

## Kagawa faces anxious wait

AFP, Manchester

Japan midfielder Shinji Kagawa faces an anxious wait to discover the extent of the knee injury he suffered in Manchester United's 3-2 Champions League win over Braga on Tuesday.

Kagawa twisted his knee midway through the first half at Old Trafford, but played on until half-time before being replaced by Portugal winger Nani.

United manager Sir Alex Ferguson admitted he is uncertain how severe the injury is, but he confirmed Kagawa will be checked out by the club's medical staff on Wednesday.

It would be a significant blow for Ferguson if Kagawa is ruled out for a prolonged period as the 23-year-old Kobe-born star has made a strong start to his career at United after a pre-season transfer from German champions Borussia Dortmund.

"He twisted his knee and we had to take him off at half-time," Ferguson said.

"He struggled on for 20 minutes or so after the injury. We will assess it in the morning. It is too early to say what damage, if any, there is."

## Robben's swift U-turn

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich's Arjen Robben has quickly dispelled any notion he is considering retiring due to constant injuries despite admitting he has thought about quitting in an interview with Dutch television.

"Yes, in the disappointment and the frustration that it is taking so long to make a come back, I have had such thoughts" he told German daily Bild on Tuesday.

"It's really frustrating when you do everything for your job and your body can not keep up."

"But I also said I have far too much fun playing football and scoring goals to retire of my own free will."

"Don't worry, I will soon be back again. Retirement? Absolutely not!"

The 28-year-old's words put in context those he used in an interview with Dutch television NOS as he recovers from a hamstring injury he suffered at the end of September having been injured at least once every year since 2004.

"I have wanted to give away my football boots and finish (my career)," Robben has said having admitted ideas of retirement "haunt my thoughts and not just now".

After Bayern's 1-0 win at Lille on Tuesday in the Champions League, coach Jupp Heynckes has even said Robben may be fit for Sunday's Bundesliga match at Bayer Leverkusen.



PHOTO: AFP

Manchester United forward Javier Hernandez (R) takes flight to head in and score during his side's Champions League clash against Braga at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

# Shakhtar strike for underdogs

REUTERS, London



Shakhtar Donetsk led the way for the Champions League underdogs as they beat holders Chelsea 2-1 while former European champions Barcelona and Manchester United came from behind to maintain perfect starts on Tuesday.

Danish debutants FC Nordsjaelland were within nine minutes of a memorable win over Juventus before having to settle for a 1-1 draw while last season's beaten finalists Bayern Munich bounced back from a shock defeat by BATE Borisov on Matchday Two to beat Lille 1-0 in France.

A year to the day since Chelsea captain John Terry racially insulted Anton Ferdinand of

Queens Park Rangers, for which he is now serving a four-match domestic ban, he is eligible to play in Europe but could not stop Shakhtar scoring after three minutes.

He failed to clear a pass to Alex Teizera who took advantage of poor defending to angle a shot past Chelsea's Petr Cech who then made a succession of good saves to keep the score down.

Fernandinho doubled the home side's lead after halftime before Oscar became the third Brazilian to score in the match with a late consolation for the well-beaten visitors.

"We are not afraid of playing against teams like Chelsea," said Shakhtar's Romanian coach Mircea Lucescu. "I think we deserved this victory - we created many more opportuni-

ties and the score could have been 4-1.

"Cech had an extraordinary game tonight. Maybe Chelsea

started a bit too relaxed."

Roberto Di Matteo, whose Chelsea side lost their first Champions League game since he became manager in March,

said: "Shakhtar have a good track record at home, particularly against the English teams. It's very difficult when you concede a fast goal. It's a shame we got back into the game a bit late. I believed we could score a goal at least but they punished us after we lost the ball in midfield. We have to do better as a team in those situations."

The result left the Ukrainian side at the top of Group E with seven points, three more than Chelsea. Juventus have three and Nordsjaelland one.

Juve have now drawn their last nine European matches, and salvaged a point when Mirko Vucinic equalised nine

minutes from time. Nordsjaelland, ahead through a 50th minute Mikkel Beckmann goal, at least hung on for their first point in the competition.

Unlike Chelsea, who failed to come back after falling behind, Barcelona, European champions three times in the last seven seasons, did just that.

But they needed a goal in the fourth minute of stoppage time from Jordi Alba to beat Celtic 2-1 after the 1967 European champions had taken the lead at the Nou Camp through Javier Mascherano's own goal after 18 minutes before Andres Iniesta's brilliantly-worked equaliser just before halftime.

Alba told Spanish TV he was lucky to be in the right place at the right time.

