

### Ferguson on pullout

LONDON, July 4 (Reuters): Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson said his club had bowed to British government pressure when they pulled out of next season's FA Cup in favour of the new world club championship.

But Sports Minister Tony Banks insisted later that United were happy to make the change and downplayed Ferguson's claim that the Government had forced the club's hand.

The Tabloid News of the World quoted Ferguson on Sunday as saying that opting for the new tournament in Brazil in January was essential if England were to be awarded the World Cup finals in 2006.

Ferguson told the paper the club had tried everything to defend their FA Cup crown next season.

"When people say we just simply dismissed the FA Cup for bigger and better things, they couldn't be more wrong. I didn't want to do it -- it was the last thing I wanted."

But "in the last week we have been under considerable pressure from both the FA and the Government to find a solution", he said.

Ferguson said the Government was "on a crusade for the World Cup and, in fairness, it would be a great boost to the country if we hosted it in 2006". Banks said: "Exceptional circumstances have caused this situation to arise."

But this is something Manchester United were happy to do and the idea that I personally forced them to do so is a rather interesting story."

The Sunday Mirror said the seeds of the club's decision were sown in a meeting between Banks and FIFA president Sepp Blatter in Germany a week after the European Cup final in May.

It said Banks was made aware that England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup finals would fail if Manchester United snubbed the new competition in Brazil.

The Mail on Sunday quoted Banks as saying: "I happen to know, as a member of the World Cup campaign committee, that if Manchester United hadn't gone to Brazil it would have destroyed our chances of staging the 2006 World Cup finals."

United's decision to opt out of the FA Cup drew bitter criticism from several other premier league clubs.

### Advocaat likes the exemption

GLASGOW, July 4: Scottish Premier League champions Rangers should follow European champions Manchester United's lead by withdrawing from a domestic cup competition, their Dutch coach Dick Advocaat said Saturday, reports AFP.

Advocaat thinks his Treble winners' hopes of Champions' League success will be hindered by participation in the Scottish League Cup, which he believes has "no value".

Ironically it was that very same competition that gave Advocaat his first silverware after he took charge at Ibrox last summer.

Manchester United withdrew from the FA Cup earlier in the week to concentrate on the World Team Championships in Brazil, and Rangers have similar worries of a fixture pile-up.

It will almost certainly be an unfamiliar Rangers team that takes the field in the early rounds of the League Cup which is still searching for a sponsor following Coca-Cola's withdrawal in 1997.

Advocaat told the Sunday Mail newspaper: "At the time we are playing our European ties we're stuck with this competition which seems to be played for fun."

The League Cup has no value because it doesn't even give the trophy winners a place in Europe."

### Yang Eintracht's permanently

BEIJING, July 4: On-loan Chinese striker Yang Chen has joined German First Division club Eintracht Frankfurt permanently for 3.75 million yuan (452,000 dollars), Xinhua news agency reported Sunday, says AFP.

Yang last season became the first Chinese player to appear in a German side when he went on loan to Eintracht. His eight goals helped the Frankfurt outfit narrowly avoid dropping out of the Bundesliga.

First Division side Beijing GuoAn agreed to release the 25-year-old Chinese international permanently during talks here with Eintracht's vice-chairman Gaetano Patella, Xinhua said.

### Esperance pip Kaizer Chiefs

MABOPANE, South Africa, July 4: Bechir Sahbani scored in extra time to give Esperance of Tunisia a 1-0 victory over Kaizer Chiefs of South Africa in a Vodacom Challenge semifinal here on Saturday, reports AFP.

The other semifinal of the new 160,000-dollar tournament will be staged in Port Elizabeth today between Orlando Pirates of South Africa and ASEC of Cote d'Ivoire.

Victory completed a remarkable 72 hours for Esperance, who won the Tunisian Cup on Thursday with an extra-time victory over Club Africain and arrived in South Africa just hours before the match.

Both teams wasted several chances in a close match before unmarked Sahbani fired the ball past goalkeeper Brian Baloyi at the second attempt after 102 minutes.



Brazil's Flavio Conceicao (R) gets the better of Gerardo Torrado of Mexico during their Group B encounter at Ciudad del Este on July 3. — AFP photo

### Stars see red

## Brazil overcome Mexican heat



ASUNCION, July 4: Brazil's Rivaldo was sent off for the second time in four internationals while Chile's Marcelo Salas was shown the red card for theatricals as their respective teams won at the Copa America on Saturday, reports Reuters.

