

## Maradona protests racism arrest

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Diego Maradona has joined a chorus of protest after an Argentine soccer player was arrested by Brazilian police for allegedly racially abusing an opponent during a Libertadores Cup match.

"Racism exists everywhere and in Brazil if they have problems they should resolve them elsewhere, not on the soccer pitch," the former Argentina international said in a television interview on Friday.

Quilmes defender Leandro Desabato was arrested on the Sao Paulo pitch after the final whistle on Wednesday and accused of slander aggravated by racism. He spent two nights in a police cell before being released.

Even the Argentina government has become involved.

"This can't be considered discrimination when there is so much adrenaline," Interior Minister Anibal Fernandez told reporters.

For Julio Grondona, president of the Argentine Football Association (AFA), slurs of this type "are very common on a soccer pitch where the player's pulse is racing".

## Australia released from Oceania

AFP, Sydney

Australia Sunday took another step towards joining the Asian Football Confederation when it received an official release from the Oceania Football Confederation.

All that remains for Australia to play their post-2006 World Cup qualification matches in Asia is approval from football's world governing body FIFA, likely in June.

The Asian Football Confederation announced last month that Australia's quest to leave Oceania and play in Asia had been unanimously endorsed by its executive committee after a meeting in Kuala Lumpur.



THIS IS LIFE! An Israeli soldier holds out his arms as he prevents a group of Palestinian schoolgirls from passing through inside Palestinian territory.

## Girls just can't have fun!

### Football

INTERNET SOURCE

Like the stars of Bend it like Beckham they cannot wear shorts until they get to the football training ground in case they cause offence with "immodest" dress. To add to their woes, the Bethlehem girls' football team practice yard at the local university has been the target of shooting by Israeli troops during the worst days of the intifada.

The team is still searching for a pitch in and around the Palestinian town that is big enough for them to begin training to compete 11-a-side; one that is not too sandy or stony or located in a village that would disapprove of young women playing football.

Despite all these obstacles, the team last week returned from playing a five-a-side tournament in Jordan, competing against other Arab women's teams, where they won one out of four games.

Established just two years ago, Bethlehem girls' was the first Palestinian women's football team, although now they have some opposition in the form of a new squad set up in Ramallah. They are also the only Palestinian team to compete in international or regional competitions.

In 2003, two young Bethlehem University students, Honey Thalji and Shatha Bannoura, approached the university's athletics director, Samar Araj Mousa, asking that they be allowed to form a girls' football team.

"We were always being told that girls don't play football, that our bodies were not made for the sport," 20-year-old Thalji, a business studies student explained. "All we wanted to do is prove the opposite."

A keen sportswoman, Thalji comes from a family of football followers - "even my mother watches it on

TV" - and had played football with her brothers as a child. "It's my passion, absolutely," said Thalji, who is now captain of the national team.

After much debate and discussion, which even saw Mousa survey some 500 local residents asking if they approved of women's football - 85% said yes - the search for suitable players began and a call went out to both the female university population and local high schools.

After a series of trials, 22 girls aged 13 to 21 signed up and three teams were formed. The Palestinian Ministry of Sport threw in their support and a male coach, Raed Ayad, agreed to begin training the girls.

Organising practice sessions was a formidable task in itself, as Bethlehem, which is only a few kilometres from the southern outskirts of Jerusalem, faces curfews and frequent outbreaks of shooting between Israeli troops and Palestinian militants.

Mousa would wait for lulls in the violence before summoning the girls to a training session by phone "often only at an hour or so's notice." If training proved too dangerous she would give balls to the team members to "take home and practice with your brothers."

Since the beginning of the intifada, Bethlehem became a ghost town - with tourists only returning in recent months as the quiet continues.

"There's really nothing here for young people to do, which is why sport is so important. It really keeps their spirits up," explained Mousa as we drove through the West Bank town.

The girls' team has attracted funding from the English Football Association and now Mousa is seeking assistance from Fifa to create football training programmes for schoolgirls as young as eight.