"It was a move involving the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

### RESULTS

**Group E**  
Nordsjaelland (DEN) 1 (Beckmann 50)  
Juventus (ITA) 1 (Vucinic 81)

**Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) 2** (Alex 3, Fernandinho 52)  
Chelsea (ENG) 1 (Oscar 88)

**Group F**  
BATE Borisov (BLR) 0  
**Valencia (ESP) 3** (Soldado 45+1-pen, 55, 69)

**Lille (FRA) 0 Bayern Munich (GER) 1** (Mueller 20-pen)

**Group G**  
**Barcelona (ESP) 2** (Iniesta 45, Alba 90+4)  
Celtic (SCO) 1 (Samaras 18)

**Spartak Moscow (RUS) 2** (Carioca 3, Jardel 43-og)  
Benfica (POR) 1 (Lima 33)

**Group H**  
Galatasaray (TUR) 1 (B. Yilmaz 77)  
Cluj (ROM) 1 (Nounkeu 19-og.)

**Manchester United (ENG) 3** (Chicharito 25, 75,

## Unwanted record beckons L'pool

AFP, Paris



Liverpool host big-spending Russian outfit Anzhi Makhachkala at Anfield in their Europa League Group A clash on Thursday with the English Premier league side seeking to avoid making unwanted history.

A 3-2 defeat to Udinese in Merseyside on matchday two leaves Brendan Rodgers' men staring at the possibility of consecutive home defeats in Europe for the first time in the club's existence.

Anzhi, thanks to the financial backing from wealthy owner Suleyman Kerimov, have started to flex their mus-

### FIXTURES

**Group G**  
Genk (BEL) v Sporting Lisbon (POR)  
Videoton (HUN) v FC Basel (SUI)

**Group H**  
Inter Milan (ITA) v Partizan Belgrade (SRB)  
Rubin Kazan (RUS) v Neftci PFK (AZE) (1600)

**Group I**  
Lyon (FRA) v Athletic Bilbao (ESP)  
Sparta Prague (CZE) v Hapoel Kiryat Shmona (ISR)

**Group J**  
Maribor (SLO) v Tottenham (ENG)  
Panathinaikos (GRE) v Lazio (ITA)

**Group K**  
Rapid Vienna (AUT) v Bayer Leverkusen (GER)  
Rosenborg (NOR) v Metalist

**Group L**  
Kharkiv (UKR)  
Levante (ESP) v FC Twente (NED)  
Helsingborgs (SWE) v Hanover (GER)

**Group A**  
Liverpool (ENG) v Anzhi Makhachkala (RUS)  
Udinese (ITA) v Young Boys (SUI)

**Group B**  
Hapoel Tel-Aviv (ISR) v Viktoria Plzen (CZE)  
Atletico Madrid (ESP) v Coimbra (POR)

**Group C**  
AEL Limassol (CYP) v Fenerbahce (TUR)  
Moenchengladbach (GER) v Marseille (FRA)

**Group D**  
Maritimo (POR) v Bordeaux (FRA)  
Newcastle (ENG) v Club Brugge (BEL)

**Group E**  
VfB Stuttgart (GER) v FC Copenhagen (DEN)  
Steaua Bucurest (ROM) v Molde (NOR)

**Group F**

cles this season with Guus Hiddink guiding the Dagestan-based club to the top of the Russian Premier League. Undeclared in eight European

fixtures this season, they will pose a serious threat to a Liverpool side that only secured their first home league win of the campaign on Saturday.

Raheem Sterling's first-half strike proved the difference in a 1-0 victory over struggling Reading, a goal that cemented his status as the club's second-youngest scorer behind Michael Owen and drew praise from his manager.

"The biggest thing for me is maintaining the hunger he's got now because he can be a really top player. It's a long way to go for him but at the moment he's been a revelation," said Rodgers.

"I don't have any concerns about him at this moment. For him, right up until now, he's been brilliant."

## Barca the new comeback kings

REUTERS, Madrid



When Tito Vilanova stepped up from assistant coach to replace Pep Guardiola at Barcelona at the end of last season there were mutterings that he might not be as effective a motivator as his charismatic close friend.

Judging by a series of stirring fightbacks, including Tuesday's 2-1 Champions League home win over Celtic, Vilanova's players have lost none of the hunger Guardiola instilled in them during his spectacularly successful four years in charge.

Barca had to come from behind to beat Spartak Moscow 3-2 at home last month and Jordi Alba's 94th-minute winner against Celtic put them five points clear of the Scottish champions at the top of the group after three of six matches.

They also rallied to win at Sevilla and Osasuna in La Liga, reversing a two-goal deficit for a 3-2 success in Seville, and both Vilanova and sporting director Andoni Zubizarreta paid tribute to that fighting spirit.

"This is a team that keeps trying until the end, until the very last minute," Vilanova told a news conference.

