Football preferred over women!

AFP, *London*

British men show far more loyalty, commitment and self-sacrifice towards their favourite football team than towards their partners, a study published Monday showed.

Some 94 percent said they would never stop loving their team no matter how bad they were while 52 percent would gladly ditch a relationship that was not going well, the survey of approximately 2,000 men across Britain found.

Psychologist Aric Sigman said: "If men showed the same fidelity, commitment, self-sacrifice and honesty toward their partners, the divorce rate would halve overnight."

A quarter of men admitted they would miss a family funeral to watch a game.

The study also found that football provided a way for men to show emotion. Nearly two-fifths (39 percent) admitted they had cried tears of joy or despair over football, whilst almost a third (32 percent) said it had been crucial in teaching them to bond with other men.

Thuram calls for racial integration

AFP, *Paris*

France's World Cup winner Lilian Thuram has called on his country to open up its troubled ghettos to help generate closer bonds between different social and ethnic factions within French society.

In an interview for Sunday's edition of Le Monde, Guadeloupe-born Thuram said: "We need to know what kind of France we want in the future: a country whose national identity is shared by all layers of society or a country divided and consumed by community interests?

"For people to identify with this country, we have to take action, to educate, open the ghettos. This is something that is not currently being done."

The international defender, a member of a body promoting social integration in the country, added: "Rather than favouring this ghettoisation, those in power need to weave a closer bond among French people, no matter what their origins."

Juventus star Thuram is one of the most outspoken footballers in France on race issues.

Cruciani curses

FROM PAGE 12

coach Islam Akhmedov, Cruciani thinks that Bangladesh will have to fight with Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Palestine for a place in the final.

"India have an easy draw but we will be facing tough opponents in the knockout stage," he said.

India have decided to field their youth team in order to give the youngsters exposure for the AFC Youth Championship to be held in India next October-November.

Rajshahi wait

FROM PAGE 12

loss (Moniruzzaman 10*)

DHAKA: 286 and 181 all out in 59.4 overs (Shahriar 41, Sharif 24, Mosharraf 47, Shahjada 1-14, Mushfiq 3-28, Shuvo 2-48, Zubair 1-35, Mahbub 3-37).

Result: Rajshahi won by 10 wickets.

CHITTAGONG: 266 and 259 all out (Salahuddin 44, Ehsanul 63, Faisal 40, Monir 1-78, Sonnet 1-40, Bashar 6-62, Marshall 2-20)

BARISAL: 381 and 39-2 in 6 overs (Imran 20, Bashar 7 batting, Yasin 1-24, Sunny 1-15).

KHULNA: 248 and 198-8 in 78 overs (Sahagir 47, Sazzad 55, Jamaluddin 50, Hasibul 3-50, Rezaul 1-6, Nabil 1-49, Rahman 2-15)

SYLHET: 329 all out in 110.4 overs (Mabud 122, Rezaul 71, Mawla 43, Faizul 1-47, Ziaur 3-66, Jamal 2-56, Shamsur 1-27, Sadik 2-66, Shafiul 1-19).

Record eludes

FROM PAGE 12

with indecent assault at the athletes' village.

This time a 40-year-old Bangladeshi athlete was the one in trouble and he will appear in court on Monday after police confiscated his passport.

Three more Sierra Leone athletes went missing bringing to 14 the number that vanished - two-thirds of their 21-strong squad.

The Games were to wrap up with the closing ceremony at the Melbourne Cricket Ground later Sunday with a Bollywood theme at its heart to welcome in the hosting of the next Commonwealth Games in New Delhi in 2010.

Football has been a popular sport among the masses of Britain since the 8th century.

PHOTO: AP

Chelsea striker Didier Drogba celebrates his goal as Manchester City players protest during their Premiership clash at Stamford Bridge on Saturday.

PREMIERSHIP

Chelsea back on track

Football

AFP, *London*

Chelsea have been a magnet for controversy this season and they proved it again during this 2-0 win over 10-man Manchester City.

