

This is just the beginning



REUTERS, Lisbon

A Russian side contesting a Champions League final is no longer a dream, according to CSKA Moscow coach Valery Gazzayev. CSKA's UEFA Cup victory over Portugal's Sporting on Wednesday is set to herald a new era in Russian football, awash with cash and attracting foreign players for transfer fees that have raised eyebrows across Western Europe and beyond. Backed by a \$54 million sponsorship deal with Russian oil company Sibneft, of which Chelsea's billionaire owner Roman Abramovich is still the majority shareholder, CSKA became the first Russian team to win a European trophy with a 3-1 success over Sporting in their own Alvalade stadium. Abramovich's cash provided the backbone for Chelsea to secure their first English league title since 1955 and in his homeland the money is pouring in to the capital's clubs.

Last week Dynamo Moscow splashed out 20 million euros (\$25.7 million) to sign Porto pair Maniche and Costinha, who joined their former team mate Dierlei in the Russian capital. Spartak paid 12 million euros for talented young Argentine Fernando Cavenaghi and Lokomotiv brought home Russia striker Dmitri Sychev from Olympique Marseille, evidence of Russian football's growing financial muscle. As well as attracting other top players to Eastern Europe, Gazzayev said his side's UEFA Cup win would provide the catalyst for a new generation of footballers. "This is a symbolic victory. Now every child in Russian youth football schools will know what to work for and what to dream about and will know those dreams can become true," he said. "This is a landmark victory for Russian football. It will give the nation the belief to go on and win more things at both club and international level. "I hope the next medal I pick up will be a Champions League one." CSKA so nearly made it into the

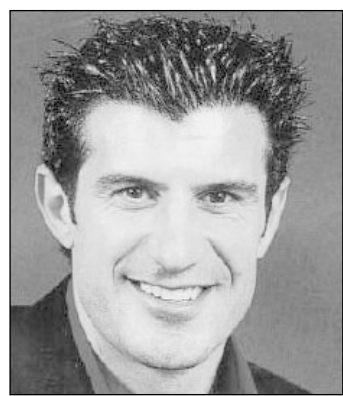
knockout rounds of this season's Champions League. Having come through a second qualifying round tie against Azerbaijan's Neftchi Baku in July, CSKA were paired with Porto, Chelsea and Paris St Germain. A 3-1 win over the French side in their final game did not prove quite enough though, Porto's last-gasp win over Chelsea putting the Portuguese side through. CSKA had to settle for a place in the last 32 of the UEFA Cup but their failure to progress in Europe's premier club competition led to the departure of captain Sergei Semak to PSG and Czech midfielder Jiri Jarosik to Chelsea. Around the same time CSKA's Brazilian striker Vagner Love said he was homesick and tired of the harsh Russian winter, incurring the wrath of Moscow supporters. But a deal with Brazil's Corinthians fell through and he was forced to return to Russia. Luckily for CSKA, Love did not dwell on his disappointment and his goals, capped by the third against Sporting, helped CSKA seal their UEFA success.

Figo back with Portugal

AP, Lisbon



Luis Figo was named Thursday in Portugal's squad for two World Cup qualifying games, returning to the national side nine months after withdrawing from international soccer. Figo, a former FIFA World Player of the Year, announced in August he was halting his 15-year international career. The 32-year-old midfielder said international commitments on top of games for Real Madrid were damaging his fitness. Officials hoped for Figo's return and never awarded his No. 7 shirt to any other player. He never ruled out a comeback and returns after losing his place in Madrid's team. "He's a great player and a great leader," Portugal coach Luiz Felipe Scolari said. "He's still got a lot to give, not only on the pitch." Figo faces competition for a midfield slot from FC Barcelona's Deco and Manchester United's Cristiano Ronaldo. Portugal hosts main Group 3 rival Slovakia in Lisbon on June 4 and plays at Estonia four days later. Figo was substituted several times during last year's European Championship, in which Portugal, as host nation, finished runner-up. He played 110 games for Portugal, a record shared with defender Fernando Couto. He has 31 goals. Scolari also recalled a handful of players with sporadic appearances for Portugal - Jorge Ribeiro and Nuno Frechaut of Dynamo Moscow, Valencia's Marco Caneira, and Nuno Valente and Ricardo Quaresma of FC Porto.