Ideally, Mousa wants to see other women teams being formed across the West Bank and Gaza. She added: "But it'll be difficult to play tournaments because of the wall," pointing to

Israel's controversial security barrier that now separates Bethlehem from Jerusalem.

The bulk of Bethlehem's team members are Arab Christians with about a quarter, Muslim. Cultural pressures can still be an issue for the girls with one woman refusing permission to travel to Jordan for last week's tournament on the grounds that "young girls don't travel without their family".

Still, Mousa said the parents were largely supportive of their daughters' efforts. "All of their families are mad football fans," she said with a grin.

But for young women in their early 20s, other potential obstacles emerge in the form of fiancés and husbands. "That's why in the Arab world you don't see too many women above the age of 22 or so playing football," said 42-year-old Mousa, herself a mother of four children. "Once they finish university and are engaged to be married, there is enormous pressure for them to give up the sport."

Thalji is adamant that this will not be her fate. "I won't want him if he doesn't like me playing soccer."

Regardless of the similarities with their own lives, none of the team members knew of the British film, Bend it Like Beckham, the tale of young British Asian girl determined to play football.

"But hang on, we've heard of David Beckham," piped up Dalia Kharoufeh who only began playing last year. The 20-year-old accounting student went on to say she did not think much of the Real Madrid star player, preferring the Brazilian Ronaldo. "Beckham didn't play well in the European championships last year and missed a penalty. That did it for me."

## United set up

FROM PAGE 12 aggregate reverse. United, who have won a record 11 FA Cups, and Arsenal, nine-times winners, are the two most successful teams in the competition's 133-year history.

Next month's match will be the first time the bitter Premiership rivals, who have monopolised the tournament for the past three seasons, have met in an FA Cup final since 1979 when Arsenal won 3-2 at Wembley.

United, who beat Championship side Millwall 3-0 in last season's final, have never won back-to-back FA Cups.

## Musharraf won't

FROM PAGE 12 to watch an international cricket match between the two countries. In 1987, it was Ziaul Haq who had done that in Jaipur.

Before leaving for the Kotla, Musharraf, speaking to reporters at the five-star hotel where he is staying, declined to predict the outcome of the match.

"I don't know. In a match, there is a result. You don't get a result by watching a match," said Musharraf stated to be a keen watcher of India-Pakistan cricket matches wherever and whenever they are played.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri told reporters before going to watch the final tie that the cricket match between India and Pakistan should not be seen as a battle but as a sport.

## They outclassed

FROM PAGE 12 the initial stages. I am happy my innings contributed to my team's victory," he said after being named.

Seamer Navedul Hasan was named man-of-the-series for his 15 wickets in six matches.

"My aim in the series was to contain runs. I just wanted to bowl a tidy line and length and waited for batsmen's mistakes because India have many stroke-players," said Naved.

"Everybody in the team backed me, especially my captain. It was the team effort which helped us win the series."

## He can hold

FROM PAGE 12 the players, but was never known to take refuge in excuses after defeat, especially when he noted even a slight fall in the level of intensity.

"I can cope with defeats, but when I see carelessness and lack of effort, it's hard to tolerate," he once said.

Not surprising from a man who believed in giving 100 per cent as a coach and expected the same in return from his players.

India has not yet named Wright's replacement.



## Did U Know?

Golf has been the only sport played on the moon when on February 6, 1971 Alan Shepard hit a golf ball.

## Fightback Pakistan

FROM PAGE 12 finally dismissing Afridi when he had the danger man caught behind steering a slower ball to third-man.

But there was no respite for India. Youhana and Malik steadied the innings with an 85-run stand for the third wicket and then Inzamam added 91 for the fifth with Younis Khan making 40 to help his team cross the 300-mark.

Malik, who scored 75 and 65 in the third and fourth matches, was again in good form as he hit eight fours in his 14th half-century before being bowled by Ajit Agarkar.

