

Maradona on target

HAVANA, May 20: With a weak defence and the goal unmanned, former soccer superstar Diego Maradona scored four times in a friendly half-hour game against students from the University of Havana, reports AP.

Maradona, 39, didn't even bother to lace up his cleats for the Friday evening match on Polar field in Havana's Marianao neighbourhood. Wearing wraparound sunglasses and a silver hoop in his left ear, Maradona arrived in a sleeveless shirt that revealed on his upper arm a tattoo of Argentine-born revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

Later, sweating heavily in the team shirt of Argentina's Boca Juniors, Maradona played with five companions including his manager Guillermo Coppola. The rival team was made up of soccer players from the university.

The game was won 4-2 by the team led by Maradona, who remains visibly overweight even though he reportedly has lost 10 kilograms (22 pounds) during his four months on the island.

Maradona arrived in Cuba on January 18 to be treated for a heart condition and the cocaine use that caused it. His Cuban doctors have said that he is fit enough to play in a testimonial match for German soccer great Lothar Matthaeus on May 26 in Munich.

Soccer personalities Rivaldo, David Beckham and Roberto Baggio have also been invited to the historic game.

Maradona's medical team, nevertheless, has said that the former captain of Argentina's national team must return immediately after the reunion in Germany to continue his rehabilitation.

The exact date of Maradona's departure for Germany has not been revealed. Cuba's Prensa Latina news agency has indicated that Maradona will be gone from Cuba for only four days.

Frazier-Lyde's 4th in a row

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut, May 20: Jacqui Frazier-Lyde, daughter of former heavyweight champion Joe Frazier, stopped overmatched Norma Galloway at 1:04 of the fourth round Friday night, reports AP.

Frazier-Lyde improved to 4-0 with the longest fight of her pro career. She knocked out two of her previous opponents in the first round, and stopped the other in the third round.

The 38-year-old fighter, based in Philadelphia and trained by brother Marvis, stunned Galloway with a right-left combination that prompted referee Steve Smoger to stop the bout.

King enquiry to begin in June

CAPE TOWN, May 20 (Internet report): The King commission of enquiry into match-fixing in South African cricket will possibly only begin its public hearings at the end of this month, or early next month.

The commission intends to issue its first interim report regarding the extent of irregularities by the end of June.

The commission must investigate, among other things, the admission by first cricket captain Hansie Cronje that he accepted money from a professional bookmaker during the recent triangular series between South Africa, England and Zimbabwe.

The commission must also ascertain if any member of the Proteas, or a team official, received illegal payments or benefits between November 1 last year and 17 April this year and if proposals were made to the South African team regarding match-fixing in 1996 in India.

According to a spokesperson from the Department of Sport and Recreation, Graham Abrahams, "no date for the start of the hearings has yet been determined."

Zim cricketers demand 90 pc pay hike

HARARE, May 20 (Internet report): Zimbabwe's under-achieving cricketers are demanding an immediate 90 per cent pay hike and threatened to boycott their maiden Test against England which got under way at Lord's on Thursday.

The Test players are also understood to have tried to influence members of the Zimbabwe A team to abandon their tour of Sri Lanka and join them in their strike if their demands were not met, says a report of the Zimbabwe Herald.

According to sources close to the team, the Zimbabwe players want their salaries to match those of other Test nations and believe the 90 per cent hike will cushion them against the fall of the local currency against the major currencies.

The players had contacted Zimbabwe A skipper Angus Mackay in Sri Lanka in a bid to coerce him to influence the national second-string cricketers to strike if their demands were not met.

The Test players then presented this demands to the Zimbabwe Cricket Union president, Peter Chingoka, and chief executive Dave Ellman-Brown when the pair stopped over from an International Cricket Council meeting.

But just when it appeared the strike row had been resolved after the ZCU chiefs' meeting with the players,



Players of Deportivo La Coruna celebrate inside their locker-room after ensuring this year's *Primera Liga* title following their 2-0 victory over Espanyol on May 19. —AFP photo

Deportivo wrap it up

MADRID, May 20: Deportivo La Coruna on Friday lifted the first *Primera Liga* title of their 96-year history with a 2-0 home victory over Espanyol on the last day of the season, reports AFP.

