

Luque keen on Spain return

Newcastle United forward Albert Luque has said he is keen to return to Spain after struggling to establish himself in the Premier League.

Terim disappointed

Turkey Coach Fatih Terim believes his side could have defeated Italy in Wednesday's friendly test.

"We are a young side and I am sure we will improve with every match," added the former Fiorentina, Milan and Galatasaray tactician.

Amelia fancies Milan move

Livorno keeper Marco Amelia is keen to move to Milan next year in order to prove his quality.



Italy forward Antonio Di Natale (R) runs off in celebration along with teammate Mauro Camoranesi after scoring his goal against Turkey during their friendly match at Bergamo on Wednesday.

Friendly indeed!

Football

Marco Materazzi's own goal gave Turkey a prestigious 1-1 draw against world champions Italy in a fiercely contested friendly in Bergamo on Wednesday.

television. "There weren't many chances, but I thought that we did enough to win."

into the net before Demirel could recover. Semi-finalists at the 2002 World Cup, Turkey equalised three minutes later thanks to an equally generous gift.

Merkel in Cottbus ranks!

German Bundesliga club Energie Cottbus are looking forward to having a new big name on their books next year, when German Chancellor Angela Merkel will become an honorary member.

Baros saves Czech blushes

An injury-time equaliser by striker Milan Baros gave Czech Republic a 1-1 draw against Denmark in a friendly on Wednesday.

Croat press salute samba star

AFP, Zagreb



Croatian football has a new hero according to the press on Thursday after Brazilian-born Eduardo Da Silva's hat-trick earned a 4-3 away win over Israel in a Euro 2008 qualifier.

pers, all of which carried large pictures of the country's new hero. "With Eduardo, Croatia has a brilliant striker who is going to bulge the opposition's net in many big matches to come," said sports paper Sportske Novosti.

looks assured. "With his qualities, Eduardo is too good for the Croatian league," reasoned Vecernji.

No respite for the Spaniards

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Spain coach Luis Aragonés was frustrated after his side's 1-0 friendly defeat at home to Romania on Wednesday left him with few positives to take into the return of Euro 2008 qualifying action next year.

nervous, and they were stronger after that. In football if you don't kick off games when you can, you see what happens."

did fans in the stadium who jeered the players off the pitch at the end. "Absolute disaster," said sports daily AS, while El Mundo said "This Spanish side are losers."

Bribe allegations investigated

AFP, Paris



European football's ruling body is set to launch an investigation following a player's claims of a corruption attempt prior to a Euro 2008 qualifier on Wednesday.

tions made by Jacek Bak and will demand that UEFA launches an investigation to find out the truth," a statement said.

France exact Greek revenge

Football

REUTERS, Paris

World Cup runners-up France were happy to gain revenge for their Euro 2004 defeat when they rounded off an eventful year with a 1-0 win over Greece in a low-key friendly on Wednesday.

The France coach believed the game was more a preparation for next year's Euro 2008 qualifiers than a conclusion to 2006.



Spanish striker Fernando Morientes lies on the ground in some pain following a hefty challenge in their friendly international against Romania in Cadiz on Wednesday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 42 Accomplished 1 TV alien 44 Dieter's snack 8 Journey 8 Pal 12 Old Olds 13 Actress Skye 14 Long sandwich 15 Previous 17 Jason's ship 18 Listening device 19 Mud 21 Meddle 24 Perch 25 In olden days 26 Maple extract 28 Post-pone 32 Flockhart's McBeal 34 However 36 It has its ups and downs 37 Groucho's "Tattooed Lady" 39 Cushion 41 — judicata

Grid for Cryptiquip crossword puzzle with numbers 1-61.

CRYPTOQUIP
H V Q P I Q U T - Z E I A A H L D
U X J L I H B G H X I Z J V T I X
A H V I H L D I L I X Q A . H B B T I
Q B Q L Z E H G U T P J X I Z ?
Yesterday's Cryptiquip: WHEN MY BELOVED OLD FERN FINALLY STARTS TO DIE, I MAY HAVE TO BID IT A FROND FAREWELL.
Today's Cryptiquip Clue: V equals F



France midfielder Patrick Vieira (R) rides the challenge of Greece forward Georgios Samaras during their friendly match at the Stade de France in Paris on Wednesday.