Ronaldo blasts Pele, Platini

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Troubled Brazil forward Ronaldo launched an astonishing attack on two of football's legends, Pele and Michel Platini in Sunday's edition of Brazilian newspaper O Globo.

The overweight and under-fire Real Madrid galactico branded Pele, commonly regarded as the greatest player ever, as a "two-bob opportunist" and hit out at European legend Platini as "jealous".

Ronaldo's outburst comes after his latest failing on the football field. He started Saturday's vital league match at Valencia on the bench but came on in the second half only to have a penalty saved.

The striker has already spent much of the season under fire from Real's expectant fans and Madrid's demanding media.

"At the World Cup, I will make a lot of people eat their words," declared a defiant Ronaldo, showing more fight than he has been accused of displaying in the white shirt of his club.

"I was disappointed with Pele, he's a two-bob opportunist," added Ronaldo, who proceeded to allude that the great goalscorer would be better off looking after his family amid allegations his son is involved in a drug trafficking scandal.

"I care nothing for Platini. I have a French teammate friend (Zinedine Zidane) who has surpassed everything he ever did and he has always told me that Platini is jealous."

After denigrating two of the world's greats, Ronaldo then somewhat ironically, added: "All I want is for people to treat me with respect and that is not what is happening.

"I am not saving myself for the World Cup. I want to do a lot to arrive in Germany full of confidence. I want to rediscover my happiness."

Gaibandha cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Mohammedan Sporting Club handed a humiliating 204-run on Sapient Sporting Club in the Naheed Cotton First Division Cricket League at the Gaibandha Stadium yesterday.
In reply to Mohammedan's 256-7

in the stipulated 50 overs, Sapient were shot out for 52.

Mohammedan's Shakil was adjudged man-of-the-match for his

Independence Day tennis Mar 23-26

The Independence Day tennis tournament will begin on March 23 at the National Tennis Complex.

The four-day competition includes men's singles, men's doubles as well as age group events like under-13 singles for boys and an under-16 draw for girls.

British Council cricket carnival from Mar 16

SPORTS REPORTER

The British Council will arrange different type of cricket tournament at BKSP under their 'British Council Leadership Programme through Sports' programme.

in the event divided in three groups -- Blue XI. Green XI and RED XI -that starts from March 16. The tournament consists three two-day and three limited-overs games

Under-17 cricketers will take part

Players will enjoy on and off the field freedom to take decisions about the game to cope with leadership quality.

British Council's deputy director Richard Sunderland said at a press conference on Monday that they have been organising this programme for the last couple of years as part of talent hunting, but this year, the council has concentrated on bringing players together

from across the country He also said that the three 'most talented' players would be sent to

UK to play in the Surrey League. "Under this programme, two national players Mushfiqur Rahim and Syed Rasel were benefited. I think it will also be helpful for the upcoming cricketers," said Khondokar Jamiluddin, chairman of Bangladesh Cricket Board's development committee.

The course has been designed such a way that the players would be accustomed in using computer, Internet, improving the English language, facing pressure under different situation during the matches, encouraging communications through oral English language.



Arsenal captain Thierry Henry scores past a full-stretch Liverpool goalkeeper Guiseppe Reina during their Premiership clash at Highbury in London on Sunday

PREMIERSHIP

Gerrard hands it to Henry

Football

Steven Gerrard has often proved a saviour for Liverpool, but his wretched error gifted Arsenal a dramatic 2-1 Premiership win at Highbury on Sunday.

The Merseysiders were primed to take a valuable point despite being reduced to 10 men after Xabi Alonso's sending-off, before Gerrard produced his embarrassing blunder with nine minutes remain-The England midfielder failed to

look before sliding a backpass towards his goalkeeper Jose Reina. and the lurking Thierry Henry snaffled possession and slid into the gaping net for his second goal of the It completed a fine week for

Arsenal after their Champions League triumph over Real Madrid on Wednesday, and a miserable one for Liverpool, whose hopes of snatching second place from Manchester United are rapidly

This was an afternoon full of powerful statements from Arsenal. and the first came before kick-off.

