

## FIFA names WC referees

AFP, Frankfurt

World football governing body FIFA on Friday named 23 referees from as many countries for the 64 World Cup matches in Germany starting on June 9.

Europe have the largest contingent with ten referees including France's Eric Poulart, German Markus Merk, Spanish Enrique Mejusto Gonzalez, Massimo De Santis of Italy and Britain's Graham Poll.

There are two referees each from Asia and Africa, three from North and Central America, South America (5) and Oceania (1).

The World Cup will be held in Germany from June 9 to July 9.

## Olympiakos renew Rivaldo contract

AFP, Athens

Olympiakos president Socrates Kokkalis announced that Brazilian superstar Rivaldo will remain with the club for another season.

No information was provided by Kokkalis on the deal.

"Rivaldo will remain with Olympiakos because he is the biggest transfer ever made in soccer in Greece. He has shown that he is a great player. He has given a lot to Olympiakos and that is why we have agreed for him to play another year with us," Kokkalis said.

The 33-year-old midfielder is playing his second season with Olympiakos and receives a reported 1.9 million euros annually.

Rivaldo was 1999 World Player of the Year and a 2002 World Cup winner.

## BU aids ailing booter

SPORTS REPORTER

Local giant Brothers Union have provided Tk 1 lac for treatment, to a promising player in the Bangladesh U 19 team.

Roni Islam, who is suffering from injuries in his leg was handed over the cheque by architect Mobashar Hossain, Vice President of Brothers Union football club, on the club premises on Thursday.

Also present were luminaries from the past including Kazi Salauddin and Senior Vice President of BU, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik along with other dignitaries and high officials.

## Gaibandha cricket

SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

Ghagot Krira Chakka defeated Sunrise Sporting Club by 21 runs in the Naheed Cotton First Division Cricket League at the Gaibandha Stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss Ghagot batted first and scored 171 runs all out in 38 overs. In reply, Sunrise were all out for 150 runs in only 21 overs to concede a narrow loss.

## Blatter arrives

**FROM PAGE 12**  
day, will call on President Dr Prof Tajuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban this morning. He will also visit the BFF Bhaban where he is expected to hand over the fund for tsunami victims to the Bangladesh Football Federation. He will depart Dhaka tomorrow morning as part of visiting countries hit by the devastating 2004 tsunami.

Blatter will fly to the Maldives before heading to Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand in a three-day whistle-stop tour of the region.

He and Hammam will also inspect football facilities that have been rebuilt following the disaster.

## Stage set

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Tajikistan and Palestine -- two of the three top-ranked teams of the meet - and Kyrgyzstan.

Among the eight teams based in Chittagong, tournament's top-ranked India -- the only team to bring their youth squad -- will face very lowly opponents.



## Did U Know?

Shoaib Malik of Pakistan scored an unbeaten 148 from 369 balls in the second innings of the first Test against Sri Lanka. It was his maiden century.



PHOTO: AFP

FC Basel's David Degen (L) congratulates teammate Mattias Delgado (C) who just scored during their UEFA Cup quarterfinal tie against Middlesbrough at St. Jakob Park in Basel on Thursday.

## Boro get Swiss rolled



AFP, Paris

Middlesbrough's dreams of European glory were ripped to shreds after a two-goal burst by Swiss side Basel left Steve McLaren's men staring under the barrel of a UEFA Cup exit Wednesday.

The English Premiership strugglers were sent sprawling by a double sucker punch just before half-time, Matias Delgado netting a 43rd-minute strike before David Degen doubled the tally two minutes later at St. Jakob Park.

Boro had coped with everything Basel had thrown at them for most of the first half and looked set to reach the interval with the scores level.

But out of nowhere Delgado found a moment of inspiration to breach the Boro defence. The Argentine cut in from the right and unleashed a powerful shot from 25 yards that kicked up off the rain-soaked turf to beat Mark Schwarzer.

