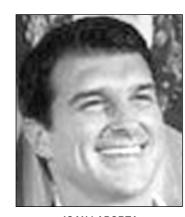
boss shows underpants!

REUTERS, Madrid

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

An eyewitness told Spain's daily ABC that Laporta had become incensed with staff after the alarm on the security scanner sounded three



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

"I would like to apologise if any Barcelona fan felt offended," Laporta was quoted as saying ir sports daily Marca on Tuesday.

"I was just trying to sort out a situation that occurred because the alarm kept going off.

"I would like to make it clear though that I did not lose my head nor did I insult anyone ... but I am really sorry that the incident caused such a fuss."

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.

Juventus have so far denied reports they have held talks with Arsenal about a move for the 29year-old Frenchman although general manager Lusicano Moggi admits he met Wenger to talk about

And reports in Italy say vicepresident Roberto Bettega will fly into London on Tuesday to meet Arsenal directors.

The Serie A champions are reported to be preparing a bid of 15 million pounds plus defender Jonathan Zebina and midfielder Enzo Maresca for Vieira

Spanish giants Real Madrid are also reported to have re-entered the race to sign Vieira after Steven Gerrard decided to stay at Liverpool.

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

Juventus are also reported to be keen on a move for Arsenal winger Robert Pires, 31, who is growing frustrated that he is only being offered a

one-year extension to his deal.

Chelsea's unbelievable bid to get Ronaldinho

Football

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

In addition to the Brazilian superstar's arrival, the Blues are also poised to land Manchester City winger Shaun Wright-Phillips and Lyon midfielder Michael Essien.

So far this summer, Chelsea have made enormous, speculative and unsuccessful offers for some of the most glittering names in European football.

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

Fuelled by the massive personal fortune of Russian billionaire owner Roman Abramovich, Chelsea are willing to match the daunting 100m buy-out clause in Ronaldinho's

Chelsea's package would give Barcelona 83m for the player and would offer Ronaldinho a nine-year contract worth 10m a year. That would effectively tie him to Stamford Bridge for the remainder of his

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.

The two big ones could come

Manchester City look likely to accept a bid of around 22m for Wright-Phillips while a bid of 20m for Essien would prove difficult for the French champions to refuse.

But it is the move to land Ronaldinho that has tongues wag-

Abramovich has made it clear the money is available to bring the world's greatest player to Stamford Bridge. Chelsea were alerted to the

possibility of landing the Brazilian after talks between Ronaldinho and Rarcelona stalled He wants a new five-year 40m deal after guiding the Nou Camp

club to the Spanish title last season

but that would break the strict wage

structure imposed by the Barcelona Ronaldinho's brother and agent Roberto de Assis, said: 'There has been no formal contact between Chelsea and Barcelona but in football there is nothing that ever

And a source close to Chelsea

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 sea-

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.

That incredible sum pales into

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

Both sides will finalise their line-

ups on Wednesday morning on a

wicket that traditionally takes spin

said the second Test in Kandy would

begin a day late on July 22 due to a

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,

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

Umpires: Simon Taufel (Australia)

and Nadeem Ghauri (Pakistan).

Aus keep Eng

First innings scoreboard of the third

NatWest Challenge match between

England and Australia at The Oval

Trescothick c Kasprowicz b Lee 0

Strauss c Gilchrist b Kasprowicz36

Flintoff c Gilchrist b Kasprowicz 5

G Jones c Kasprowicz b Gillespie1

Total: (For 7 wkts in 50 overs) 228

Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-44, 3-61, 4-74,

Did not bat: Harmison, Gough, S

10 0 46

10 4 40 0

10

AUSTRALIA: Gilchrist, Hayden,

Ponting, Martyn, Symonds, Clarke,

Hussey, Lee, Gillespie, Kasprowicz,

Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (South

Africa) and David Shepherd (Eng-

"I asked him to find out what prob-

lems they have and he told me that

the young players need improved

diets. I am going to let the federation

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

after tomorrow's meeting," said the

brilliant forward who has only drawn

my salary immediately after my

return. But money is not an issue to

me. I want work," added Qamar who

also runs his own business in

Pakistan, a reason behind his not

taking a full-time job in Bangladesh.

two months' salary from the BHF.

