SPÖRT

Maradona in Serbia for documentar

Argentinian football legend Diego Maradona arrived here Tuesday for a brief visit to be filmed for a documentary about his colourful life by celebrated Balkan director Emir

"I have not been in Belgrade for so long, but do not think that I was not aware of what has been going on here," Maradona told reporters after a ceremonial meeting with Serbia's Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica

"For all these years, I have been observing what is going on and I want to say that I was with you all the time," Maradona said.

Kostunica said he was honoured to meet "two great artists Maradona, who has turned football into art, and Kusturica, one of the most respected directors nowa-

Maradona was last in Belgrade in 1982, when he played for Spanish side Barcelona, beating Serbia's

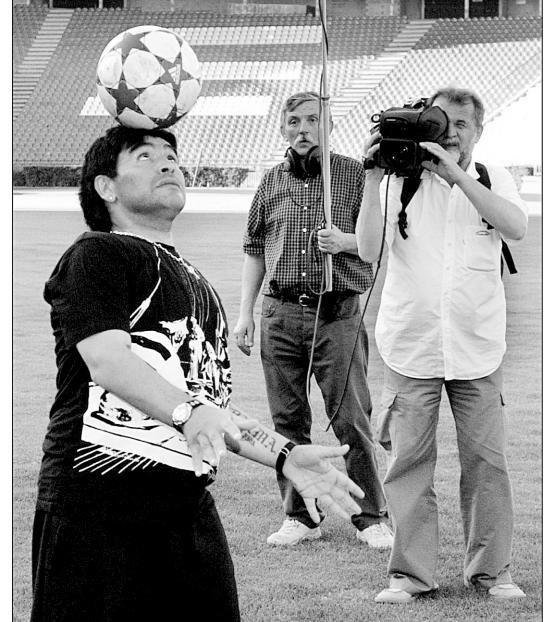
Red Star Belgrade 4-2 in the second round of the now defunct European Cup Winners' Cup. Kusturica said that several scenes in the documentary would be filmed at Red Star Belgrade's

stadium, 'where Maradona scored one of his unforgettable goals'. The Bosnian-born director began filming a documentary on Maradona this spring, describing it

as a "film which will be quite compli-

cated in conception. "My intention is to find and recreate over the next five months the real personality of Maradona," said Kusturica, who has won two Golden Palm awards at the Cannes film festival for "Underground" (1995) and "When Father Was Away on

Business" (1985). His latest full-length movie, "Life is a Miracle", was filmed in Serbia and released last year.



"The pitches in England offer

results and maybe you are going to get

four or five results in the series.

Hopefully, it's not going to be one-

sided but I think it is going to be very

sit back, be patient and try to win a

game from a few mistakes by the

aggressive all the time, three sessions

a day, 15 sessions a Test match,"

insisted Lara, who led West Indies in

their 3-1 Test series defeat against

have had over the Australians, in the

ICC Champions Trophy and yester-

day (Monday) it's because of aggres-

sive cricket, attacking cricket," said the

gifted left-hand batsman ahead of the

triangular one-day series, also featur-

ing Bangladesh, which starts at The

Australia, they didn't sit back and allow

triangular series coming up and in the

Test series. It can't just be for one or

two sessions, it has to be for the entire

New Zealand captain Stephen

Fleming, MCC's skipper for the

Tsunami match, added: "I think it will be

a great series. The billing is one and two

the first of many I'm sure," added

Fleming, whose side have lost their

last five Tests against Australia, includ-

ing a 3-0 defeat in New Zealand

the Ashes for a number of years now

and they've been very focused on it for

some time now," insisted the experi-

enced batsman who saw New

Zealand beaten 3-0 in last year's Test

Rahmatganj

on top after

Rahmatganj Muslim Friends

Society registered their sixth victory beating Dhanmondi Club 1-0 to finish on top of the table at the end of

the first-leg of the First Division

match winner in the 78th minute at

the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa

bagged 19 points from seven matches while Dhanmondi share

the bottom-place along with BRTC,

The second leg will begin from June

20 and the mid-season players

POINTS TABLE (After first-

6 1 0

7 4 2 1

7 3 2 2

7 0 3 4

3 3 9

1 2 4

0 6 3 15

W D L GF GA Pts

13

14 3 16

6 4

6 14

2 10

transfer will be held from June 17-

Jumratul Islam Mithu struck the

With the outcome, Rahmatganj

Football League yesterday.

Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

both on three points.

leg)

Teams

RMFS

Badda

Victoria

Agrani

Wari

BRTC

D'mondi

Mohakhali 7 5

"It's England's best chance to win

"Last (Monday) night was a spar,

in the world. I can't wait to watch it.

"That's what they need to do in the

the world champions to dictate.

"The last two successes England

Australian team.

Australia in 2002-03.

Oval on Thursday.

day, every day."

concluded in March.

series in England.

first leg

SPORTS REPORTER

"I think Australia loves teams that

"They (England) have to be

STILL GOT THE SAME CONTROL: Argentine idol Diego Maradona (L) balances a ball at the Red Star stadium in Belgrade on Tuesday while he is filmed. Maradona is in the Serbian capital working on a documentary about his life.

Socceroos' skipper delighted

AFP, Berlin

Australia international captain Craig Moore is delighted his country have finally been given the go-ahead to join the Asian World Cup qualifying zone for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter admitted football's governing body had no objection to Australia leaving the Oceania qualifying system, which does not have a direct qualifying spot for the World Cup.

It will be good for us and bad for the Asian teams," Moore said.

"In the Oceania qualifying zone we were never really tested and that is never good preparation for an all or nothing play-off."

Australia have reached just one World Cup back in 1974 with the two-legged play-offs against South America's fifth best team proving too big an obstacle.

By joining Asia, Australia will have to fight it out with 44 other countries for a maximum of five World Cup spots but Socceroos skipper Moore prefers a longer campaign.

"A group system is better than a play-off," declared Moore. "It means an off-day, a refereeing decision or an enthusiastic fan cannot spoil two years of hard work.

Australia lost to Uruguay in the play-off for the 2002 World Cup but it is the 1998 play-off defeat by Iran

that still bothers Moore "When we played Iran for a spot in

the 1998 World Cup we led 2-0 with 15 minutes to go," explained Moore. "Then a crazy fan climbed on the

goal causing the game to be delayed by ten minutes. We lost our rhythm and missed out on qualifica-

Iran came back to score twice in the final 14 minutes to snatch a 2-2 draw and secure a spot in France

Australia have to beat the Solomon Islands home and away and then a yet-to-be determined fifth-placed team from South America to reach the 2006 finals.

Frank Farina's side are preparing for Wednesday's Confederations Cup match with

A Roman wedding

AFP, Rome

AS Roma captain Francesco Totti's wedding on Sunday is set to bring central Rome to a standstill with all the scheduled masses at his chosen church cancelled to avoid unwanted

The wedding is due to take place in Capitol Square, home to the Town Hall, but will be blocked to cars from early morning onwards with the wedding service between Totti and TV star Hilary Blasi set for 1500GMT.

The service is being held in the church of Santa Maria dell'Aracoeli, which also looks onto the Piazza Venezia, and the priest Father Leopold took the decision to cancel all other services.

While Totti has garnered some unsavoury headlines for his behaviour on the pitch - he spat at a Danish player in Euro 2004 - he is an iconic personality to the AS Roma fans.

'Take Ashes initiative'

Cricket

AFP, London

West Indies star Brian Lara has told England they must forget about trying to play a containing game if they want to wrest the Ashes back from Australia England have lost their last eight

Test series against their oldest foes but are now second behind Ricky Ponting's men in the world Test

And home hopes of a first Ashes triumph since Mike Gatting's side won in Australia in 1986-87 have been stirred by the sides' last two, albeit one-day, matches.

