

Gang-rape investigation Chelsea star the key?

Football

REUTERS/SUN, London

A teenage girl's allegations she was gang raped by at least seven professional soccer players in a luxury London hotel is threatening to rock English football with its worst-ever "players behaving badly" scandal.

involved by posting their guesses on soccer Web sites, opening a wider debate over players' privacy and libel. The Sun astonishingly revealed on Friday that the footballer at the centre of the investigation is a Chelsea player.

She had met him in a trendy bar at the Sanderson Hotel in London before accompanying him to the Grosvenor House Hotel. The girl told how she drank Coca-Cola with the player and some of his pals before agreeing to let him bed her. They went to room 316 and had sex.

Premiership preview Anfield centre of England

Football

AFP, London

Gerard Houllier's bid to reshape Liverpool into a more attacking side goes on trial when Arsenal visit Anfield on Saturday. Houllier has backed away from comments he made after last weekend's defeat by Charlton that the game would "make or break" Liverpool's season.

his side are on the right track but is pragmatic enough to recognise that the fans will be looking for tangible evidence of that assertion on Saturday. "Whatever the result, it is a game where we have to perform," he said. "We want to show what we can do and confirm what we have been doing so far this season."

Saturday. Chelsea travel to Middlesbrough on Sunday aiming to bury the memory of a 2-0 home defeat by Besiktas in the Champions League. The reverse was Chelsea's first loss since Roman Abramovich began injecting his millions into the club and manager Claudio Ranieri knows his new boss will not accept too many more setbacks.

Table with 2 columns: Fixture, Date/Time. Includes Fulham v Leicester, Leeds v Blackburn, Liverpool v Arsenal (1130 GMT), Manchester United v Birmingham, Newcastle v Southampton, Portsmouth v Charlton, Tottenham v Everton, Wolverhampton v Manchester City, Aston Villa v Bolton (1505 GMT), Middlesbrough v Chelsea (1300 GMT).



PHOTO: AFP THE LAST FALL! China's superstar Sun Wen (front, No. 9) loses balance after being challenged by a Canadian at PGE Park in Portland, Oregon on October 2.

Sun sets

AFP, Portland



The captain of China's women's national soccer team and one of the game's greatest players, Sun Wen, announced her retirement Thursday following China's devastating 1-0 quarter-final loss to Canada in the Women's World Cup, state press reported.

players in the world to have played in all four Women's World Cups, scoring 106 goals in 152 caps for a Chinese team that placed second in both the 1996 Olympics and the 1999 World Cup. "I felt we had a chance trailing 1-0 in the game," she said. "I never gave up. I fought until the last second."

Serie A preview It's that time of the year

Football

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan host AC Milan on Sunday determined to erase the painful memories of last season's cruel Champions League semi-final defeat inflicted upon them by their city neighbours. The two-legged derby tie was finely balanced with little to separate the two teams, but Milan edged it on the away goals rule.

Table with 2 columns: Fixture, Date/Time. Includes Hannover v Schalke 04, Eintracht Frankfurt v Borussia Dortmund, SC Freiburg v 1860 Munich, Stuttgart v Cologne, Bayern Munich v Hertha Berlin, SV Hamburg v Borussia Moenchengladbach, VfL Bochum v Kaiserslautern, Bayer Leverkusen v Hansa Rostock, Werder Bremen v VfL Wolfsburg.

Juventus, 2-1 winners at Olympiakos on Tuesday, welcome Bologna to the Delle Alpi stadium boosted by striker Alessandro Del Piero's decision to prolong his stay with the reigning Italian champions. The 28-year-old Italy international signed a four-year extension on Thursday that will keep him at the Turin club until June 2008.

Local councillors in the capital have given the go-ahead for Roma's fixture at Siena to be shown live on a giant screen close to the city centre in a bid to prevent ticketless fans from travelling. Only 900 tickets have been made available to Roma fans for the match at Siena's 10,000 capacity Artemio Franchi stadium. Around 5,000 supporters were expected to head for the medieval Tuscan town.