Boro had barely recovered from the disappointment of that goal

before they were two down. Brazilian playmaker Eduardo played in Degen, who looked once before thundering his finish past Australian international Schwarzer.

The English side never recovered from that lightning double-whammy, and could have seen their hopes completely snuffed out had defender Chris Riggott not made a superb goal-line clearance midway through the second half.

Boro substitute Ugo Ehiogu went close with a powerful late header but the English side's hopes of stealing a precious away goal was thwarted by Basel keeper Pascal Zuberbuehler.

A miserable night for Boro also saw trouble in the stands, with police moving in to quell sporadic scuffling amongst the travelling support.

"We gave away two poor goals and it costs you at this level," said Riggott. "But we don't feel like we're out of it."

Elsewhere in the UEFA Cup Wednesday, German side Schalke 04 put one foot in the semifinals after recovering from 1-0 down to win 3-1 away to Bulgarian side Levski Sofia.

Levski had the Germans in trouble early on when Daniel

Borimirov capitalised on some poor defending to put the home side ahead.

But the Bundesliga side took control of the tie with a second half goal blitz that will leave them firm favourites to progress.

Uruguayan Gustavo Varela levelled it on the night with a finish high into the net after a neat one-two with Levan Kobiasvili before Brazilian midfielder Lincoln fired the visitor into the lead on 69 minutes.

German international Gerald Asamoah left Schalke in control of the tie when he followed up Christian Poulsen's header, which hit the post, to drive in the rebound.

The win means Sofia must score three times in next week's second leg to have any chance of progressing.

In other matches, Rapid Bucharest were held to a 1-1 draw at home by rivals and 1986 European champions Steaua Bucharest at the Giulesti Stadium in the Romanian capital.

Spanish side Sevilla all but assured themselves of a place in the last four with a 4-1 home win over St Petersburg of Russia.

## PREMIERSHIP

# Fergie's sweet dilemma



REUTERS, London

Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson has an enviable selection dilemma for Saturday's trip to Bolton Wanderers where victory would keep the Reds hanging on to the coat tails of Chelsea.

Ruud van Nistelrooy returned to the starting line-up on Wednesday after more than a month in exile on the bench and celebrated by scoring his 20th goal of the season in the 1-0 defeat of West Ham, United's seventh straight league win.

Now Ferguson must decide whether to retain the 29-year-old Dutchman alongside Wayne Rooney, or re-instate Frenchman Louis Saha whose goals have kept Van Nistelrooy out of the side.

Whoever he plays, Ferguson knows victory at Bolton is vital in United's attempt to narrow the nine-point gap on champions Chelsea and keep comfortably ahead of

third-placed Liverpool. "I have a job picking my team for a massive game at Bolton on Saturday, although that is what I'm paid to do," Ferguson told United's website.

"When we were at our very best, we had four great strikers. It was certainly one of the factors in us winning the Treble," added Ferguson who also has high hopes for young American-born forward Giuseppe Rossi.

Chelsea's relentless march towards a second successive title is unlikely to falter at Birmingham City on Saturday and the battle for fourth place, and a slot in the qualifiers for next season's Champions League, is hotting up.

Tottenham Hotspur travel to Newcastle on Saturday hoping Robbie Keane can maintain his prolific form. The Ireland international has scored five goals in four games, including both in the 2-1 victory over West Bromwich Albion on Monday.

Newcastle, who have lost their

last three games, will be without midfielder Scott Parker with suspected glandular fever.

Arsenal, buoyant after their superb 2-0 victory over Juventus in the first leg of a Champions League quarterfinal on Tuesday, are at home to an Aston Villa side still not safe from relegation. The Gunners have not lost the fixture since 1993.

Blackburn can benefit from any slip-ups from Arsenal or Tottenham when they play Wigan Athletic on Monday.

