

Sport

Spain over the moon

MADRID, Sept 10: Spain were celebrating qualification for the European championship finals on Thursday, after their overwhelming 8-0 victory over Cyprus in Badajoz, reports Reuters.

The win takes Spain to an unassailable position in Group Six, five points ahead of second-placed Israel, who visit Spain on October 10 for the team's final match.

The victory means Spain have finally gained revenge for last year's shock 3-2 defeat in Cyprus, which led to the resignation of former national coach Javier Clemente and the appointment of Jose Antonio Camacho.

Camacho, now unbeaten in his 10 games since taking over last September, said he was proud of his team and dismissed the claim that Cyprus were weak opponent.

"To score eight goals against Cyprus you have to do everything right," he said.

The Spanish press were handsome in their praise for the manner of the victory and gave extensive credit to the bulky former Real Madrid midfielder and Spanish international.

"Spain won because the coach made them hungry to overturn the serious mistake they made last year," Spanish sports daily said.

"Camacho has made Spaniards proud to wear their shirt again," another daily Marca added.

The match was highlighted by hattricks for Ismael Urzua and Julian Guerrero, both of who play their club soccer with Athletic Bilbao.

There was a certain irony in the Basque pair being the main protagonists.

Camacho had taken charge saying that he was going to broaden the base of the Spanish national team, after Clemente had been extensively criticised for selecting players predominantly from his native Basque country.

For Guerrero it was his second hattrick in a Spanish shirt, his first coming nearly three years ago against Malta.

He only made his return to this international side in June after a wretched time at World Cup finals last summer.

Cox wallop Hampshire

LONDON, Sept 10: Somerset's Australian captain Jamie Cox hit the highest score of his career when he made 216 in the English County Championship match against Hampshire at Southampton on Thursday, reports AFP.

Cox batted for eight hours and 134 of his runs came in boundaries, as a weakened Hampshire attack struggled to contain him.

The Tasmanian's previous best score came in 1996-97 when he took 200 off the Pakistan bowling for his Australian state team.

Cox figured in century stands with Marcus Trescothick, who earned a trip to New Zealand with the England A squad earlier this week, and Pieter Holloway on the first day and a further 116 with Peter Bowler on the second.

"It was a nice wicket to bat on but I never set out to beat my own best score, or anything like that," Cox said.

BRIEF SCORES

English county championship score summaries on Thursday:

(Day one of four)

At Lord's: Surrey 426-4 (A Brown 165no, A Hollie 55) v Middlesex

At Hove: Sussex 250-8 (R Montgomerie 59) v Nottinghamshire 150

(Day two of four)

At Riverside: Durham 255 (J Lewis 76, D Bon 54; T Munton 7-91) v Warwickshire 252-4 (M Powell 11no) v Middlesex

At Chelmsford: Worcester 308 (C Hick 101; R Anderson 4-74, R Irani 4-51) and 25-0 v Essex 303 (R Irani 103, N Hussain 71; A Sheriyan 4-70)

At Bristol: Gloucestershire 150 (P Alder 6-34) and 208-9 (T Hancock 71, M Windows 55; T Smith 4-67, P DeFreitas 4-34) v Derbyshire 203 (R Weston 52, B Gannon 5-42)

At Southampton: Somerset 493-6 dec (J Cox 216, P Bowler 103no, P Holloway 58) v Hampshire 126-0 (J Laney 63 no, D Kenway 60)

At Old Trafford: Kent 410 (A Symonds 99, A Wells 86, D Headley 72, M Fleming 55; C Schofield 4-103) and 8-0 v Lancashire 312 (G Lloyd 81, N Fairbrother 63; M Patel 8-115)

At Northampton: Northamptonshire 509 (D Sales 205, D Ripley 105) v Leicestershire 225-7 (A Habib 51; M Davies 4-61)

At Headington: Glamorgan 498 (M Maynard 186, M Powell 70, M Wallace 64no) v Yorkshire 140 (S Watkin 4-35) and 93-5

