



PHOTO: AFP

A portrait of Ferenc Puskas is displayed as sentinels guard the coffin of the recently deceased Hungarian soccer legend at the Stephan Basilica church in Budapest on Thursday.

## El Gordo hits back

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid's Brazilian veteran striker Ronaldo hit back at his critics on Thursday after scoring twice in Wednesday's 2-2 draw at Dynamo Kiev.

The 30-year-old had come in for criticism following a series of injuries and poor form - he had only scored twice before Wednesday and his girth has been a constant source of fascination for the media.

"When you score you are great and when you don't score you are fat," said the former Inter Milan and Barcelona star who was world champion with Brazil four years ago.

A cool wind has blown through Real this season after Italian coach Fabio Capello took charge at a club, which has not won a trophy since 2003, for the second time.

Capello has not allowed reputations to affect his choice of lineup and both Ronaldo and former England star David Beckham have spent time on the bench, the latter most of the season to date.

Implying that both of them ought to play, Ronaldo said that he and Beckham had a "perfect" understanding. The Brazilian added: "I want to continue to be important for this team."

The Brazilian told reporters he still intended to hit his season's target of 30 goals while admitting he did not always see eye to eye with Capello, with whom he said he is sometimes "in disagreement".

Ronaldo denied a story in French newspaper Le Monde which linked Real, Barcelona and two other top Spanish clubs Valencia and Betis to doctor Eufemiano Fuentes, who is at the centre of a blood doping affair involving mainly cyclists.

"We're available for any doping tests, including the random tests that are carried out by the federation, UEFA or whoever," said Ronaldo.

## Calderon praises Becks

INTERNET, undated

Real Madrid president Ramon Calderon insists he wants David Beckham to stay at the club for the rest of his career.

Beckham enjoyed the rarity of a full run-out in the absence of midfield regulars Emerson and Raul as Real drew 2-2 with Dynamo Kiev in the Champions League last night.

The 31-year-old hit the post in the second half, and Calderon has been impressed by the former England captain's attitude as he battles to get back into the first team.

"Beckham is an exceptional player on and off the pitch. I would like him to sign on for the rest of his career," Calderon said on his club's website.

"He has never complained about being benched and his charm and caring attitude always shine through."

Beckham's current four-year contract runs out next summer, and he will be free to negotiate with other clubs in January.

## 'Sheva not untouchable'

Football

AFP, London

Jose Mourinho has fuelled speculation of a rift with Andrei Shevchenko by claiming that the 30-million-pound striker has not been good enough to earn "untouchable" status at Chelsea.

Mourinho's remarks, made in an interview to promote a children's cancer charity, were published a day after Shevchenko was forced to deny comments attributed to him which implied he was contemplating a return to Italy less than six months after moving to London.

Mourinho said he had nine players who were guaranteed first team places when fit and admitted Shevchenko, who has scored six times in 20 appearances since his summer move from Milan, was not

one of them. "You think if Joe Cole has an amazing game against Werder Bremen I don't play him for Manchester United?" Mourinho said.

"I play the best players at the time. Sheva is not untouchable because of the way he is playing. Claude Makelele is untouchable because of the way he plays. Michael Essien is untouchable because of the way he plays. It is not because I love them."

The full list of Mourinho's untouchables is: Essien, Makelele, Frank Lampard, John Terry, Ricardo Carvalho, Ashley Cole, Didier Drogba, Michael Ballack and goalkeeper Petr Cech, currently recovering from a serious head injury.

The Chelsea manager denied he was under pressure to play Shevchenko from the club's owner,

Roman Abramovich, and warned that he would head straight for the exit door if the Russian tycoon started interfering in team matters.

"For sure (I would quit)," Mourinho said. "But Roman is very intelligent. He would never do this. If he does this, it's because he doesn't trust the manager. If he doesn't trust the manager he has enough money to sack me, give me compensation, send me home and bring another one in."

Shevchenko was widely quoted earlier this week as saying that his style of game "does not suit" Mourinho and that, if he was not wanted at Stamford Bridge, he would gladly accept a return to Milan on a loan deal in January, as has been widely predicted.

Chelsea denied that the striker had made the remarks and issued a

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## Klinsmann declines US post

Football

AFP, Los Angeles

Former Germany coach Jurgen Klinsmann has decided he will not coach the US national team, which will be guided on an interim basis by American Bob Bradley, ESPN reported.

Hours after Klinsmann told the US sports network that talks had ended with the US Soccer Federation, ESPN reported that unnamed sources told them Bradley, who coaches Major League Soccer's Chivas USA, will take the interim job Friday.