"I'll know what is in the future

"I was assured that I would get

With the Asiad starting in the

officials when we meet tomorrow.

Qamar wants

McGrath; substitute: Katich.

М

Collingwood c Symonds b Gillespie

Extras: (lb-1, nb-2, w-7)

SCOREBOARD

on Tuesday:

ENGLAND

Vaughan run out

Solanki not out

5-87, 6-93, 7-186

Giles not out

Bowler

McGrath

Gillespie

Symonds

Kasprowicz

Toss: Australia.

FROM PAGE 12

Pietersen b Gillespie

Buddhist religious festival.

Sri Lanka Cricket, meanwhile,

later in the match.

Rangana Herath

TEAMS

First Test starts today

Starless Windies vs full-strength Sri Lanka

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

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

Sri Lanka. determined not to offend the visitors, say they expect a battle of equals in the first Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club even though form points to a one-sided contest in favour of the hosts. The West Indies go into the

series shorn of most of their top stars, including one of the world's leading batsman Brian Lara, due to a protracted sponsorship row with their cricket board. Chanderpaul, a veteran of 86 Tests, is the only one in the 14-man

touring party to have played more than 10 Tests. Six are absolute Sri Lanka, on the other hand, are geared for their 150th Test boosted

by the return of prolific off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan after an 11month absence due to a shoulder

'We would not have been here if we did not think we could compete," said Chanderpaul, the only one in the team to have played a Test match in Sri Lanka before. "This is a young bunch we have

who are determined to make a name for themselves. They are very keen to get on with it.

"Don't write them off even before

the series has started. Everyone needs a chance to prove them-The West Indies' Australian

coach Bennett King said it was an opportunity for the youngsters to stand up and deliver. "You find diamonds in coal," said

the former coach of the famed Australian Cricket Academy. "It takes a little pain to get joy. West Indian cricket may be in a state

of flux but the system is in place for a

brighter future.' The West Indians got a taste of the dauting task ahead in the twoday practice match at the weekend when they were shot out for 110 and the hosts replied with 382 with Test batsmen Kumar Sangakkara (109), Thilan Samaraweera (95) and captain Marvan Atapattu (77) mak-

ng merry. "We are not complacent at all," said Atapattu. "There is a Test match to be played and I am certain the West Indians are as much ready for the challenge as we are.

"We have to do the job once we get there. We can't be thinking who is there is their line-up and who is not. There are runs to be scored and 20 wickets to be taken to win.'

Australian coach Tom Moody, looking to begin his stint with Sri Lanka on a positive note, said it was not difficult to be motivated for what could be a lame contest.

"Playing for your country is motivation enough," said Moody. "I am very excited about the series because the players are raring to

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

Benitez had been keen to bring the former world and European player of the year to Anfield, but Liverpool have been put off by Real's insistence on a transfer fee for the 32-year-old.

The Spaniard told reporters on Monday: "We are looking at other options for the right side and we are trying to see which will work best for us. It will be very difficult to sign

However, Liverpool are close to

completing the signing of Valencia midfielder Mohamed Lamine Sissoko, who was at the club's Melwood training ground for a medical on Monday Benitez is also hoping a deal can

done for Southampton striker Peter Crouch, who faces playing next season in the second division after breaking into the England squad.

Talks are underway between the two clubs and Benitez is keen to sign the lanky 24-year-old before Liverpool leave for a pre-season training camp in Switzerland on

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.

The 18-year-old promising middle-order batsman from Comilla has been selected to play down under after left-arm paceman SK Russel and left-handed batsman Mehrab Hossain Jr had to return from Australia to join the Englandbound Bangladesh Ateam.