Rivaldo and Salas, two of the tournament's biggest names, were among four players sent off in the group B double bill in Ciudad del Este, where Brazil beat Mexico 2-1 to qualify for the quarter-finals and Chile overcame Venezuela 3-0.

There was little question over the dismissal of Barcelona star Rivaldo, dispatched to the dressing room for a violent foul on Salvador Carmona, who will have been grateful to survive with both his legs intact.

But Salas, who set up two of his team's three goals, may feel aggrieved. The Lazio striker received his first yellow card after the referee judged he had dived in the penalty area, although replays suggested he had been genuinely fouled. He was booked for the same offence outside the penalty area in the second half, when it appeared that he had his hair pulled as he tussled for the ball.

Chile ended the game with nine players after the first half dismissal of right-back Jorge Vargas, while Venezuela's Rolando Alvarez was sent off after just ten minutes for a violent tackle.

Rivaldo, also sent off in a friendly against the Netherlands last month, left the field as Mexico staged a late fight-back.

### BRAZIL-MEXICO

Brazil, who joined Peru in the last eight, had cruised to a 2-0 halftime lead thanks to goals by Amoroso, whose 18th-minute effort was set up with a diagonal pass by Ronaldo, and a spectacular long-range drive by Palmeiras midfielder Alex from nearly 30 metres.

In the second half, Ronaldo slowed up noticeably while Mexico brought on Gerardo Torrado and Isaac Terrazas and took the initiative. Terrazas pulled back a 73rd minute goal after Brazil goalkeeper Dida failed to catch a free kick and Torrado nearly equalised with a long-range shot turned around the post by Dida.

By the end, Brazil were so desperate that coach Wanderley Luxemburgo replaced Ronaldo with defensive midfielder Joao Carlos.

Nineteen-year-old Ronaldo Assis, who became the sensation of the tournament with a

magnificent goal in the 7-0 demolition of Venezuela, was brought on for the last ten minutes but saw little of the ball.

Brazil have maximum six points from two games while Mexico have three, and dropped to third behind Chile on goal difference. However, Mexico are favourites to finish second as they face Venezuela in their last match on Tuesday, while Chile take on defending champions Brazil.

The top two teams qualify automatically while the two best third-place teams from the three groups also go through.

### CHILE-VENEZUELA

Ivan Zamorano set Chile on the way by converting a chance provided by Salas in the fifth

his team's 3-1 win over Ecuador, may hope to level in today's Group C match against Colombia.

Palermo, who has a prolific record for his club Boca Juniors, appeared somewhat upset Saturday when reporters suggested he was only in the Argentine team because some European-based stars are absent.

"It is us who are here and the coach believes in us," he snapped. "I don't know the motives about the ones who are not here and I don't want to talk about them."

**TODAY'S MATCHES**  
Uruguay vs Ecuador 5:30 am (BST)  
Argentina vs Colombia 8:30 am (BST)  
Star Sports will show both games.

### STANDINGS

ASUNCION, July 4 (Reuters): Copa America standings after Saturday's games:

GROUP A	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Peru	2	2	0	0	4	2	6
Paraguay	2	1	1	0	4	0	4
Bolivia	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Japan	2	0	0	2	2	7	0
<b>Results:</b> June 29 — Paraguay 0 Bolivia 0							
July 2 — Paraguay 4 Japan 0							
July 1 Bolivia 0 Paraguay v Peru							
GROUP B							
Brazil	2	2	0	0	9	1	6
Chile	2	1	0	1	3	1	3
Mexico	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Venezuela	2	0	0	2	0	10	0
<b>Results:</b> June 30 — Mexico 1 Chile 0							
July 3 — Venezuela 0 Brazil 3							
July 3 — Chile 3 v Venezuela 0							
July 2 Mexico 1 Brazil 2							
<b>Remaining fixtures:</b> July 6 — Venezuela v Mexico							
Brazil v Chile							
GROUP C							
Argentina	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Colombia	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Uruguay	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Ecuador	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
<b>Results:</b> July 1 — Colombia 1 Uruguay 0							
Argentina 3 Ecuador 1							
<b>Remaining fixtures:</b> July 4 — Argentina v Colombia							
Ecuador v Uruguay							
July 7 — Ecuador v Colombia							
Uruguay v Argentina							
<b>Note:</b> Top two in each group plus the two best third-placed teams qualify for the quarter-finals.							
Peru and Brazil already qualified.							

