## Iran president | PREMIERSHIP not planning **Germany visit**

Iran on Sunday said football-loving President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad would not be attending the World Cup finals in Germany.

"There is no plan for a visit by Mr. Ahmadinejad to Germany and watching the World Cup games in the stadium." foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told

"But what is evident is that he is a sports fan, and his presence among the athletes is a heartwarming move. We have to differentiate between these two matters," he added

Asefi's intervention comes less than a week after the Iranian Football Federation raised the possibility of Ahmadinejad travelling to Germany to support the national team at the June 9-July 9 finals.

"It is possible because our president loves football." said federation president Mohammad Ali Dadkan.

"He often watches the national team's matches."

Iran are in Group D with Mexico, Portugal and Angola and have chosen the southern German city of Friedrichshafen as their World Cup



Big hitting all-rounder Mohammad Rafique has hit 26 sixes in 24 matches so far in his





### Diego Maradona (Argentine football legend)

"I don't know if England are going to reach the (World Cup) final but it's a team that worries me as a potential rival of Argentina."

### Nafees' motivation

FROM PAGE 12

But honestly speaking I was little bit tense when I reached 99," said the batsman who was dropped at a fly-slip position by Shane Warne when he was on 66.

Nafees was not successful against Muttiah Muralidaran whenever he tried to play the sweep but he showed different character against Shane Warne to be successful

"Actually I was wrong in choosing the ball for sweep shot against Murali but I think I learnt from my mistake which reflected in the day against Warne. My main intention was to play according to merit of the delivery," he

The vital cog of his and the whole innings was the short period after lunch when Nafees and skipper Bashar consolidated to be set again during the post-lunch period. Before lunch, they were rampant, going at a rate of almost six an over. But just after lunch, Ricky Ponting's applied a different strategy to contain the batsmen, to test their temperament, But thankfully, the pair were steady and controlled to score only 28 runs from

### India doubtful

FROM PAGE 12

the matter could be taken as early as Tuesday (April 11).

Sabina Park will host seven World Cup matches, including the first game and a semi-final, but work on the ground has been hit first by labour problems, and then by the cement crisis. The problem was further exacerbated when batches of cement were recalled as they were of substandard quality.

### Guwahati turns

**FROM PAGE 12** 

"We are not satisfied with the umpires' decision and we will write to the International Cricket Counci about it," association spokesman Bikash Barooah said.

# Chelsea show true colour

Football

Ten-man Chelsea took a giant stride towards a second straight Premiership title by overcoming the twin handicaps of going behind and having a player sent-off to beat West Ham 4-1 in dramatic style at Stamford Bridge here Sunday.

All of Chelsea's goals in an extraordinary comeback came after they'd gone 1-0 down in the 10th minute and seen Maniche. making his first Premiership start for the club, sent-off minutes later.

Victory left the Blues, who had seen their double-digit lead at the top whittled down to seven points before kick-off, 10 points clear of second-placed Manchester United before Sir Alex Ferguson's team hosted Arsenal later Sunday.

Chelsea played most of the match with 10 men after Maniche was dismissed in the 16th minute for a wild challenge on full-back Lionel Scaloni.

By then the Hammers had already rocked Chelsea when defender James Collins headed in Yossi Benayoun's corner at the near post.

But Chelsea turned the game on its head to the delight of the home crowd with two goals in just over two minutes from strike pair Didier Drogba and Hernan Crespo.

Chelsea skipper John Terry then added a third in the second-half before William Gallas made it 4-1. But three minutes after nearly levelling for the Blues, Maniche was given a straight red card by referee Chris Foy for his lunge on

However, the leaders responded in style with two quick goals, fully vindicating the decision of Jose Mourinho, who earlier this week said he was more worried by bird flu than United, to pair Drogba

and Crespo up front. In the 28th minute a superb

through-ball from former West Ham midfielder Frank Lampard found Drogba and although the Ivory Coast international's first shot was

blocked he scored from the

were the team who'd had a player dismissed and their revival was complete when Terry, seemingly unconcerned by the fact his side were down to 10 men, got forward to smash the ball home in the 54th



Chelsea's Argentine striker Hernan Crespo rides on the back of Didier Drogba to celebrate his strike against West Ham during their Premiership clash at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

ing their breath, Chelsea went ahead when Drogba's cross-shot was turned in by Argentina ace

The chances then kept coming for Chelsea in an incident-packed minute after Gallas's shot had come off the woodwork.