Wenger had been lambasted for his failure to field one English player in the goalless draw with Real but once again there were no natives in his starting 11.

Juventus took a huge step towards

retaining the Serie Atitle after they drew

0-0 at home to closest rivals AC Milan on

Stadium ensured Juve maintained their

10-point lead over second-placed Milan

29 matches played while Milan, the only

team to beat the reigning champions

Juventus have 74 points from their

The game failed to live up to its billing

as a crunch Scudetto showdown, but

the two best chances fell to Milan in the

second half and on both occasions

Juve keeper Gianluigi Buffon rescued

Filippo Inzaghi as his fellow Italy interna-

cally to punch away Gennaro Gattuso's

title race became that much harder

when Gattuso was sent off in the 69th

refused to say that the championship

but certainly we have gone some way to

winning it." he said. "At this stage of the

season. it will be hard for Milan to make

Champions League football next

season were dented after they lost 3-2

at Ascoli -- their first Serie A defeat since

Ascoli stormed into a three-goal lead

Roma's hopes of playing

minute for two yellow cards.

was now in the bag.

up 10 points.'

December 4.

tional tried to take the ball round him.

First he dived bravely at the feet of

And then he flung himself acrobati-

Milan's task of trying to reopen the

Juve's Brazilian midfielder Emerson

'You can't say the title has been won.

with just nine games left to play.

this season, have 64

the hosts

A point apiece at the Delle Alpi

Football

AFP, Rome

Juve tighten title-grip

Arsenal fans were not complaining. It took Henry just eight minutes to slice open Liverpool's back-line, when his inch-perfect pass was ballooned over by Emmanuel

The portents were unmistakeable and Arsenal seized the lead their bright football deserved in the 15th minute. The creator was Cesc Fabregas, the Spaniard delaying his pass to the splitsecond for Henry to collect and finish with a right-footed shot that arced past Jose Reina. It is at times like this that

Arsenal's most dangerous opponent is themselves. The Londoners were so dominant that they began to seek the perfect goal and their finishing turned profligate. Emmanuel Eboue had the goal at his mercy in the 33rd minute but

rather than shooting he chose to

pass to Pires and Steve Finnan Encouraged, Liverpool crept back into the game. Xabi Alonso, Garcia and Gerrard all came close with spectacular efforts, but the best chance of all fell to Peter Crouch. The England striker was left alone

from Finnan's cross, but he headed

Arsenal needed the interval but they emerged with their assertiveness restored and Henry should have added to his tally in the first five minutes of the second half.

wastefully wide from eight yards.

First he seized upon Pires' through-ball and slid his shot inches

before half time with Fabio Quagliarella,

But Roma, whose 11-match

winning streak was ended last week

after their 1-1 draw with Inter Milan,

mounted a rousing comeback with a

Rodrigo Taddei tap-in and a Gianluca

Comotto own goal reducing the deficit

the score with a stooping header that

rolled inches wide of the post, before

Roma's Christian Chivu was sent off for

a professional foul on Alfredo Cariello in

points, one behind Fiorentina whose

match at Cagliari was abandoned in the

30th minute due to security concerns as

winds reaching 100mph battered the

ground on the teams above them after

losing 2-1 at in-form Parma, while I azio

climbed to seventh following their 3-1

Empoli and Messina boosted their

P W D LG/FG/APts

29 20 4 5 63 24 64

29 19 5 5 53 22 62

28 17 5 6 48 30 56

29 16 7 6 54 29 55

29 11 11 7 30 29 44

Program Th

5 1 57 18 74

survival chances with 2-1 home wins

against Chievo and Lecce respectively.

home win against Reggina.

and Palermo beat Udinese 2-0.

29 23

Sixth-placed Livorno failed to make

Roma remain in fifth spot on 55

Amantino Mancini almost levelled

with 15 minutes to go.

the closing stages.