The Galician club had started play needing a point to prevail at the expense of outgoing champions Barcelona, who drew 2-2 at home to Celta Vigo, and Real Zaragoza, who went down 2-1 at Valencia.

Barcelona and Valencia join Deportivo in next year's *Champions League* at the expense of Valencia's fellow 1999-2000 finalists Real Madrid who went down 1-0 at home to Valladolid -- Zaragoza will also qualify if Valencia beat Real Madrid in next Wednesday's *Champions League* final.

Similarly Real must beat Valencia in next week's final in Paris if they are to participate in next year's tournament but it is Deportivo who will hog the headlines over the weekend after ending a long -- and sometimes agonising -- wait for the Spanish league title.

In the 1990s Deportivo acquired a reputation as chokers, twice surrendering the title on the last day of the season when leading at the start of play.

Particularly traumatic was the 1993-4 season when they missed a last minute penalty that would have won the title.

But nerves among the Deportivo fans were assuaged after three minutes when Brazilian Donato, who three times had finished a *Primera Liga* runner-up, opened the scoring against Barca's city rivals with a near-post header from a corner.

He was an appropriate scorer. The 37-year-old was the first choice penalty taker in 1993-4 but had been substituted by the time Bebeto made his monumental blunder.

And after 34 minutes their prolific Dutch forward Roy

Makaay notched a second, slipping home a shot at the near post from close range after good work from Manuel Pablo.

Meanwhile, Real Zaragoza also struck early with a fourth-minute goal from their Yugoslav forward Savo Milosevic against Valencia.

Milosevic held off his marker before firing home with his preferred left foot.

But, unlike Deportivo, Zaragoza were aware that no matter how well they performed they were dependent on events elsewhere going their way.

Mauricio Pellegrino equalised for Hector Cuper's Argentinian Claudio Lopez made it 2-1 for Valencia with a free goal when Kily Gonzalez's shot was blocked but went in off Lopez's knee.

But Barcelona, who two months ago were insuring themselves so they could afford win bonuses for a *Champions League/Primera Liga/Spanish Cup* clean sweep, surrendered their title on a plate with a dreadful first-half display at the Nou Camp.

Celta Vigo put on a display of

Galician solidarity as they dominated the outgoing champions in the first half at the Nou Camp with six attempts on goal compared to one for the Catalans.

It took 28 minutes for Vigo to make their dominance count with Tomas weaving through before wrongfooting Barca keeper Rued Hesp with a left-footed cross-shot.

Seven minutes later it was 2-0 when Mario Hector Turdo cut inside and fired a left-footed shot into Hesp's left-hand corner.

Barcelona were jeered off at the interval.

At last the Nou Camp fans had reason to cheer two minutes into the second period when their Dutch striker Patrick Kluijvert converted a penalty.

Then the Dutchman squared the match with a close-range header, his 16th of the season. Lopez brought some cheer to their coach Louis van Gaal.

Barca dominated the second half but could not grab the third goal for what would have anyway been a pyrrhic victory.

STANDINGS

Spanish league table after matches played on Friday (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Deportivo	38	21	6	11	66	44	69
Barcelona	38	19	7	12	70	46	64
Valencia	38	18	10	10	59	39	64
Zaragoza	38	16	15	7	60	40	63
Real Madrid	38	16	14	8	58	48	62
Alaves	38	17	10	11	41	37	61
Celta Vigo	38	15	8	15	45	43	53
Valladolid	38	14	11	13	36	44	53
Vallecano	38	15	7	16	51	53	52
Mallorca	38	14	9	15	52	45	51
Athletic Bilbao	38	12	14	12	47	57	50
Malaga	37	11	14	12	55	50	47
Espanyol	38	12	11	15	51	48	47
Racing Santander	37	10	15	12	52	50	45
Numancia	37	11	12	14	46	57	45
Oviedo	37	11	12	14	44	59	45
Real Sociedad	37	10	14	13	41	49	44
Real Betis	37	10	9	18	31	55	39
Atletico Madrid	38	9	11	18	48	64	38
Sevilla	38	5	13	20	42	67	28

AFP FOOTBALL BRIEFS

PARIS, May 20: Auxerre will fill France's last Intertoto Cup spot it was revealed on Friday after St Etienne, who finished a highly respectable sixth in the recently concluded French league season, said they were not interested in taking part.

