

Sport

Maradona's faith healed

BUENOS AIRES, Oct 9: Diego Maradona believes in himself again. His return to Argentine soccer with a match-winning debut for Newell's Old Boys won rave reviews on Friday from local media and national team coach Alfio Basile, reports Reuter.

Emelec of Ecuador would dare assume the role of party-pooper. Almost as if a script had been written beforehand, the festivities reached fever pitch when Maradona — who else? — won the game with a spectacular goal in the second half.

That (surprise) was a feeling shared by many of those who were watching me and could not believe their eyes, Maradona exulted. To Basile fell the unenviable task of putting the icing on the comeback cake. He addressed the question as cautiously as possible, saying after the match: "I want him to play. If nothing unusual happens, and I hope it doesn't, he will travel to Australia."

Nigeria's first ever

ALGIERS, Oct 9: Nigeria reached the World Cup finals for the first time when they drew 1-1 with Algeria in their final African qualifier on Friday, reports Reuter. The hard-earned point lifted them above African champions Ivory Coast in the second round Group A standings.



Soccer legend Pele, now playing the role of roving ambassador for the 1994 World Cup finals in the USA, gestures at a press conference held in Frankfurt on October 8. The Brazilian soccer genius is a representative of Master Card, one of the major sponsors of the bonanza in Los Angeles next year. — AFP photo

Alarum for loopy Limey fans

LONDON, Oct 9: Any English soccer fan who stirs up violence during next week's World Cup qualifier in the Netherlands faces a possible ban from attending the finals next year in the United States, the British government said Saturday, reports AP.

The Dutch authorities intend to take a tough line against hooligans and I fully support that approach, Howard said. "This is such an important match that all eyes should be focused on the pitch — not on what is happening elsewhere."

Misbehaving fans could be kept from travelling to the United States next year by the Football Spectators Act of 1989, which says that a person convicted of a soccer-related offence may be subjected to a restriction order. Howard said he hoped the law could also be applied to include acts of hooliganism at the finals.

Yantra under a cloud

SOFIA, Bulgaria, Oct 9: The Bulgarian soccer club Yantra have been expelled from the country's First Division after a bribery charge, media reported Saturday, reports AP. The executive committee of the Bulgarian Football Association suspended Yantra, located in the town of Gabrovo in central Bulgaria, from the top league for the rest of the season and relegated the club to the Second Division next year.

It's dream come true for Pele

NEW YORK, Oct 9: Perhaps nobody is looking forward to next year's World Cup more than Pele, who had a dream to bring the tournament to the United States nearly two decades ago, reports AP. Considered by many as the greatest player in soccer history — now a goodwill ambassador for the sport as well as for his native Brazil — was campaigning for the United States to be hosts of the World Cup back in the 1970s.

States final, but he won't predict anything like that. "I don't think they have an obligation to play well for the American people. That won't just make the World Cup successful," he says. "The American people want a show. If they see beautiful games, they don't care if it is the US or Brazil or Italy or England. They want to see a good show."

great soccer." "The people from the older (soccer) countries worry about what will happen," he says. "When you travel to their countries, they say they are worried, because they don't have too much information. They worry about the money and the crowds."

A month's wait for Krabbe's fate

BONN, Oct 9: A decision on the two-year drugs ban facing German sprinter Katrin Krabbe will be made next month in Monaco, the German Athletics Federation (DLV) said on Friday, reports AP. Krabbe, the former 100m and 200m world sprint champion, was suspended for a year and then banned for a further two years in August after she admitted using the "banned substance Clenbuterol."

Booters' bit for Palestine

JERICHO, West Bank, Oct 9: It was the biggest sports event for Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories in recent memory — and it could not have been choreographed better, reports Reuter. Up to 15,000 sports-starved fans packed a make-shift stadium in the West Bank town of Jericho on Friday to watch French veteran soccer greats like Michel Platini and Alain Giresse play a friendly match against their national team.

other countries, was organised by Varietes Club de France, a club of French sports celebrities, and sponsored by Radio France and Canal Plus TV. It follows the signing in Washington last month of an historic peace accord by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation under which Israel will withdraw from Jericho and Gaza.

wiches and boiled fava beans. The biggest problems for organisers was getting hundreds of fans off the field, and this delayed the match by half an hour. "We have never played a foreign country," said Ibrahim Jadalal, 23, who travelled for nearly two hours from the southern West Bank town of Hebron to see the match.