Klinsmann told ESPN that he has backed away from replacing Bruce Arena and guiding the American effort ahead of the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

Klinsmann, who guided

Germany to the World Cup semi-finals this year, lives in Southern California and had been in intense talks with US Soccer Federation president Sunil Gulati regarding the coaching position.

"Sunil and I have concluded our discussions about the US men's national team program and I have withdrawn my name from consideration as coach," Klinsmann told ESPN.

"I'm not going to go into details about our conversations but I certainly want to wish the next coach of the US men's national team much success and I want to also thank Sunil for the opportunity to exchange ideas."

Klinsmann guided his homeland to a third-place World Cup finish on home soil this year. The former German captain led his team to the 1990 World Cup crown, finishing with 47 goals in 108 caps.

Bradley won MLS Coach of the Year honors this year after guiding Chivas into the playoffs with a mark of 10-19 with 13 drawn. Bradley coached the Chicago Fire to the 1998 MLS title.

The Americans appear to have ended a five-month search to fill the void. Bradley will have his first test in a January 20 home friendly against Denmark in nearby Carson.

After the 1998 US World Cup squad finished last in France, American hopes were bolstered by a quarterfinal run in 2002 at South Korea.

But that was followed by disappointment last June when the Americans exited the tournament in the first round, losing to the Czech Republic and Ghana while holding eventual champions Italy to a 1-1 draw thanks to an Italian own goal.



JURGEN KLINSMANN

## UEFA admits Gibraltar

REUTERS, Nyon

Gibraltar was admitted as a provisional member of UEFA on Friday.

The Executive Committee of European soccer's ruling body said in a statement they had "no choice" but to allow the disputed territory provisional membership following an earlier decision by CAS, the Court of Arbitration for Sport, in July.

The statement also pointed out that FIFA, world soccer's governing body, had determined earlier this week that Gibraltar "does not meet the statutory requirements to become a FIFA member."

As a result of Friday's decision, Gibraltar's application for full membership is now set to be discussed at UEFA's Congress in Dusseldorf in January.

The application is rigorously opposed by Spain which claims sovereignty over the British-controlled territory.

UEFA Chief executive Lars Christer Olsson told a media conference that the Executive Committee was not in favour of Gibraltar's full membership but that its hands were effectively tied by the CAS decision.

"Theoretically we could have said no," Olsson said.

"But when you have a legal

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## Bayern, G-14 differences settled

REUTERS, Brussels

The G14 and Bayern Munich have resolved their differences with the German champions cementing their position in the group of Europe's 18 most powerful clubs, G14 chairman David Dein said on Thursday.

Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge told a magazine last month that his club were considering leaving the Brussels-based organisation but following a meeting of the G14 general assembly, Dein said the matter had been resolved.

"I spoke directly to Karl-Heinz on this and as far as I am concerned Bayern Munich are very much part of G14," the Arsenal vice-chairman said.

"The comments were out of frustration, which happens sometimes. But I am satisfied that this is an end to it and Munich have offered to host the next G14 assembly

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## Germany ponder Nike switch

REUTERS, Berlin

The German Football Association (DFB) has received an offer worth 56 million euros (\$75 million) a year from Nike to switch allegiance from long-time equipment supplier Adidas, a German sports newspaper reported on Friday.

Kicker newspaper said Nike had offered the DFB 400 million euros for an eight-year deal from 2011 plus a 50 million euro signing bonus on top.

The German FA (DFB) confirmed it had received a "very interesting offer" from Nike for the period after its contract with Adidas expires at the end of 2010 but declined to provide further details.

Germany have won three World Cups wearing Adidas boots and have enjoyed close ties to the Bavarian sportswear maker since founder Adi Dassler helped them win their first world title in 1954 with his revolutionary screw-in

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## UEFA mulls 24-team Euro

REUTERS, Nyon

UEFA is to consider the possible expansion of the European Championship to 24 national teams instead of the current 16.

UEFA's chief executive Lars Christer Olsson said European football's governing body had discussed the idea during its Executive Committee meeting on Thursday and Friday and agreed to put it to UEFA's Congress in Dusseldorf at the end of January.

The Congress will not vote on the expansion itself, but simply on whether the idea should be the subject of a feasibility study.

Olsson said the proposal could nevertheless become a reality in time for Euro 2012. Ukraine-Poland and Croatia-Hungary have made joint bids to hold Euro 2012, with Italy mounting a solo bid. UEFA is due to announce the winning bid in April next year.