Sant'Elia Stadium.

Juventus

AC Milan

Inter Milan

Fiorentina

Livorno

Deputy Director of British Council Bangladesh Richard Sunderland (C) on

Monday briefs the reporters at a city hotel in connection with an 11-day

cricket carnival starting at the BKSP on March 16.

wide of the far post, then, four min utes later, he placed another low

drive too close to Reina, who saved

comfortably. Liverpool had escaped and they made the most of their good fortune in the 75th minute when Jens Lehmann could only parry Gerrard's swirling drive and Garcia nodded in from close range.

Suddenly Liverpool looked the more likely winners but their momentum was stalled six minutes after their equaliser when Alonso, who had been booked moments earlier for a rash tackle, hacked down Mathieu Flamini and was promptly dismissed.

Still the visitors appeared likely to eke out a valuable point, until Gerrard's brainstorm handed Henry his second goal and Arsenal the victory their performance thor-

TOP SIX

Team	Р	W	D	L	G/F	G/A	Pts
Chelsea	29	24	3	2	58	18	75
Man United	28	18	6	4	56	28	60
Liverpool	28	16	7	5	33	17	55
Tottenham	29	13	10	6	41	28	49
Blackburn	29	14	4	11	38	34	46
Bolton	27	12	9	6	37	28	45

5th Semester

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

lift v'ball title

The 5th Semester of the Aariculture department defeated the 7th Semester of the Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) 2-0 in the final of the volleyball competition on Monday at the

Dr. Prof. Wahid-uz-Zaman, VC of PSTU, distributed prizes among the

Ctg, Rajshahi

innings was halved with 156 runs on

Chasing 325 for victory from maximum 90 overs, Barisal resumed the final day on 0-0 (one over) but never showed the intention to go for big hitting as they lost wickets at regular intervals. They eventually finished on 259-7 when the match was called off two overs before schedule.

Both the sides scored 265 in their first innings.

SCORES IN BRIEF

CHITTAGONG: 473 and 153-2 in 18 overs (Tamim 71 n.o., Salahuddin 49, Nazimuddin 16 n.o. Mehrab Jr 1-44, Sajjad 1-21).

DHAKA: 302 and 323 all out in 91.5 overs (Uttam 39, Anwar 51 Shahriar 57, Mehrab Jr 79, Riyad Opee 14. Saiiad 14. Munir 15 extras 10, Yasin 4-120, Ilias 5-80, Faisal 1-36).

Result: Chittagong won by eigh wickets

RAJSHAHI: 306 and 185-9 declared in 59.1 overs (Farhad 23, Forhad Reza 14, Mushfiq 63, Rosel 14, Shamimul 25 n.o., extras 17, Hasibul 6-62, Nazmul 2-35,

SYLHET: 166 and 174 all out in 46.2 overs (Rahman 16, Mawla 71 Mabud 32, Rezaul 20, extras 15, Shafaq 5-43, Mushfiq 3-32, Shuvo KHULNA: 265 and 324.

BARISAL: 265 and 259-7 in 89 overs (Shahin 20. Hannan 28 Farugue 55, Sonnet 23, Humayun 55 n.o., Nadif 28, Marshall 15 extras 26. Shiblu 1-62. Faizul 1-34 Sajjadul 1-30, Ujjal 1-8, Sadik 2-63, Sadat 1-33).

FOUR-DAY TABLE Teams W L D-Ld Pts

Rajshahi 5 2 0 Chittagong 8 4 2 2 Dhaka 3 3 3 4 1 2 2 0 Sylhet Barisal 1 5 8

22 21 13

Rijkaard unruffled after defeat

INTERNET, undated

Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard shrugged off his side's defeat at Osasuna and insisted they still have a comfortable advantage over their title

The Catalans had two men sent off as they crashed at Estadio EL Sadar, out - still sitting on a nine-point lead at the top of the table - Rijkaard cut a less than concerned figure.