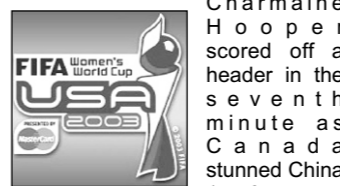
The Maradona museum

AFP, Buenos Aires

The boots worn by Diego Maradona during the controversial 1986 World Cup game against England and the telegraph announcing his first national call up are among 400 items on show in a travelling Museum launched in honour of the Argentine idol here. Argentina beat England on their way to victory in a 1986 World Cup when Maradona put the ball into the net with his fist. The referee allowed the goal and Maradona attributed the score to "the hand of God".

Canada do the unthinkable

AFP, Portland



Charmaine Hooper scored off a header in the seventh minute as Canada stunned China 1-0 on Thursday and advanced to their first ever berth in the FIFA Women's World Cup semi-finals. "This is a dream come true for me and for many of the other players on this team," said goalkeeper Taryn Swiatek, who made five saves for the shutout.

pointment for China which was initially supposed to host the tournament before an outbreak of SARS forced organizers to move it to the US. The game also marked the final international appearance for China's star forward Sun Wen, who plans to retire. Dogged striker-turned-defender Hooper finished off a long ball from Diana Matheson in minute seven, heading the ball over China keeper Han Wen-xia for what turned out to be the only goal of the match.

work and a lot of running, chasing balls. All of the players worked extremely hard," said Canadian coach Even Pellerud. Germany confirmed their status as the European powerhouse by easily rolling over Russia 7-1. Kerstin Garefrekes and Birgit Prinz scored two goals each as Germany set up a dream showdown with defending World Champ, the United States. After a second-half goal avalanche, the Germans also secured their place at next year's Olympic Women's Football Tournament in Athens.

Primera Liga preview

Black beast in Barcelona

Football

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona fans sometimes refer to Valencia as the black beast, the persistent nightmare which always returns, and the 11-man league leading monster will be back in the Nou Camp on Sunday. The Nou Camp has always been an intimidating citadel for visiting teams, although it has lost some of its aura in recent years, but Valencia teams have rarely been cowed despite usually around 100,000 baying Catalan fans.

occupy the place left vacant by Cocu while Argentine striker Javier Saviola should fill in for Motta. Another question hanging over Barcelona's heads is how fit their team will be after their midweek trip to Mexico for a friendly. The excursion has been criticised in many quarters for having more to do with president Joan Laporta's desire to make Barca a global brand on par with Real Madrid than helping his club lift the league title for the first time in five seasons.

missed their 3-1 Champions League win at Porto on Wednesday. Beckham is suffering from a bruised foot and Real coach Carlos Queiroz has the choice of replacements Ivan Helguera and Jose Maria 'Guti' Gutierrez. Deportivo La Coruna lost their 100 per cent record last Sunday when they went down 3-2 at Osasuna but the Galicians are still second with 12 points and could go back to the top if Valencia slip up.

Third-placed Real Madrid will try to restore their domestic poise, after losing their own unbeaten record at Valencia, by thrashing struggling Espanyol. Espanyol are at the foot of the table without a win to their name and a big victory over the Barcelona-based side would be even sweeter for Real Madrid fans as their opponents are coached by Javier Clemente. Clemente became a hate figure in the Spanish capital during his six-year reign as the Spanish national coach during the 1990s for apparently overlooking Madrid players in favour of fellow Basques.

Real are likely to have Raul Gonzalez back to partner Ronaldo up front although they may still be without David Beckham, who

Table with 2 columns: Fixture, Date/Time. Includes Deportivo La Coruna v Atletico Madrid (1730), Villarreal v Real Zaragoza (1730), Real Betis v Athletic Bilbao (1930), Sunday: Malaga v Celta Vigo (1500), Murcia v Albacete (1500), Real Mallorca v Osasuna (1500), Real Sociedad v Sevilla (1500), Valladolid v Racing Santander (1500), Real Madrid v Espanyol (1700), Barcelona v Valencia (1930).