Multinational y'ball team?

TOKYO, Oct 9: The Yaohan Department Store Group will set up a Hong Kong based multinational women's professional volleyball team this year, Kyodo news service said Friday, reports AP. Yaohan will recruit Olympians and star players from Japan, Europe, North and South America, company sources told the agency.

Everybody knows when I came to play with the Cosmos in '75, we started to work so hard to make soccer grow in the US. Then we started to work to bring the World Cup to the US and a lot of people didn't believe in it. A lot of newspapers started teasing us at that time, saying it was a joke that the World Cup would come to the United States. Not much of a joke, was it? "Today, it is a reality," he says. "This means a lot for me. I used to say it is my dream come true to have the World Cup here. Next June, my dream will be real."

He also believes the doubters in Europe and South America — and there are many who believe bringing the World Cup to the United States is tantamount to heresy — will be surprised by the positive public response to the event. "First of all, this is a new thing and the American people want a new show. This will be successful as a show, almost like the Olympic Games. Everybody in 1984 said the Olympic Games at Los Angeles would not get any crowds for the soccer, that the Americans don't like soccer, that they would only go to see swimming and the basketball."

"This is the problem. I think if Brazil has the chance to put the players together and train for 4-5 months, we will be strong enough to be in the final of the World Cup." Pele believes the key to Brazil's success is the availability of 27-year-old striker Romario, who plays for FC Barcelona in the Spanish First Division. "Of course, in the last game against Uruguay, Brazil brought Romario back for Spain. Romario was the best player in that game. If Romario can stay on the team, practice and train with the team, we will have a strong team in the World Cup," he said. "But if they do not have time to train or they do not bring in all the players to train and practice, may be Brazil will be a tremendous party, with

Jockey dies after race fall

SYDNEY, Oct 9: Leading Australian jockey Ken Russell died Saturday evening after suffering injuries when he fell from his horse during a race at Rosehill race course, hospital officials said, reports AP. Russell, 42, was taken to Westmead Hospital after his horse fell during the Tooheys Gold Handicap, the final race of the day, but died of head injuries soon afterward, the officials said. Another horse, Sonar Bar, crashed into Russell. Russell's wife Carol was at the track and witnessed the accident. Tuig, the horse Russell was riding, suffered severe injuries and had to be destroyed.



The Palestinian football team carries overhead the national flag before their game against a French all-stars team in Jericho on Oct 8. The French team, led by Michel Platini, lost 1-0 to the Palestinians. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues. ACROSS: 1 Polar employee, 4 Type of plastic, 7 Worshiper's place, 11 Brazilian state, 13 Squabble, 14 Vincent Lopez's theme, 15 Neighbor of Turkey, 16 A Stooze, 17 Way down there, 18 Seabees' motto, 20 Near-black, 22 Kennel cry, 24 In the direction of, 26 Stared wide-eyed, 32 Electrician, at times, 33 "— effort", 34 Prized possession, 36 Home of song, 37 "— not lost...". DOWN: 2 Sweet as You —, 3 Friend of Kukla and Ollie, 4 Biceps locale, 5 Benefit, 6 Chur-chillian offering, 7 "Moon River" singer, 8 Word in a sentry's call, 9 Hearty brew, 10 Knock, 12 Sheriff, 19 Art medium, 21 Promise, 23 Cribbage score-keeper, 25 Neighbor-hood, 26 Rip, 27 Low cart, 28 Equipment, 29 "Man — Mancha", 30 Kite's activity?, 31 Dict. entry, 35 Treasure seeker's aid, 38 School zone sign, 40 Outdo, 42 Bonus, 45 Millennium fraction, 47 Implement, 48 Cut short, 49 Coop group, 50 She's on her way out, 51 Aussie avis, 52 Kins-woman, 54 Verily.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid. A 10x10 grid with some letters filled in and others blank, representing a substitution cipher.

CRYPTOQUIP S J F B Z R O Y P P O S R L F E J W F U P W S X W F V V Y J C U R S G P J W E O E Z J E X L O W F Y O O Z J O I C R G G Y I R T T Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU TRADE A SKUNK FOR A LION IT'S USUALLY A ROAR DEAL. Today's Cryptoquip clue: F equals N 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.