All Africa Games football

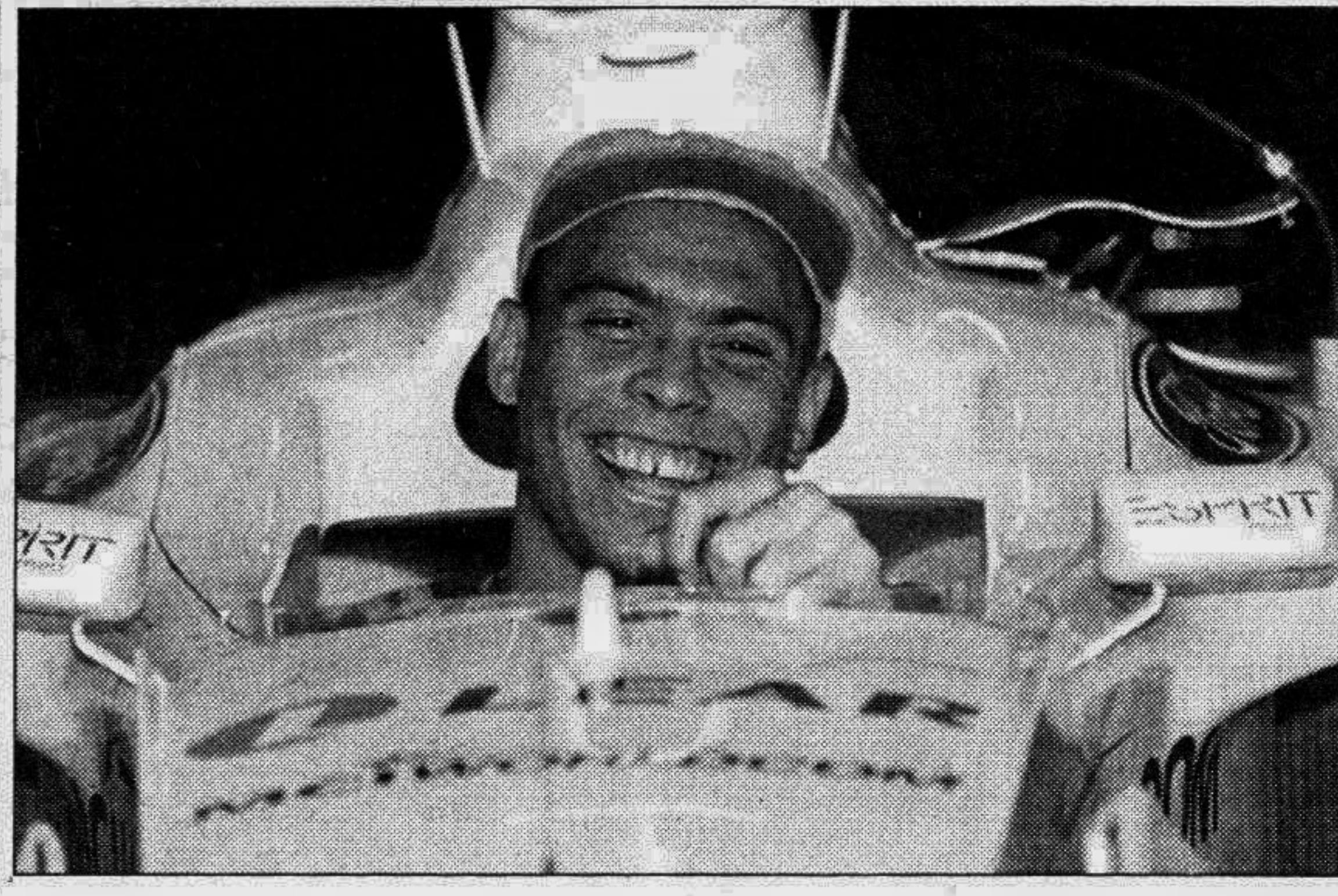
Cameroon blank

Mauritius

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 10: Cameroon rarely moved out of first gear as they defeated Mauritius 3-0 at Rand Stadium here on Friday in their first Group 2 match at the All Africa Games, reports AFP.

In another match of the group, Zambia outclassed highly-rated Cote d'Ivoire 4-0 at Orlando Stadium.