Auxerre, double winners back in 1996 but who faded to finish eighth in veteran coach Guy Roux's last season in charge, join Sedan, who bizarrely sacked their coach Patrick Remy on Sunday after a successful two year stint in charge, and Lens in the Intertoto Cup.

Sedan and Auxerre will begin their campaign in the second round of the competition at the beginning of July while Lens enter the Intertoto in the third round on July 15.

STOCKHOLM SQUARE NAMED AFTER 'NACKA'

STOCKHOLM: A Stockholm square has Friday been named after legendary Swedish football Lennart "Nacka" Skoglund.

The square, on the corner of the Katarina Bangatan and Brannrigatan Streets in the Sodermalm district of the Swedish capital, will now be known as Nackas Hoerna (Nackas Corner) which is also a football pun as Hoerna is also the word for corner in football.

Skoglund (1929-75) started for Italian Serie A outfit Inter Milan and won a Scudetto with the Nerazzuri in 1953-4.

ARAGONES PONDERS MEXICAN MOVE

OVIEDO: Oviedo's Spanish coach Luis Aragones said Friday that he was in contact with Mexican clubs as he prepares to end his stint at the *Primera Liga* club.

Gunners sign Cameroon star

PALMA, Spain, May 20: UEFA Cup runners-up Arsenal have signed Cameroon international midfielder Lauren Bissonette Mayer from Spanish outfit Real Mallorca, it was announced here on Friday.

The 23-year-old, who must still undergo a medical, had been sought after by Real Madrid. *Serie A* duo Parma and AS Roma and French giants Paris St Germain.

MAGPIES EXTEND DAIZAS' DEAL

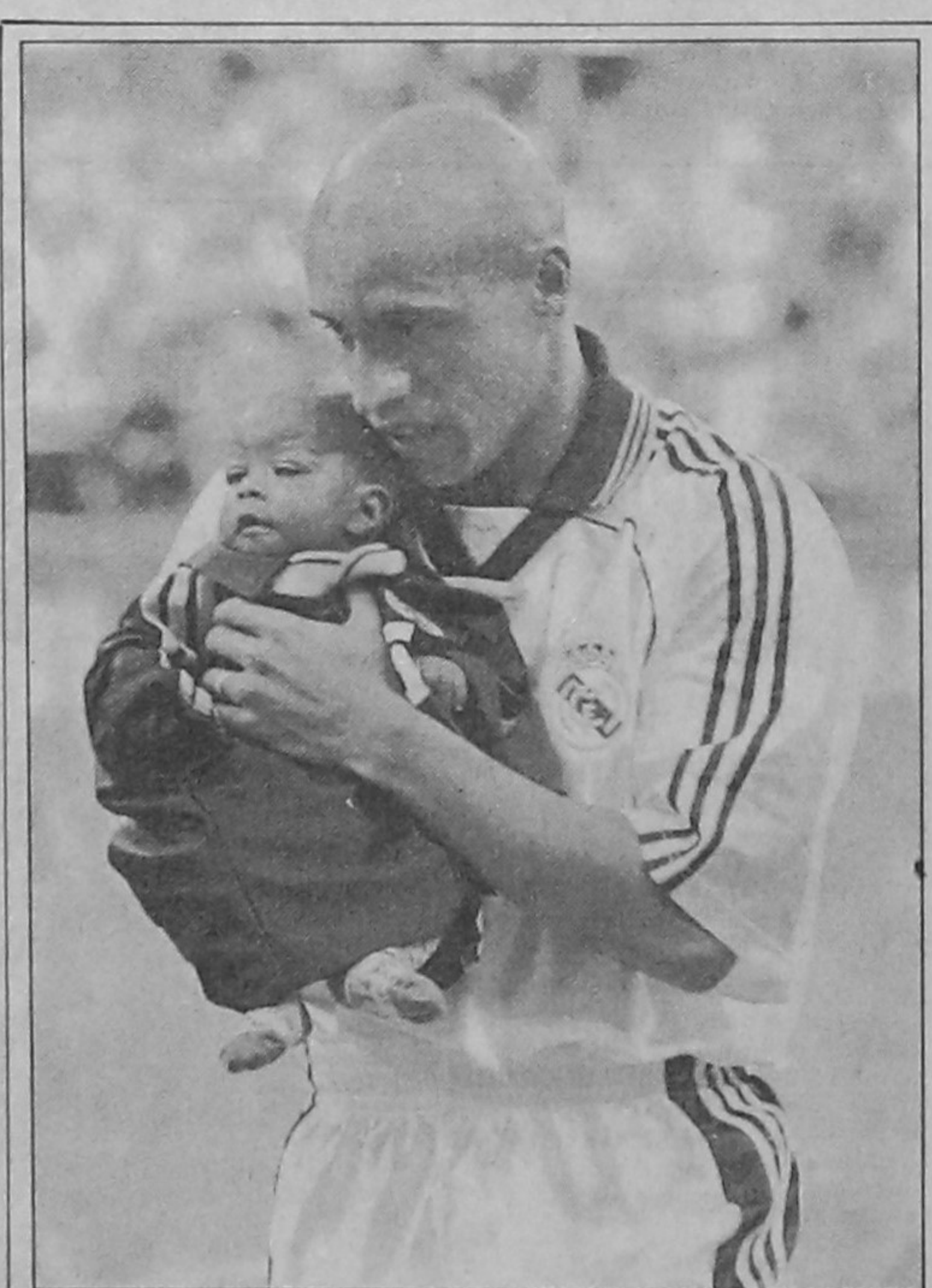
LONDON: Newcastle defender Nikos Daizas was rewarded for a solid season on Friday with a new four-year contract.