City were furious that Didier Drogba's second goal was allowed to stand after the Ivory Coast striker used his hand to control the ball before applying a routine finish.

The visitors surrounded the referee Rob Styles to protest and their captain Sylvain Distin was sent off for dissent after the half-time whistle.

Chelsea coach Mourinho claimed in his programme notes that "the hero is the team" but here, all eyes were on Drogba.

The muscular striker has been an enigmatic presence for Chelsea this season, with his off-days outnumbering his good ones, and against City he was both irrepressible and irascible.

He displayed his best qualities in scoring a sublime opening goal in the 29th minute.

Drogba, who had fired a warning shot across City's bows moments earlier when his low drive was well saved by David James, collected Eidur Gudjohnsen's pass, twisted inside David Sommeil and then thrashed his shot into the roof of the net.

After James had brilliantly saved John Terry's close-range header in the 32nd minute, Asier del Horno deflected Joe Cole's drive towards Drogba in the six-yard box.

The striker clearly used his arm to control the dropping ball before driving in a low shot, but Styles allowed the goal to stand, sparking vehement protests from the City players.

The most outraged of all was Distin and his complaints earned him a caution.

Then, as the players trooped off for half-time, he continued his objections and was shown a second yellow card and then the inevitable red.

Seconds after the re-start, Chelsea almost scored a third when Gudjohnsen sped clear of a dithering defence, only for Micah Richard's excellent sliding tackle to deny him at the last second.

Chelsea were happy to stay in second gear and that was lucky for City. If the game had been more evenly poised, Joe Cole and the Argentine substitute Hernan Crespo would doubtless have made more of hugely inviting opportunities.

Instead, Cole's shot was parried by James and Crespo somehow headed wide of a gaping net.

City even came close to a goal of their own when Danny Mills, who had earlier forced Petr Cech into a sprawling save, grazed the post with a wickedly curling free-kick.

Aussies gain advantage

Cricket

AFP, *Durban*

South Africa collapsed against the second new ball as Australia took a first innings lead of 102 runs on the third day of the second Test against Australia at Kingsmead Sunday.

Fast bowler Brett Lee took five for 69 as South Africa were bowled out for 267 shortly before tea.

Jacques Kallis made a patient 114 for South Africa but his dismissal in the second over with the new ball triggered a collapse in which the last five wickets fell for 12 runs in 34 balls.

Kallis was caught and bowled by Stuart Clark, with the ball looping back to the bowler off a leading edge as Kallis tried to turn Clark's first delivery with the new ball to leg.

Lee then ripped through the rest of the batting, taking four wickets for nine runs. His third wicket, that of Mark Boucher, was his 200th in Tests.

Kallis played an innings of contrasts. He started with a blaze of strokes Saturday, reaching his half-century off 49 balls.

After his overnight partner, AB de Villiers, was out to the 12th ball of the day, Kallis went on the defensive on a pitch of uneven bounce on which run-scoring had been difficult throughout the match. De Villiers and Kallis put on 134 for the third wicket.

Kallis played only four scoring strokes in the first hour, three singles and a pulled four off Clark, as he moved from 72 to 79.

Left-hander Ashwell Prince was more aggressive, making 33 before he was caught at square leg off Shane Warne, dancing down the pitch but mistiming an attempted hit to midwicket.

Kallis reached his 24th Test century and his third against Australia in the last over before lunch when he punched Warne through the covers for his 17th boundary. His second fifty took 124 balls. It was his fourth century in successive Tests at Kingsmead.

He added only ten more runs off 49 balls after lunch before his dismissal.

Shaun Pollock was caught behind seven balls later and Mark Boucher had his leg stump sent flying when he missed a pull shot in Lee's next over.

Lee's pace was too much for tailenders Andre Nel and Makhaya Ntini as the South African innings folded. It was Lee's seventh five-wicket haul in Tests.

