AFP, Berlin

A German Green Party politician on Tuesday said the football World Cup, which will be played here from June 9 to July 9, should be cancelled because of the outbreak

of bird flu in the country.
"The virus is here, and we have a giant sports event on our hands. I would be tempted to say let us be cautious and call it off," said Baerbel Hoehn, the leader of the parliamentary committee for agriculture.

The World Cup organising committee refused to comment but Hoehn found support from World Health Organisation expert Klaus Stoehr, who said he did not think the suggestion amounted to

"We should think very carefully about what we are going to do if we have a human case of avian influ-

The 2006 World Cup is expected to bring some three million football fans to Germany, and the country has been preparing to host the event since 2000.

The dangerous H5N1 strain of bird flu reached German shores last week, and by Tuesday 103 dead birds had tested positive for the

Dalmiya in hot water

PTI, New Delhi

The wranglings in the Board of Control for Cricket in India took a serious turn on Tuesday with the new regime headed by Sharad Pawar accusing former BCCI president Jagmohan Dalmiya of misappropriating funds to the tune of 20 crore rupees.

BCCI's marketing committee claimed that Dalmiya had bungled funds related to the 1996World Cup and TV rights, a charge which was vehemently refuted by the veteran administrator.

"There has been pilferage of money. Prima facie there is a case of misappropriation of funds and fraud," BCCI vice-president and marketing committee member Lalit Modifield reporters.

"The money involved is to the tune of 20 crore rupees. PILCOM (1996World Cup Committee) is just one account, there are other accounts as well," Modi alleged after an emergent working committee meeting of BCCI here.

"PILCOM was being operated by its erstwhile secretary Dalmiya. That has been shut down and the money transferred to CAB (Cricket Association of Bengal of which Dalmiya is the president)... So the members have asked the President to seek an explanation," he said.

"The members have authorised the President to take a decision in this regard. Dalmiya has sought seven days to reply to the charges." Dalmiya, however, termed the allegations "absolutely baseless" and said he was ready to furnish all

"They are making absolutely baseless allegations in the media and if they have any query they should ask me. I am ready to provide all details, but why this public accusation?" Dalmiya said.

Former BCB joint-secretary Apu no more

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh Cricket Board joint-secretary and Brothers Union official Golam Faruque Apu died of a heart attack in Florida, USA on Monday. He was 52.

Apu, a former cricketer and the board joint-secretary from 1992-96, left behind his mother, wife and two daughters.

Bangladesh Cricket Board, Brothers Union, Sammilito Krira Paribar and Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh have condoled the death of Apu prayed for the salvation of the departed soul. They also expressed their heartfelt sympathy for the bereaved family.

Nat'l chess qualifiers from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The qualifying rounds of the 32nd National Chess Championship will

begin today at the BCF hall-room. Nine top players of the preliminary rounds will join automatic qualifiers GM Ziaur Rahman, GM Niaz Murshed, IM Reefat Bin Sattar, IM Enamul Hossain Rajib and IM

Abdullah Al Rakib in the finals. Players with 2100 rating or above, selected players from Dhaka city, different districts, universities and other affiliated bodies and national junior, sub-junior and women's chess champions will participate in the qualifiers.



Chelsea captain John Terry (C) launched on a left-footed shot as his teammates look on at the club's training ground in Cobham, Surrey on Tuesday. Chelsea will host Barcelona at Stamford Bridge in a mouthwatering Champions League quarterfinal tonight.

Super Wednesday in store

CHAMPS LEAGUE

Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho insisted the Stamford Bridge pitch was up to scratch for their mouthwatering repeat of last year's last 16 Champions League clash against Barcelona on Wednesday by using a colourful analogy.

The Stamford Bridge pitch took a battering from heavy rain on Sunday, as Chelsea beat Colchester 3-1 in the FA Cup, but Mourinho insisted the surface was not as bad as it looked, though, Barcelona have not shared his opinion.

"Sometimes you see beautiful people with no brains. Sometimes you have ugly people who are intelligent, like scientists," said Mourinho, whose side edged Barca 5-4 on aggregate last season. "Our pitch is a bit like that. From

the top it's a disgrace but the ball rolls at normal speed.

