has been completed.

Park, who won four Premier League titles and a Champions League during his time at Old Trafford, is understood to have been swayed to join QPR by their ambitious plans.

The 31-year-old became one of Sir Alex Ferguson's most reliable players after joining the club in the summer of 2005 in a £4m move from PSV Eindhoven.

However, after seven successful years in the north-west, Park is now set for a move to the capital with QPR.

France still against hijab

AFP, Paris

The French Football Federation (FFF) said Friday that it would "not authorise players to wear a veil" while playing for France or in organised competitions, a day after world footballing authorities said the hijab could be worn on the pitch.

"Regarding the participation of female French national team players in international competitions on one hand, and the organisation of national competitions on the other, the French Football Federation reiterates its duty to respect the constitutional and legislative principles of secularism that prevails in our country and features in its statutes," declared a statement from the FFF.



Players wrestle for the ball in the mud during a 2012 Swamp Soccer World Cup match at Olympic Green area, next to the National Stadium in Beijing on Friday. Thirty-two teams are competing in the 10-day competition with the winners set to get 2012 London Olympics commemorative torch as a prize. PHOTO: REUTERS

Zola set to join Watford

AFP, London

Championship side Watford confirmed the sacking of manager Sean Dyche on Friday, paving the way for Italian Gianfranco Zola to be installed as his successor.

The Hornets' new owners terminated Dyche's 12-month tenure in charge after he guided the club to an 11th-placed finish in the English second tier last season.

His replacement is likely to be former West Ham boss Zola after the Pozzo family, who completed their takeover from Laurence Bassini last week, suggested in a TV interview that he would take charge at Vicarage Road.

A statement from the new owners on the club's website read: "Watford football club confirms that it has terminated the contract of first-team manager Sean Dyche, with immediate effect."

"On behalf of the club, the Pozzo family acknowledges that Sean's positive contribution to Watford FC dates back long before his appointment as manager in June 2011."

"His achievements under difficult circumstances mean that he will rightly be held in high regard by Watford supporters."

"Everyone at the club extends their warmest wishes to Sean for the future."

Dyche, who made more than 230 appearances for Chesterfield as a centre-half in the 1990s and had spells at Bristol City and Millwall, joined Watford in 2002.

He went on to make 72 appearances in three years as a player and after two years at Northampton, returned to Vicarage Road as youth-team coach in 2007.

Dyche was made assistant to Malky Mackay in 2009 and succeeded him as boss in 2011.

His departure paves the way for Zola to return to English football following his two-year spell with the Hammers in May 2010.

Giampaolo Pozzo had hinted at the 45-year-old's appointment on Monday, telling Sky Italia: "Zola? We are on the right path and hence, I believe he will be our new coach. We have a verbal agreement."

All about bells

AFP, London

Church bells, bicycle bells, handbells, ship's bells, and even mobile phones will sound across Britain in a "cacophonous, amazing sound" to mark the start of the Olympics, artist Martin Creed told AFP.

The 43-year-old Turner Prize winner was commissioned to create his "Work No. 1197: All the bells in a country rung as quickly and as loudly as possible for three minutes" as part of the government's Cultural Olympiad, encouraging people to take in some culture along with the London 2012 Games.

And in the case of "All the Bells", said Creed, everyone can even take part. All people need to do is ring any kind of bell for three minutes starting at 8:12am (0712 GMT) on July 27, exactly 12 hours before the start of the opening ceremony pre-show.

If the mobile phone is their chosen instrument, they can download a special ringtone from the project website, where participants can upload recordings of their bell-ringing afterwards.

For Creed, speaking at his cluttered east London studio, the project is part of a mission to take art out of the gallery into the public sphere.

"Art galleries are... a special place that's separate from the world and it makes me a bit uneasy, because I think that to a certain extent anything can look good in a gallery," the British artist said.

"They're beautiful spaces; very protected and cosseted. If my work has to be protected by an art gallery I think that's not good enough. It's like a child that can't make its way in the world.

"If it's any good, my work, it'll be able to survive in a hostile environment."

His "All the Bells" project has encountered some hostility from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, a group that maintains the very English art of "change ringing"

according to set formulas. They argued that ringing church bells "as quickly and as loudly as possible" was unsuited to their medium and even dangerous. Creed labelled them "a bunch of meanies".

But they now support the project -- after being advised the instructions are flexible. "All the Bells" echoes a long British tradition, says Creed, with bells rung out to celebrate historic events like Queen Elizabeth II's 1953 coronation and the end of World War II in 1945.

The Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary will join in, ringing ship's bells and those at shore bases.

Other participants signed up on the website include Lilly, a Welsh schoolgirl with her grandmother's handbell, and a pair of dogs who will apparently ring their collar bells on time.

Creed carried out a trial run in San Gimignano in Italy, which he said was "brilliant", but has concerns about how far sound will carry in the Britain-wide event.

However, the BBC will be broadcasting "All the Bells" live from many locations -- helping ringers feel they are part of something big.

Creed previously created a work in which a sprinter ran up and down part of London's Tate Gallery, and says he relates closely to athletes.