Australia lead the three-match series 1-0.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the third day of the second Test between South Africa and Australia at Kingsmead on Sunday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings 369

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (overnight 140-2)

Smith c Langer b Lee	0
De Villiers c Hayden b Clark	50
Gibbs b Kasprowicz	9
Kallis c and b Clark	114
Prince c Symonds b Warne	33
Rudolph c Hussey b Warne	13
Boucher b Lee	19
Pollock c Gilchrist b Lee	1
Boje not out	6
Nel c Hayden b Lee	5
Ntini c Ponting b Lee	0
Extras: (lb-3, nb-14)	17
Total: (All out in 88.4 overs)	267

Fall of wkts: 1-0, 2-10, 3-144, 4-200, 5-226, 6-255, 7-256, 8-257, 9-267.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Lee	19.4	5	69	5
Kasprowicz	14	0	60	1
Warne	25	2	80	2
Symonds	11	3	16	0
Hussey	1	0	2	0
Clark	18	4	37	2

Umpires: S Bucknor, B Doctrove (both WIS).

Lara sparks

FROM PAGE 12

and final Test between New Zealand and West Indies at McLean Park on Sunday:

WEST INDIES: First innings

Gayle c Fulton b Martin	30
Ganga b Bond	38
Lara b Astle	83
Morton not out	70
Chanderpaul run out (Vettori)	2
Bravo not out	22
Extras: (lb-3, nb-8)	11
Total: (For 4 wkts in 78.1 overs)	256

Fall of wkts: 1-37, 2-111, 3-171, 4-189.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Bond	18	2	87	1
Franklin	15	1	66	0
Martin	10	2	39	1
Astle	14	5	23	1
Styris	13	5	27	0
Vettori	8	4	11	0

Toss: New Zealand.

Umpires: Mark Benson (ENG), Ian Powell (RSA).

Sachin rules out retirement

Cricket

PTI, *undated*

Booed by his home fans, plagued by a prolonged slump and battling a fresh injury, Sachin Tendulkar's cup of woes may be brimming over but he's all set to fight the odds. The recent reversals notwithstanding, Tendulkar is clear that his reflexes have not slowed down and believes there is "nothing to be concerned about" as of now.

Tendulkar, in an interview with Outlook, a weekly, also scotched any speculation about retirement, saying he had been "batting well" and just needed some luck to turn things around. Asked specifically if he was contemplating retirement, he replied, "I am not interested in this question".

On his failures in three consecutive Test series, Tendulkar said "I feel I have been batting well. I have made one odd mistake and paid the price. Batsmen sometimes get away with bad shots and are fortunate to see some catches get dropped. I just feel that luck needs to be a bit more on my side. I am not overly worried because everyone goes through such a phase. I think it is a part and parcel of life. As long as I know from the bottom of my heart that I am trying my best, it is OK,"

Tendulkar added he had been speaking to former players for advice. "I speak with senior players who have actually gone through such things and how they dealt with such situations - it makes a huge difference to your confidence... it is important to stay calm mentally.

"I know exactly what is happening but sometimes getting guidance from seniors who have played a lot of cricket helps. I have some very good people around who share their thoughts with me. One of them is Greg Chappell. Ravi Shastri and Sunil Gavaskar are there too. Talking to them helps."

Tendulkar, ruled out of competitive cricket to undergo a shoulder surgery, felt he was happy with his current form. "I don't believe that my reflexes have slowed down," he continued. "I am quite happy with the way my feet move when I am at the crease. I like the way I was middling the ball both at Karachi and Mumbai. I believe I am getting in the right positions to play each delivery."

On being booed by his home crowd at the Wankhede Stadium during the third Test against England, he said, "I thought the issue was blown out of proportion by the media. It wasn't that bad. I have more well wishers than the small section of the crowd at the Wankhede Stadium that day. I have to ignore them. I cannot forget the backing I have got from the people all these years just because of this."