Pakistan scored 91 in the last 10 overs, largely thanks to Inzamam who eventually fell to a poor decision in the final over when Indian umpire Arani Jayaprakash wrongly adjudged he had made contact with the ball.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the sixth and final one-day international between India and Pakistan at the Ferozeshah Kotla in New Delhi on Sunday:

PAKISTAN				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Butt c Sehwaq b Zaheer	3			
Afridi c Dhoni b Nehra	44			
Malik b Agarkar	72			
Youhana run out	50			
Inzamam c Dhoni b Agarkar	68			
Younis c and b Nehra	40			
Razzaq c Sehwaq b Nehra	0			
Akmal b Agarkar	5			
Naved not out	9			
Extras: (lb-5, w-7)	12			
Total: (For 8 wkts in 50 overs)	303			
Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-68, 3-153, 4-191, 5-282, 6-282, 7-294, 8-303				
Did not bat: Arshad, Iftikhar				

INDIA				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Zaheer	10	0	65	1
Nehra	10	0	72	3
Agarkar	9	0	58	3
Harbhajan	9	0	39	0
Mongia	7	0	40	0
Tendulkar	5	0	24	0

Sehwaq c Afridi b Naved	21
Tendulkar b Iftikhar	9
Dhoni c Afridi b Arshad	24
Dravid run out	19
Yuvraj run out	13



Players of the Maple Leaf International School girls handball team pose with State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharraf Hossain during the prize-giving ceremony at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex on Sunday.

## StanChart cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Saikat Hossain hit a sparkling century as Iqra Model handed a Titus Gas Adarsha High 39-run defeat in the Standard Chartered Under-15 Young Tigers School Championship at the Uttara Friends Club ground yesterday.

Iqra rode on Saikat's 87-ball 101 innings that produced 17 boundaries to score 266 and then Ahsanullah claimed five wickets for 40 to wrap up Titus Gas for 227.

At the Residential Model School ground, a six-wicket haul by Masum Rabbi helped Rajdhani Model High School (86) to post a three-wicket victory over Jinjira Pilot High (85).

In the day's other matches, Rose Garden (95) defeated Maniknagar Model High (92) by four wickets, CNH High (156) earned 15-run victory over Dhaka Residential Model (141) and Khilgaon Government High (232) trounced Ideal (125) by 107 runs.

Meanwhile, South Zone (278) managed a 13-run victory against West Zone (265) in the Under-17 competition.

## Maple Leaf defend girl's h'ball title

SPORTS REPORTER

Maple Leaf International School retained their title when they registered a 5-1 victory against Dhanmondi Qamrunnisa in the final of the mini handball girls' tournament at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

The winners led the first half 2-0. Maple Leaf, which was also sponsoring the second version of the tournament, earlier moved into the final with a hard-fought solitary goal victory in tiebreaker in the first semi-final against Sunnysdale while Dhanmondi Qamrunnisa booked their place with a 4-2 win against Green Herald.

Sanjida of Maple Leaf was adjudged the best player in the tournament.

## Ronaldo's peace mission

INTERNET SOURCE, Jerusalem

Brazilian superstar Ronaldo has joined the ranks of celebrities working to bring about peace in the West Asia.

Ronaldo will visit the region early next month to participate in a Peres Centre for Peace sponsored project that brings around 800 Israeli and Palestinian children from low economic status to participate in an educational programme that promotes peace and co-operation through sports, a media report said on Friday.

Chelsea's Portuguese coach Jose Mourinho, who has led British club Chelsea to the Champions League semi-finals, also agreed to serve as a special envoy for the centre during a recent visit.

## Mind your mouth!

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Flamengo have fired their second coach this year, this time for talking too much.

Cuca, who had been in charge for 12 matches, said he had been sacked for publicly repeating that the team needed new players.

"My persistent requests for reinforcements ended up upsetting the directors," he told reporters. "I went too far."