"Individual members of the

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## Martyn surprises & retires

### Most unsung player: Ponting

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Australia batsman Damien Martyn has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket with immediate effect.

The 35-year-old told Cricket Australia of his surprise decision just before they were due to announce the squad for the third Ashes Test.

He indicated he no longer had the motivation to perform at his best.

Cricket Australia boss James Sutherland confirmed Martyn would have kept his place despite scoring only 45 runs in three innings in the first two games.

Martyn, who scored 4,406 Test runs in 67 appearances at an average of 46.37, said he was fully aware of the "tremendous challenges facing Australian cricket" during the Ashes series.

But he continued: "Such challenges require people who are more than 100% committed, dedicated, disciplined and passionate about the game, what it seeks to achieve and how those involved in the game can best serve cricket, sport and the wider community."

"I said to myself when I made this decision in the last 48 hours that I may lose friends in doing what I'm doing."

"But I also said to myself that if I stayed doing what I was doing I may equally lose respect for myself and the friendship of those around me who are entitled to expect from me more than 100%."

Australia captain Ricky Ponting paid tribute to Martyn's contribution to the success of the team in both Test and one-day cricket, describing him as "one of the world's most unsung players".

He said: "It is obviously something Damien has thought long and hard about and I know that I and all of the other members of the team will miss him greatly."

"I don't think it is really understood how good a player he actually is. He is one of those players who, as the conditions and situations got harder and more difficult, the better he became and I know I

will miss his influence on the Australian team."

His place in the squad for the third Ashes Test, which starts on 14 December in Perth, has been taken by uncapped 27-year-old batsman Adam Voges.

Martyn, from Western Australia, was arguably the most stylish batsman in the national team.

But he was dropped from it on a number of occasions during his career, the first time after a loose shot against South Africa in Sydney in January 1994, when Australia failed to reach a target of 117 and were beaten by six runs.

He had to wait more than six years for another chance and made the most of it by hitting the first of 13 Test centuries at Edgbaston on the 2001 Ashes tour.

His career took another downturn in 2005 when he managed only one half century as Australia lost the Ashes in England, but returned for the tour to South Africa at the start of this year and made 101 in the final Test in Johannesburg as Australia completed a 3-0 whitewash.

Martyn was also a prolific one-day batsman, scoring 5,346 runs from 208 matches at an average of 40, with five hundreds and 37 fifties.

He scored an unbeaten 88 as Australia beat India in the 2003

World Cup final despite batting with a broken finger and recently played a leading role as they won the ICC Champions Trophy with two hat-tricks and an unbeaten 47 in the final against West Indies.

"Damien's decision has come as a surprise to us but I fully respect his decision to retire on his terms," said Sutherland, the Cricket Australia chief executive.

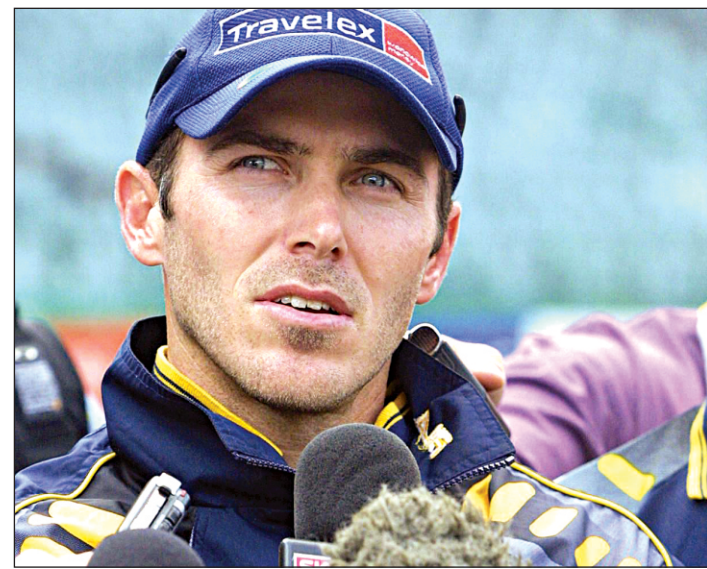
"I got a very clear indication from him that his decision was absolutely final and that he had been thinking about it for a little bit of time."

"I can tell from the tone of his voice and the thought processes in getting to where he's at that there's no point in talking to him further. He wanted to make that decision independent of all other factors and we respect that."

Former Australia captain Ian Chappell said he respected Martyn for the timing of his decision.

"You don't have to be Einstein to know that the Australian selectors are going to want to make the side younger pretty soon and he probably felt he was near the top of the list of guys to go," he said.