"We still have a big advantage over our rivals," the Dutch coach said after

"I don't believe that it is a warning about the final phase of the league. "I am happy with the performance

of my players. "To play with ten and finally nine players on the pitch is very difficult because we kept fighting until the final

"There are no easy matches in this eague and Osasuna are one of the best teams in the championship.

"The defeat hurts, but it is not always possible to win."

C'WEALTH GAMES

Slump in ticket sales shadow event

AFP, Melbourne

Nearly 400,000 tickets remain unsold for the Commonwealth Games despite a mini-surge when a new batch was released Monday for blue riband events.

Although tickets are going begging, Melbourne 2006 chief executive John Harnden and Commonwealth Games Federation chief executive Mike Hooper praised the ticketing process.

"We're absolutely delighted with where we are at," Harnden said.

"With 72 hours to go we think we are ready to put on the biggest and best show ever in Melbourne.' Sports fans snapped up almost

19,000 tickets in just four hours Monday as organisers released extra seats to some of the most sought after events, such as swimming, diving, gymnastics and track cycling. The ticket release followed

finalisation of venue plans such as seating and scoreboard positions and camera platforms. But despite the sales surge,

almost 395,000 tickets remain to Games events, including 5,000 to the opening ceremony, 26,300 for the closing ceremony and about 200,000 for athletics events. In an effort to ensure the 80,000capacity Melbourne Cricket Ground

ceremony broadcast to some 1.5 billion people, 5,000 tickets will be given away to Games volunteers. Harnden continues to be upbeat about ticket sales, pointing out that

(MCG) is packed for the opening

despite the shortfall, a record number of tickets have been sold "We have had an enormous take

up, we have sold over 1.3 million tickets and I just think that's phe-"It's a record by a long long way

from any Commonwealth Games." Hooper said the federation felt the ticketing process had produced a "tremendous result".

Mixed reactions

The crucial thing is not to put too much pressure on themselves. They want to go to and get 100s. "But what happens is they go out

there, the pressure is applied and their decision making isn't very good but I'm sure it will come in Mumbai." Fletcher paid tribute to his bowl-

"The pressure was off India's

ers, saying: "The bowlers have done

batsmen but the bowlers came in and did a good job. "You apply pressure by being

more consistent." India coach Greg

Chappell felt his side had grasped

the nettle on day four to swing the match in their favour. "It was a good gutsy effort at the start of the fourth day. It could have gone either way but we stood up to be counted," he told Sky Sports.

"I was very impressed with Munaf Patel, he played well in the lead-up game (first Test) against England, there's a little bit more bounce on this wicket than Nagpur.

"He has got a good temperament and good pace, so we're starting to build an attack that can play under most conditions, and that's impor-

Chappell was also delighted with the contribution of Kumble. "He has a great attitude, he loves

the contest and loves bowling against good players. "His attitude is very important

around the team, he doesn't say much but he doesn't have to - he leads by example. He exudes confidence and the boys believe he can deliver. He's the sort of player you want in your team.'

PRIMERA LIGA

Osasuna stun Barca

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Primera Liga leaders Barcelona had two players sent off during a 2-1 defeat at fourth-placed Osasuna on

The visitors went 1-0 down when Valdo cashed in on a goalkeeping error and Osasuna captain Patxi Punal added a second from the penalty spot after Edmilson was sent off for bringing down Savo

a goal back 18 minutes from time but could not prevent Barcelona suffering their fourth league defeat of the season Thiago Motta was also dis-

Substitute Henrik Larsson pulled

missed in injury time for a foul on substitute Pierre Webo.

Champions Barcelona remain nine points clear of Valencia and Real Madrid, who drew 0-0 at the Mestalla on Saturday after Ronaldo missed a last-minute penalty for the

Barcelona have 61 points with 11

Osasuna are on 49, four clear of Celta Vigo who lost 2-0 at Espanyol on Saturday

Relegation-threatened Alaves put the brakes on Sevilla's drive for a Champions League berth despite having two players sent off in the closing stages of their 2-1 home win over the Andalucians.