The 26-year-old Greek international has been in discussion with the club over an improved deal for several months, but United have confirmed that the negotiations have reached a successful conclusion.

"This is great news for Newcastle United," said chairman Freddy Shepherd. "Nikos deserves his new deal and everybody knows what a good season he has had under Bobby Robson."

Aragones has a distinguished record in football and coached Atletico Madrid team that won the 1975 World Club Championship, beating Argentina's Independiente 3-0 on aggregate. Atletico represented Europe in that tie because European champions Bayern Munich declined the invitation to participate.

The 61-year-old, who also says he has been contacted by Real Zaragoza, said: "I have received offers from Mexico and it is not the first time. Perhaps this time I will take them up because I like new experiences and they play good football in Mexico."



ROBERTO CARLOS JUNIOR: Real Madrid's Brazilian star Roberto Carlos holding his son before the start of their *Primera Liga* encounter against Valladolid on May 19. —AFP photo

WINNERS & LOSERS

Spanish winners and losers following Friday's matches:

Champions: Deportivo La Coruna

Champions' League: Barcelona and Valencia. Real Madrid or Real Zaragoza.

Real Zaragoza will qualify if Valencia beat Real Madrid in Wednesday's *Champions League* final -- Real Madrid will qualify if they beat Valencia.

UEFA Cup: Alaves, Real Zaragoza or Real Madrid depending on *Champions League* final result. Spanish Cup winners (Atletico Madrid or Espanyol)

Intertoto: Celta Vigo and Valladolid

Relegated: Real Betis, Atletico Madrid, Sevilla

FACTFILE

MADRID, May 20 (AFP): List of Deportivo La Coruna's trophy wins:

Founded: 1904

Promoted: 1991

Primera Liga: 2000

Spanish Cup: 1995

Spanish Super Cup: 1996

Trapattoni leaving Fiorentina

FLORENCE, Italy, May 20: Fiorentina's Giovanni Trapattoni announced on Friday he is quitting as the *Serie A* club's coach, reports Reuters.

"I confirm my decision not to renew the contract with Fiorentina," Trapattoni said in a statement.

The coach had already voiced his intention to leave after the team's disappointing exit from the *Champions League* in March.

Trapattoni spent two brief spells with Bayern Munich before joining Fiorentina. The *Serie A* side took seventh place in the Italian league championship which ended on Sunday.

The club was surrounded by controversy this week after supporters threw Molotov cocktails and threatened to boycott next season's games after reports striker Gabriel Batistuta was ready to leave the team.

"I had already decided four or five months ago. There are no elements to start (the new season) with enthusiasm," Trapattoni told news agency AGI.

Former Italy coach Arrigo Sacchi and ex-AS Roma coach Zdenek Zeman were touted as possible replacements.

But the club ended the season brightly, winning their last three matches to clinch a place in next season's UEFA Cup on the final day of the season.

Some newspapers had speculated that as a result, the most experienced coach in Italian soccer might stay on.