Gallas though got on the scoresheet in the 69th minute when he capitalised on hesitancy in the Hammers' defence to fire home from close range.

PRIMERA LIGA

# Real lose more ground



REUTERS, Madrid

Valencia moved up to second in the Primera Liga on Saturday with a 1-0 win at Celta Vigo while Real Madrid slipped to third after drawing 1-1 in the Bernabeu with relegationthreatened Real Sociedad.

Miguel Angel Angulo's 29thminute strike put Valencia level on 59 points with Real, but second due to their superior head-to-head

Real were held despite Brazil striker Ronaldo scoring his 100th goal for the club in the first half, as Sociedad's impressive Mark Gonzalez pounced on an error by goalkeeper Iker Casillas to equalise after the break.

Real and Valencia closed to within 10 points of leaders Barcelona, who visit Racing

Uruquayan winger Mario Requeiro produced a touch of quality to set up Valencia's goal as he controlled a long ball on the edge of the area, before spinning to lay it off for Angulo to fire home. Celta, who are sixth, created a

number of chances but it was the visitors' striker David Villa who came closest to adding to the score after the break as Valencia dominated. Sociedad, who have the worst

away record in the league, were determined to take the game to Madrid and unsettled the home defence early on with a string of teasing crosses before Ronaldo scored in the 25th minute.

Zinedine Zidane picked out the Brazilian on the edge of the area with a low free-kick and he fired a first time shot into the far corner for his fourth goal in as many games.

Five minutes later Ronaldo almost had his second when he finished off a swift break by shooting against a post, and then scooping

Sociedad continued to have chances, however, and Chilean winger Gonzalez stung Casillas's fingers with a rasping free-kick just before the break

the rebound over an empty net.

In the 62nd minute Casillas fumbled Mikel Alonso's harmless cross and Gonzalez was on hand to poke home the loose ball for the Five minutes earlier Ronaldo had

limped off injured to be replaced by Italy striker Antonio Cassano, but Real clearly missed the Brazilian's presence as they chased the win-Brazilian forward Robinho led

Real's charge near the end but they lacked precision and lost their way when midfielder Guti was sent off four minutes from time

Real left the pitch to a barrage of whistles from disgruntled home

## Nepal, Kyrgyzstan in semis

Ishanbaev from the right.

"Our strategy was based on counter attacks. We packed our defence and succeeded not to concede a goal first." admitted Kyrgyzstan coach Boris Podkorytov. "We waited for the goal and it came."

shocking exit and said spoiling too many chances cost them the defeat. "Kyrgyzstan defended very well. I think we dominated the match but we failed to score.

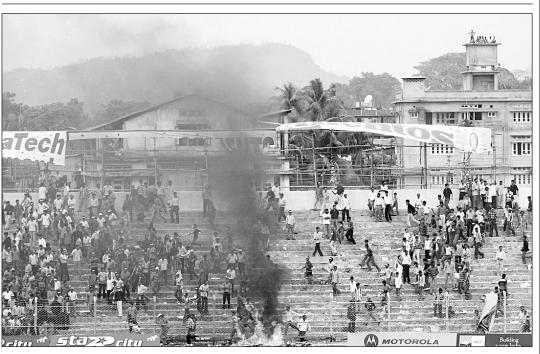
shot came off Indian defender Pradeep during a corner.

Maharian doubled the lead 11 minutes later from another corner when his shot took a deflection off a rival defender and went in off the

Two minutes later, Basanta Thapa sealed victory with a powerful

make a comeback."

Akhmedov said his team collapsed within ten minutes of the game. "We conceded goals early into the match and it was all over then itself," he



## Maradona hopes to lead **Argentina**

INTERNET, undated

Diego Maradona believes he has a chance of coaching Argentina if Jose Pekerman does not lead them to World Cup glory this summer in Germany.