During his two-month long stay Shamsur will represent Northern Territory of Sports in the competi-

Div I soccer

SPORTS REPORTER

The First Division Football League match between BRTC Sporting Club and Dhanmondi Club ended in a 2-2 draw at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Hakim and Shahid netted for BRTC while Ali Hossain and Ruhul Amin scored one each for Dhanmondi.

The outcome left BRTC with 10 points from 12 matches while Dhanmondi, already relegated to second division after 32 years, improved their tally to five points from an equal number of outings.

Shoaib given full contract

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

central contracts for a period of one year starting July 1, 2005 and Shoaib Akhtar is included in the list," the board said in a statement. Another 13 players, who have the

potential to represent Pakistan in future, are being offered central retainership contracts, said the PCB.

Narrow-minded

FROM PAGE 12 that ICC had announced the dates

25

R W

44

26

for the Super Series months ago. and the BCCI knew full well their key players would be involved in the iamboree. What's worse is the second excuse the board has put forth -- that October is a month when two of India's biggest festivals, Diwali and Dussera, happen, and this makes it inconvenient to host Bangladesh. Have we forgotten, that only last year, India played against Pakistan in a one-dayer to celebrate the board's Platinum Jubilee, on Diwali day?

The bottom line is that India are not trying especially hard to fit in Bangladesh -- and the onus is on the BCCI, since it was they who postponed Bangladesh's visit the first time around -- because the tour does not mean much financially. The BCCI has bent over backwards in the past to accommodate full series, only Tests, or preferably only one-dayers, against the likes of Australia, England and Pakistan. That's the role commerce plays in today's high-stakes business of cricket.

But it cannot be merely about the bottom line. The ICC has put in place a 10-year programme where each team plays against everyone else home and away in that period. If the BCCI cannot respect the Bangladeshis merely as a Test country, or for matters of finance. they should do so because it is the right thing to do. Because the ICC cannot function smoothly if a board chooses to be a law unto itself. (Anand Vasu, Assistant Editor of

Graf back for a match

Tennis

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

The 22-time Grand Slam singles champion is interrupting her retirement on Tuesday to play with the Houston Wranglers of the World Team Tennis Pro League.

"It's hard for me to call it a comehack." Graf said in a telephone interview

"It's too early to say if there will be more. It's hard with all the schedules. If it works out, maybe there is another one." Tuesday's match is Graf's only

one this season as a member of the Wranglers. Houston will take on the Sacramento Capitals, led by Anna Kournikova at Houston's Westside Tennis Club. Much has changed in the 36-

in August 1999 as the third-ranked player in the world. She married Andre Agassi and had two children -- a boy in 2001 and

vear-old Graf's life since she retired

a girl in 2003. "Time is a big factor," Graf said. "For a few years, I barely played.

It's not easy with my husband still on tour. It's been a challenge to stay in Graf, who won 107 career sin-

gles titles, said juggling the demands of motherhood and her charity work made it difficult to establish a strict training regimen. "This year I just picked up the

racket more frequently than I have in the last five years," she said. "I've practised quite a bit the past

two weeks, but before that it was

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

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.

"I think she's going to see how she feels. ...but we're absolutely thrilled to have her.'

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

Graf played an exhibition match last year in Germany against Gabriela Sabatini.

strengthen her knees and back after suffering several injuries during her

She's looking forward to playing in front of a crowd in the fan-friendly format of the WTT, but she cau-

"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

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



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 thw 1980s and the current allconquering Australia side.

Asked which would win in a game between the two, he chose Australia because of leg-spinner Shane Warne. "I think he's the greatest spinner I've seen." And he said it was a contest

between Warne and India batsman Sachin Tendulkar that had provided him with one of the great memories "The best piece of of his career. cricket I ever watched I think it was in India. Warne bowling to Tendulkar. Warne was doing his utmost to get him out, Tendulkar

doing his utmost to score runs. "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.

"It 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

"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 commentating, 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."