LUIS FIGO

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Ricardo Pereira (Sporting), Quim Silva (Benfica)
Defenders: Miguel Monteiro (Benfica), Jorge Andrade (Deportivo Coruna), Marco Caneira (Valencia, Spain), Ricardo Carvalho (Chelsea), Jorge Ribeiro (Dynamo Moscow), Alex Costa (Vitoria Guimaraes), Fernando Meira (VfB Stuttgart), Nuno Valente (Porto), Nuno Frechaut (Dynamo Moscow), Ricardo Costa (Porto)
Midfielders: Luis Figo (Real Madrid), Deco Souza (Barcelona), Armando Petit (Benfica), Costinha (Porto), Maniche Ribeiro (Porto), Tiago Mendes (Chelsea), Manuel Fernandes (Benfica)
Forwards: Cristiano Ronaldo (Manchester United), Helder Postiga (Porto), Luis Boa Morte (Fulham), Pauleta (Paris St Germain), Simao Sabrosa (Benfica), Ricardo Quaresma (Porto), Nuno Gomes (Benfica)

UN invites Pak players to be its ambassadors



AFP, Karachi

The UN has commended the Pakistan-India cricket series which helped promote peace between the cricket-mad nations and invited the Pakistan team to serve as its ambassador for 2005, an official said. Pakistan and India, who have fought three wars since winning independence from the British rule in 1947, came close to a fourth war three years ago. The South Asian rivals had millions of troops at the respective borders before a "hand of friendship" offered by former Indian premier Atal Behari Vajpayee paved way for normalisation of relations. The thaw in relations also removed a three-year ban on bilateral sporting events in October 2003. "The two cricket series have played a significant role and brought people of both the countries closer," said the letter, referring to India's tour to Pakistan last year, their first across the border since 1989. Pakistan paid a return trip to India earlier this year. They are now gearing up to host

ing peace in the region," wrote Ogi. "The two boards deserve full appreciation for hosting the events to promote peace and harmony. Cricket has proved that it has the potential to promote peace," the letter said. "The United Nations in a letter have appreciated the peace-promoting cricket between Pakistan and India and have appointed Pakistan cricket team to serve as spokesperson of IPYSE (International Year of Sports and Physical Education) for 2005," Pakistan Cricket Board spokesman Abbas Zaidi told AFP. "The peaceful sporting events held in the last two years have contributed significantly in promot-

India for another three Tests and five one-day games early next year. More than 10,000 Indian fans crossed the border to watch the 2004 series and were warmly received in Pakistan which paved way for further confidence-building measures. Around 3,000 Pakistanis crossed border to watch the first Test at Mohali in March followed by President Pervez Musharraf's visit to New Delhi to watch the last one-day match and hold talks with Indian government. PCB chairman Shahydar Khan thanked the UN for the gesture. "We are thankful to the UN for appreciating our efforts. We would continue to work in tandem with the Indian board to hold such peaceful series in future as we realise that cricket can act as tool of peace," said Khan. The PCB also accepted the UN offer and said Pakistan's national team would always act as ambassadors of peace.