The defeat left Sevilla five points adrift of Osasuna and one ahead of Villarreal, who were held 1-1 at Real Mallorca.

Osasuna threw down the gauntlet at the Reyno de Navarra Stadium with a high-tempo start and never let Barcelona settle on the ball as they pressed in every area of the pitch.

pounced on a blunder by Victor Valdes, hooking the ball into an open goal after the keeper dropped a 19th-minute cross.

Former Real Madrid player Valdo

Osasuna kept up the pressure in the second half and extended their lead through Punal on 59 minutes. Larsson scored for Barcelona

with a fine first-time shot after Ronaldinho had threaded a marvellous ball through the back four.

scrambled a 1-0 victory over fellow strugglers Cadiz despite having defender Fernando Amorebieta

sent off in the 18th minute. Midfielder Tiko scored the winner from the penalty spot deep into stoppage time after Alejandro

Varela was red-carded for handling Six points separate the bottom seven teams with Malaga bringing up the rear on 22 points after their 1-

draw at Real Betis. Cadiz have 25 points with Betis, Alaves and Bilbao all on 26. Mallorca have 27 and Real Sociedad 28.

TOP SIX

Геат	PW	D	L	G/F	G/A	Pts
Barcelona	27 19	4	4	64	25	61
√alencia	27 14	10	3	37	21	52
Real Madrid	27 16	4	7	50	26	52
Osasuna	27 15	4	8	35	30	49
Celta Vigo	27 14	3	10	29	27	45
Sevilla	27 13	5	9	35	29	44

I want Ballack: Mourinho

Football

Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho admits he is waiting for German international captain Michael Ballack to make a decision on whether he will join the Premiership champions on a free transfer at the end of the season.

Bayern Munich star Ballack, out of contract at the end of the season, has spoken with Chelsea about a summer move and Chelsea are waiting on an answer. "Ballack is worth at least 25

said in an interview with Bild news-"He said he needs time before making a decision. I respect that

million and I want him," Mourinho

and now it is up to him.' Chelsea, bankrolled by billionaire Russian owner Roman Abramovich, are reportedly ready to make the 29-year-old Ballack the

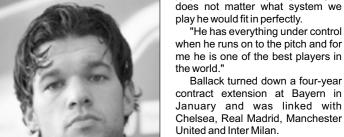
world's highest-paid player with a

"If someone wants to buy him or Bayern want to keep him it will take a lot (of money)," said Mourinho. There had been suggestions that Ballack would not suit Chelsea with England international Frank

weekly salary of 121,000 pounds

(177,600 euros, 210,900 dollars).

dream pairing in Europe. "You only get problems if you Lampard already occupying the partner bad players with one attacking midfield role but Mourinho another not two very good players. said the duo would be a dream "Ballack is a very intelligent player and tactically very strong. It



play he would fit in perfectly. "He has everything under control when he runs on to the pitch and for

Ballack turned down a four-year contract extension at Bayern in January and was linked with

Ballack has scored an impressive 29 goals in 62 internationals and is regarded as one of the best attacking midfielders in world foot-

India coast home

FROM PAGE 12 four boundaries in his 20th Test half-century.

SCOREBOARD

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard on the fifth and final day of the second Test between India and England at the Punjab Cricket Association Stadium in Mohali on Monday: **ENGLAND:** First innings 300 (Flintoff 70, Pietersen 64, Jones 52; Kumble 5-76, Patel 3-72)
INDIA: First innings 338 (Dravid 95, Pathan 52; ENGLAND: Second innings (overnight 112-5)
Strauss c Dhoni b

out Extras: (lb-10, nb-6, w-17 Total: (All out in 76.1 overs) Fall of wkts: 1-7, 2-50, 3-55, 4-88, 5-109, 6-116, 7-124, 8-139, 9-181.