Other last 16, first leg matches on the night include Germany's Werder Bremen against Italian giants Juventus, Ajax of the Netherlands against Inter Milan, and Scotland's Rangers against

Villarreal of Spain.

Morrinho has even of ered
Barcelona the use of Chelsea's training pitches if they don't like the surface at Stamford Bridge.

For almost three decades Peter

Velappan has been the voice of the

Asian Football Confederation

(AFC), but the controversial secre-

tary general has now been silenced.

Hammam, a Qatari who says he

lives by the maxim that actions

speak louder than words, has

decided he will now be the only

person authorised to talk officially

rationale is that Asian football's

governing body is going through a

transition "from being amateur to

being professional" and a single

Velappan is "internationally recog-

nised as an outstanding profes-

sional and a leading football expert

in the world", but it appears the

veteran is not what is needed to

Velappan, or Pistol Pete as he is

known in some quarters, has had a

habit of firing from the hip during

his 27-year reign, to the delight of

journalists but not always the

At the 2004 Asian Cup finals in

Beijing, he was forced to apologise

tioning whether Beijing should

for blasting Chinese fans and ques-

The AFC's website says

According to an AFC official, the

on Asian football matters.

voice is needed.

achieve the AFC goal.

powers that be.

host the 2008 Olympics.

AFC president Mohammed bin

Football

AFP, Singapore

London on Monday.

The Catalans have been grumbling about the state of Chelsea's pitch and fear it could hinder their lowing football.

But the Blues boss invited them to give up their option of training at Stamford Bridge on the day before the game and use Chelsea's train-

ing base in Surrey instead.

Mourinho said: "If Barcelona want to train at our training centre on Tuesday to give us more time to work on the pitch, the offer is there. The training the day before a game is nothing. It's just to get used to the

"If they want to train at our training centre we'd be very pleased for them to go there."

Juventus have serious problems in defence before their trip to Werder Bremen, who will be looking to improve on their woeful showing at the same stage last year when they lost 10-2 on aggregate to French champions Lyon.

Left back Gianluca Zambrotta and right back Jonathan Zebina are doubtful with Giorgio Chiellini likely to replace the former.

Juventus coach Fabio Capello was thinking of putting Frenchman Lilian Thuram on the right flank and then placing Robert Kovac in the central defensive position vacated by Thuram.

Another option would be for him to leave Thuram in the central role and field Manuel Blasi, who is Barcelona were expected in comfortableinafullbackposition.

AFC becoming bin Hammam!

He had been outraged when

fans booed speeches by guests at

the opening match and threatened

to keep future AFC events out of the

the city was not a suitable venue for

fled feathers came last week at the

opening ceremony of a FIFA man-

agement course and appeared to

fly in the face of bin Hammam's

edict that only he can speak pub-

chiefs unprofessional and blamed

FIFA for not training them prop-

erly, prompting 22 senior

Association of Southeast Asian

Nations football officials to fire off a

letter to FIFA president Sepp

the "discharge of personal rancour

in a public forum", calling his

criticism "gratuitous" and claim-

inghe had done nothing to help the

game in their region during his

Velappan, who the website says

"commands very high respect from

was not available to comment on

ber of FIFA's executive committee

and close to Blatter, can now do

the president has the right to

Only bin Hammam, also a mem-

"Under AFC regulations, only

speak," said the unassuming, but Asian Cup finals in 2007.

the world football community",

time in power.

the furore.

In it they slammed Velappan for

Velappan called ASEAN football

the Olympics.

ese capital. He even suggested

The latest comments that ruf-

Capello was also scathing of the defensive problems which cost them victory against Messina who scored a late equaliser for a 2-2 draw on Saturday.

"Juventus should not concede a goal on a freekick," Capello said. "I was really annoyed at that particularly as Bremen are very good at that aspect of the game.'