Trapattoni said he had spoken to Fiorentina's volatile president Vittorio Cecchi Gori last weekend but had turned down an offer to guide the club next season.

He described his relations with the media magnate as "splendid" despite his departure.

Sacchi has been out of coaching since he quit Atletico Madrid in February 1999 and turned his back on the bench. Since then he has carved out a successful career as a television pundit.

Zeman has been out of work since January when he resigned as coach of Turkish side Fenerbahce. He coached Roma for two seasons from 1997-99 before moving to Turkey and has vast experience in Italian soccer.

Shoji Jo eyes World Cup

VALLADOLID, Spain, May 20: Valladolid's Japanese international star Shoji Jo admits the future of Japanese football could depend on a good showing at the 2002 World Cup co-hosted by Japan and South Korea, reports AFP.

"There is a lot of pressure, here for me, because I must take on board the experience of top class football for the future, for the national team and Japan," said Shoji Jo.

"Japanese players are very disciplined, perhaps more so than the Europeans. They may disagree with the coach but they conform to his decision. But in general there are some weaknesses and we must assimilate western tactics, I am here for that," said Shoji, who would not commit on the future of Japan's beleaguered French coach Philippe Troussier.

"Troussier has problems at the moment, I do not know if he will stay. We will see," said Shoji.

Shoji has passed up the opportunity of a knee operation because he believes it would interrupt his career and possibly his World Cup prospects.

"I feel fine. Nothing is impeding me and I can play normally. Why have an operation," said Shoji, whose knee has troubled him since March.

The wounded knee saga took a somewhat farcical twist after Shoji injured it on March 15, diagnosed as a ruptured cruciate ligament. The player's agent made the somewhat bizarre claim that the player had been born without having a cruciate ligament.

French specialist Gerard Sailliant, who has treated the knee injury of Brazilian legend Ronaldo at the Pitié Salpêtrière hospital in Paris, finally diagnosed that the player did indeed have a cruciate ligament but that it had been ruptured for six years.

Given that Shoji has been in constant action over that period it would seem to suggest that the player's hopes of making the World Cup are good.

Van Gaal steps down

BARCELONA, Spain, May 20: Barcelona's controversial Dutch coach Louis van Gaal revealed Saturday at a press conference that he was quitting the deposed Spanish champions, reports AFP.

"Friends and friends of the press, I'm off. Bravo," said Van Gaal. "I'm leaving because I am in agreement with president Nunez (Barca president Josep Lluís Nunez)."

Nunez, president of Barcelona for the past 22 years, officially confirmed his resignation last Wednesday and announced new elections for the post in July.

"He supported me from the first and for me this is very im-

portant," said Van Gaal, who then turned his fire on the snipers -- and players -- he believes undermined his authority at the club.

"The president (Nunez) took me on for my philosophy and my personality, for my character and also the gameplan of my Dutch team, Ajax Amsterdam."

"To implant this philosophy in a club is very difficult. Why is it difficult? Because this philosophy does not correspond with the culture of the country."

"I had to struggle every day to convince everyone at Barcelona and especially the players, but in this place, in this culture the players always say 'we are the best'."

"No, we are not the best perhaps because we have to show it on the field every year."

"What has Barcelona won in 100 years, how many *Champions League* (note: Barcelona have won only one *Champions League* in 1992)?" asked van Gaal.

"In six years at Ajax I won more than Barcelona had won in 100 years. But I came here to win as much as I did at Amsterdam."

In his three years in Catalunya van Gaal won two *Primera Liga* titles and one Spanish Cup after arriving from Dutch giants Ajax, whom he led to one *Champions League* victory.

Backing for the coach has dwindled following a string of poor league results which saw the Nou Camp outfit surrender the title to Deportivo La Coruna and the club's failure to reach the final of the European *Champions League* after a defeat to Spanish rivals Valencia.