In September, England beat Australia by six wickets in the semifinals of the ICC Champions Trophy and on Monday, in the teams' first meeting this season, won the

Twenty20 match at the Rose Bowl by

the huge margin of 100 runs. "Australia knows it's a more competitive English team that it is facing," Lara, captain of the West Indies side that lost seven Test matches home and away against England last year, told reporters here at Lord's after Tuesday's Tsunami appeal one-day match.

"I think it's going to be a good contest, I don't know if it is going to be close but I know England is playing good cricket at present," added Lara, captain of an International XI that suffered a 112-run defeat against

Arch rivals' exciting

There was no respite for the Abahani shotstopper who had to deal with two long range efforts by Donald and Alfaz before Farhad squandered the easiest chance in injury time. Taking a pass from Ibrahim, Farhad fired an angular shot through two defenders but Biplab's made a reflex save.

Abahani, however, brought the score level just 15 seconds after breather. Joy's centre from the right byline caught Biplab in two minds allowing Ibrahim to sneak in and race past the keeper before whacking the ball into an open net for his second league goal

Both sides played cautiously after that but Mohammedan were the better of the two sides in the remaining time. Donald, who looked lethargic for most of the game, was very quick with the ball and forced

another save by Nizam before chipping the ball onto the crossbar from 25 yards ten minutes from the final whistle

Abahani's long-ball strategy gave chances to substitutes Wali and Tipu in the stoppage time but both failed to test Biplab

Yellow cards: Hassan, Rony, Khokon (Mohammedan) and Joy, Ujjal (Abahani)

TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN: Biplab, Kamal, Nazrul, Hassan, Rony, Arman Aziz, Asad, Munna (Khokon, 23rd minute), Faisal (Mintu, 78th), Alfaz (Zahid, 74th) and Donald. ABAHANI: Nizam, Obaidur,

Shawkat, Pradeep, Lajuk, Zahid (Wali, 89th), Joy, Ndem (Parvez, 66th), Ujjal, Farhad (Tipu, 82nd) and Ibrahim. Referee: Mansoor Azad.

Powell sets 100m new

this year, you will just have to wait until the end of this season to see, Second in the race was Ghana's

Aziz Zakari in 9.99 with Jamaica's

Michael Frater placing third with a 10.03 clocking, both personal bests. In the men's 110 metres hurdles, American Arend Watkins despite a slow start and hitting some of the hurdles, came through to win with a season best clocking of 13.23

seconds, beating his closest oppo-

nent Ukraine's Sergey Demidyuk by

"I am very satisfied that I won in a very fast race. Last night I was so anxious I couldn't sleep," Watkins

Athens Olympics silver medal winner Hasna Benhassi of Morocco won the 800 metres women's competition as she sprinted at the end to win the event in 1 minute, 59.60 seconds edging out Greece's Maria Papadopoulou who set a national record with a 1:59.79 clocking.

"It was a very good rehearsal for the World Championships in Helsinki. It was an easy race for me as it turned out. Everything went well," Benhassi said after the race.

In the women's 400 metres hurdles Australian Jana Pittman easily won the race with a season's best of 53.44 seconds with Poland's Anna Jesien a distance second at 54.27

"It was a very good training for the World Championships in Helsinki. I am very satisfied that I

won this race, I am in very good shape," Pittman said.

In the men's 400 metres hurdles Louis van Zyl of South Africa with a great sprint at the end took the event



ASAFA POWELL

in 48.16 seconds beating out Greece's Pericles lakovakis who was second in 48.24.