Bremen have the good news international striker Miroslav Klose is available against Juventus after being out of action for three months with an injury to his right shoulder. Werder coach Thomas Schaaf

club after deliberately resting him in their 1-0 victory at Dortmund at "I want to be there at all costs," said the Germany international,

who has not played since January

could field Klose against the Italian

Rangers celebrated their 2-0 Scottish Premier League win over Hibernian on Saturday with a bottle of champagne and they hope to be cracking open the bubbly again when they take on Villarreal

in the Champions League. The drinks were on Thomas Buffel, who turned 25 on Sunday, and he was keen to mark his birthday with his team-mates after the

It was a much-needed victory for a team who had lost their last three games and Buffel is determined to see their luck continue

no-nonsense, bin Hammam.

"Velappan's remarks did not reflect

his capacity as the AFC secretary

year-old Malaysian has caused a

flap, or been slapped down, but the

AFC denies relations between bin

Hammam and Velappan have

"There is no rift," an AFC spokeswoman insisted, but she

Velappan has devoted the past

40 odd years to football in Malaysia

and Asia, including being manager

of the national team, taking them

He became AFC secretary gen-

eral in 1978 and is credited with

being the force behind the organi-

sation's expansion to include its

But his time appears to be draw-

Even his own association, the

"I hope anyone who takes over

ing to a close, with another

Malaysian, Paul Mony, drafted in

Football Association of Malaysia.

the secretary general post of AFC in

the future learns from the past

mistakes and is more mature when

making any statement to the pub-

Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah.

lic," said deputy president Tengku

the aging icon will retire after the

Sources close to the AFC suggest

current 46 members.

last year as his deputy.

seems to have lost faith.

to the Munich Olympics in 1972.

declined to comment further.

general.

when Villarreal come calling.

Speaking of the post-match celebrations, he said: "I wanted to give everybody a glass of cham-

"Everybody worked hard, and I think it's good to keep the boys together. We have to stick together as a team on Wednesday and work hard, because we know they will do

"Not a lot of players have been to this stage, and even then we have the chance to go further and through to the quarter-finals. That would be amazing for this club."

Villarreal manager Manuel Pellegrini, meanwhile, issued a warning to Rangers that his side -seventh in their domestic league -would not be coming to Glasgow in the hope of taking a narrow defeat or a draw back to Spain.

"We are going to Glasgow to win. The way we play at Villarreal is we try to win games, never just to get a draw," said Pellegrini, whose team rehearsed for the game in ideal fashion by walloping Espanyol 4-0 in the league on Saturday with former Manchester United striker Diego Forlan among the

"It is very important to try and score a goal and we will not be going there to wait on Rangers for We will have chances in

Glasgow and we are looking to

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIER

Japan take on India today

Japan's countdown to the World Cup in Germany got off to a slug-gish start with a 3-2 loss to the

tion for the World Cup and we still have some difficulties, but we are getting better and better in each game," said coach Zico.

"We are determined to form a solid team by winning the opener of the Asian Cup qualifying round against India next Wednesday,' added the Brazilian.

"This is a real competition, not a friendly game, we are vying for three points from a win to make a berth in the Asian Cup. We will do our very best to defend the Cup."

Japan have been drawn with India, Saudi Arabia and Yemen in Group A for the Asian Cup, with the top two going through to the finals co-hosted by Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam in July next

Nakamura, but has been encour-Tatsuhiko Kubo after a 17 month injury layoff.

first goal since June 2004 and his ninth for Japan -- the second best under Zico's wing after Nakamura who has scored 10. "He (Kubo) showed an ideal

positioning to receive a pass. It gave us the victory and I'm sure he gained a lot of confidence," said

players for the match against India, but I'm going to use Kubo as long as possible. That's the best way for him to get into his rhythm."

to prepare for the World Cup.

Wednesday would be the 100th since Zico took charge following Japan's successful 2002 World Cup campaign.

Friendship can wait

CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Bremen

Juventus midfielder Patrick Vieira will put his friendship with Johan Micoud to one side on Wednesday when the Italian league leaders face Werder Bremen in the Champions League

Vieira, who has known Micoud since they were children and played together with him in the French national team, has been assigned to shackle the Werder playmaker in the first leg of their last 16 tie at the Weser stadium.

"We will be friendly to one another before and after the game, but we each have a job to do during the match," Vieira told Werder's official website

"We know each other's game very well -- we both learned our trade at AS Cannes soccer school.