On the opening day of the tournament here on Thursday, hosts South Africa beat Algeria 2-0 at the Orlando Stadium in a Group 1 match while in the same group, Uganda also won 2-0 against Mali at the Rand Stadium.



CHANGING TRADE? Brazilian soccer superstar Ronaldo is all smiles while sitting in a racing car at the Monza racetrack after a free training session yesterday ahead of the Italian Grand Prix which is on September 12. — AFP photo

Serie A preview

Inter face the Roma heat



MILAN, Sept 10:

Inter Milan are heading for the lion's den this weekend when the most talked about

team in Italy face AS Roma at a seething Olympic stadium,

reports AFP.

Inter, who made headlines when Christian Vieri bagged a hat-trick on his debut two weeks ago, will be hoping that the most expensive man in soccer history is fit and well for Sunday night's contest.

The lumbering centre-forward left the field before the end of Italy's Euro 2000 qualifier defeat to Denmark in midweek because of a muscle strain.

Club officials played down the injury, however, and insisted that Vieri would be available for the match in Rome — where the Italian ace should be partnered by Brazilian ace Ronaldo.

Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano is also fit, but the team look to have lost Roberto Baggio, who pulled up in training with a back strain. Midfielder Vladimir Jugovic is still unavailable.

Roma boss Fabio Capello, the former maestro of AC Milan, has a great deal of prestige riding on this match.

It is the first showdown this

season between two of the seven title pretenders and it is Capello's first major rendezvous since taking over in July. It will also be in front of about 70,000 demanding fans.

AC Milan are at home to Perugia — the team they beat on the final day of last season to win the championship.

Milan skipper Paolo Maldini is battling to come back after breaking a toe-bone nearly three weeks ago and faces a late fitness test.

Maldini is keen to return to a defence which has continued to give goals away since their pre-season friendlies and was to blame for a disappointing 2-2 draw with newly-promoted Lecce last time out.

The problems in defence are not that serious, because it's not as if our opponents are getting that many shots in," Maldini claimed.

"All the same, the trouble is that the ratio of scoring chances conceded to goals conceded is high.

"Perhaps things aren't being done with the intensity and concentration that's needed in the Serie A and the European Champions League."

Perugia aside, Milan will certainly need to buck their ideas up against Gianluca Vialli's Chelsea in the European

Champions League at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday night.

Fiorentina, who host Arsenal on Tuesday in Florence, are away to Reggina on Saturday, while Lazio also head south to face Barca.

There was good news for Juventus on Thursday, when the Italian Olympic Committee cleared them to use Dutch midfielder Edgar Davids for their away fixture against Cagliari.

Davids has been treating an eye problem with a medicine containing a banned substance and has waited nearly a month for permission to play at club level. He was on stunning form last weekend for Holland, scoring twice in their 5-2 draw with Belgium despite having to wear protective goggles.

Alessandro Del Piero, dropped by Dino Zoff for Italy's qualifier, should play alongside strike partner Filippo Inzaghi, who had a wretched time against the Danes in Naples after a superb start to the season.

Serie A fixtures this weekend:

Saturday: Reggina v Fiorentina, Udinese v Piacenza, Bari v Lazio (**evening kick-off**)

Sunday: Cagliari v Juventus, AC Milan v Perugia, Parma v Bologna, Torino v Venezia, Verona v Lecce, AS Roma v Inter Milan (**evening kick-off**)

All Africa Games start

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 10: It was a mixed start for hosts South Africa on the opening day of the All Africa Games (AAG) on Thursday with the football side winning but the organisers looking to have scored an own goal, reports AFP.

South African midfielder Steve Lekole and Siyabonga Nomvete got the goals in a 2-0 win over Algeria to put them at the top of the group 1 table.

Meanwhile organisers were having to listen to multiple complaints and appeared to be having a hard time keeping their statements positive after the barrage of criticism.

South Africa is trying hard to play down certain image problems, notably arrogance and problems in townships in these September 9 to 19 Games in Greater Johannesburg.

Problems with issuing accreditation, transport delays, glitches in the opening ceremony preparations as well as telephone mishaps are still hampering the event.