Jamaica's Sherone Simpson edged out Zhanna Block of Ukraine in the women's 100 metres on the line to win the race in 11:16 sec-

Bulgaria's star 100m runner Ivet Lalova was unable to take part after suffering a knee injury during the warm-up and was taken to hospital. The grand prix was the first major

athletics competition at the Athens Olympic Stadium since the Games held there last summer.

into World Cups as favourites and it will be the same for the 2006 World Cup, Parreira said "I think that Brazil have to assume

defend their title

AFP, Bergisch-gladbach

their role as favourites. That is the best way," he added, as his team prepare for their opening match in the Confederations Cup in Germany against Greece in Leipzig on Thursday

No question

about who are

the favourites

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira

said on Tuesday his team should start

the 2006 World Cup as favourites to

"For many years, Brazil has gone

Brazil suffered a setback to their campaign to qualify for the 2006 finals in Germany when they were beaten 3-1 by their arch rivals Argentina last

However they only need three points from their last three matches to reach the finals. Parreira brushed off criticism of his

team, saying expectations of Brazil were always high. "I recall that the 1970 team was highly criticised," he said of Pele's

team which dazzled in the finals in Mexico. "It was the same in 1994 (when he was coach), nobody believed in the team and we became world champions. It happened again in 2002, when the team was discredited until the final qualifying matches. Yet we were the

best team at that World Cup." Pele said this week that he pelieved the 2006 World Cup final would feature Brazil against Germany, the same as in 2002 in Yokohama

Cristiano Ronaldo staying?

REUTERS, London

Manchester United winger Cristiano Ronaldo looks certain to continue his career at Old Trafford.

Europe's big guns are casting envious eyes over the 20-year-old Portugal international after a string of superb displays in the Barclays Premiership and for his country.

However it is understood that he has agreed a lucrative new five-year deal at United and is due to sign when he returns from holiday. Should he, as expected, put pen to

paper it would be a massive boost for manager Sir Alex Ferguson in his bid to regain the high ground from Ferguson believes Ronaldo and

two of the most exciting young players in the world. Ronaldo has scored 15 goals in 90 games for United after moving to England from Sporting Lisbon for

£12.5million as an 18-year-old.

England striker Wayne Rooney are

He continued his progress last season despite the club failing to win a trophy, lighting up a number of games with his dribbling skills and pace.

Ronaldo signed an initial five-year deal on the lowest wage band and his value now to United is amplified at national level.

He has scored seven goals for Portugal in their World Cup qualifying matches and is second in Europe's goalscoring ranks, ahead of Andriy Shevchenko and Ruud van Nistelrooy

Confederations Cup champs to get 2.275m euros

AFP, Frankfurt

The Confederations Cup champions will receive 2.275m euros for lifting the championship, it was announced on Tuesday.

The runners-up will take home 1.94m euros with 1.7m euros to the third place team and 1.42m euros to the fourth best side.

All the others will receive 853,000 euros each.

007 to the rescue! AFP, Glasgow

Secret agent 007 turned football agent for a day to help Rangers win the race to sign former Marseille captain Brahim Hemdani. Sean Connery, the actor most

closely identified with the role of James

Bond, stepped in when Hemdani was having difficult making up his mind between a move to Scotland or to Germany with Bayer Leverkusen. Rangers chairman David Murray organised a meeting between Connery

and the 27-year-old and the world's most famous Scotsman obviously did a good job of selling his native country to the Algerian-born defender, who signed for the Scottish champions on Tuesday. "It's true I enlisted Sean's help to sell Scotland to Brahim," Murray told the

Daily Record. "Bayer Leverkusen were

chasing him as well and I arranged for

Sean to meet the player at Cannes

Airport to help sell Scotland to him. "Brahim then flew over and had a good look around. I am delighted to say, that after returning home to France, he then agreed to sign for the club."