Flamengo, who have won the Brazilian championship four times since it began in 1971, were beaten 1-0 in the first leg of a Copa Brasil tie by second division Ceara on Wednesday.

In their previous game, they were hammered 4-1 by neighbours Fluminense in a Carioca (Rio de Janeiro) state championship semi-final 10 days ago.

Although the club, once graced by players such as Zico and Junior, claim to have more than 30 million fans, they are in chronic financial difficulties and appear set for another fight against relegation when the Brazilian championship starts later this month.

Flamengo's first coach this year was Julio Cesar Leal, who was fired after only three games.

## MSC, Abahani

FROM PAGE 12 automatic qualification rules for capital teams and instead introduce qualifying rounds for everybody including the champions and runners-up.

This year, Muktijodha, Mohammedan, Abahani, Sheikh Russel and Brothers won automatic berths in the finals.

### FIXTURES

(Group matches start at 4 pm and 6 pm)  
 Apr 21: Mohammedan v Wanderers; Abahani v Arambagh  
 Apr 22: Muktijodha v Youngmen's; Brothers v Sheikh Russel  
 Apr 23: Abahani v Wanderers; Mohammedan v Arambagh  
 Apr 24: Brothers v Youngmen's; Muktijodha v Sheikh Russel  
 Apr 25: Arambagh v Wanderers; Mohammedan v Abahani  
 Apr 26: Sheikh Russel v Youngmen's; Muktijodha v Brothers

## PREMIERSHIP

# Spurs deny Liverpool

### Football

AFP, London

Andy Johnson's controversially won penalty secured a 3-3 Premier League draw for Crystal Palace against bottom-of-the-table Norwich on Saturday.

It was a result that did neither side much good, with Norwich and second-bottom Palace still where they were before kick-off.

Norwich, 3-1 up, had been on course for their first away league win in over a year when Palace striker Johnson went down in the box seven minutes from time before scoring his 10th penalty of the season.

Also remaining in the bottom three were Southampton who squandered a 2-0 lead at home to Aston Villa in a 3-2 defeat.

Bolton, who won 2-1 away to Charlton with on-loan Liverpool striker El-Hadj Diouf scoring for the visitors, leapfrogged the Reds into fifth place in the table.

Meanwhile Liverpool, who saw captain Steven Gerrard miss a penalty, were held to a 2-2 draw at home to Tottenham.

In Saturday's late game, Portsmouth, who marked Alain Perrin's first game in charge with a 4-2 win over Charlton last week, remained unbeaten under the Frenchman with a goalless draw away to Birmingham.

The result took Pompey eight points clear of the bottom three.

Elsewhere at the bottom, Fulham inched further away from trouble following a 1-1 draw against Manchester City at

Craven Cottage.

At Selhurst Park, Joonas Kolkk put Palace ahead in the fifth minute.

But striker Dean Ashton, who turned down the chance to join Palace from Crewe in favour of Norwich, struck twice either side of half-time.

The Canaries then extended their lead when Leon McKenzie, a scorer in last week's shock 2-0 win against Manchester United, was on target again in the 53rd minute.

However, Michael Hughes gave Palace hope with a diving header 17 minutes from time before Johnson's 83rd minute penalty salvaged a point.

With none of the top four in action because of fixture delays caused by the FA Cup semi-finals, Liverpool, fresh from their mid-week goalless draw away to Juventus which set up a Champions League semi-final against Premiership leaders Chelsea, knew they could close the gap on Everton at Anfield.

But not for the first time this season they struggled in the league days after European success.

Spurs took the lead thanks to a brilliant strike from Erik Edman in the 12th minute. However, Liverpool were back on terms a minute before the break thanks to a superb shot from Luis Garcia.

Republic of Ireland striker Robbie Keane restored Spurs' lead in the 55th minute and Liverpool then saw Gerrard shoot wide from the spot, after he'd been fouled by Stephen Kelly, before Sami Hyypia levelled in the

63rd minute.