Bundesliga preview All eyes on Hildebrand

Football

AFP, Berlin

Vfb Stuttgart, remarkable 2-1 conquerors of Manchester United in the Champions League midweek, can write a piece of Bundesliga history on Saturday if they deny bottom-of-the-table Cologne a goal. Stuttgart's 24-year-old goalkeeper Timo Hildebrand has not let in a goal for 735 minutes and is another 68 minutes from overtaking Bayern Munich keeper Oliver Kahn's unbeaten record of 802 minutes set in February.

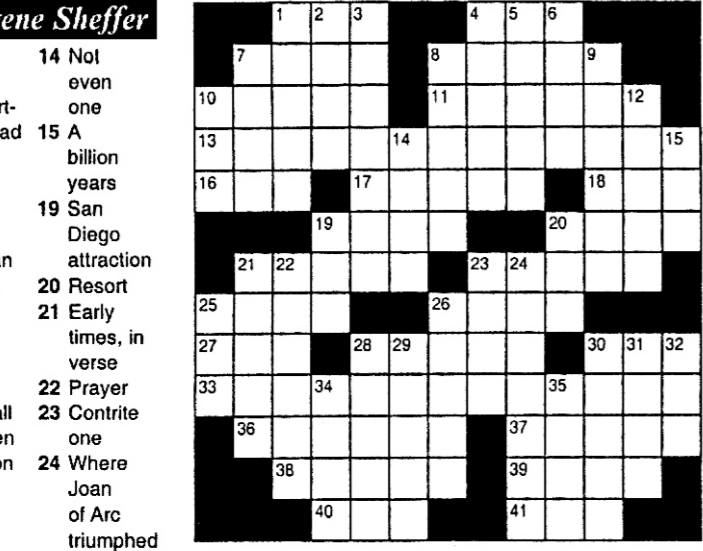
matches against Cologne, whose coach Friedhelm Funkel's job is on the line. But Funkel was defiant. "My team will go down fighting," he claimed. Second-placed Werder Bremen and third-placed Bayer Leverkusen, both a point behind Stuttgart, are at home to VfL Wolfsburg (6th) and Hansa Rostock (13th) respectively. Champions Bayern Munich, whose play-maker Michael Ballack is doubtful after picking up an ankle injury in the 1-1 Champions League draw with Anderlecht, have never lost in 26 years at home to 182 minutes Hertha Berlin.

Tobias Rau, Willy Sagnol and Alexander Zickler. However, Berlin, yet to win this season, should not provide too stern a test for Bayern's understudies. Borussia Dortmund, yet to win away this season, travel to newly-promoted Eintracht Frankfurt where they have not won since 1995.

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CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer. 28 'What's as — as — Line?' 3 Comfort-ed in bad times 4 Important date in Mexican history (Sp.) 5 "— With a View" 6 Soft ball one 7 Sharpen 8 Houston jock 9 Mar triumphed 10 Wire measure 11 "The Absinthe Drinker" artist 12 "Chips in chips 28 BBQ venue 29 Foolish and doddering 30 Viscous 31 Own 32 Storm center 34 Sting operation 35 Whodunit basis



CRYPTOQUIP D Y J O Y C R J Z X J H T Q G C F Q C X X E J J R W L R D Z Z C O L G W L D ' H X T E E C O D Z Y E O J H C W L C F G W T X L D J Z. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOUR OLD AUTO IS HAULED AWAY TO THE POUND, I SUPPOSE IT'S IN-CAR-CERATED. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals S. The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

WHIZZ KID-198 correct answers

- 1. Who won the Champions Trophy hockey title? Ans. Netherlands
2. Who clinched the Europa college basketball crown? Ans. Khulna College
3. Bangladesh lost the first Test against Pakistan by: Ans. 7 wkts
4. Who became man-of-the-match in the 4th Test between England and South Africa? Ans. Kirsten
5. Who won the Spanish Super Cup? Ans: Real Madrid

Ashes tray

FROM PAGE 13 beat England on home soil for the first time; a seismic event that led the Sporting Times to publish a mock obituary of English cricket, which stated that "the body will be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia".