### TOP SCORERS

ASUNCION, July 4: Copa America goalscorers after Saturday's games, reports Reuters.  
3 — Amoroso (Brazil)  
2 — Roberto Holcen (Peru), Ronaldo (Brazil), Martin Palermo (Argentina), Miguel Benitez, Roque Santa Cruz (Paraguay)  
1 — Wagner Lopes, Atsuhiro Miura (Japan), Jorge Soto, Israel Zamica (Peru), Luis Hernandez (Mexico), Ronaldo Assis, Rivaldo, Emerson Ferreira (Brazil), Victor Bonilla (Colombia), Diego Simeone (Argentina), Ivan Kaviedes (Ecuador), Ivan Zamorano, Jose Luis Sierra (Chile).



Venezuela's Ruberth Moran of Venezuela (R) and Francisco Vargas of Chile are locked in a tussle during their Copa America clash at Ciudad del Este on July 3. — AFP photo

### Barthez beats them all

PARIS, July 4: Goalkeeper Fabien Barthez is France's most popular sports figure, edging World Cup-winning team-mate Zinedine Zidane into second place, according to an opinion poll to be published today, reports Reuters.

Yachtswoman Florence Arthaud came third in the poll of 1,013 French people over 15 commissioned by the Sunday newspaper Journal Du Dimanche.

The shaven-headed Monaco goalkeeper received 56.7 per cent of votes to Zidane's 52.5 and 38.6 for Arthaud, the first woman to win the Route du Rhum trans-Atlantic solo sailing race in 1990.

There are five footballers in the top 10, all members of France's 1998 World Cup winning team.

The others are new Inter Milan signing Laurent Blanc, captain Didier Deschamps who has just joined Chelsea, and Arsenal's Emmanuel Petit.

Tottenham Hotspur's David Ginola, a popular figure in Britain but overlooked by World Cup coach Aime Jacquet, is 12th.

The others in the top 10 are Olympic judo champion David Douillet, yachtswoman Isabelle Autissier, Formula One motor racing driver Jean Alesi and Olympic double sprint champion Marie-Jose Perec, cycling's Richard Virenque, who would almost certainly have featured among the top 10 before last year's Tour de France doping scandal, came a lowly 30th.

The highest-placed male cyclist was Laurent Jalabert, 20th, in a sport whose image has been badly damaged by the doping revelations of the last 12 months.

### Van Hooijdonk blasts Forest

LONDON, July 4: Dutch striker Pierre van Hooijdonk has blasted former club Nottingham Forest, where he went on strike last season before being recalled, as the Midlands relegation target.

"I'd be ashamed to play for Forest against a Dutch club, I'd rather not be on the pitch," said Van Hooijdonk, who last month signed for Dutch top-flight outfit Vitesse Arnhem.

"Nottingham Forest was a big mistake. It is a terribly amateurish club," he told the News of the World.

The 29-year-old fell out of favour with Forest for downing tools and refusing to return for half the season to the City Ground in a dispute over investment in new players at the club, which he said was not good enough for the Premiership.

Former England skipper David Platt last week took over as Forest coach with ambitious plans to spend a reported 15 million dollar kitty on new talent to try to ensure promotion at the first attempt.

### Atletico pursue 'Piojo' Lopez

MADRID, July 4: New Atletico Madrid coach, Italian Claudio Ranieri, is after Valencia's Argentine international forward Claudio "Piojo" Lopez, sports daily As reported on Sunday, says AFP.

Ranieri, who arrived from Valencia only a week ago after leading them to a Spanish Cup triumph over Atletico, is keen to take Lopez with him after the striker placed third in the Spanish goalscoring charts last season with 21 goals.

Also chasing the 25-year-old ace are Italy's Lazio. Lopez is under contract at Valencia until June 2001 and any team prising him away before then would have to fork out 24 million dollars.

### Angela soars to new Euro heights

PARIS, July 4: Ukraine's Angela Balakhonova set a European pole vault record and edged closer to Australian Emma George's world mark at the Stade de France on Saturday, reports Reuters.

Balakhonova vaulted 4.55 metres to score an overwhelming victory ahead of second-placed Tatyana Grigorieva of Australia, who cleared 4.41.