I don't dive: Drogba

INTERNET, *undated*

Chelsea striker Didier Drogba has insisted that he does not dive.

The Ivory Coast striker again made the headlines for his performance in the victory over Manchester City, when his two goals were tainted by more criticism of his style of play.

Apart from handling the ball in the build-up to his second goal, Drogba also came under scrutiny for an incident when he fell to ground easily following what appeared to be minimal contact.

The discussion about his integrity was then further fuelled by ambiguous comments he made in a post-match interview with the BBC, when he seemed to admit diving, before saying moments later that he never dives.

Drogba has now moved to clarify those remarks, claiming that excitement made his answer sound a little muddled.

"Unfortunately in the emotion of winning the game my comments have come across partly in the wrong way," he told Chelsea's official website.

"I want to make clear that I don't dive, this was the intention of my answer."

Bollywood lights

FROM PAGE 12

A children's choir sang an Aboriginal farewell song as the Commonwealth Games Federation flag was lowered and handed to Delhi chief minister Sheila Dikshit.

That was the cue for a 10-minute Indian showcase featuring Bollywood stars including former Miss World Aishwarya Rai, heartthrob Saif Ali Khan and screen siren Rani Kukherjee.

Famous Indian landmarks including the Taj Mahal and Red Fort were depicted to an accompaniment of bhangra music before a giant three-tiered golden chariot entered the stadium.

On board a host of Indian celebrities waved to the crowd including cricketing greats Sunil Gavaskar, returning to the ground where he scored a Test century in 1977/78, and Kapil Dev, who snared five-wicket hauls at the ground in 1985 and 1992.

Dancers dressed in vivid costumes depicting elephants, peacocks and butterflies the demonstrated the traditional Indian kathakalis dance.

Fireworks in the white, green and saffron of the Indian flag erupted from the roof of the MCG as the dancers formed the words "See You Delhi 2010".

AFC to follow

FROM PAGE 12

"It is all set and we can hold a match there the next day. But the way the works at the Bangabandhu Stadium is going, we are a bit annoyed. The grass here is not suitable for football and I hope they prepare it in time," said an AFC official.

"Usually, ten days before a tournament, no one is allowed to enter the ground. But here, the scene is different. I saw a man playing golf in the ground," he added.

The man playing golf was none other than National Sports Council's director of planning Nurul Haque Pradhan, the man in charge of the stadium renovation and also a member of the Challenge Cup local organising committee.

Independence

FROM PAGE 12

Haq distributed prizes among the winners.

CHESS

Fide Master Nasir Ahmed won the Independence Day Rapid Chess Tournament, organised by the Bangladesh Chess Federation. National champion IM Enamul Hussain Rajib was the runner-up in the day- long event.

Maple Leaf lift school b'ball title

BDNEWS, *Dhaka*

Maple Leaf emerged champions in Shabab Murshid Memorial School Basketball Tournament with a 43-23 victory over Agha Khan School in the final at the Dhanmondi Basketball gymnasium on Sunday.

The winners dominated the first half 27-10.

Zeesan and Aftab scored 14 and 13 points respectively for the winners while Mehran and Amit caged 10 and eight points respectively for the losers.

Eminent cultural personality and freedom fighter Nasiruddin Yousuf Bachchu distributed prizes among the winners. Shabab Murshid Foundation chairman Dr KSA Murshid, South Breeze School principal Zeenat Chowdhury were present.

PRIMERA LIGA

Barca draw a blank

Football

AFP, *Madrid*

Barcelona's seemingly unstoppable march towards their second successive league title had the brakes put on it by Malaga when they were held to a 0-0 draw by the bottom club on Saturday.

Poor finishing by the Catalan club and a great game by the Malaga keeper Francesc Arnau against his former club, where he spent seven seasons, meant Barca failed to score for only the third time this season.

Barcelona were by far the better side and had more than twice as many shots on goal as the home side but they were missing some of the magic usually provided by their inspirational World Player of the Year Ronaldinho.

