

WENGER SAYS SANCHEZ WANTS TO STAY AT ARSENAL

LONDON: Alexis Sanchez wants to stay at Arsenal despite speculation that he is disillusioned by the club's failure to challenge for the Premier League title, manager Arsene Wenger said yesterday.

Reports in British media say contract talks have been put on hold, but Wenger insists Sanchez, who has a year and a half left on his deal, will be at the club next season.

"Basically, he (Sanchez) wants to stay at the club and it's down to finding an agreement with his agent," Wenger told reporters yesterday. "The players first have

to see if they are happy at the club, then they have to find an agreement."

Arsenal, fifth in the Premier League, are in danger of missing out on Champions League qualification and the 28-year-old Sanchez has been linked with a number of other clubs, including Chelsea, Manchester United and Paris St Germain.

Wenger himself is out of contract at the end of the season, but once again refused to clarify his future as he focussed on Monday's away game at Crystal Palace.

The Frenchman did, however, defend midfielder Mesut Ozil- another player

whose future is the subject of uncertainty- saying Arsenal's crushing Champions League exit at the hands of Bayern Munich had hurt the player.

"(Ozil) is very ambitious. He wants to win the Champions League. We went out in such an emphatic way, it was difficult to take for everybody," Wenger said.

"He cares and people often reproach him because of his style of play, but he cares much more than people think he does."

Ozil has been criticised for a series of anonymous displays in recent months but

impressed in Wednesday's 3-0 win over West Ham United-Arsenal's second victory in seven league games.

Arsenal are four points behind fourth-placed Manchester City, having played a game less, and six points behind third-placed Liverpool who have played two games more. "We are in a position that is not comfortable. It is not where we want to be. We know what we need to do," Wenger said.

"The line of conduct is very clear. We had a hiccup in recent weeks, what is important is to move on." — Reuters

Live		Matches on TV (Local Timings)	
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE			
Tottenham Hotspur v Watford	14:30	beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Stoke City v Liverpool	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 8	
Bromwich Albion v Southampton	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 9	
West Ham United v Swansea City	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 10	
Middlesbrough v Burnley	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 12 EN	
Manchester City v Hull City	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Bournemouth v Chelsea	19:30	beIN SPORTS HD 2	
SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA			
Espanyol v Deportivo Alaves	14:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Real Madrid v Atletico de Madrid	17:15	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Sevilla v Deportivo La Coruna	19:30	beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Malaga v Barcelona	21:45	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE SERIE A			
Empoli v Pescara	16:00	beIN SPORTS HD 4	
Atalanta v Sassuolo Calcio	19:00	beIN SPORTS HD 4	
Juventus v Chievo Verona	21:45	beIN SPORTS HD 4	
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA 1ST			
Freiburg v Mainz	16:30	beIN SPORTS	
Hamburger v Hoffenheim	16:30	beIN SPORTS	
Koln v Monchengladbach	16:30	beIN SPORTS	
Schalke v Wolfsburg	16:30	beIN SPORTS	
Leipzig v Leverkusen	16:30	beIN SPORTS	
Bayern Munich v Dortmund	19:30	beIN SPORTS	
FRENCH LEAGUE 1ST			
Angers v Monaco	18:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6	
Lyonnais v Lorient	21:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6	
Caen v Montpellier	21:00	beIN SPORTS	
Nancy Lorraine v Stade Rennes	21:00	beIN SPORTS HD 7	
Girondins v Metz	21:00	beIN SPORTS HD 9	
Dijon v Bastia	21:00	beIN SPORTS HD 8	



ZURICH: This file photo taken on December 17, 2015 shows a sign of FIFA seen at the football's World governing body headquarters in Zurich. World football's governing body FIFA announced yesterday a record \$369 million loss for 2016 as it paid for the fallout from multiple scandals and bad investments. — AFP

SOCCER

FIFA LOSSES HIT \$369M IN 2016, \$1BN TARGET IN 2018

ZURICH: FIFA finances showed a loss of \$369 million last year as American and Swiss corruption investigations added legal costs to the soccer body's budget and scared off sponsors.

An even bigger loss is expected next year, FIFA said yesterday after publishing its 2016 accounts, which reflect a new way of reporting income. FIFA expects to rebound with \$1 billion in profit in the accounts for 2018, which will include income from most TV broadcast deals for the World Cup in Russia.

Still, the scandal-hit soccer body's confidence will be tested with 24 slots currently unsold in a 34-sponsor program for a World Cup that kicks off in only 14 months. "However, it goes without saying that stagnant global trade and subdued investment, combined with investigations surrounding previous FIFA officials, have put pressure on the organization's overall revenue generation," FIFA said in the 116-page financial report for 2016.

FIFA's costs in 2016 included legal

bills of more than \$50 million for the American and Swiss federal investigations of bribery and mismanagement linked to international soccer leaders. That legal bill rose from \$20.2 million in 2015. FIFA is sticking to its revenue target of \$5.56 billion - mostly from World Cup TV and sponsorship deals - for the four-year financial cycle tied to the tournament in Russia.

Using the new financial reporting standards, FIFA's reported loss of \$122 million in 2015 would have been recalibrated to a \$52 million deficit. That suggests FIFA's loss in 2016 would have easily exceeded \$200 million under the old methods of booking contracted income.

FIFA has budgeted to earn almost \$4 billion income in 2018 alone and end next year with record reserves of \$1.655 billion. However, the reserve fund is now down to \$1.048 billion and should fall to \$605 million in a year before the bounce back FIFA is relying on. Its cash reserves have been above \$1 billion since 2008. The 2016 accounts covered

the first 10 months under FIFA President Gianni Infantino since he succeeded the disgraced Sepp Blatter.

FIFA booked \$502 million in income - with zero reported from European broadcast rights deals that are now backloaded to 2018 - and had reported expenses of \$893 million.

The spending rises were in part to fulfil Infantino's campaign promises last year of increased grants to national, regional and continental soccer bodies worldwide. FIFA's 211 member federations are now entitled to \$5 million from each World Cup. The document also blamed Blatter's regime for "ill-considered" investments on a soccer museum and adjoining four-star hotel in downtown Zurich. The World Football Museum lost FIFA \$50 million in 2016, including some one-off costs, the soccer body said. FIFA also spent \$7.9 million on the February meeting in Zurich to elect Infantino, and there was a \$5.6 million increase in payments to FIFA Council members. — AP