George, who set her world record 4.60 in Sydney in February, was fifth.

Another record at the first athletics meeting to be held in France's soccer World Cup stadium was the 58,000 crowd, the biggest ever for an athletics event in the country.

In a low-key meeting, Briton Dwain Chambers won the men's 100 metres in 10.12 seconds from Ghana's Leonard Myles-Mills and American veteran Dennis Mitchell.

Canadian former world record holder Donovan Bailey, continuing his comeback after rupturing his right Achilles tendon last September, was last but not disappointed.

"I'm happy, I feel good physically but there are still a few technical problems," Olympic champion Bailey said.

"I'm trying to learn to race again after my injury and it's only my fourth outing. I've never run after records but after victories."

"I'll be in Seville and I'll do my best, like I've always done," Bailey added, looking ahead to the world championships in August.

Ukraine's Zhanna Pintusevich, women's world 200 metres champion, won the 100 metres in 10.97 ahead of Jamaican veteran Merlene Ottey.

## 'Posh' becomes Mrs Beckham!

DUBLIN, July 4: In a secret ceremony at a romantic Irish castle pin-up Manchester United midfielder David Beckham married Spice Girl Victoria Adams Sunday, reports AFP.

The golden couple exchanged vows at a lavish bash in the French-owned Luttrellstown Castle retreat for the rich on the outskirts of Dublin.

A single white dove was released as they married.

Just close family and friends attended the actual ceremony presided over by Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork Paul Colton.

The nuptials between the multi-millionaires Beckham, 24, and Adams, 25, better known as "Posh Spice", are being hailed as the celebrity wedding of the year with no expense spared.

Dubbed the "people's royal wedding" by the tabloid press, exclusive media rights to the

showbiz affair have been bought up by glossy magazine OK! for a reported one million pound (1.5 million dollars) fee.

The couple exchanged wedding rings within a tight ring of security around the heavily wooded 560 acres (227 hectares) estate.

Crowds gathered at the entrance hoping to catch a glimpse of the 300 showbiz/soccerbiz guests on their way into the medieval castle but many travelled in smoked glass limousines.

The guests included Sir Elton John, other members of the Spice Girls group, most of the Manchester United team and Sir Bobby Charlton.

The leafy estate and a covered walkway between the fairytale castle with its gothic battlements and an elaborately decorated marquee, protected OK!'s investment from prying lenses.

Over 100 security men, some with guard dogs, roamed the estate to deter gatecrashers or intrusive photographers.

No expense had been spared for the glitzy celebrations with children's amusements, an orchestra and a fireworks display planned for after the reception.

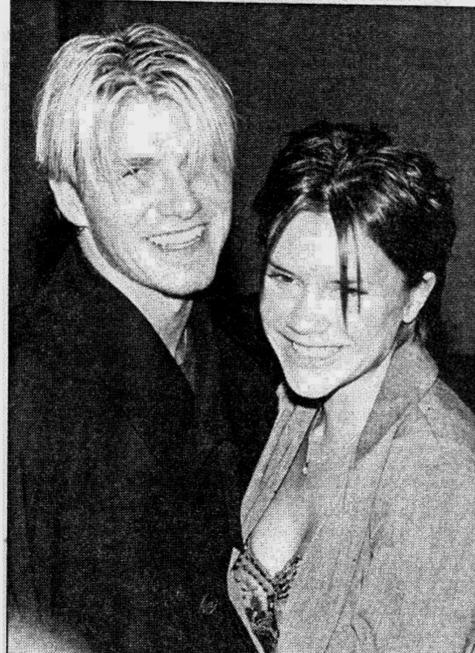
Months of planning have gone into the wedding with hundreds of people checking everything out down to the last detail.

The wedding feast was reported to be red pepper soup, followed by breast of turkey or grilled Mediterranean vegetables for the vegetarians, followed by a favourite of Beckham's, sticky toffee pudding.

The theme colours for the wedding, which is reported to be costing 500,000 pounds, are black and white.

No description of Posh's wedding dress, costing 60,000 pounds, was given apart from the fact it was designed by American Vera Wang, who created actress Sharon Stone's wedding gown.

Looking relaxed before the ceremony, Beckham played a round of golf on Luttrellstown's course.



An AFP file photo of the Beckhams — David and Victoria.