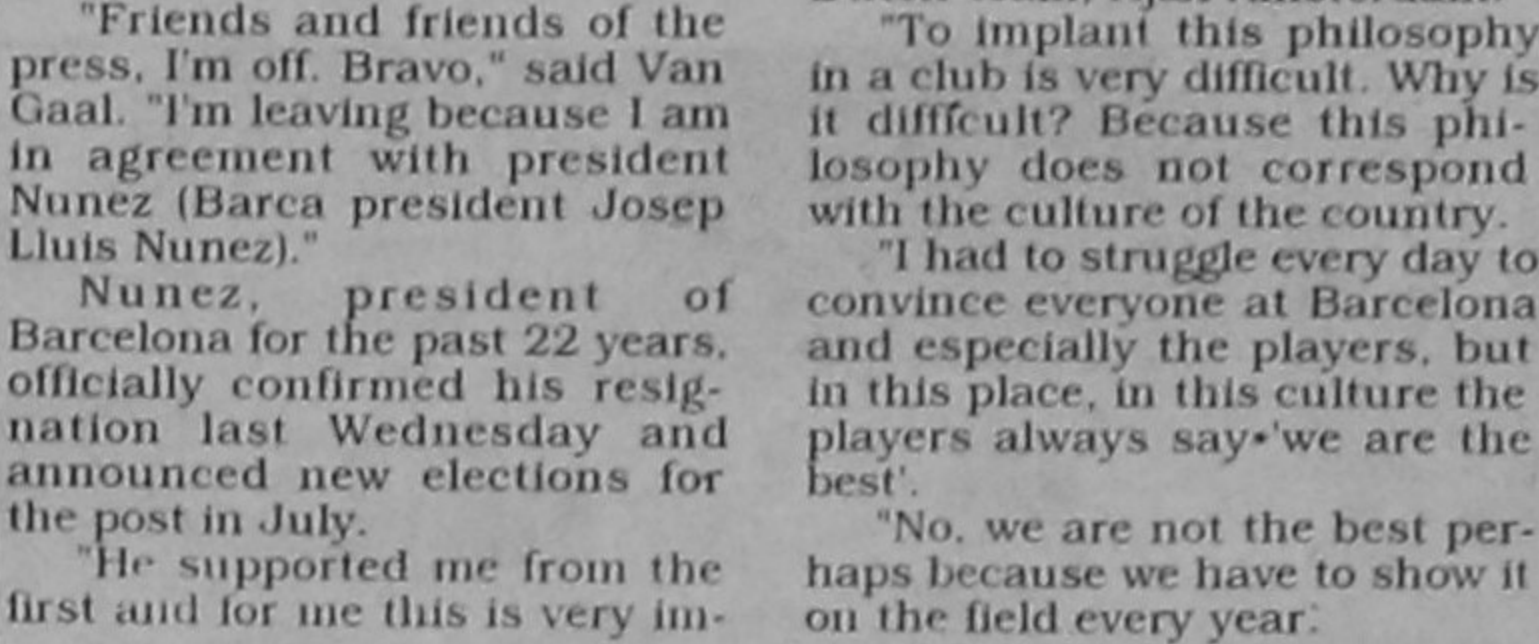
Just to rub it in Valencia will face Barca's arch-rivals Real Madrid in the Paris final on Wednesday.

The Dutchman was also much criticised for his policy of buying abroad -- especially in his native Holland -- something that did not go down well with supporters of a club that sees itself as a talisman for the Catalan region.

According to Spanish media, van Gaal handed in his resignation as soon as the Spanish club were beaten in the *Champions League*, but Nunez refused to accept it.

Van Gaal's resignation could almost certainly secure Brazilian Rivaldo's position at the club. Rivaldo and van Gaal have reportedly been at loggerheads in the past few months.

At one stage van Gaal announced his willingness to sell the star player to an Italian team -- while a new coach would undoubtedly want Rivaldo to stay.



Barcelona coach Louis van Gaal during a press conference at the Nou Camp Stadium on May 18, the day before their *Primera Liga* match against Celta Vigo. Van Gaal stepped down as the Barca manager yesterday. —AFP photo

Security on the agenda



THE HAGUE, May 20: English and Turkish football chiefs will meet next week in Holland to discuss security arrangements for Euro 2000, Dutch Interior Minister Klaas de Vries said on Friday, reports AFP.

The meeting comes 48 hours after serious violent incidents between rival fans from England and Turkey marred the UEFA Cup Final in Copenhagen where Galatasaray of Istanbul beat London side Arsenal 4-1 on penalties after the match finished 0-0.

That violence followed the fatal stabbing of two Leeds United supporters in Istanbul on the eve of their UEFA Cup semifinal first leg match last

month.