The legendary striker told Argentinian TV: "There is a good willingness of Argentinian Football Association boss Julio Grondona to have me work as a coach of the

"If Jose Pekerman wins the World Cup, I could work with the youth.'

Maradona was asked about Argentina's chances. "We need to remember the last World Cup, in that we were the main

favourites and we returned to Argentina after the first group stage," he said. "The boys know that in Korea-Japan we made history. So that

error will serve as an example for us

to do things in a different way."

## **Angry Martin** "punishes" galacticos

AFP, Martin

Real Madrid president Fernando Martin dragged his underperforming galacticos back into training two and a half days early as punishment for their insipid display against Real Sociedad.

Ronaldo, Zinedine Zidane and company were back in training Sunday morning despite playing at the Bernabeu on Saturday night, a match they threw away after Iker Casillas' mistake gifted the visitors a 1-1 draw in a match which also saw Guti sent off and the players booed

Martin ordered coach Juan Ramon Lopez Caro to cancel the players' proposed rest and focus on trying to secure second place in Primera Liga, a position they lost to Valencia who won 1-0 at Celta Vigo.

The president met with players and coaching staff and asked them to increase their efforts to secure the second automatic Champions League qualifying spot.

# **Puyol admits**

Carles Puyol has confessed that he would like to join Milan if he ever leaves Barcelona.

The outstanding Catalan captain is eyeing a major prize in the shape of the UEFA Champions League trophy this term but the Rossoner stand between Barca and a place in the final in Paris.

Puvol is unlikely to ever contemplate quitting Nou Camp but, if he was to move on, Milan would be his ideal destination.

"Paolo Maldini, Alessandro Nesta, Alessandro Costacurta and

something to learn.' Barcelona tackle Milan over two

legs with Villarreal or Arsenal awaitng the victors in the final

### Premier Div v'ball

BDNEWS. Dhaka

their respective matches of the United Commercial Premier Division Volleyball League at the Volleyball Court adjacent to Bangabandhu National Stadium

SC by 25-13, 25-17 and 25-21 points while Titas Club outplayed Wari Club by 25-18, 25-23 and 25-23 points.

## Fleming shines

FROM PAGE 12 New Zealand's opening batsmen were dismissed in successive overs early in the touring team's reply. Michael Papps was caught at third slip off Monde Zondeki in the sixth over and Jamie How was trapped leg before by Garnett Kruger seven balls later.

Fleming and Peter Fulton added an unbeaten 133 for the third wicket before bad light stopped play half an hour after tea.

dominant partner, making his 96 off 96 balls with 15 fours and four sixes, two of them pulled in one over from Kruger, who was earlier named in the South African squad for the Test

Fulton was unbeaten on 36 off 84 balls with seven fours.

**BRIEF SCORES** REST OF SOUTH AFRICA: 395 all

NEW ZEALAND: 159 for 2 (Fleming 96 not out, Fulton 36 not out;

# Rooney racks up gambling debts

Football

**INTERNET**, undated

England boss Sven-Goran Eriksson will talk to star striker Wayne Rooney over allegations that he has racked up 700,000 British pounds (1.22 million dollars) of gambling

Rooney, who earns an estimated 50,000 pounds (87,290 dollars) a week on the pitch and millions more a year from sponsorship deals, is one of a number of England players said to be involved in betting on sports other than their own, according to the Sunday Mirror newspaper.

It is not the first time England players have been linked to the pursuit of gambling. Manchester United coach Sir Alex Ferguson - who owns his own

boss Kevin Keegan have reputations for enjoying betting. Michael Owen, who owns four racehorses, is well known for his love of gambling and in 2003 he admitted to being an "occasional" gambler who had run up 30,000-40,000 pounds (52,000-70,000

dollars) in losses from his bets.

