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Ayrton Senna laid to rest

SAO PAULO, May 6: Triple world champion racing driver Ayrton Senna was buried Thursday with full state honours in Sao Paulo's Morumbi cemetery...

Marino Grand Prix in Italy. Among the sporting figures present at the funeral were French four-time world champion and arch-rival Alain Prost...

that I realise how much I will miss him," he said at the cemetery. In a move approved by Senna's family, Prost joined Brazilian racing driver Emerson Fittipaldi and his son Christian, Austrian Gerhard Berger...



Tens of thousands of Brazilians line Sao Paulo's Marginal Tiete highway as the funeral cortege carrying the coffin of three-time world auto driving champion Ayrton Senna heads for the city centre on Wednesday.

Dutch WC squad named

ROTTERDAM, May 6: Dutch coach Dick Advocaat named former captain Ruud Gullit on Friday in his squad for next month's World Cup finals in the United States, reports Reuter.

One of the game's most distinctive and charismatic performers, and a favourite with crowds worldwide, Gullit wins his return after sparking form in Italy this season. Advocaat had few surprises in his squad. It was already evident that star striker Marco van Basten would be sidelined through the ankle injury that has kept him out of action for the whole of this season.

TEAM

Goalkeepers: Edwin Van der Sar, Ed de Goey, Theo Snelders. Defenders: Danny Blind, Frank de Boer, Ulrich van Gobbel, John de Wolf, Stan Valckx, Ronald Koeman. Midfielders: Frank Rijkaard, Rob Witschage, Arthur Numan, Jan Wouters, Wim Jonk, Aron Winter. Strikers: Ronald de Boer, Marc Overmars, Peter van Vossen, Gaston Taument, Dennis Bergkamp, Ruud Gullit, Bryan Roy.

Romario's father kidnapped

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 6: Brazilian soccer star Romario, whose father has been kidnapped, said he will remain in Barcelona to play in this weekend's crucial match against Real Madrid, the Globo television channel reported on Thursday, reports Reuter. Earlier, a local newspaper quoted the striker for Spanish champions Barcelona as saying he might return to Brazil.

Globo, which interviewed Romario by telephone, reported that Romario wants his two young children, who are currently in Rio, to travel to Barcelona. He also said he had been advised not to speak about the kidnapping. Romario trained as normal on Thursday.

His 64-year-old father Edevaldo de Souza Faria was kidnapped Monday night after leaving his bar in the northern part of Rio.

"I did not expect this, but I was tired of warning him not to go out alone," Romario was quoted by the Jornal do Brasil as saying.

Helio Vigio, head of Rio's anti-kidnapping squad, told Reuters that kidnapers have demanded 7 million dollars in ransom.

Vigio said police were investigating but would not provide further details. The family only notified police of the kidnapping on Wednesday, he added.

Rumours that De Souza had been released were denied by family members contacted by Reuters at the home of Romario's father.

"We believe he is still being held captive," said a woman who identified herself as the fiancée of Romario's brother.

Sweden sink Nigeria

STOCKHOLM, May 6: Sweden beat African champions Nigeria 3-1 in an international friendly match here Thursday night, as Nigeria showed up without their star players, reports AFP.

Swedish midfielder Stefan Schwarz opened the match by scoring after just two minutes, recording one of Sweden's fastest ever goals in international play.

Schwarz also combined with midfielder Jonas Thern to confuse and outplay the Nigerians.

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Gullit to make up for lost time

ROME, May 6: Ruud Gullit will be 32 years old in September but is still one of the greatest players in the world, reports Reuter.

That is not just the opinion of his millions of fans nor is it just the view of a sympathetic media, but the considered opinion of AC Milan who have just bought the dreadlocked Dutchman back from Sampdoria, a year after mistakenly letting him go.

Silvio Berlusconi, Milan's owner and Italy's new Prime Minister, has admitted openly the club were wrong to let him leave last May after six seasons at the San Siro.

Gullit has had an outstanding season with Sampdoria and will be back in the Milan side for the start of next season.

It was a great satisfaction when Berlusconi said publicly that his biggest mistake was his new contract.

Milan, one of the world's great clubs, can afford to be choosy about who they buy, and can afford to buy the best.

When they first bought Gullit from PSV Eindhoven for a then world record fee of 5.5 million pounds (8.28 million dollars) in 1987 he was undoubtedly the best, being voted the world footballer-of-the-year and the European footballer-of-the-year in 1987.

Now seven years and countless knee operations later, he is still a potent force who could yet lead the Netherlands all the way to the World Cup final.

One of the game's most distinctive and charismatic ambassadors and a favourite with crowds worldwide, Gullit has not appeared in a Dutch shirt since coach Dick Advocaat substituted him during a World Cup clash with England at Wembley in April 1993.

That indignity provoked



RUUD GULLIT

Gullit into quitting international soccer for the second time in just over six months. The lure of the World Cup has tempted him back again one last time, but he is adamant he will retire, from international soccer for good after the finals.

"In America I will say a final farewell to the Dutch team. The 1996 European Championships are too distant.

"I don't have to be the number one or anything, I don't want to be the captain, that's Ronald Koeman's job. I don't need to be involved in discus-

sions with the coach on the line-up. I just want to make my experience available for teammates, help them to play better, set up chances for them."