HOUSE BURGLED, AWARD WON

Eventful day for Lampard



AFP, London

The London home of England and Chelsea football star Frank Lampard was burgled early Wednesday, when the intruders made off with two luxury cars, police said. Officers said they were holding one man in connection with the early morning break-in, in which a computer and television were also snatched from the house in the wealthy west London district of Chelsea. Lampard, the 26-year-old midfielder named player of the year this season by the Football Writers' Association, was at home during the burglary, his management company said later. At the time of the break-in, he was asleep with his Spanish fiancée Elen Rives, 28, who is pregnant. "Frank has only been in the house for a matter of days but unfortunately photographs of the house have been published in various newspapers which has not helped with maintaining his privacy and security," his management said. "Neither Frank nor his fiancée Elen, who were asleep in the house at the time, were harmed in any way and neither was his house ransacked nor damaged." Lampard was due to collect the English Football Writers' Association player of the year award on Thursday evening after being at the heart of Chelsea's first championship-winning campaign for half a century. He will be awarded the prestigious accolade at a gala dinner held at London's Royal Lancaster Hotel. Lampard was - for the second time in succession - runner-up in the vote for the Professional Footballers' Association Player of the Year, which was won by teammate and Chelsea captain John Terry, while the midfielder himself then topped a poll of fans on the PFA website for their own version of the award. It has been a phenomenal season for both men, a fact not lost on England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson, who is sure to make each an integral part of his World Cup qualifying campaign. "They have developed from being young talent into important players at the highest level to the extent that they could now play in any team in the world," said the Swede. The FWA award is the English game's oldest and most prestigious individual accolade, and Lampard becomes only the second Englishman since Alan Shearer in 1994 to win, with Teddy Sheringham the other five years ago. Lampard - second to Thierry Henry in last year's FWA vote - and Terry collected more than 90 percent of the votes, with Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher finishing a distant third.

Wilson, who played for the Brujas club, had been picked for the Costa Rican national side to play in the North and Central America and Caribbean (CONCACAF) qualifying zone for the 2006 World Cup finals in Germany. International Costa Rica striker Wayne Wilson died here Wednesday after failing to recover from injuries sustained in a car crash last week. The 29-year-old, who had scored 75 goals in Costa Rica's first division and four for the national side, was driving to see his family last Saturday when the car he was driving hit a truck on the highway connecting San Jose to the Caribbean coastline. Wilson, who played for the Brujas club, had been picked for the Costa Rican national side to play in the North and Central America and Caribbean (CONCACAF) qualifying zone for the 2006 World Cup finals in Germany.

PREVIEW: SERIE A Juve's eyes on Milan game



AFP, Rome

Juventus will be crowned Italian champions without kicking a ball on Friday if their closest rivals AC Milan fail to beat Palermo at the San Siro. Milan are playing their penultimate Serie A match two days early to give them more time to prepare for next Wednesday's Champions League final against Liverpool, while Juve visit Livorno on Sunday. Five points adrift of Juve with only two games remaining, Milan must win on Friday or the Scudetto the little silver shield awarded to the league champions - will end up in the Old Lady's hands for a 28th time. Must Milan win on Friday then Juventus will lift the championship if they defeat Livorno on Sunday. If Milan win against Palermo and Juve fail to beat Livorno, the race for the title will go right down to the final game of the season. A two-game play-off will ensue if Juve and Milan end up with the

same number of points after the final round of matches. The Italian title cannot be decided on goal difference. Milan midfielder Clarence Seedorf admitted that trying to do the double had proved to be a bridge too far for the reigning Serie A champions. "To fight at the same time for the Champions League and the league championship is really difficult," said the 29-year-old Holland international. "To believe in the Scudetto now is really hard, but against Palermo we want to do well all the same as we prepare for Istanbul." Juventus, who are currently refusing to talk to the media in response to what they feel is an attempt by the press to unsettle the club, have practically led the championship race from start to finish. After 21 matches they held an eight point advantage over Milan, but four games later their lead was cut to zero. The two title rivals were neck and neck for two months until May 8 when Juve beat Milan 1-0 at the San

Siro to open up a three point gap. Last weekend, that gap was stretched to five points when Juve beat Parma and Milan drew at Lecce. In the race for the fourth and final Champions League place which is still up for grabs, Udinese and Sampdoria, who both have 60 points, face difficult matches this weekend. Udinese play away to Cagliari who themselves are chasing a UEFA Cup place, while Sampdoria host third-placed Inter Milan, who clinched a place in the Italian Cup at Cagliari's expense on Wednesday. Down at the bottom, the situation couldn't be more tense with just five points separating the bottom six clubs.