Hemdani was available on a free transfer after the expiry of his contract at Marseille. He will earn a reported four million pounds if he sees out the fouryear contract he has signed with

JAPAN V MEXICO

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 9:55PM BST

Evenly matched foes

AFP, Hannover



Japan, who meet Mexico in the Confederations Cup on Thursday, must

raise their game if they are to repeat or surpass their exploits at the 2002 World Cup on home soil, captain Tsuneyasu Miyamoto

Japan, who made it through to the second round in Asia, became the first country to qualify for Germany 2006 when they beat North Korea last week, but Miyamoto reckons there is stil plenty of work left to be done.

"The team must improve. This is just the start for this side. Compared to 2002 we have to improve the defensive aspect "We will have to play more for-

progress before the World Cup." The Confed Cup could not come at a better time then for the Asian

eign teams and we must make

champions, with Mexico followed by Group B ties against Greece and Brazil And Miyamoto is hungry for

success

"Japan qualified for the World Cup thanks to everyone in the squad and in this tournament we want to reach the semi-finals." he said

For defender Teruyuki Moniwa the competition represents an international lifeline as he has returned after a year in the international wilderness after being shunned by Zico for breaking a curfew and visiting a hostess bar in February last year. The FC Tokyo star, called up to

replace injured Yuji Nakazawa, said: "It's been a big regret that I've not been able to wear the Japan

"It feels like this is my last chance so I have to make sure I take it." Also injured are Feyenoord midfielder Shinji Ono ánd SV Hamburg striker Naohiro Takahara

but Zico can count on the return of

Fiorentina's Hidetoshi Nakata and

Shunsuke Nakamura, both sus-

pended for the North Korean quali-

look out for a new club.

Zico reckons his men are capaole of holding their own in this mini

"Considering the quality of my players, I'm quite sure that we can cope with other top teams on an

his individual level in the following Mexico, who famously beat

ment when each player improves

Reggina's Nakamura, who has scored 12 goals in 50 games for Japan, will be keen to impress alongside Nakata as he is on the

"We can make a great achieve-

Brazil to win the 1999 edition, suf-

tion of their emblematic Barcelona defender Ricardo Marquez who picked up an injury in training on Tuesday Mexico still have some unfinshed business to attend to before securing automatic qualification for the World Cup, but Ricardo

fered a major blow with the defec-

and Tobago Lavolpe, like Zico, regards the next fortnight as a World Cup dress

Lavolpe's team are sitting pretty on

top of their CONCACAF group after

last week's 2-0 win over Trinidad

"The competition will give us an idea of what we will find in 2006 and allow us to compare ourselves against teams of high potential.'



SHOW ME SOME OF YOUR OLD SPARK! Japan coach Zico (R) watches veteran midfielder Hidetoshi Nakata during a training session at the Sportspark in Hanover on Tuesday.

A study in contrast

FROM PAGE 12 the playoffs if they are to return to Germany for next year's World Cup

"It was a verv bad result for us." Karagounis admitted. "But we are Karagounis is hoping to recover from a hamstring injury to partner captain Theodoros Zagorakis in

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira said his side would not under-estimate the threat from Greece and their experienced

German manager Otto Rehhagel. "They have a German coach and so they are very disciplined and good on the ball," Parreira

"I have been showing my players videotapes of the Greek team and I cannot find a single weak link in their side." Ronaldino's presence has guaranteed a 44.000 sellout crowd in this city in the former communist

East Germany but the World Footballer of the Year has admitted he is tired after a long club season with Barcelona. In the absence of Ronaldo, the spotlight will fall instead on the new shining light of Brazilian football

fledgling partnership with Robinho

needed time to develop. "I believe the association with Robinho, Kaka and Ronaldinho (the so-called 'fantastic quartet') has all the makings to be a suc-

35 Polish

37 Tender-

39 "Caught

va!