"The fact he has got a home Test coming up, that Australia is probably going to win the Ashes back -- all those reasons make it tougher and all the more reason to admire him for it."



DAMIEN MARTYN

## Manchester, London brace for derbies

AFP, London



Wine-loving Sir Alex Ferguson is counting on another vintage performance

from Ryan Giggs to give him cause to pull something special out of the cellar after Saturday's Manchester derby.

Victory over Manchester City at Old Trafford would allow Ferguson to raise a glass to a nine-point advantage over Chelsea at the top of the Premiership table, with the champions not playing until Arsenal visit Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

City contributed to Manchester United's miserable 2005-06 campaign by taking four points from their two league encounters, drawing at Old Trafford and then beating their cross-town rivals 3-1 at the City of Manchester Stadium.

But with the veteran Giggs running into the kind of form that has made him a match-winner so often in the past, Ferguson is confident of a different outcome this time around.

The 33-year-old winger, now playing his trade regularly in midfield,

was outstanding in the 3-1 Champions League win over Benfica in midweek, making United's equaliser and then scoring a well-taken second.

And his enduring value was reflected in Ferguson's move to haul him off immediately his header had hit the net.

"Ryan's performance was superb," the Scot declared. "When he scored I couldn't get him off quick enough because I think he is hitting form again and with a lunchtime kick-off on Saturday that limits his

recovery time."

"He has had a couple of quiet games for us recently, but you can always tell with Ryan when it's coming, you get the signs and we get that on Wednesday night."

Ferguson's achievement in revitalising United this season has been watched with admiration by Stuart Pearce.

"They are a fine side and are playing very well at the moment that is why they are six points clear at the top of the table over a side (Chelsea) that has spent, multi millions," said the City manager.

"Alex has rejuvenated United again this year. That is why young idiots like me have to admire him so much as a manager."

Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho, who was taken to hospital suffering from a severe migraine last weekend, has been handed another headache ahead of the Arsenal match after striker Andriy Shevchenko allegedly hinted at tensions with his new boss.

The Ukrainian forward, who has struggled to make an impact in

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### FIXTURES

(1500 GMT kick-off unless stated)  
**Saturday**  
 Manchester United v Manchester City (1245), Blackburn Rovers v Newcastle United, Liverpool v Fulham, Middlesbrough v Wigan Athletic, Portsmouth v Everton, Tottenham Hotspur v Charlton Athletic, Watford v Reading, Bolton Wanderers v West Ham United (1715)  
**Sunday**  
 Chelsea v Arsenal (1600)  
 Monday  
 Sheffield United v Aston Villa (2000)

## The Eternal derby

REUTERS, Rome



AS Roma's players will be brimming with confidence as they prepare to face arch rivals Lazio in the Rome derby on

Sunday.

Six straight Serie A wins have established Roma in second place on 32 points, four behind leaders Inter Milan.

They also beat Valencia 1-0 in midweek to reach the knockout phase of the Champions League for the first time -- a feat that eluded them even as Italian champions during the 2001-02 season.

"That was an important win, the crowning achievement of all our efforts," said their coach Luciano Spalletti, who has succeeded where a string of others failed by uniting a team that was left shattered by the departure of Fabio Capello in 2004.

again title contenders, they play an attractive, short-passing game and have the most prolific attack in Serie A -- three more reasons why Lazio will be desperate to knock them off their perch.

It is more than five years since Lazio last challenged for the title. Since then the club have sailed close to bankruptcy and lost almost all of their top players.

In Delio Rossi, however, Roma have found a coach able to turn limited resources into a dangerous counter-attacking side.

Their strike partnership of Tommaso Rocchi and Goran Pandev combines pace and skill, while former Italian international Angelo Peruzzi is one of the most experienced goalkeepers in the league.

Roma, meanwhile, are fretting over captain Francesco Totti, who missed the Valencia match with an ankle sprain.

"My ankle is still hurting, but I'll do everything I can to be there against Lazio," said the striker, who is top scorer in the division with nine goals.

In the other matches, Inter travel to Empoli, where they will

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### FIXTURES

(all times 1400 GMT unless stated)  
**Saturday**  
 Reggina v Ascoli (1700), Palermo v Livorno (1930)  
**Sunday**  
 AC Milan v Torino, Atalanta Bergamo v Messina, Cagliari v Parma, Catania v Udinese, Chievo Verona v Fiorentina, Empoli v Inter Milan, Sampdoria v Siena, Lazio v AS Roma (1930)