"Everything I do involves moving my body, so to work best, I need to move well," the Scot said.

"What's beautiful about sport is the movement of the body is honed down to one very narrow area."

He is enthused by the Olympics as a public event, with his only complaint that "they haven't given me any tickets".

But "All the Bells", he said, marks an artistic direction from which there is no going back.

"I think that all my work should be public work," he said.

Abahani win football fest

SPORTS REPORTER

Newly crowned champions of Bangladesh Premier League Abahani defeated Dhaka Bank XI 5-3 in an entertaining exhibition match titled "Dhaka Bank Football Fest" at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Abahani took a 13th minute lead through their midfielder marshal Awudu Ibrahim as the Ghanaian headed in a cross from Zahid Hossain. Awudu would make it 2-0 from the penalty spot three minutes later.

However Dhaka Bank X, comprised of players from eight other clubs of the top tier league, reduced the margin in the 43rd minute when Muktiyodha striker Mithun Chowdhury found the back of the net with a fierce shot from thirty yards out. Dhaka Bank got level two minutes after the restart, thanks to a left-footed finish from midfielder Shakil Ahmed.

But Abahani regained the lead in the 63rd minute through Ghanaian substitute Twum Frank. Another substitute Shakhawat Hossain Rony made it 4-2 with a header on an Awudu cross. Dhaka Bank XI's Didarul Hossain reduced the margin again with a diving header on the 86th minute. But Abahani had the last laugh as Rony scored his second of the match, three minutes later, to give the four-time professional league champions a 5-3 victory.

Louis van Gaal Dutch coach

Football

AFP, The Hague

Veteran former Ajax, Barcelona and Bayern Munich coach Louis van Gaal was appointed Friday as the Dutch national squad's new manager following Bert van Marwijk's resignation last week after a woeful Euro 2012 campaign.

"The Dutch Royal Football Federation (KNVB) this evening reached an agreement with Louis van Gaal over his appointment as the coach of the Dutch national eleven," the KNVB said in a statement.

"Van Gaal has signed a contract that will link him from August 1 this year until the end of the World Cup in 2014," the statement added.

His appointment marks an end to speculation following van Marwijk's resignation on June 27 after the Dutch bowed out at the first round of Euro 2012 in Poland and the Ukraine -- one of their worst results in decades.

Van Gaal, 60, brings with him a wealth of experience as a former player as well as a coach with Ajax, winning the national championships three times in 1994, 1995 and 1996, the KNVB said.

He took over as national coach from Dutch football legend Frank Rijkaard in 2000, losing only twice in 14 games.

He resigned in 2001 when the Netherlands failed to qualify for the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea.

Van Gaal's coaching experience also include leading German football giants Bayern Munich, taking them to the Champions League in 2009. He left the club last year.

"We were looking for a trainer with a wealth of experience, with personal and technical expertise," said KNVB director Bert van Oostveen.

"Van Gaal earned his spurs not only nationally, but internationally as well and we know him as a dedicated and highly driven coach," van Oostveen said.

In his first official reaction van Gaal voiced his joy about being approached by the KNVB, saying in the same statement: "It's the challenge I have been waiting for."



Jubilant Abahani players and officials pose with the Dhaka Bank Football Fest trophy after defeating Dhaka Bank XI 5-3 in an exhibition match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The exhibition match was held to mark the 17th anniversary of the bank. PHOTO: STAR

GLT expensive

Football

AFP, Paris

The president of the French professional football league (LFP) on Friday welcomed the decision to introduce goal-line technology (GLT), but balked at its prohibitive cost.

"Good sense has finally prevailed," Frederic Thiriez told AFP a day after the International Football Association Board (IFAB) -- custodians of the game's laws, voted to introduce GLT.

The GLT will be used at the Club World Cup in Tokyo in December, the Confederation Cup in 2013 and also the World Cup in 2014.

It means footballing authorities around the world can introduce the technology into their competitions, using either the Hawk-Eye or GoalRef systems that have been undergoing tests.

"With the support of the French football federation, I've been proposing since 2005 the use of video on the goal-line. That was refused. Now it's the end of an archaic rule which I've been fighting for all these years."

"However, it's still not satisfying because the prohibitive cost of the technology envisaged by FIFA will prevent their use in most competitions."

FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke estimated the cost of GLT at between \$150-250,000 (121-201,000 euros) for each system, with that falling significantly over time.

SPORTS POLL WEEKLY QUESTION
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What to WATCH

- TEN Cricket**
Sri Lanka v Pakistan
Third Test, Day 1
Live from 10:30am
STAR Sports
Wimbledon Championships
Men's Singles Final
Live from 7:00pm
- ESPN**
F1 World Championship
British Grand Prix
Live from 5:45pm
- STAR Sports**
 MotoGP World Championship
German Grand Prix

DAY'S EVENT

- Premier Hockey League**
Sonali Bank v Wari
Time: 2:30pm
Mohammedan v Sadharan Bima
Time: 4:15pm
Venue: Maulana Bhasani National