40 "That's a

laugh!"

bone

43 Restau-

47 Commo-

48 Base run-

51 Tend the

Roberts

lawn 52 Evangel-

53 Oklaho-

54 Blueprint

55 Actor

56 Split in

DOWN

1 Goya's

Naked ---"

Solution time: 25 mins.

addition

Estrada

ner's goal

employee

rant

41 Leg

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Venus

5 Cry

9 Papa

12 La Scala

stopper

Kind of

Fool ---?'

magazine

13 Fashion

14 "What

15 Dive of

a sort

17 Bigshot

18 Small

21 Type

22 Molts

24 Box of

27 Hot tub

peace

32 Charged

33 Spoon-

bender

Geller

34 Arizona

city

36 Part of

37 Raced

38 John at

the piano

UCLA

28 Green-

31 Equi-

sock

19 Nullifies

measure

(Abbr.)

de —

And he added that bad luck had come his way when he took it off before going for a shower at the end of play at Lord's one day.

"Graham Burgess was the other umpire and he said 'are you all right'? I said 'yes, just give me a couple of minutes'. And he said 'But where did you say you put the ball?" Shepherd has been with his

partner Jenny for over 20 years and

said life back in Devon, south-west

England, would be a challenging

experience. "It will be a learning curve for me, I've never been home for so long since I started plaving cricket. The dog will be pleased. I expect."

Such was Shepherd's standing in the game, authorities were prepared to break with the current rules and let him umpire the Lord's Test against Australia.

"I felt very flattered. But I didn't want it really. There's enough hype going on these days. Players are the stars. The game of cricket is for players not umpires.

And he said there would no great dramas from him at The Oval. "A little wave perhaps but no tears. Those are for others not for me."

FACTBOX

FROM PAGE 12 **OFFICIATED IN**

By Eugene Sheffer

Seuss's

Circus"

3 Defeat

4 Legen-

dary

5 Left

6 Yale

7 Will

sharp-

shoote

student

Ferrell

movie

8 Source

9 Tennis

10 Surround-

ed by

16 "Jeop-

ardy!

20 Pindaric

work

winner

Jennings

irritation

"If — the

22 Golfer's

No. 3

wood

Holbein

-dandy

25 Work

26 Pasa-

27 Grain

site

29 Tramcar

load

Smith

biopic

Lake —,

40 Chance

42 Pedestal

43 "Wunner

band-

leader

school

46 Oboist's

sliver

49 Bobby of

hockey

44 London

45 007's

30 Cover

35 Will

37 Tar

11 Immerses 39 South

arena

storage

23 Painter

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 2003 World Cup (South Africa) including the

Two Tests South Africa v India in 1992-93 during the ICC-National Grid pilot scheme; Appointed to the National Grid Panel in

The Beast linked to Nou Camp

Sevilla striker Julio Baptista has refused to rule out a move to cham-

down the chance to join Arsenal last week as a move to Highbury would

"I am not discarding anything, all is possible," Baptista told COM

bility of a move to Barca. "My agent and I are clear on what

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.'

Enamul raring

time along with left-arm pacer SK Russel, 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

Challenge Trophy

CRYPTOQUIP

OBSESTM E M D A K V

GAOKDUYG MDYKEMI. MD YKHYIT MYV

EMBDD TPCSBD UDYKT Y Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHILE COOKING SUPPER, A GIRL, QUITE IRKED AT A FELLOW,

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals E

give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

plaving career.

tioned against high expectations. "How can I be the same," she



pions Barcelona after confirming that he will be staying in the Primera Liga next season.

The Brazil international turned

have jeopardised his chances of gaining Spanish citizenship and the subsequent benefits of being an EU passport holder.

Radio when asked about the possi-

is important and that is to have an EU passport.

Source

FROM PAGE 12

last night.

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.

PLANTED A QUICHE ON HIS FACE.

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

teams from each of two conferences advance to the finals Sept. 16-17 in