### World University Games on

## Russia lifts first gold

PALMA DE MALLORCA, Balearic Islands, July 4: Reigning all-around world champion Svetlana Khorkina led Russia to the women's team title in gymnastics Saturday to claim the first gold medal of the 20th World University Games, reports AFP.

Khorkina earned the day's top apparatus score, a 9.825 on the bars, and was the top individual performer as Russia beat strong teams from Ukraine and China.

The Russians totalled 113,487 points for the four disciplines, Ukraine took the silver with 112,974, and China 111,744. All three countries boasted their likely lineups for the next World Championships, in China in October.

A young US team was fifth, with 109,012 points, on the first full day of competition at this biennial event for collegiate athletes. Three Americans, led by ninth-place Heidi Louise Moneymaker, had individual scores among the top 24 and

qualified for the all-around competition on Monday.

The men's team competition, where the Russians will be favoured again, is Sunday.

More than 4,000 athletes are expected to take part in 12 sports at the games, which were to be officially opened with a torch-lighting ceremony at the new 4 billion pesetas (25 million dollars) Son Moix Stadium Saturday night. The games close July 13.

Saturday's other action was limited to preliminary round games in men's basketball and volleyball.

The US basketball team struggled against South Korea for a half before stretching its University Games record winning streak to 33 games with a 96-77 victory.

Jung-Lae Lee's 3-pointer at the start of the second half brought South Korea to within 43-39, but the US team's improved perimeter defence and strong inside play carried it to the win down the stretch.

Forward Kevin Freeman, a member of Connecticut's NCAA champions, paced the United States with 18 points, while North Carolina centre Brendan Haywood muscled his way to 15 points and a game-high nine rebounds before fouling out with 4:04 to play.

The United States, which has won five straight gold medals at this event, faces Nigeria on Sunday in its second game. Nigeria lost 66-61 to Lithuania on Saturday.

Host Spain, whose top national team faced Italy for the European title in France on Saturday, turned in the most dominating performance here in a 113-51 rout of Hong Kong.

Elsewhere, Russia beat Finland 87-75, Bulgaria got past Ireland 87-80, Britain handled Peru 94-54, and Canada had little trouble beating Japan 67-42.

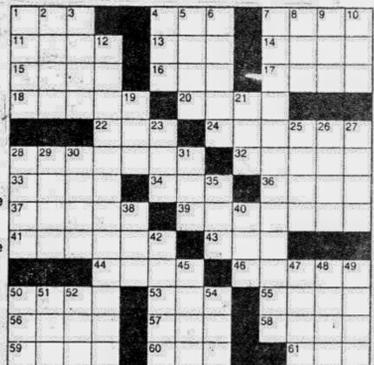
Winners included the United States, which beat Norway, 25-17, 25-11, 25-13, Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, Brazil and Russia.



Dwain Chambers (R) of Great Britain sprinting towards the finish ahead of the pack during 100 metres of the Grand Prix IAAF meeting at Saint-Denis, France on July 3. — AFP photo

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS  
1 Made a lap? 46 Brown ermine 3 Farewell 4 Has the skill 26 Come in last  
5 Leave out 27 Kept tabs on  
6 Airline employee 28 Chime  
7 Seven 29 Bruins' home  
8 Big brother 9 Belushi characterization  
10 Mule of base  
11 "La Vie en Rose" singer 56 Expol 57 Leading lady?  
12 Thought 58 Gumbo 10 Mule of base  
13 Goose egg 59 Salver 12 Twelve refrain 61 Turf  
14 Yule 60 Starred 21 Ske-music lines 1 Anagram for "pass" 23 Spade or club  
20 Rent 2 "— She Sweet?" 25 Titular entree  
22 Superb 26 Mexican entree  
28 Bulletin-board nood 32 He was Vulcanized 33 Singer's comeback?  
34 Blow up 36 Durante trademark  
37 Soaring 39 Foiled a bomber  
41 Backslid 43 — de ux 44 Pedestal figure



Solution time: 24 min.  
Yesterday's answer

CRYPTOQUIP  
Q C D L G F P Q W M V F  
P D K F U X J L X M F C X B K P D T G  
D W V Q B V T J F V F U K Q P F  
Saturday's Cryptoquip: COULDNT YOU PREDICT THAT THE SUIT PATTERN LIKED BEST BY BANKERS IS CHECKS?  
Today's Cryptoquip clue: V equals H  
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.