"We will try and take into account what happened in Copenhagen so that the same thing does not happen in our country during Euro 2000," said de Vries.

Holland and Belgium will co-host summer's football extravaganza from June 10 to July 2.

From the moment the smallest incident occurs we will smother it," pledged de Vries, saying that Holland was prepared for the thousands of visiting fans.

The Minister also used the occasion to distribute Euro 2000 manuals to the 25 police forces in Holland which give precise rules of engagement to officers who will police the final.

Dutch police were present at Copenhagen to witness the incidents that left five people seriously injured.

"These are incidents we wish to avoid at all price," said de Vries.

The police's Euro 2000

supremo Theo Brekelmans said: "The Danish authorities had a lot less resources than us. It (Denmark) is a much more peaceful country."

The Dutch Interior Minister Peter van Zunderd said that police would be doubly vigilant on June 11 and 12.

On the 11th Turkey met Italy at Arnhem while England tackle Portugal in nearby Eindhoven 24 hours later.

"We consider that weekend as one of the peaks in the police workload during Euro 2000," he said.

Among the measures to be used by police are detention for 12 hours, special arrest powers and a nine-day preventive detention policy.

"We will be very severe with the minority who spoil the football for the great majority," said van Zunderd.

Mayors of the different host cities will also be given the power to ban the sale of alcohol and its consumption in the street, he added.

Real Valladolid's Japanese striker Shoji Jo (C) tries to shake off Roberto Carlos (R) of Real Madrid during their *Primera Liga* fixture on May 19. —AFP photo



Real Valladolid's Japanese striker Shoji Jo (C) tries to shake off Roberto Carlos (R) of Real Madrid during their *Primera Liga* fixture on May 19. —AFP photo

Osaka atop J-League

TOKYO, May 20: Cerezo Osaka defeated front runners Yokohama Marinos 3-2 to climb to top of the table for the first time on Saturday, moving to within a step of winning the first stage of the J-League, reports AFP.

Osaka, halting Yokohama's first-stage victory, stood with 10 wins against four defeats for 29 points, two points above Yokohama with only one more game each left in the 16-team first stage.

"I just put my foot forward and the ball took a good course and went in. It was tough physically, because Yokohama's defence line was very good and they made us run," said Akinori Nishizawa, who flicked in the second get-ahead shot in the 49th minute.

"We have one more match to go. We'd like to tighten ourselves up and prepare for the last match. If we can win it, everything comes our way," he added.

"I was lucky, the ball just came in front of me," said Daisuke Saito, who struck home the decider with only two

minutes left on the clock.

Both goals were set up by South Korean midfielder Yoon Jong-Hwan.

Earlier in the day, Asian Cup winners Cup holders Shimizu S-Pulse bowed to Verdy Kawasaki 2-3, leaving Osaka and Yokohama as the only two teams to keep the chance to win the first stage.

Shimizu came back twice from a goal down to go into sudden death extra time, but South Korean striker Kim Hyun-Seok's header hit keeper Masanori Sanada's hand and landed in the net in the 101st minute.

Defending champions Jubilo Iwata also lost their chance to win the first stage after taking only two points as they defeated Kyoto Purple Sanga 3-2 in extra time.

In other games, Australian striker Steve Corica netted the sole goal on a penalty in the 78th minute to give Sanfrecce Hiroshima a 1-0 win over powerhouse Kashima Antlers.

Newcomers FC Tokyo failed to keep their hopes alive as they crashed to Vissel Kobe 1-2, although Brazilian striker Tuto

came back to the pitch to score his 10th goal of the season.

Takayuki Chano scored his first goal in his six years in the J-League, leading JEF United Ichihara to a 3-0 victory over Avispa Fukuoka, while Kashima Reysol downed Kawasaki Frontale 4-2.

Dudic moves to Benfica

LISBON, May 20: Yugoslav international defender Ivan Dudic, 23, Friday signed for five years with Portuguese top flight side Benfica, the club's president Joao Vale e Azevedo announced Friday night, reports AFP.

Dudic joins the Lisbon giants from Red Star Belgrade where he has featured in the first team for three years and has one senior cap for the national team.

He is Benfica's first purchase for next season and has already been named as part of a 25-man squad that will be trimmed to 22 for Euro 2000 by Yugoslav coach Vujadin Boskov.

Dudic moves to Benfica

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