FIXTURES

(All 1400 GMT kick-off unless stated)
Friday: AC Milan v Palermo (1930)
Sunday: Atalanta v Roma, Brescia v Messina, Cagliari v Udinese, Chievo v Bologna, Lazio v Fiorentina, Livorno v Juventus, Parma v Siena, Reggina v Lecce, Sampdoria v Inter Milan

Not 'cleared for life'



AFP, London

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has written to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to tell them that Shoaib Malik, in common with every other bowler, cannot be 'cleared for life' after remodelling a suspect bowling action. The off-spinner was cited for a suspect topspin action following a one-day series in Sri Lanka in October but recently returned to bowling. PCB officials wrote to the world governing body asking them to clarify the 23-year-old Shoaib's position and there was even a suggestion that he should be allowed to "bowl without inhibition" in future. But the ICC re-iterated their long-standing position that no bowler can ever be given a lifetime clearance because of the risk of re-offending. In a letter to the PCB, David Richardson the ICC's general manager, cricket, wrote they had noted a considerable improvement in Malik's bowling action in Pakistan's recent tour of India, as confirmed by the Pakistan board's own biomechanical report that it recently commissioned from South Africa. "We are pleased to note that Shoaib appears to have made improvements to his action and that he

was recorded as bowling within the levels of tolerance of elbow extension as laid down in the ICC regulations by the biomechanical research commissioned by the PCB," said Richardson. "This seems to confirm what the match officials reported to us following his bowling during the recent ODI series in India, where they said that he was bowling with a much smoother action." However, the former South Africa wicket-keeper added: "There can be no guarantee that he will not be reported again should his action deteriorate. "As regards the request that Shoaib be given ICC clearance to bowl without inhibition in the future, I would like to clarify the position as follows: "The effect of the report from the biomechanical expert cannot be to clear the bowler to bowl without limitation in the future. "This would obviously not make sense as a bowler could then, once cleared, simply revert to old bad habits. "As with all bowlers, whenever Shoaib bowls in a match in the future, his action will be under the scrutiny of the match officials. "According to ICC regulations they will use the naked eye to determine whether his action complies with the Laws. "You will recall that the degree of permitted elbow extension is 15

degrees and that this level of tolerance was set at the point at which such elbow extension will begin to become noticeable to the naked eye. "Accordingly, any degree of extension which is visible to the naked eye must and will be reported. "Shoaib has proven himself a fantastic young cricketer and we are hopeful that he will continue to work on his action to ensure that the improvements that have taken place become permanent." Earlier this month Malik was banned for one Test and fined 75 percent of his next two international match fees by the PCB for throwing a domestic game. Leading his hometown Sialkot team, he admitted throwing a Twenty20 tournament match against the Karachi Zebras as a protest after his team were penalised for a slow over rate in another match. Malik will miss Pakistan's first Test against the West Indies in Barbados starting on May 26. He has so far taken eight wickets in eight Tests but 84 wickets at 99 one-day internationals at an average of just over 34 apiece. In February the ICC endorsed a change in the laws governing fair deliveries by allowing all to straighten their bowling arm up to 15 degrees, established as the point at which any straightening, resulting in an illegal 'throw' becomes visible to the naked eye.

Savar Area team still the best

SPORTS REPORTER

The Savar Area team maintained their supremacy in the Bangladesh Army Aquatic Meet when they clinched their third successive championship on Wednesday. Savar bagged 11 gold, 7 silver and 9 bronze medals in the five-day swimming and water polo competition which concluded at the Army Swimming Complex at Banani. Rangpur Area team finished runners-up with 6 gold, 11 silver and 3 bronze. Rezaul Karim of Savar, Ahsan Habib (Savar), Abul Kalam Azad (Rangpur) and Jamshed Ali (Ghatail) were adjudged best swimmer, best swimmer new soldiers, best diver and best water polo player respectively. Quarter Master General of Bangladesh Army Maj Gen Abu Roshde Rokonuddawla distributed prizes as chief guest. Matuul Udayan Sangha recorded a 3-1 win over Rainbow AC at the Kamalapur Stadium. **Winning start** FROM PAGE 16 four matches at different city venues. Uttar Baridhara Club beat Kasaituli SKP 1-0 while Government Printing Press defeated Karwanbazar Pragati Sangha and Rahmatganj SC edged Gandaria Famous by identical margins at the Army Stadium. **Man-of-the-match:** Abdur Razzaq.

