Ronaldo, Lula join hands

Football

AFP/REUTERS, Sao Paulo

World Cup winner Ronaldo has an important date for his diary - an invitation to attend the swearing-in ceremony for Brazil's new president, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on New Year's Day.

Lula, who swept to power in last month's elections, said he had spoken to the Real Madrid striker by phone and the pair plan to meet up when Ronaldo returns for his Christmas holidays.

Lula has offered Ronaldo a role in his campaign to fight hunger in Brazil, and the former trade unionist said: "Ronaldo has agreed to help the battle against hunger

"We hope to have other important players too."

When the 26-year-old star goes back he will also have the chance to drive down the Ronaldo Nazario street - the road where he lived as a child in the north west area of Rio de Janeiro which has been renamed in his honour

According to the O Globo news network, Lula called Ronaldo in Madrid to request the player's backing for a relief programme based on food vouchers

"I am completely at the disposi-

from depression

Chelsea goalkeeper Mark Bosnich

revealed on Wednesday he is being

treated for severe clinical depres-

sion just days after press reports

been admitted to the depression

management company, SEM, read:

"Mark Bosnich has been diagnosed

as suffering from severe clinical

admitted to a depression unit of a

medical facility to obtain treatment

ate to release this type of informa-

tion, which is private in nature, but it

has been decided to do so on this

facility has not been revealed.

Bosnich has engaged lawyers to

deal with allegations that he tested

out the test, the Football Association

nor Chelsea have confirmed the

Neither UK Sport, which carried

The location of the medical

occasion to prevent speculation."

"On medical advice he was

"It would not usually be appropri-

The 30-year-old Australian has

A statement released by his

that he had failed a drugs test.

unit of a medical facility.

depression.

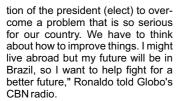
for that depression

positive for cocaine.

identity of the player.

Bosnich

suffering



According to estimates released



LUIZ INACIO LULA DA SILVA

by Lula's Workers Party, some 54 million Brazilians, or 31.2 percent of the population live in a state of poverty, and more than 40 million suffer from malnutrition.

Lula has identified hunger relief as his priority when he takes office in January 1, while Ronaldo already holds a post as a UN Goodwill

The "Zero Hunger" project, for which I ula intends to create a new government department, falls within the wider sphere of a social pact aimed at raising living standards for the low paid.

Ronaldo said the policies being proposed by Lula's Workers Party could have some bearing on foot-



RONALDO

"I have high hopes that these improvements can feed through to football. Having the game well-organised, with full stadiums is important. With the help of the government, I believe things can improve." Ronaldo said

Friends forever

Tennis

REUTERS, Brussels

Belgium rolled out the red carpet for its two favourite daughters on Wednesday as Kim Clijsters and Justine Henin entertained their fans in a good-natured exhibition match.

The in-form Clijsters, who won the WTA Tour Championships on Monday with victory over world number one Serena Williams, carried on from her recent success as she trounced the waif-like Henin for the second time in less than a week 6-1, 6-4.

But the quality of tennis was not

high on agenda on Wednesday. French-speaking Henin, ranked fifth in the world, got into the party mood by accepting a prolonged kiss and a single red rose from her fiancé, Pierre-Yves Hardenne.

Flemish-speaking Clijsters also had her moment in the spotlight although her boyfriend, men's number one Lleyton Hewitt, was otherwise occupied in Shanghai for the Masters Cup.

Clijsters, 19, was pleasantly surprised when a flurry of flowers

was thrown her way. But the flowers were soon forgotten as the world number four focused her attention tzu puppy.

Despite the one-sided scoreline, Henin -- Wimbledon runner-up in 2001 -- wowed the crowd with her bold and blistering passing shots during the first set.

But a missed smash in the fourth game allowed Clijsters to break and roar away with the first set. With the match slipping away

from her, Henin upped the tempo and dazzled her fans with a succession of outlandish shots. Thoroughly enjoying the oncourt exhibition, the crowd made

ties by bursting into a spontaneous Mexican wave. Henin joined in, but Clijsters simply shook her head and laughed.

their own contribution to the festivi-

She was having fun but not enough to risk losing.