FIXTURES	
(1400 GMT kick-off unless stated)	
<b>Saturday</b>	Arsenal v Aston Villa, Birmingham v Chelsea (1145), Bolton v Manchester Utd, Everton v Sunderland, Fulham v Portsmouth, Newcastle v Tottenham, West Brom v Liverpool (1615)
<b>SUNDAY</b>	Manchester City v Middlesbrough, West Ham v Charlton (1600)
<b>MONDAY</b>	Blackburn v Wigan

## Seamers shake

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Ashwell Prince and Jacques Rudolph but the two left-handers clung on to reach tea on 23 and 12 respectively.

SCOREBOARD	
Scoreboard at tea on the first day of the third and final Test between South Africa and Australia at the Wanderers Stadium on Friday:	
SOUTH AFRICA	
De Villiers c Martyn b Clark	12
Gibbs b Kasparowicz	16
Dippenaar c Gilchrist b Clark	32
Kallis b Lee	37
Prince not out	23
Rudolph not out	12
Extras: (nb-8)	8
Total: (For 4 wickets in 54 overs)	140
Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-38, 3-97, 4-106.	
Bowler	
Lee	15 6 28 1
Clark	16 8 38 2
Kasparowicz	16 3 44 1
Warne	4 0 18 0
Symonds	3 0 12 0
To bat: M Boucher, S Pollock, N Boje, A Nel, M Ntini.	
Umpires: S Bucknor (WIS), A Hill (NZL).	

## Rookies power India

<b>FROM PAGE 12</b>	
sixes and four boundaries in his sixth half-century and Strauss six fours in his eighth 50.	
SCOREBOARD	
Scoreboard of the second one-day international between India and England at the Nahar Singh Stadium in Faridabad on Friday:	
ENGLAND	
Strauss b Powar	61
Fior b lbw b Harbhajan	33
Shah c Dhoni b Powar	0
Pietersen c David b Yuvraj	71
Flintoff st Dhoni b Powar	5
Collingwood run out	5
Jones c Gambhir b Sreesanth	22
Blackwell b Sreesanth	9
Plunkett b Pathan	4
Ali not out	1
Anderson b Sreesanth	2
Extras: (b-4, lb-3, nb-4, w-2)	13
Total: (All out in 49.5 overs)	226
Fall of wickets: 1-66, 2-71, 3-135, 4-143, 5-174, 6-193, 7-214, 8-221, 9-223.	
Bowler	
Pathan	8 2 29 1
Sreesanth	6.5 0 40 3
Harbhajan	10 1 43 1
Powar	10 0 34 3
Sehwag	4 0 21 0
Yuvraj	10 0 39 1
Gambhir	1 0 13 0
INDIA	
Sehwag b Blackwell	26
Gambhir c and b Anderson	29
Dravid run out	5
Yuvraj b Blackwell	18
Kaif lbw b Plunkett	0
Raina not out	81
Dhoni b Flintoff	38

## Golden first day for hosts

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali**  
Hosts Patuakhali, BJMC and BDR won gold medals on the opening day of the 30th National Cycling Championship yesterday.

In the 100km road time trial team event, Patuakhali won gold while in the 30km time trial individual, in the women's 15km time trial Farhana Sultana Shila of BJMC got gold.

More than 100 sportsmen from 12 districts and 4 sports organisations are taking part in the meet.

## Bangladesh A

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Gajanayake got 3 wickets.

**SCORING IN BRIEF:**  
**SRI LANKA A:** 466 & 51 for 3 in 18 overs (Mendes 9 batting Warnapura 21 batting; Baisya 1/5)  
**BANGLADESH A:** First innings 368 all out in 123 overs (Iqbal 62, Imran 57, Al Hasan 85, Rahim 50; Herath 4/89, Gajanayake 3/16).

## Wenger loyal to Gunners

AFP, London

Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger on Friday committed his long-term future to the English Premiership side amid speculation linking him with the vacant manager's job at Real Madrid.

Wenger, whose side beat Juventus 2-0 in the Champions League on Tuesday, has been named by Real Madrid president Fernando Martin as one of seven managers the Spanish side are considering.

But the 56-year-old Frenchman told the Evening Standard: "If I left I would feel a deserter - like the guy who walks away from the army once there is a war. I am highly committed to this club."