Adam's sentimental

FROM PAGE 13 that lay ahead he said: "The first day is likely to be the hardest, it's 25 miles all uphill. "We are going to have teething problems and we are starting late, so I think it's going to be a rude introduction." The UK leg of the journey will cover 594 miles across 28 days and ends in Brighton on October 31. It is also hoped to visit China, Japan, South Korea, Egypt, the United States and Spain. Maradona, 42, is now living in Cuba where he went to seek treatment for cocaine addiction

Malik calls

FROM PAGE 13 100-2. Hameed reached his second one-day half century off 81 balls with four boundaries but six runs later failed to beat South African captain Graeme Smith's brilliant throw from mid on and was run out. Youhana and Younis Khan ran some quick singles to disturb the South African bowling but at 142 Younis misjudged a single and was run out for 19. Kallis finished with 2-53.

SCORECARD

Scoreboard of the Pakistan innings in the first one-day international match against South Africa at the Gaddafi Stadium on Friday: PAKISTAN Hafeez c Dippenaar b Pollock 5 Hameed run out 56 Youhana c Boucher b Hall 68 Younis Khan run out 19 Inzamam b Kallis 37 Malik not out 82 Razaq c Kallis b Pollock 2 Latif not out 1 Extras: (lb-4, w-3) 7 Total: (for six wkts in 50 overs) 277 Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-100, 3-142, 4-167, 5-231, 6-257 Did not bat: Shoaib Akhtar, Mushtaq Ahmed, Mohammad Sami BOWLER O M R W Pollock 10 3 46 1 Ntini 3 0 26 0 Kallis 10 1 53 2 Hall 10 1 53 1 Peterson 8 0 40 0 Dawson 9 0 55 0 SOUTH AFRICA: G. Smith, B. Dippenaar, J. Kallis, J. Rudolph, N. McKenzie, M. Boucher, S. Pollock, A. Hall, A. Dawson, R. Peterson, M. Ntini Toss: Pakistan Umpires: Darrell Hair (AUS) and Aleem Dar (PAK) TV umpire: Nadeem Ghauri (PAK) Match referee: Clive Lloyd (WIS)

Srichaphan in last four

AFP, Tokyo

Thai star Paradorn Srichaphan underscored his status as Asia's number one by beating Lee Hyung-Taik of South Korea to reach the semifinals at the Japan Open tennis tournament on Friday. The Thai third seed, who has not lost a tie-breaker this week, stormed back from early service breaks to score a 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 victory over the Korean seventh seed, Asia's number two. "I would say it's not easy for me to be number one in Asia -- he's number two. This match put a lot of pressure on me to play against another great Asian player out there and he took the first set," said Paradorn. "I really felt pressure in the first set, but I think I did a good job today, winning the second set, coming back slowly and winning the match." In the semi-finals Saturday he will play second seed Sebastien Grosjean of France, the winner over eighth seed Jan-Michael Gambill of the United States 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

Wishart whacks

FROM PAGE 13 Extras: (b-5, lb-4, w-1, nb-3) 13 Total: (For seven wkts in 96 overs) 254 Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-20, 3-65, 4-79, 5-89, 6-149, 7-174 BOWLER O M R W Wilson 21 9 36 2 Wates 21 4 76 2 Angel 21 6 63 2 Worthington 14 5 29 0 Casson 7 1 29 0 Hussey 11 8 10 1 North 1 0 2 0 Toss: Western Australia