Gullit's career was resurrected at Sampdoria. Free of the knee injuries which plagued him at Milan, the tall, supremely athletic Gullit rediscovered all the drive and skill which made him Europe's top player in the late 1980s.

Sampdoria made Gullit the focal point of their team, allowing him licence to roam wherever his instincts took him.

He responded by scoring 15 league goals, easily his best return in seven seasons in Italy, and inspiring a team of limited resources to third place in the league and triumph in the Italian Cup.

That was good enough for Milan to want him back — and Gullit is pleased to be returning to the limelight.

On the pitch he stands out, an unmistakable figure with his locks and commanding physique while Italian crowds love his sporting gestures towards friend and foe alike and the sheer enthusiasm he brings to the game.

Off the field he is a journalist's dream, fluent in several European languages and prepared to hold forth on a range of sporting and social issues.

Back in 1987 he dedicated his European footballer-of-the-year award to South African leader Nelson Mandela and his frequent attacks on racism have helped make him hero for black soccer fans the world over.

The son of a Surinamese father and a Dutch mother, the Amsterdam-born Gullit made his professional debut at the age of 16 for the local club in the nearby town of Haarlem.

He soon moved to Feyenoord, playing alongside the maestro Johan Cruyff in the championship winning team of 1984.

Further Dutch league titles followed in 1986 and 1987, convincing Berlusconi that he was the man to take the Italian club back to the top.

Gullit immediately galvanised Milan, helping them to the Italian title in 1988 and crowning a marvellous year by captaining the Dutch to the European Championship.

Hailed by Ireland manager Jack Charlton as "the complete modern footballer", Gullit's progress was subsequently slowed by a series of knee operations.

Injured in the 1989 European Cup semifinal, Gullit returned for the final barely a month after a knee operation, rattling home two goals in his team's 4-0 win over Steaua Bucharest.

But fresh surgery was required which kept Gullit out of the game for almost a year before the 1990 World Cup finals.

He appeared in all four games in Italia '90 but was shadow of himself as the unhappy Dutch team, riven by internal bickering, made an early exit.

That being the case, his return to the Dutch team promises to be spectacular.

New twist in Cameroon's prep

YAOUNDE, May 6: FIFA is threatening to suspend Cameroon's Soccer Federation with the World Cup finals just six weeks away, reports Reuter.

Sepp Blatter, the world soccer body's secretary-general, has ordered the Central African country to accept the outcome of elections at the National Federation, FECAFOOT, or risk having their team excluded from next month's finals.

In a fax sent from Zurich on May 3, Blatter warned soccer authorities that failure to do so would lead to FECAFOOT's suspension from FIFA.

He said FIFA's legal department had concluded the election was "perfectly valid". FIFA had sent an earlier fax on April 29 requesting prompt action.

Present Paul Biya's government has sided with FECAFOOT's ousted former president, Pascal Bayon Owona. He was sacked by the Federation's central committee on March 30 for alleged mismanagement and embezzlement.

Owona was replaced by Maha Daher, FECAFOOT's former secretary-general. But Owona said the vote was illegal and won backing from Prime Minister Simon Achidi Achu, who sent him to Europe to sign an exclusive sponsorship deal for the 'Lions'.

In early April the Cameroon Tribune, the government daily, reported that 50 policemen occupied FECAFOOT's offices to deny access to Daher and his new committee.

State-controlled television says Owona is still the official president. Daher, whose telephones at home and at the office have been cut, told Reuters on Thursday he had no government response to FIFA's fax. A spokesman for the Prime Minister declined comment. FIFA officials appeared keen to play down the chances of Cameroon missing out on the World Cup finals.

Guido Tognoni, FIFA spokesman, said: "We've written them a letter saying they could be suspended if they carry on with this row, but we didn't specifically mention the World Cup."

Tognoni described it as a "standard procedure" used to put pressure on a federation. The row with FIFA was only the latest setback in Cameroon's chaotic preparations. The 'Lions' have failed to organise any warm-up matches at home and French coach Henri Michel is under political pressure to pick veteran striker Roger Milla.

An unseemly struggle for control of the World Cup budget has also broken out between officials and politicians.

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Martina moves into qtrs

ROME, May 6: Former world number one Martina Navratilova on Thursday defeated Argentine lines Gorrochategui to advance to the quarterfinals of the clay court Italian Open — one of the few tournaments she has never won, reports Reuter.

The 37-year-old Navratilova dropped the second set on a cool, blustery afternoon but the second seed came through 6-2, 3-6, 6-4.

In her last season on the circuit, Navratilova was pushed hard by the unseeded Argentine who had defeated her on the same surface at the Hilton Head tournament five weeks ago.

Navratilova, who returns to

Sawamatsu defeated 13th seeded American Ann Grossman 6-3, 6-3 on Thursday.

Top-seed Conchita Martinez of Spain breezed into the quarterfinals with a 6-1, 6-1 rout of Argentina's Patricia Tarabini.

Italian qualifier Adriana Serra-Zenetti ousted another seed, No 10 Brenda Schultz.

The diminutive Italian, who eliminated No 4 Anke Huber after losing the first set, had an easier time against her Dutch opponent, who at 6-foot-2 (1.88 metres) is a foot (30 centimetres) taller.

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