

Barcelona boss shows underpants!

REUTERS, Madrid

Barcelona president Joan Laporta has apologised after he stripped to his underpants during an argument with security staff at the city's airport.



JOAN LAPORTA

The irate Barcelona president was reported to have hurled his shoes into the air and then taken off his trousers after being asked to walk through the scanner again and again.

Vieira wants answers

AFP, London

Arsenal captain Patrick Vieira reportedly wants to meet manager Arsene Wenger to discuss his future after he was linked with Juventus.

Vieira was persuaded to turn down a move to Real Madrid last year when Wenger convinced him he was part of Arsenal's long-term future.

Chelsea's unbelievable bid to get Ronaldinho



LONDON

Chelsea are set to complete a staggering 142 million (\$420m) triple transfer swoop that will see Barcelona star Ronaldinho move to Stamford Bridge.

But they now have the opportunity to once again flex their financial muscle in extraordinary fashion.



AFP, Colombo

West Indies captain Shivnarine Chanderpaul has warned hosts Sri Lanka not to consider his under-strength team easy pushovers during the two-Test series starting here on Wednesday.

Table with 5 columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Rows include Lee, McGrath, Kasprowicz, Gillespie, Symonds, Clarke.

AUSTRALIA: Gilchrist, Hayden, Ponting, Martyn, Symonds, Clarke, Hussey, Lee, Gillespie, Kasprowicz, McGrath; substitute: Katich.

With the Asiad starting in the middle of 2006 in Qatar, Qamar's priority now must be preparing the team for the SA Games -- formerly known as the SAF Games -- where hockey has been reintroduced after 1995.

"I'll know what is in the future after tomorrow's meeting," said the brilliant forward who has only drawn two months' salary from the BHF.

Chelsea have brought in 14.8m from the departures of Mikael Forssell, Mateja Kezman and Scott Parker but have spent only 8m on Asier Del Horno.

Both sides will finalise their line-ups on Wednesday morning on a wicket that traditionally takes spin later in the match.

Sri Lanka Cricket, meanwhile, said the second Test in Kandy would begin a day late on July 22 due to a Buddhist religious festival.

TEAMS SRI LANKA (from): Marvan Atapattu (captain), Sanath Jayasuriya, Mahela Jayawardena, Kumar Sangakkara, Thilan Samaraweera, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Upul Chandana, Chaminda Vaas, Nuwan Zoysa, Muttiah Muralitharan, Lasith Malinga, Gayan Wijekoon, Russel Arnold, Rangana Herath.

WEST INDIES (from): Shivnarine Chanderpaul (capt), Denesh Ramdin, Darren Powell, Omari Banks, Kerry Jeremy, Deighton Butler, Sylvester Joseph, Narsingh Deonarine, Dwayne Smith, Tino Best, Jermaine Lawson, Xavier Marshall, Runako Morton, Ryan Ramdass.

Umpires: Simon Taufel (Australia) and Nadeem Ghauri (Pakistan).

Aus keep Eng

SCOREBOARD First innings scorecard of the third NatWest Challenge match between England and Australia at The Oval on Tuesday:

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claimed they 'could not rule out' a bid that would smash the world transfer record.

It is now down to Jose Mourinho to decide whether to step up the chase and succeed where Manchester United failed in bringing Ronaldinho to the Premiership.

Chelsea chief executive Peter Kenyon was heavily involved in United's attempts to lure the Brazilian and has kept in contact with his advisors.

And with Abramovich's billions behind him, he can now make the kind of contract offer that even Barcelona cannot match.

Chelsea would be willing to pay the Brazilian around 175,000 a week plus a huge bonus if they claim the Champions League next season.

That incredible sum pales into insignificance, however, when Ronaldinho's worldwide marketing potential is taken into consideration.

He rivals David Beckham in the Far East as well as giving Chelsea a foothold in South America.

More than that, though, Abramovich knows he could be the final piece of the jigsaw that establishes Chelsea as the most powerful force in world football.

Figo unlikely for Liverpool

REUTERS/AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez has abandoned plans for the European champions to sign Real Madrid's Portuguese midfielder Luis Figo.

Shamsur goes down under

SPORTS REPORTER

Young batsman Shamsur Rahman was due to leave Dhaka last night to play in the Australian minor league in Darwin.

Div I soccer

AFP, Karachi

Injury-prone fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar is among 20 cricketers who have been offered new one-year contracts, the Pakistan Cricket Board said Monday.

Narrow-minded

that ICC had announced the dates for the Super Series months ago, and the BCCI knew full well their key players would be involved in the jamboree.

Graf back for a match



AP, Houston

Steffi Graf is returning to the tennis court for the first time in six years, but don't call it a comeback.

The 36-year-old German had what is widely considered her best year in 1988, when she won all four Grand Slam singles events in a year and also won an Olympic gold medal.

She acknowledges being 'very nervous' about the match but also excited about her return.

"It's huge that she is putting her toe in the water," said Ilana Kloss, WTT chief executive officer and commissioner.