"It will be a special game and we'll see a lot of each other on the pitch."With his position in offen-sive midfield and my defensive midfield position, we'll surely have a lot to do with each other. It'll be a

While Vieira is still playing

AFP, Bangkok

Thai noodles

eye WC boom

The upcoming World Cup will likely boost Thailand's instant

noodles market by 10 per cent as

hungry and sleepy Thai football fans watch it on live with cups of quick, hot and cheap meals in

hand, a research house said

"The games will be broadcast live from Germany, which means

Thai people will watch them from

9:00 pm to 3:00 am and instant

noodles is the most convenient food for Thai football fans,"

Kasikorn Reserach Center said in a

tournament, which kicks off in

Germany in early June, is expected

to lift the Thai instant noodles

Kasikorn said the 64-match

regularly for France, Micoud is on the most beautiful football, but the fringes and far from certain of they proved that as a unit great going to this summer's World Cup.

Vieira insisted playing away from home first was not necessarily an advantage for the reigning

Italian champions. "At this point of the competition, whether you play at home first r second has no influence," said

the former Arsenal star. "It would be great if we can score, but we've got to be careful not to concede -- Bremen are very strongathome."

Vieira believes Werder will not allow the fear of conceding an away goal cramp their attacking style. "Their strengths are definitely in

"They play the ball to the strikers quickly and score many goals. On top of that they have Micoud. Joe' is a real number 10, who spreads the ball around well and creates.

Vieira said Liverpool's surprise success last season showed that every club in the competition deserves respect. "Anything is possible in foot-

ball. It's on the pitch that the decision is made as to who is the best

"Liverpool may not have played

success can be achieved.

"I personally believe that the door is still open for every team still involved."

Werder striker Miroslav Klose, who has not played since injuring his right shoulder on January 26, has returned to full training but may not be ready to face Turin's

"I want to be there at all costs," said the Germany international.

Juve's marauding left wingback Gianluca Zambrotta has failed to recover from a thigh strain so Giorgio Chiellini is expected to step

Werder's 1-0 win at Borussia Dortmund on Saturday left them in third place in the Bundesliga, nine points adrift of leaders Bayern Munich. Juventus were held to a 2-2 draw

at Messina at the weekend, but are still nine points clear at the top of

In 10 visits to face German clubs in European competition between 1976 and 2002, Juventus have lost just once -- the 3-1 defeat to Borussia Dortmund in the 1996-97 Champions League final played in

Adriano wants to end drought

*WEFA CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Amsterdam

Inter Milan's out-of-sorts striker Adriano is hoping to rediscover his goalscoring touch in Wednesday's crunch Champions League clash

here against Ajax.

The powerfully-built Brazil international has netted just two goals this year and his scoring drought has been a contributory factor in Inter's Serie A slump that has left them 12 points behind leaders Juventus. "Unfortunately this is a difficult moment for me," said the misfiring

24-year-old marksman ahead of the first leg of their last 16 tie against the Dutch giants. "I haven't been able to*score

lately and as everybody knows strikers live for goals.
"More than anything I believe it's all in the head, because physi-cally I feel much better and I feel

"I just need a little calmness and some help from my team-mates to

put things right "I have faith in myself and the squad. I hope to start scoring again very soon and let's hope it happens on Wednesday.

'It's a great opportunity to show

Despite his alarming dip in form and the club's recent run of poor

results, Adriano, nicknamed 'The Emperor' in Italy, believes Inter can still win the Champions League. 'I believe one hundred per cent that we can win it," he said

"We have to have the desire, determination and will to win. The team just needs a bit of courage and, perhaps, a bit more help from Ajax have a lengthy injury list with Steven Pienaar, Edgar

Manucharayan, Kenneth Vermeer, Nicolae Mitea, Wesley Sneijder, Zdenek Grygera and captain Tomas Galasek all expected to be Inter's Julio Cesar, who missed last Saturday's 0-0 draw at Livorno,

has recovered from a muscular problem and is expected to return goal for the two-time European Uruguayan striker Alvaro

Recoba and Arrentine midfielder-Juan Veren are both carrying injuries and will not be called up by Inter coach Roberto Mancini. Inter's Serbian midfielder Dejan Stankovic is suffering from back-ache and has a 50-50 chance of

Ajax, who have been crowned European champions on four ccasions, thrashed Roosendaal 6-

at the weekend with Klaas-Jan Huntelaar scoring four goals. Their comprehensive win left them in fourth place in the Dutch

first division, 20 points behind leaders PSV Eindhoven.