"I love what I do here and love the spirit of the team. I feel committed to the players and the club."

Wenger, who arrived in Highbury in 1996 from Japanese side Nagoya Grampus Eight, is contracted to Arsenal until 2008 but could stay well beyond then - having seen the youngsters he has brought through show their potential against the Italian champions.

"I don't consider for a second that I'll change my mind," said Wenger. "I've started to build a new team again and want to see the job through."

Wenger also previously coached French sides Monaco, Nancy and Cannes.

## Bachini banned for life

AFP, Rome

Siena midfielder Jonathan Bachini has been given a life-long ban after twice testing positive for cocaine, the Italian football league's disciplinary commission said Thursday.

Traces of the recreational drug were found in a urine sample taken from Bachini after Siena's Serie A match away to Lazio in December.

The 30-year-old, who spent two seasons at Juventus, had previously served a nine-month ban for testing positive for cocaine when he was playing for Brescia.

Bachini, 30, made two international appearances for Italy during his time at Udinese.

Cocaine is not performance enhancing, but is on the Italian Olympic Committee's list of banned substances.

## Camoranesi up for sale

INTERNET, undated

Mauro German Camoranesi is reportedly set for a summer exit after Juventus fined him almost 30,000 pounds for his dismissal against Arsenal on Tuesday.

The Argentine infuriated club officials during the 2-0 Champions League defeat for firstly being sent-off and then ironically applauding the Highbury crowd.

Clearly disgusted by those actions which have damaged the Juventus brand, the Old Lady will now force the Italian international to dig deep into his pockets.

Camoranesi has had a difficult campaign at the Stadio Delle Alpi and Tuesday's incident was just the latest demonstration that he can lose his cool in the heat of a game.

It now seems almost certain that the former Verona player will be sold at the end of the current campaign.

Boss Fabio Capello has concerns over his temperament and has actually substituted him twice this season just minutes after throwing him on as a substitute.

Juventus have already made an initial step to replace him by securing the services of winger Marco Marchionni once his Parma deal expires in the summer.

## Hosts ready

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Kanchan, making up the attack.  
Cambodia manager Lors Salakhan said that his young side will look to end their losing run since return to international football in 1995.

"We have worked hard for the Challenge Cup. We prepared two months and like every one, we want to win. We are ambitious and want to finish top of the group," said the manager.

In the other match in Dhaka, Palestine may prove too good for unfancied Guam, who have not won a single match in the last ten years and will looking forward to have international exposure.

"We have come here to win the title," told Palestine coach Mohammad Sabbah, whose side trained at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The Palestine lost to China 2-0 but upset Singapore (in Jordan) in their Asian Cup qualifiers recently. They do not have any international standard venue in the war-torn country and prepared for one week in Alexandria.

## PRIMERA LIGA

# 'El clasico' pride at stake



REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid's faint hopes of depriving Barcelona of a second consecutive league title will be extinguished if they fail to beat their arch-rivals in Saturday's "clasico" at the Nou Camp.

Real trail Barca by 11 points with just eight games to go and it appears to be only a matter of time before the Catalans claim their 18th title.

"We have to be realistic," says Real keeper Iker Casillas. "Our aim is to win at the Nou Camp so that we can try and pull clear of the other teams that are fighting for second place."

"We have to win at all costs. If they win they will be taking a giant step towards the title."

For Barca this is not the most crucial game in the next week - that is the return leg of their Champions League quarterfinal against Benfica on Wednesday.

Frank Rijkaard's side dominated the first leg in Lisbon but, despite a handful of chances, they had to settle for a 0-0 draw.

"The Benfica match is more important for us," Portugal midfielder Deco told Marca on Thursday. "We don't have to beat Real to win the league title, but we

have to beat Benfica if we want to win the Champions League.

"There is no doubt, however, that we still want to win the match for our pride and for the fans and we know that if we beat Real we will wrap up the title in two or three weeks."