Graf said the generosity that Wranglers owners Jim and Linda McIngvale have shown to her and Agassi's foundations over the years was a major factor in her decision to play again.

Graf said she has been trying to strengthen her knees and back after suffering several injuries during her playing career.

She's looking forward to playing in front of a crowd in the fan-friendly format of the WTT, but she cautioned against high expectations.

"How can I be the same," she said.

"I live a different lifestyle in general. I think they will see that I'm a little more relaxed than I used to be."

"It will be interesting to see how it's going to work tomorrow (Tuesday)."

The WTT league is made up of 12 teams and plays a three-week season ending July 24. The two top teams from each of two conferences advance to the finals Sept. 16-17 in Sacramento.

The coed league, co-founded by Billie Jean King, is in its 30th season.



STEFFI GRAF

Shepherd signs off

FROM PAGE 12

He added the best two sides he had seen during his time as an umpire were the West Indies side of the 1980s and the current all-conquering Australia side.

Asked which would win in a game between the two, he chose Australia because of leg-spinner Shane Warne.

And he said it was a contest between Warne and India batsman Sachin Tendulkar that had provided him with one of the great memories of his career.

"That day Tendulkar came off best, I think he got 170, but it was wonderful cricket to watch."

As an umpire Shepherd became known for his habit of hopping onto one leg when the score was on 111 or multiples.

"I started as a kid when I was playing club cricket back in Devon. It's a load of nonsense really but the only thing to stop something bad happening on 111 is to get your feet off the ground."

"When I played for Gloucestershire I used to give a little skip in the outfield. Nobody ever noticed, why should they?"

"When I umpired no-one noticed until I got to my second Test at Edgbaston in 1985."

Someone without my knowing wrote into dear Brian Johnston (the late BBC Radio broadcaster), who was commenting, saying 'what's this idiot when the score gets on 111?' He told the world and then I was lumbered with it.

"I am superstitious. Friday 13th is terrible day and that day I have a matchstick touching my finger so I am touching wood all day to combat it."

The Beast linked to Nou Camp

LONDON

Sevilla striker Julio Baptista has refused to rule out a move to champions Barcelona after confirming that he will be staying in the Primera Liga next season.

The Brazil international turned down the chance to join Arsenal last week as a move to Highbury would have jeopardised his chances of gaining Spanish citizenship and the subsequent benefits of being an EU passport holder.

"I am not discarding anything, all is possible," Baptista told COM Radio when asked about the possibility of a move to Barca.

"My agent and I are clear on what is important and that is to have an EU passport."

"I have just one year to go before I stop being a foreigner. I need to remain here one year longer in Spain and after that I will think about what to do."

-Internet

Enamul raring

FROM PAGE 12 time along with left-arm pacer SK Russell, who has come back from Australia after playing in the minor league in Darwin.

Another young talent who played with Russel in Darwin, left-handed batsman Mehrab Hossain Jr, replaced injured Aftab Ahmed at the last moment and was due in Dhaka last night.

FACTBOX

FROM PAGE 12 OFFICIATED IN 1983 World cup (England); 1987 World Cup (India/Pakistan); 1992 World Cup (Australia/New Zealand); 1996 World Cup (India/Pakistan/Sri Lanka) including the final; 1999 World Cup (England) including the final; 2003 World Cup (South Africa) including the final; Two Tests South Africa v India in 1992-93 during the ICC-National Grid pilot scheme; Appointed to the National Grid Panel in 1994.

Challenge Trophy

FROM PAGE 12 send return air tickets for them but we have not agreed," he said adding that the BFF is trying to bring strong teams from Korea, Qatar and Malaysia for the international club tournament to be held in Dhaka in February 2006.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Venus de — 5 Cry 9 Papa 12 La Scala 13 Fashion magazine 14 "What Kind of Fool —?" 15 Dive of a sort 17 Bigshot (Abbr.) 18 Small sock 19 Nullifies 21 Type measure 22 Molls 24 Box of 12? 27 Hot tub 28 Greenpeace subj. 31 Equi- 32 Charged bit 33 Spoon-bender Geller 34 Arizona city 36 Part of UCLA 37 Raced 38 John at the piano

DOWN 1 Goya's "The Naked —" 2 Dr. Seuss's "If — the Circus" 3 Defeat 4 Legend-dary employee sharp-shooter 5 Left 6 Yale student 7 Will Ferrell movie 8 Source of irritation 9 Tennis prize 10 Surround-ed 11 Immerses 16 "Jeopardy!" winner Jennings 20 Pindaric work

Solution time: 25 mins.

CRYPTOQUIP E M D A K V O B S E S T M G A O K D U Y G H Y T P C S E D M D Y K E M I . M D Y K H Y I T M Y V

EMBD DTPCSBD UDYKT Y VYI. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHILE COOKING SUPPER, A GIRL, QUITE IRKED AT A FELLOW, PLANTED A QUICHE ON HIS FACE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals E

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.