Pathan 16 Patel 23

CROSSWORD

41 Make

furrows

43 Scottish

land-

45 Lisa's

role

47 Mischie

vous

tyke

48 Like

54-

Across

49 Grounds-

need

54 Tramcai

55 Duck

56 Wall

59 Born

keeper's

contents

climber

57 Apiece

58 Popeye's

creator

owners

"Friends

ACROSS

4 Cashew

cousin

-relief

12 Hallow-

een shout

termina

14 Right

angle

15 Kansas

17 "Skip to

18 Queue

19 Kitchen

gadget

Piggy's

pronoun

21 Fainting

24 Small

pie

25 Miss

26 Fresh

28 Slack

31 A Beverly

33 Comedia

35 Vacillate

Ryan

38 Indispen

able

40 Away

from

WSW

36 Pitcher

Hillbilly

DeLuise

symbol

Fall of wkt: 1-39 Collingwood

Result: India won by nine wickets and lead Mari-of-the-match-Api Kupable.

(AUS) and Sim Third Tart of americal cerbal ween domestic and international cricket. The Tigers will leave Dhaka this

afternoon for Bogra where they play the first game on March 17 before travelling to Khulna for the second on March 20. The last two games will take place at the Fatullah Stadium, which got the

nod from the ICC on Sunday to host

international matches, on March 23

and 25.

DOWN

1 Tummy

short

letters

dressed

2 Chit

3 Get

4 Bar

5 Up for

7 Skilled

grabs

6 Haystack

bowlful

Quasi-

modo's

venue

additive

10 Lotion

11 Insult

16 To and

20 Cupid's

Solution time: 24 mins

Breakfast

Kiwis sneak FROM PAGE 12 Eden Park on Monday: **NEW ZEALAND:** First innings 275 (Styris 103 n.o, Astle 51; Smith 3-71, Bradshaw 3-73. WEST INDIES: First innings 257

(Sarwan 62, Bravo 59; Martin 3-80, **NEW ZEÁLAND:** Second innings (McCullum 74, How 37; Gayle 4-71, Bradshaw 3-83) **WEST INDIES:** Second innings

Ganga c How b Astle 95 Sarwan c Styris b Bond Lara b Bond Chanderpaul c Fulton b Vettori Bravo Ibw Bond Smith c Fleming b Bond Ramdin c Franklin b Vettori Bradshaw c Fleming b Vettori 10 Taylor b Bond 13 Edwards not out Extras: (b-1, lb-3, w-1, nb-5) Total: (All out in 102.3 overs) 263

211, 5-216, 6-218, 7-221, 8-246, 9-247, 10-263 Bowler 0 Bond 27.3 69 46 14 Franklin 16 39 Martin 92 Vettori 35 11 3 10 Astle

Fall of wkts: 1-148, 2-157, 3-182, 4-

Result: New Zealand won by 27 runs. Man-of-the-match: Shane Bond. Toss: West Indies Umpires: Daryl Harper (AUS)

Rudi Koertzen (RSA)

By Eugene Sheffer 21 Prayer ending 22 Unaccom panied 23 Energetic determi-

nation

gai pan

29 Hourglass

30 Potato

32 Eli's

buds

school

"Close

ters ..

37 Peers

39 Talk on

42 Use a

loom

44 Wall St

45 Stage

item

50 Funny

51 Triumph

52 Leading

lady?

53 Alterna

46 Tortoise's

opponent

debut of a

and on

Encoun-

34 Dillon of

27 Moo goo

CXFXMTG

VTXGD, XD XM LNDDXWGO

DAQMMOS Saturday's Cryptoquip: A LIST OF COMPLAINING FOLKS AT A BOOK'S BEGINNING MIGHT BE THE

"TABLE OF MAL-CONTENTS." Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals T

The Cryptoguip 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.

CRYPTOQUIP ZTPOST

MATM MAO LSNWGOP ZNQGC

"Ballack is very fit and scores a lot of goals. In Europe I only know Lampard and Ballack who play at

this level," Mourinho declared.

"Together they would be the