Kick-off at St Mary's was delayed by 15 minutes because of traffic congestion but for the home fans the wait was worthwhile when Kevin Phillips scored in the fourth minute.

Phillips' strike partner Peter Crouch doubled the lead nine minutes later before Carlton Cole pulled one back for David O'Leary's men 15 minutes after the break.

Then Nolberto Solano's shot in the 70th minute made it 2-2 and two minutes later Steven Davis completed the fightback.

Charlton went behind to Jay-Jay Okocha's seventh-minute penalty before Francis Jeffers levelled.

But just before the hour mark Senegal striker Diouf restored Bolton's lead.

United States international Claudio Reyna put Manchester City ahead in the 20th minute before an error from former England keeper David James let in Luis Boa Morte for Fulham's equaliser late on.

## TOP SIX

English Premiership table after Saturday's late game played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Chelsea	32	25	6	1	62	12	81
Arsenal	32	21	7	4	73	33	70
Man Utd	32	19	10	3	48	19	67
Everton	32	16	6	10	39	33	54
Bolton	33	15	7	11	43	37	52
Liverpool	33	15	6	12	46	34	51

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

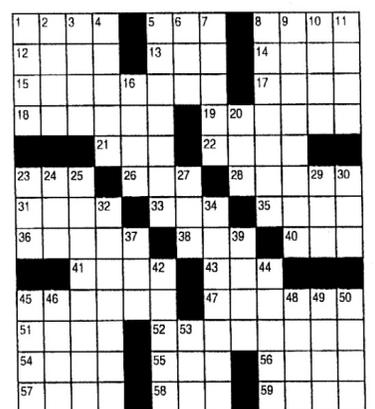
- 1 Deeds
- 5 "The Amazing Race" aid
- 8 Blue hue
- 12 Entice
- 13 Raw rock
- 14 "SNL" alumna
- 15 Pulpit figure
- 17 Anatomical network
- 18 "A Streetcar..." role
- 19 Earlier, poetically
- 21 Spread seed
- 22 Galvanizing material
- 23 Back talk
- 26 Ring decision
- 28 Macabre cartoonist
- 31 Journey Wilson
- 33 Perch
- 35 Host Jay
- 36 Pants material
- 38 Diary

**DOWN**

- 1 European range
- 2 Brusque
- 3 Genealogy
- 4 Crofts' partner
- 5 Mostly shaved dog
- 6 Exist
- 7 "White Men Can't Jump" cast member
- 8 Near the kidneys
- 9 Beverage, often
- 10 Golden Rule word
- 11 From the start
- 16 What a stent will prevent
- 20 Predetermine
- 24 Rage
- 25 Medium-sized
- 27 Lubricate
- 29 Singer DiFranco
- 30 Head movement
- 32 Intoxicated
- 34 Harpsichord melody
- 37 Bumped into
- 39 Capricorn
- 42 Legends
- 44 Felix's roomie
- 45 Apprehend
- 46 "And what... rare as..."
- 48 By way of, to birds
- 49 Maui mementos
- 50 History chapters
- 53 Go like a bunny

**Solution time: 21 mins.**

B L O W   G R A Y   H U R T  
 O N A   H U E   O R E O  
 S P R Y G L A S S   U G L Y  
 H E X   O I L   P R I E T S  
 A W I S H   B U L L E T S  
 D E M I   H U T   A R I A  
 O R A N G E S   P S A L M  
 G E M   M A S  
 S M I L E   B O N   E A U  
 L A R A   D O U G L A S S  
 A M T S   T I N N   A C H E  
 W E I S I S   P R E T   S H I E D



## CRYPTOQUIP

JAN CGC VTUNZ · JR YNVXN  
 JAN PRCXNCJ · LGJ TAN  
 IRGCZ KJ ZKIIPGYJ JR

TAVUN JAN AVLKJ  
 Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF A POST OFFICE BURNED DOWN, I PRESUME IT WOULD LOOK LIKE A CASE OF BLACKMAIL.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: I equals F

The Cryptquip 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.