No Bravo for WI in second ODI

Cricket

AFP, Queenstown

The West Indies' chances of squaring the one-day cricket series against New Zealand received a knock Tuesday with confirmation all-rounder Dwayne Bravo would miss the second international with a side strain.

"He's definitely not going to make it tomorrow," West Indies captain Shivnarine Chanderpaul told journalists.

Chanderpaul was unwilling to

tour opener last week.

"We will wait and see how things will progress. I really couldn't tell you how bad it is," Chanderpaul

their record of 14 losses from their last 16 completed games, the team has turned to a sports psychologist. Irishman David Scott, who has worked with professional ice-

In an attempt to turn around

hockey teams, has had a positive impact on the West Indies camp, Chanderpaul said. "He's been doing a lot of one-

on-one sessions with the players, predict when the valuable giving them advice. He's been allrounder would rejoin their ranks trying hard. He's been doing a lot of work and we've gone a long way.

CRYPTOOUIP KJUT QYNLZH MZAAFUAN

NQUTX LFDU LYVULJUA MJZLLFTV ZTX NSMJ, KYSHX

L J Z L E U D Z F H E Y T X F T V ? Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF AN OFFICER ARRESTED SOME WAYWARD LETTUCE OR ENDIVE, YOU MIGHT HAVE COLLARED GREENS. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals T

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. It 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.

3RD HOSAF PRESIDENT'S CUP (h **GOLF TOURNAMENT - 2006**

during the prize giving ceremony at the Savar Golf Club on Monday.

Winners of the third Hosaf President's Cup Golf Tournament are seen with Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed

AFP, Yokohama

Champions Japan launch their defence of the Asian Cup on Wednesday with a qualifier against India, using the match as vital preparation for the World Cup in

United States, but they are hoping to build on the momentum after beating Finland 2-0 at home on "We have just started prepara-

Zico is without his Europebased players, led by Bolton midfielder Hidetoshi Nakata and Celtic midfielder Shunsuke aged by the return of striker

He scored against Finland, his

"I'm going to replace some

Japan Football Association president Saburo Kawabuchi wanted to use the Olympic team for the qualifying round, but Zico held firm, determined to use the games A goal at the Yokohama stadium

market by 10 per cent to reach 11 billion baht (279.8 million dollars) this year. "Also fast-food operators and 24-hour convenient stores, which sell many ready-to-cook foods, are likely to get windfalls," it said. But the research house added Thai instant noodle makers were

facing stiff competition in the

domestic market and said they

should seek overseas markets to boost their sales. The World Cup begins on June 9 with the final on July 9.

FA Cup final at Cardiff

The FA Cup final will not be held at the new Wembley Stadium, the Football Association announced Tuesday as the worst kept secret in football -- that the venue would not be ready on time -- was finally confirmed.

Instead, Cardiff's Millennium

Stadium will again host English

football's showcase event, as work continues to complete reconstruction of the 90,000-seater venue in north London. "I can confirm today (Tuesday) that this season's FA Cup Final will

statement. "I can also confirm that England's pre-World Cup games against Hungary (on May 30) and Jamaica (June 3) -- previously scheduled for Wembley -- will now

13 - shoe-

string

currency

ance?

35 Object

14 Recess

be held at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff on May 13," FA chief executive Brian Barwick said in a

be held at Old Trafford." after being injured in the Twenty20

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer ACROSS 36 Drunkard 3 Gangster's 23 Pendulum 1 Burlan 37 Diamond girlfriend 4 Tennis 24 Candle material club 38 Suspicious 5 Pugilist's count 41 Fa's 5 Wild card, 25 Triumphed 8 Director neighbor often 26 Frenzied Preminger 42 Masseur's 6 From 27 Muumuu 12 Smell

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source Solution time: 21 mins.