SERIE A

Football

Inter Milan put their Champions

League elimination by Villarreal

behind them with a 2-1 win at Ascoli

that moved them up to second in

from 33 matches, eight points

behind leaders Juventus and one

ahead of AC Milan who host

Fiorentina and Chievo Verona

second automatic place in next sea-

son's Champions League group stage.

as Inter had to come from behind

after Ascoli striker Fabio Quadliarella fell in the area to earn a

21st minute penalty that Marco

chances before the break, but came

out strongly at the start of the sec-

The pressure paid off after 51

Inter struggled to create scoring

It also helps Inter's bid to claim the

However, the win was not easy

The result gave Inter 71 points

REUTERS, Rome

Serie A on Saturday.

respectively on Sunday

Ferrante converted.

ond half.

A spokesman for Rooney, 20, refused to discuss the newspaper's claims, saying: "We have got absolutely no comment to make at all."

The Football Association said although Eriksson would not launch an inquiry into the claims, he would speak to the players allegedly involved to establish exactly what the situation is.



**WAYNE ROONEY** 

The players are due to take up their World Cup bid in Germany in less than two months' time.

minutes when Obafemi Martins

raced onto a defence-splitting pass

by Santiago Solari only to be

upended by keeper Ferdinando

Coppola as Inter won a penalty of

their own, which Julio Cruz fired into

minutes later, a foul on Cruz earning

a 25-metre free-kick that Sinisa

Mihailovic curled round the wall and

looked like letting go, though they

played the final few minutes of the

match with 10 men after Cruz was

Earlier, Udinese continued their

season's fourth-placed finishers

their second win in a row and took

them seven points clear of Messina

sent off for a second bookable

Having seized control Interrarely

The visitors took the lead five

the roof of the net.

offence.

in at Coppola's near post.

with a 2-0 win at Livorno.

in the last relegation berth.

## Inter players assaulted

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan president Giacinto Facchetti has condemned the group of fans who attacked several of the club's players at Milan's Malpensa airport in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Around 100 Inter supporters, still angry about their team's exit from the Champions League on Tuesday, were waiting for the squad as they got off their flight from Ascoli, where they had won 2-1 on Saturday evening.

Several Inter players were set upon and midfielder Cristiano Zanetti was struck on the back of the head.

"We cannot accept it when disappointment degenerates into violence. Facchetti said.

"What happened at Malpensa airport on Saturday night when the team returned from Ascoli is unaccept-

"Violence is unacceptable for those who declare themselves as Interfans." The Italian Cup is Inter's only realistic hope of landing a trophy this season.

## AR Knitwear champions

SPORTS REPORTER

AR Knitwears beat Car Haat by 4 runs in the final to lift the fourth Dhanmondi Cricket Academy Twenty20 Cricket Cup at the Academy ground on Saturday.

Sinisa revives Interplaced First, AR Knitwears scored 92 for the loss of 5 wickets in 20 overs. In reply, Car Haat were stipulated to 88

runs in the final over of the match. Rohan was adjudged man-of-thematch, while Shoikot of Car Haat was chosen as the man-of-the-series.

### Gaibandha cricket **OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha**

Mohammedan Sporting Club defeated Ghagot Krira Chakra by 98 runs in the Super League phase of the Naheed Cotton First Division Cricket league here at the local stadium yesterday.

Ghagot were bowled out for 106 runs, chasing a total of 203 runs.

## Tough task

climb away from the relegation zone FROM PAGE 12 not only Bangladesh," said Nazarov. A goal either side of halftime by Italy striker Vincenzo laquinta and who is on his second visit to defender Cesare Natali gave last

Bangladesh "Yes, my team beat them twice three years earlier but we have only 30 per cent players from that side. It will depend on which team is better on the day. Every team want to win,

you are in the world of football, that

vou know who Guus Hiddink is.

what he has achieved on a club

level and at national team level, if

it's in Champions League, national

find out if you might be good

enough to be put on a list of

"So if you have to sit down to

leagues or in the World Cup.