Henrik Larsson and Ludovic Giuly both went close in the first half before African Player of the Year Samuel Eto'o, who was playing his 200th league game, had a goal controversially disallowed just before the break.

Referee Julian Rodriguez Santiago originally gave the goal but then his linesman said that Henrik Larsson had handled the ball.

Larsson and most of the rest of Barca protested his innocence and television replays showed clearly that the linesman had got it wrong with the wayward hand belonging to Malaga captain Fernando Sanz.

Eto'o had further cause to feel frustrated when he hit the cross bar in injury time at the end of the rather tepid encounter.

Barcelona have 68 points from 30 games and a 14-point point lead at the top of the Spanish first division after second-placed Osasuna let them off the hook when they went down 1-0 at Athletic Bilbao later on Saturday.

The only goal of an entertaining game came after 59 minutes when Luis Prieto headed home a Francisco Yeste free kick.

Both teams ended with 10-men after Osasuna's Ludovic Delporte and Athletic's Ismael Urzaiz were sent off for an injury-time brawl.

Real Betis eased their relegation worries with a 2-1 win at Villarreal earlier on Saturday, the Seville-based side's second win in a week and just their second victory away from home this season.

Betis' Brazilian striker Robert put them seemingly well in control with two first half goals but they had to survive a nervous last few minutes as Villarreal staged a furious bid to salvage a point.

Argentine international Juan Pablo Sorin headed home a cross from his compatriot Juan Roman Riquelme after 78 minutes.

Villarreal nearly got a draw when another of their Argentine contingent Rodolfo Arruabarrena found the net in injury time but the goal was disallowed because Sorin was judged to have fouled Betis keeper Pedro Contreras.

SERIE A

Roma stall Juve charge

Football

REUTERS, *Milan*

Serie A leaders Juventus were held to a 1-1 draw at home by AS Roma on Saturday allowing rivals AC Milan to cut their lead to eight points with their 3-1 victory over Fiorentina for Tuesday's Champions League quarterfinal, first leg tie away to Arsenal.

At the San Siro, Milan came from behind to beat Fiorentina comfortably after Italy international and Serie A's top scorer

Luca Toni had put the Florence side ahead in the 13th minute with his 25th strike of the season.

Ukrainian Andriy Shevchenko scored the equaliser from a tight angle in the 20th minute before second half goals ensured the points for Carlo Ancelotti's team.

Brazilian Kaka headed in a cross from 39-year-old defender Alessandro Costacurta and then midfielder Gennaro Gattuso blasted in from the edge of the area on the hour to make it 3-1.

Milan received a boost when captain Paolo Maldini came on in the 75th minute to make his first appearance after three months out with injury.

Inter Milan's hopes of catching AC Milan suffered a blow with a 1-0 defeat at mid-table Parma which leaves them in third-place trailing their city rivals by five points. Inter were beaten by a 39th minute goal from Parma's Brazilian midfielder Fabio Simplicio as they fell to their sixth league defeat of the season.

Bernardo Corradi broke down the left flank and put in a low cross which Inter's Cameroonian defender Pierre Wome badly miscontrolled, allowing the ball to spill to Simplicio who drove home his ninth league goal of the season.

Parma went close to a second on several occasions but Inter keeper Francesco Toldo produced a series of good saves twice keeping out excellent long-range strikes from Australian midfielder Mark Bresciano. Inter almost grabbed a last-minute equaliser but Parma keeper Luca Bucci's diving save kept out a glancing header from Argentine Esteban Cambiasso.

PHOTO: AP

Milan playmaker Kaka celebrates his strike against Fiorentina during their Serie A clash at San Siro on Saturday.

Juve led through a 35th minute header from Brazilian midfielder Emerson but had Czech midfielder Pavel Nedved sent off on the stroke of halftime.