"It's not easy when the other team's 10 outfield players are all in their penalty area defending," the 44-year-old added.

Zubizarreta added in an interview with Spanish television: "This is a team that wants, that desires, that tries and it's something to feel proud of."

"We had several chances to score before and when (David) Villa hit the post in the last minute you thought that was it. But these players always have something in reserve."

The other side of the coin is that Barca's unusually leaky defence is shipping the goals that force them to chase games in the first place.

Part of the reason is that Spain centre backs Carles Puyol and Gerard Pique have been sidelined by injury but there have also been some disturbing lapses and goalkeeper Victor Valdes is not looking as solid as he has in recent years.

"Well, people said before that we were boring to watch," Vilanova said. "Now we are not boring anymore."

Vilanova deployed Marc Bartra at centre back against Celtic alongside converted midfielder Javier Mascherano and the 21-year-old produced.

## Lyon have to sell to survive

AFP, Paris

French club Lyon will be forced to sell two or three players just to balance the books, according to chairman Jean-Michel Aulas.

The club's accounts showed a shortfall of 28 million euros (\$36.2 million) in June this year and Aulas said they will need to part company with some more star names to wipe out the deficit.

"We have plans to sell three players, two in the winter transfer window and one next summer, for 30 million euros (\$38.6 million). That will also cut our playing staff and the wage bill. Negotiations are already well under way, but they cannot be finalised until the end of the window," he said.

Lyon, French champions for a record seven years in a row from 2002, have already sold off big earners Cris, Kim Kallstrom, Aly Cissokho and France international goalkeeper Hugo Lloris in the summer. But a deal to take defender Anthony Reveliere to Paris Saint Germain collapsed at the last minute.

"He could be one of the players who could leave, unless we come to an agreement to extend his contract," Aulas said. "We will review the situation with coach Remi Garde at the end of the season."

## Maradona clowns around in India

INTERNET, undated

Football crazy Kerala went into raptures as Diego Maradona, the Argentine soccer legend cut his 52nd birthday cake, shaped like a football and weighing 25 kilograms, in front of a mammoth crowd assembled at the Municipal stadium in Kannur.

To entertain the hysterical Malayali fans who came to Kannur from all over the state, Maradona sang, danced and kicked balls into the roaring galleries even as the event was telecast live by all local TV channels.

Maradona's two day visit to 'God's Own Country' was on the invitation of a jewellery group to inaugurate their 10th showroom and helicopter services.

This marked his second trip to India after his visit in 2008 to India's other football crazy city of Kolkata. The legend landed at Kochi's International Airport on October 23 where thousands of frenzied fans gave him a rousing reception. He was flown in a chartered chopper from Kochi to Kannur 400 km away.

## Rami signs for Stuttgart

AFP, Stuttgart

With Germany star Sami Khedira set to play for Real Madrid at Borussia Dortmund on Wednesday in the Champions League, his younger brother Rani has signed for Bundesliga side VfB Stuttgart.

The 18-year-old has made 13 appearances for Stuttgart's reserve team in Germany's third league this season having moved up from the club's junior teams.

"We are moving our planning forward for next summer, bringing Rani Khedira closer to professional football," said Stuttgart manager Fredi Bobic.



**STAR Cricket**  
Champions League T20  
FIRST SEMIFINAL  
Delhi Daredevils v Highveld Lions  
Live from 9:30pm

**ESPN**  
Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm

**TEN Sports**  
UEFA Europa League  
Inter Milan v FK Partizan  
Live from 10:00pm  
Newcastle v Brugge

## PFA's anti-racism plans

REUTERS, London

The English Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) issued a six-point action plan to help deal with racism on Wednesday following a series of high profile developments in the fallout from the John Terry-Anton Ferdinand case.

The PFA has been criticised for not doing enough to tackle the problem, but responded by saying the time was right for tougher penalties.

The response from the FA and the

PFA comes after Reading striker Jason Roberts, a member of the PFA's management committee, expressed frustration that the problem of racism was not being dealt with properly by the sport's authorities.

### SIX-POINT PLAN

1) Speeding up the process of dealing with reported racist abuse by closely monitoring any incidents

2) Consideration of stiffer penalties for racist abuse and an equality awareness programme for culprits and clubs involved

3) An English form of the "Rooney

rule" -- introduced by American football's National Football League in 2003 -- to make sure qualified ethnic minority coaches are on interview lists for job vacancies

4) Monitoring the proportion of black coaches and managers and any inequality or progress highlighted

5) Racial abuse to be considered gross misconduct in player and coach contracts (and therefore potentially a sackable offence)

6) Keeping abreast of other equality issues such as gender, sexual orientation, disability, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and Asians in football.