# Hiddink out of England frame

"I guess that the homework has

not been done very well," Van



Football

Guus Hiddink's agent on Sunday ruled the PSV Eindhoven and Australia coach out of becoming the next England manager and took a swipe at the Football

Association over their handling of the affair. Hiddink, who guided Holland and South Korea to World Cup semifinals, was the erstwhile favourite to succeed Sven-Goran Eriksson after the 2006 World Cup

But in recent weeks he has slipped out of contention, instead being linked to Real Madrid or

taking over as manager of Russia. The 59-year-old Dutchman's agent Cees van Nieuwenhuizen insisted it was "sort of an insult" for Hiddink to be asked to go on a shortlist for the England job

35 He's all

up in

himself

36 Knock 'em

plished

Balls of

dead

37 Accom-

38 "Great

Fire"

singe

additive

46 Surround-

ed by

48 Glee club

member

49 Pleasant

50 Adversary

detective

Solution time: 27 mins.

47 Rage

51 Blind

part

52 Teen-lit

53 Hostel

45 Lotion

wrapped

ACROSS

4 Made

like

8 Turned

blue?

12 Plague

13 Sported

14 Modern-

day coin

15 Barristers'

member

support

18 "Men in

Black'

co-star

21 Roulette

22 Skedad-

23 Got rid

of a

26 Be idle,

27 Time-

30 Kuralt's

beat

32 Tide type

33 Remnant

pseudo-

34 Dickens

31 Cover

squeak

with "out"

zone units

16 Family

17 Sail

1 The lady

Leander

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

DOWN

1 Lovers

2 Vagrant

3 Diploma

hurdle

4 Vacillated

5 Is willing

6 "Judith"

composer

postage

8 imp

9 Foreign

unit

money

10 Hibernian

tonaue

19 Wilbur's

20 Moonshine

container

compan-

11 Braille bits 36 Twist

seeker's



"We didn't take it too seriously

because you would expect, when

**GUUS HIDDINK** Five Live.

23 Raw

rock

25 Young

26 Namely

(Abbr.)

fashion

instance

territory

32 Undraped

34 Tarzan's

35 Fungai

37 Rid of

39 Mid-

38 Pugilistic

eastern

airline

40 Parks or

41 Turkish

white-

wine

grape

standards

43 Unyielding

42 LAN

Bonheur

discol-

oration

forcefully

27 Height of

28 Hit hard

29 Bond, for

31 Level

24 Charged

particle

candidates .... I think either you go for him or you don't go for Van Nieuwenhuizen added: "He

is totally out of the reckoning. That doesn't disappoint him at all. "He won't be the England man-

The FA this week whittled down their choice of candidates to just a handful of men, a group widely thought to comprise Martin O'Neill Sam Allardyce, Steve McLaren,

Alan Curbishley and Luiz Felipe Scolari. A decision is expected before the World Cup begins on June 9.

HVUJA MRLVJ MX MQV XIMQXZXJMUPM MX AVM JVC ZVJMRS CXIL, U BIUVZ

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF THEY COULD ENGINEER A PERFECT COPY OF A PARK KEEPER, I'D NAME HIM THE CLONE RANGER. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals T

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** "XEE MX MQV HIRBVP!"

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

# Santander on Sunday.

through the second half, drilled in a first-time right-footer from ten yards after meeting a low cross by Azamat

Palestine coach Mohammed Sabah was frustrated after the

**NEPAL-INDIA** Nepal rode on a brace from Pradeep Maharjan to take a 2-0 lead over India, who fielded their youth team in the tournament. Nepal started offensively against their lessexperienced rivals and Maharjan opened their account in the 15th minute when he slammed in a rebound after Surendra Tamang's

drive from 20 vards.

"My team clicked at the right moment. We took the lead which put the inexperienced Indian side under pressure." an elated Nepal coach Shyam Thapa said. "India also played well and they tried hard to

India's Uzbek coach Islam

Indian cricket fans set fire to various materials in the stands of the Nehru Stadium in Guwahati after the fifth ODI between India and England was called off.

### Milan affection **INTERNET**, undated

"Considering that I'd like to finish my career here in Barcelona, and that I'll never play for another Spanish club, if I would have to leave Spain one day, I'd like to go to Milan," he told Gazzetta dello Sport.

Jaap Stam are great defenders. "With them, there is always

Bangladesh Rifles and Titas Club won

Bangladesh Rifles beat Dilkusha

Coming together at 26 for two,

The left-handed Fleming was the

out (McKenzie 147, Duminy 127; Franklin 4/80)