Clijsters is also likely to be the last player to ever beat Henin because on Sunday the 20-year-old will become Justine Hardenne when she marries her fiancé.

No loophole on Aussie side

AFP, Sydney

Australia have all their bases covered despite going into the second Ashes Test in Adelaide with just one recognised spinner, chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns said on Thursday.

Australia on Thursday opted against calling in either Nathan Hauritz or Stuart MacGill on the spin-friendly wicket at the Adelaide Oval, in favour of retaining the squad which trounced England by 384 runs in Brisbane.

The Adelaide wicket always presents a selection dilemma, but Australia's performance at the Gabba along with paceman Brett Lee's 10-wicket haul for New South Wales, persuaded the selection panel against making changes.

"The option is always there to include two spinners but what we've found, in Brisbane and in the recent past, is the make up of the side with three fast bowlers and one spinner has done the job well in most conditions," said Hohns "So after an emphatic win like

that we thought it wasn't necessary to make any changes at all.

Hohns' selection panel colleague Allan Border, who is in Hobart coaching the Australia A side, added: "The Adelaide wicket can offer turn but we have something special in Shane Warne and Darren Lehmann can do a job quite tidily with his left-arm spinners

"The wicket can be a bit up and down. However the wicket plays we think we have it covered." Queensland off-spinner Hauritz

would have been the likely spinning choice, after being included in recent touring squads. But Lee, who was named as 12th

man for the first Test, ensured he remained in the mix by returning to star for NSW against Tasmania in the Sheffield Shield. "Brett Lee going back was a successful trial. He was given some

exactly as we wanted him to respond," Border said. However, Hohns indicated that although Lee's NSW performance saw off any threat from a second spinner, he may not have done enough to oust Andy Bichel from the

clear messages and he responded

Australia XI. Hohns said it was yet to be decided whether the named 12th man will return to play domestic cricket to keep in form.

TEAM

Steve Waugh (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Andrew Bichel, Jason Gillespie, Matthew Hayden, Justin Langer, Brett Lee, Darren Lehmann, Damien Martyn, Glenn McGrath, Ricky Ponting, Shane Warne,

Agassi does Hewitt a favour tinues a reign that began when he won last year's Masters Cup edition in Sydney Hewitt's achievement lifts him to

an elite group that includes only

Jimmy Connors, Ivan Lendl and

WHY ME? American Andre Agassi looks up towards the heavens as he heads towards defeat in Shanghai yesterday.

Pete Sampras as players to have held on to the number one position for a full calendar year. The top ranking capped off a wonderful season that saw him triumph at Wimbledon, three other

tournaments and win more than 2.5 million dollars in prize money. Agassi came into the Masters Cup hoping to become the oldest player to finish a year ranked number one, but he got off the worst possible start on Wednesday when

thrashed him 7-5, 6-1. He told reporters after that match that he would find it hard to regroup in time for the Ferrero clash and he looked as if he had not mentally recovered in a dour first

the Czech Republic's Jiri Novak

sulking would not get him the coveted title, Agassi exploded out of the blocks to break Ferrero's first serve of the second set.

He blasted 18 winners past his

hapless opponent in the second

set, finishing it off with an ace down the middle. But in a nail-biting final set, Agassi finally succumbed after saving four match points, serving a

double fault to end his campaign for Earlier in the day, Switzerland's Roger Federer continued his dream Masters Cup by qualifying for the semi-finals with a 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 win

Federer, who at 21 is the youngest player in the eight-man field, joined Carlos Moya as the only two players to have booked spots in the semi-finals, which will be played on

Agassi is the only player to have already ruled himself out of conten-

Novak and Ferrero are due to play off for the other semi-final berth from the Gold Group on Friday while Hewitt, Safin and Spain's Albert Costa are fighting it out in the Red Group

The Masters is proving a remarkable ending to the season for Federer, who is six months younger than Hewitt.

Federer has enjoyed his best year on the circuit with three titles and he could finish the season ranked as high as three if he continues winning here.

Hewitt's match against Safin on Thursday night was a replay of the Paris Masters Series final less than two weeks ago, in which the bigserving Russian cruised to victory

However Safin arrived here a tired and dispirited figure and has lost his first two round robin matches to Moya and Albert Costa.