Barca, held to a goalless draw by basement side Malaga in their last league match, head into Saturday's match with an important psychological advantage given the humiliating 3-0 defeat they inflicted on Real at the Bernabeu this season.

The Catalans gave Real a footballing lesson as a Ronaldinho double and a superb opportunistic strike from Samuel Eto'o earned one of their most comprehensive victories on enemy territory.

Midfielder David Beckham, who has recovered from an ankle injury and will be fit to play, admits Real are still smarting from that defeat.

"Our pride was hurt when they came to the Bernabeu and beat us the way they did," he says. "So for us it's about pride, getting three points and playing well."

"I think it is going to be impossible to catch them but weirder things have happened in football."

Real's spirits were raised by a 4-0 win at home to Deportivo Coruna last weekend. If coach Juan Ramon Lopez Caro keeps faith with the team that hammered the Galicians, club captain Raul will start on the bench for only the second time in 30

games against the Catalans.

Barca will be without injured defenders Rafael Marquez and Edmilton, and their dynamic Argentine forward Lionel Messi although skipper Carles Puyol returns after a one-match ban.

In the weekend's other matches, third-placed Osasuna, who are just two points behind Real, host Bernd Schuster's Getafe on Sunday in their bid for a place in the Champions League.

Valencia, who are a further two points back in fourth spot, will be out to end their disappointing run of form when they entertain relegation-threatened Cadiz.

## FIXTURES

(Kick-off times in GMT)  
**SATURDAY**  
Real Sociedad v Malaga (1800), Real Zaragoza v Villarreal (1800), Barcelona v Real Madrid (2000)  
**SUNDAY**  
Alaves v Athletic Bilbao (1600), Deportivo La Coruna v Racing Santander (1600), Real Mallorca v Espanyol (1600), Osasuna v Getafe (1600), Valencia v Cadiz (1500), Atletico Madrid v Celta Vigo (1700), Real Betis v Sevilla (1900)

## SERIE A

# Juve seek home comfort



AFP, Rome

Juventus must shake off their European hangover when they face bottom club Treviso on Saturday if they are not to lose their grip on the Italian title.

Seemingly unstoppable in Serie A, the Old Lady was brought to her knees in the Champions League at Highbury on Tuesday where they suffered a 2-0 defeat to Arsenal in the first leg of their quarterfinal.

The result has left Juve with a mountain to climb in the second leg next Wednesday and could have a knock-on effect on their league form for the remaining seven games of the season.

Despite their 1-1 draw with Roma last week, Juve still have an eight-point cushion at the top of the table and few would bet against them landing a 29th Scudetto.

But although the reigning champions are still firmly in the driving seat, AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti knows only too well that miracles can happen in football, having been the victim of the greatest fightback in Serie A history.

Ancelotti was in charge of Juventus for the 1999/2000 season when they built up a nine-point lead with eight games to go, only to lose the title to Sven-Goran Eriksson's Lazio on the final day.

"Anything is possible as I learned when I was at Juve," said Ancelotti, whose Milan side are well placed to reach the semi-finals of the Champions League after their goalless draw at Lyon.

Juventus coach Fabio Capello is likely to rotate his squad for the trip to Treviso with one eye on the Arsenal match in Turin.

Pavel Nedved is unavailable following his red card against Roma, so Adrian Mutu is likely to continue in the Czech midfielder's place.

# Lara keen on home WC



CRICINFO, undated

He is keen to play in the first World Cup to be staged in the Caribbean next year but Brian Lara accepts that it is up to the selectors to accommodate his stated intention of reducing his number of ODIs leading to the tournament.

"It's a situation where we still have to sit and talk," Lara said. "It's not just my decision but I am very much interested in playing in the World Cup."

He added: "It's West Indies cricket you're talking about. We've got selectors, we've got a coach, we've got a captain and everybody is trying to get everybody in the right groove and get the team gelling. I can't be a hindrance to that and I've told them I want to be a part of that. We'll wait and see."