Down to 10 men for the second half, Juve looked to have held on but five minutes from the end Roma drew level with a header from Moroccan midfielder Houssine Kharja.

Juve keeper Gianluigi Buffon then had to produce a fine save to keep out a long-range drive from Roma defender Cesare Bovo.

The Turin side had suffered an early blow when striker Alessandro Del Piero limped off with a thigh injury that could make him doubtful

Ancelotti going to Madrid?

AFP, *Madrid*

The Spanish sporting press insisted on Sunday Carlo Ancelotti will be Real Madrid's coach next season although he has just signed a contract extension until 2008 with AC Milan.

AS newspaper claimed on Thursday Ancelotti would be coming and Marca on Sunday also said he would be joining Real, explaining the contract extension was a ploy by AC Milan owner and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

Marca said that in reality, Berlusconi had given his thumbs-up to Ancelotti leaving the club.

The Spanish press has been speculating hard in recent weeks on who will take over from Madrid's stand-in boss, Juan Ramon Lopez Caro, next season.

Apart from Ancelotti, other candidates include Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger, Juventus coach Fabio Capello, German Bernd Schuster, the boss of Spanish first division side Getafe, plus Real's former coach Vicente del Bosque.

CROSSWORD *By Eugene Sheffer*

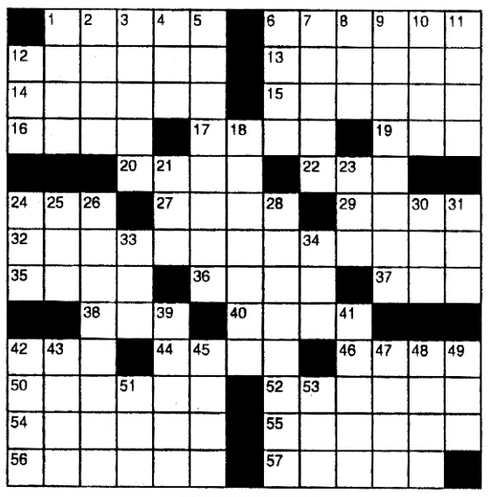
ACROSS

1 R&B star whose last name is Raymond
6 Calypso crew
12 Sextuple, then halve
13 Matchless
14 Ancient
15 Take for granted
16 Microscope view
17 Burden
19 Answer, on "Jeopardy!"
20 Guardhouse
22 Make lace
24 Suffragist's monogram
27 Taj Mahal city
29 Thailand, once
32 Communications-company staff?
35 Calendar quota
36 Albacore, e.g.
37 Fresh
38 Upper limit
40 Standard
42 Hearty laugh syllable
44 Tramp's co-star
46 Old Testament prophet
50 Buckeye
52 Snub
54 Keep in custody
55 Cancel out
56 Fig variety
57 Shine

DOWN

1 Stimulate
2 Prognosticator
3 Edward Teller's brainchild
4 Right angle
5 Stopper?
6 Twosome
7 Smaller map
8 Force
9 Sometimes it starts with an X
10 Jamaican exports
11 Quest
12 Playground game
18 Beached
21 Snoop Dogg's genre
23 Venomous viper
24 Pigs' digs
25 Swarm member
26 Promptness
28 Irksome
30 Brewery product
31 Kitten's remark
33 History chapter
34 Anvil location
39 Unadorned
41 Tropical fruit
42 Scuttles
43 Throat clearer
45 Kournikova or Karenina
47 Bygone New Zealand flock
48 Table scraps
49 "What did I tell you?"
51 Thole insert
53 Solidify

Solution time: 27 mins.



CRYPTOQUIP

TGNRNZA UBYV ZAPM NK MANHA B JGVRRQ MPYBK JNHCZ EGPY BYPKU ZNKUWV UFQZ: "UP EPG TWPCV."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IN WHAT WAY DO BRITISH DOGCATCHERS EARN MONEY? I GUESS THEY MUST BE PAID BY THE POUND.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals G

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.