Belgian Kim Clijsters (L) consoles compatriot Justine Henin after beating her 6-1, 6-4 in an exhibition match in **Brussels on November 13**

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GDCQTGM CD PDHW Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A COMPANY PRODUCES CORDUROY PILLOWS, DO YOU THINK IT MAKES HEAD LINES? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G 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.

Aus A to follow the seniors

Cricket

AFP, Hobart

Australia A have no doubt about their job over the next three days -keep the English cricketers on the ropes.

Coming off a first Test drubbing, the tourists' problems compounded here on Thursday with fresh concerns about the fitness of key allrounder Andrew Flintoff.

But the tourists on Thursday night included Flintoff in their team to face Australia A after he underwent scans.

Flintoff, who is recovering from a hernia operation and was sent away for the scan after reporting groin soreness while bowling in the nets on Thursday, was given the okay to play in good news for the battered tourists.

Fast bowler Steve Harmison, who is recovering from shin splints, was included in the 12 for the

Alex Tudor and Chris Silverwood, who joined the squad last week to replace injured pacemen Darren Gough and Simon Jones, were also named.

Skipper Jimmy Maher said he was keen to use the Hobart match to continue Australia's dominance over England. "I know (Test captain) Steve

Waugh would be very keen for us to continue to dominate," Maher said. "Obviously, we were very dominant in Brisbane, but cricket's a funny game.

"It can come back and bite you as soon as you let your guard down, so we'll worry about our own game and hope that's good enough to keep England where they are at the moment."

After a laid-back three days, England had a solid session in the nets on Thursday. Flintoff, who missed the

Brisbane Test with continuing problems from a hernia operation, But physiotherapist Kirk Russell said Flintoff experienced pain in the

off for a soft tissue scan.

The other England quicks in line for the Hobart match -- particularly Steve Harmison, who also missed

right side of his groin and was sent

Brisbane through injury -- put

plenty of energy into the session.

Tennis

Andre Agassi conceded the title of

world number one for 2002 to

Australian Lleyton Hewitt after

losing an epic battle against Juan

Carlos Ferrero at the season-

ending Masters Cup here

Agassi, 32, had to win the tour-

nament to have a chance of over-

taking Hewitt as world number one.

but his 5-7, 6-2, 6-7 loss to Ferrero

meant he would not even make it

later Thursday to play Russian

Marat Safin knowing he had

secured the world's top ranking for

player to finish consecutive sea-

sons as world number one and

The 21-year-old is the youngest

the second year in a row.

Hewitt was due to go on court

out of the initial round robin stage.

AFP, Shanghai

Thursday.

batsmen Maher, Greg Blewett and Matthew Elliott in Australia A has been criticised by Victorian coach David Hookes. Coach and national selector

The inclusion of seasoned

Allan Border said the makeup was an issue and the selectors had tried to work out exactly what it should "Talk to the players and they want Australia A to be the next best,

they rate it that highly," the former Australian captain said. "Once they get picked for Australia A they see that as a real indication that they're almost next

cab off the rank.' Border said it was used for that purpose, but also for development and selectors could use it as they saw fit from year to year.

"We might have different circumstances that come up. We might want to pick the next best side because we have a World Cup coming up.

"Other times it might be just as beneficial for selectors to look at other players."

Even Friday's team may not necessarily be next best, with young off-spinner Nathan Hauritz preferred to experienced leggie Stuart MacGill.

Border said there'd been a couple of spin options, including MacGill "We didn't feel like we wanted to

expose MacGill to England at this stage," he said. "We'll keep him up our sleeve if required. "Just because a player is not here, it doesn't mean he's not in our

thoughts." **TEAMS**

AUSTRALIA A: Jimmy Maher (captain), Greg Blewett, Stuart Clark, Michael Clarke, Matthew Elliott, Brad Haddin, Nathan Hauritz, Martin Love. Ashlev Noffke, Marcus North, Brad Williams, Shannon Tubb (12th

ENGLAND: Marcus Trescothick (captain), Michael Vaughan, Mark Butcher, Robert Key, John Crawley, Craig White, Andrew Flintoff, Alex Tudor, Richard Dawson, James Foster, Chris Silverwood, Steve Harmison (12th man to be named).

Thank you, Basel

set which he lost 7-5.