This seventh AAG, and South Africa's second participation since returning to the world of sport in the early 90s following the abolition of apartheid, was expected to show the country was adept at organising major events.

The day's table tennis was cancelled and no reason was immediately made public.

The South Africa versus Algeria football fixture went ahead though the roof covering the VIP stand at the Orlando stadium had not been finished.

South Africa thrashed Lesotho 43-0 in the first baseball game but the fixture was reportedly delayed for two hours because of problems with the chalk lines.

Amid all the problems, Egypt won the first gold medal of the Games when they carried off the team competition in rhythmic gymnastics. South Africa took the silver with Cape Verde earning the bronze.

Marchers were often not in unison, costumes were either

too small or too large and hats were falling off all over the place, not giving the impression of finely-honed preparations.

Also, athletes are having major delays getting to venues by official buses and are still having to wait for hours getting accreditation which is hampering their preparations.

Junior Ramonha, who runs the accreditation centre at the Nasrec Stadium, urged for calm and said athletes could help themselves by being patient. "We are doing the best we can," he said.

Nigeria failed to turn up for their men's field hockey match against Zimbabwe and were withdrawn from the competition. Financial problems are believed to be the reason.

Then Ghana's men's hockey team also failed to appear thinking their match was on Saturday, but their South Africa opponents agreed to reschedule the game.

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Corinthians go six points clear

RIO DE JANEIRO, Sept 10: Corinthians face arch-rivals Palmeiras on Sunday boosted by a 3-1 win over Cruzeiro which moved them six points clear in the Brazilian championship standings, reports Reuters.

Marcelinho scored from the penalty spot in the 42nd minute of their Wednesday match, followed by a goal from Edilson and a last minute strike from Fabio Baiano.

Corinthians' Alex Alves missed several chances before Paulo Isidro pulled one back for them in the 87th.

Palmeiras go into Sunday's needle match languishing in 17th place with just nine points to Corinthians' 24.

South Africa's David Konnemeyer (R) is under pressure from Algerian Lotfi Sahraoush during their All Africa Games first round fixture in Soweto on September 9. — AFP photo

Bergomi USA bound

MILAN, Sept 10: Former Italy defender Giuseppe Bergomi is to play in the United States in Major League Soccer (MLS).

Bergomi, who spent his entire career with Inter Milan before retiring at the end of the 1998-99 season, said he had been approached by MLS clubs the New York Metrostars and the New England Revolution.

Bergomi, 36, has friends at both clubs — former Italy goalkeeper Walter Zenga is the New England coach and German international and ex-Inter midfielder Lothar Matthaeus will join the MetroStars in February.

"Yesterday (Wednesday) Matthaeus called me and asked me if I wanted to play with him," Bergomi said. "But Walter is also pressing me to go to Boston. It is certain that I will go to America but I am not yet sure where."

Bergomi will officially say farewell to Italian soccer on October 11 with a testimonial match at the San Siro stadium in Milan.

Euro 2000

Bookies fancy Holland

LONDON, Sept 10: British bookmakers William Hill make

join hosts The Netherlands 7-2 favourites for the European soccer championship after the latest qualifiers, reports Reuters.

Betting: 7-2 The Netherlands 4-1 Italy 7-1 Spain 15-2 Germany 8-1 France 12-1 Sweden 20-1 Czech Republic, Portugal, Romania 25-1 Belgium, England, Norway 28-1 Croatia, Ukraine 33-1 Yugoslavia 40-1 Russia 50-1 Turkey 66-1 Poland, Ireland 125-1 Scotland.

United will certainly be without captain Roy Keane (groin) and defender Denis Irwin (ankle), who were both injured playing for Ireland. Right-back Gary Neville is also out after picking up a groin injury in England's goalless draw in Poland on Wednesday.

"We've got a massive amount of injuries at the moment," admitted Ferguson. "Sometimes it happens and there's not a lot you can do about it. They were

international

injury list," he said.

For security reasons, the match has been brought forward to a morning kick-off.

Former England manager

Bobby Robson faces a stiff test in his first game in charge of

United.

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