Ntini top South Africa cricketer

BBC ONLINE, undated

Paecman Makhaya Ntini has been named South African cricketer-of-the-year. He also scooped the Test player-of-the-year and the Players' player-of-the-year award at a presentation ceremony on Wednesday in Gauteng. Ntini, the fourth-ranked bowler in the world, took 58 Test wickets in the 14 matches of the period under review, July 2004 to May 2005. **Still Pakistan** FROM PAGE 16 Gayle, bowling his off-spin, was the most successful West Indies bowler, taking three for 48 from his allotment of 10 overs; and Bradshaw collected two for 27 from seven. Afridi gave Pakistan a flying start, but was one of three batsmen that were run out. **BRIEF SCORES** PAKISTAN: 192 all out in 44.3 overs (Butt 43, Youhana 30, Afridi 24, Inzamam 23, Razzaq 22; Gayle 3-48, Bradshaw 2-27) WEST INDIES: 133 all out in 45.2 overs (Bravo 27, Gayle 22, Bradshaw 17, Morton 13, Chanderpaul 13; Razzaq 4-29, Shabbir 2-19, Naved 2-23, Afridi 2-28) **Result:** Pakistan won by 59 runs and take 1-0 lead in the 3-ODI series.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 40 Mighty Ducks' pond? 42 "The Jazz Singer," e.g. 12 Chest area 13 To-do list 14 Smell the coffee? 15 Cincinnati runners-up with 6 gold, 11 silver and 3 bronze 16 Valhalla VIP 17 Mideastern prince shade 20 Competent 22 Boar's mate 24 Suitable 27 Mater precursor 29 Intricate weavings 32 Reversal in altitude 35 Use a stop watch 36 Calamitous 37 Bob's longtime partner 38 Macabre author

DOWN 1 Roe provider 2 Mischievous Norse god 4 Greek cross 5 Thrown out 6 Urban transport 7 Gelling agents 8 Exod. follower 9 Woolens, e.g. 10 Nollon 11 Have coming 12 Seesaw quorum 18 Some bios 21 Redcap's burden 23 Have a mortgage 24 Charade **Solution time: 27 mins.**

1 L I B **2** G A L M **3** W H E Y **4** A D A **5** A R E A **6** R O M E **7** D E M O C R A T **8** O P U S **9** S A N C H O **10** U R N **11** H E W **12** C H E S T **13** T O D O **14** U P S E T **15** B E N **16** A P E **17** L E A R **18** C O O D **19** P I S T A **20** N A I G **21** T H X **22** F I L I E S **23** A R A B I T **24** S O L **25** A R A B I T **26** T R A D E S **27** S E A L **28** Z I G G U R A T **29** A G R A **30** E C H O **31** A R E **32** C O A X **33** N E S T **34** G N P

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CRYPTOQUIP
G K V C J F I R F Y O Q F O N O T R Z
C K V C I T R Z E J I F , G T O A S C H
P Y R P ' Q E O R T O A C T Q -
E T O R S G H W O N O H P .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU PICKED A YELLOW FLOWER AND THEN SOMEHOW MISPLACED IT, ARE YOU LACKADAISICAL?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P equals T
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.



PHOTO: ISPR

Quarter Master General of Bangladesh Army Maj Gen Abu Roshde Rokonuddawla (2nd from L) hands over winner's trophy of the Bangladesh Army Aquatic to the members of Savar area team at the Army Swimming Complex in the city on Wednesday.