40 Honest

loin, e.g

politician

Wallach

gamut 54 Traditional

tales

55 Nosh

53 The

CROSSWORD

1 Diet soda 36 Thorax

ACROSS

4 Assist

ance

hope

8 Hitcher's

Secret"

13 Cupid's

14 Valhalla

president

potatoes

settings

honoree

lishment

Garson

15 13th

17 Sweet

18 Lens

19 Verily

21 11/11

22 Embel-

26 Actress

29 Enjoy-

ment

30 Kimono

31 Edward

Jones

Dome

team

designa-

33 "Wheel of

34 Singer

Fortune"

DiFranco

32 Towel

alongside the burly Adriano in Karagounis at Inter Milan, said his

21-year-old Robinho, who will start Adriano, a teammate of

"They (Abahani) wrongly mentioned in their protest letter that Shakil was a Dhaka Wanderers player in the last season that's why

player in Shakil.

23 Bound

24 Wading

bird

25 A couple

26 Seles'

of cups

competito

By Eugene Sheffer

DOWN

1 Lovers

2 Budget

rival

3 Region

4 Impede

11 Navy rank

(abbr.)

ored of

16 is enam

20 German

Solution time: 25 mins

article

5 "It's -

Arambagh.

we had to reject their appeal. Actually Shakil played for Mohakhali XI in the last season," said Mozammel Haque Mukta, secretary of the league committee, after a MFLC meeting yesterday. Abahani earlier demanded to be

awarded full points in their drawn

match against Arambagh claiming

their opposition fielded an illegal

"But the pairing with Robinho

The other Group B match on

The top two teams in each of the

Thursday features Japan against

two groups qualify for the semi-

finals on June 25 and June 26. The

final takes place in Frankfurt on

The Metropolis Football League

Committee (MFLC) has rejected

Abahani's appeal to declare goal-

keeper Shakil an illegal player of

MFLC rejects

Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

appeal

needs time playing together to create an understanding," said

Adriano on Tuesday.

Mexico in Hannover.

June 29.

Tigers think

FROM PAGE 12 also need to bowl a disciplined line

and I'm really happy the way Nazmul bowled in the two practice games." Bangladesh coach Dav What-more said that he was happy to start the grueling one-day series at the back of a

good win against Worcestershire. But he ruled out the notion that the aggressive batting of his boys in the Tests might bring good results in the

shorter-version of the game. "I would not go to that extent not in my mind anyway. We have a bit of confidence in what we can do. But we still need a bit of correct decision making to do that. You can still try to bat that way and get out. Fields will be more defen-

Refreshingly

FROM PAGE 12

the ground to board the team bus and club officials had to come forward to cool down their fans.

There were also quite a few who returned with satisfaction after watching a match worthy of its status. "The return of the game to the

Bangabandhu National Stadium is one of the reasons why the supporters are turning up to watch local football. Still, it is not enough. There are no alternatives for quality football. But I believe after today's match, the attendance will go up," said 56-year old Junab Ali from Jurain.

Many others felt that it is possible to bring back football's glory days despite the cricket fever provided the organisers become more active.

CRYPTOQUIP

RNGI HW H ' D E L OH'UI

OBHR EIHCBZLGTM

PULE TPSM ZIWLGI, ZNO

P ZITT
THAT R B I S L I R G H E C P Z I T T . **Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** THAT NEW RADIOLOGIST IS TOO GOOD-NATURED. I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HE SEES IN PEOPLE. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals V

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.

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for

41 Maternity 27 Hindu Unusual Day" ward princess data 6 Neither 28 Artist 45 Radar partner Nolde 7 Whom 29 Predicaspot 48 Gas-Zola supported 32 Odious station request 8 Befitting a 33 Don't be 50 Philbin's sovereign areedy 35 Symbol of 9 McKincohort 51 Secondley's intrigue hand first lady 36 "— 10 Lower the Harold's 52 Whitney Pilarimliahts

age

38 Bolivian

skilled

nesian

ment

45 Shape

entertain

Skewer

shifter?

course.

47 Biz-news

abbr.

49 Equi-

for short

46 Reading

ogy chart

42 Geneal-

43 Poly-

39 More