REUTERS, Shanghai

Roger Federer outgunned Jiri Novak in the Tennis Masters Cup on Thursday, before revealing his inspiration this week has come from a different sporting source.

"FC Basel have been riding on a wave and it has been inspiring me lately," the stylish Swiss tennis player said when asked of his home team's achievement of reaching the second stage of soccer's Champions League. "They didn't beat (Liverpool) but

rankings and that is what is important and I think that is an incredible result for Basel," he added. "I mean, I think nobody expected "They were hoping to get into

they finished ahead of them in the

the UEFA Cup and now they have made it into the next stage of the Champions League.

"I think the whole year has been just incredible for them. They won the Swiss Cup, they won the Swiss Championship, then they qualified

against Celtic and they have been

"It is a pleasure to go and watch

It has also been a pleasure watching Federer this week at the biggest professional sports event to have been staged in China.

The fluid right-hander has been

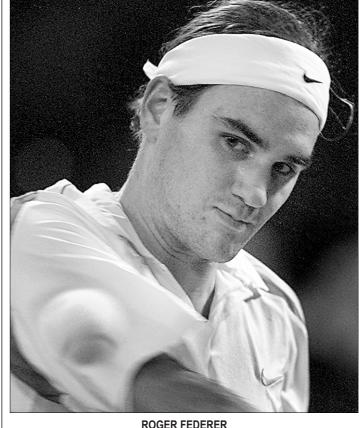
compared to Pete Sampras by many as he has flashed his skills at the New Shanghai International Expo Centre and the comparison is nothing new. "It's not the first time I've heard

this," he said, "but obviously it is nice to be compared to one of the all-time greats.

"I know we both play very smooth, but my results are nothing compared to his.

Federer's result on the third day of action at the \$3.7 million seasonender -- a 6-0 4-6 6-2 win over the Czech -- was impressive enough and put him firmly on course for a place in the semi-finals.

"I'm still very far away (from winning the tournament), let's be honest," he said. "But I feel good and if I continue playing the way I did today I think I have a chance."



ROGER FEDERER

Lazio in crisis

The future of Lazio football club was Cirio, the debt-ridden company owned by club president Sergio Cragnotti, announced it could be forced to sell its stake in the Italian First Division outfit.

Cirio also said it may be seeking to offload its other businesses, Del Monte Pacific and Bombril, as part of a restructuring programme. Cirio's proposed sale of its 35

The board of canned food giants

percent share in the Rome club followed its announcement of a ninemonth net loss of 83.9 million euros. Shares in Cirio have been sus-

pended all week. The company has debts of around 150 million euros leaving many to fear that Lazio will founder like former Serie A outfit Fiorentina, who were demoted to the third division after amassing huge

BCB U-17s

FROM PAGE 13

starts from tomorrow

and Tanveer took two wickets each. The BCB under-17 were also impressive in longer version match. They beat their CAB counterparts in a three-day match by four-wickets at the same venue last week. They will play their final three-day

match at the Shiliguri Stadium that

SCORES IN BRIEF CAB Under-17: 120 all out in 42.3 overs (Siddharth 27, Sumon 16, Ziaur 3-21, Nadif 2-17, Tanveer 2-

BCB Under-17: 123 for 2 in 31.4

overs (Naeem 57 n.o., Pavel 41) Result: BCB Under-17 won by eight

WI will walk

FROM PAGE 13 (November 18), Jodhpur in Rajasthan (November 21) and Vijayawada in southern Andhra

Pradesh (November 24). **TEAMS**

INDIA (from): Saurav Ganguly (captain), Virender Sehwag, Ven-katsai Laxman, Rahul Dravid, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Harbhajan Singh, Saniav Bangar, Anil Kumble Javagal Srinath, Ajit Agarkar, Dinesh Mongia, Jaiprakash Yadav, Ashish Nehra and Parthiv Patel.

WEST INDIES (from): Carl Hooper (captain), Chris Gayle, Wavell Hinds, Marlon Samuels, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Ridley Jacobs, Mahendra Naga-mootoo, Mervyn Dillon, Pedro Collins, Vasbert Drakes, Ricardo Powell, Corey Collymore, Cameron Cuffy, Darren Ganga, Ryan Hinds.