The Daily Star



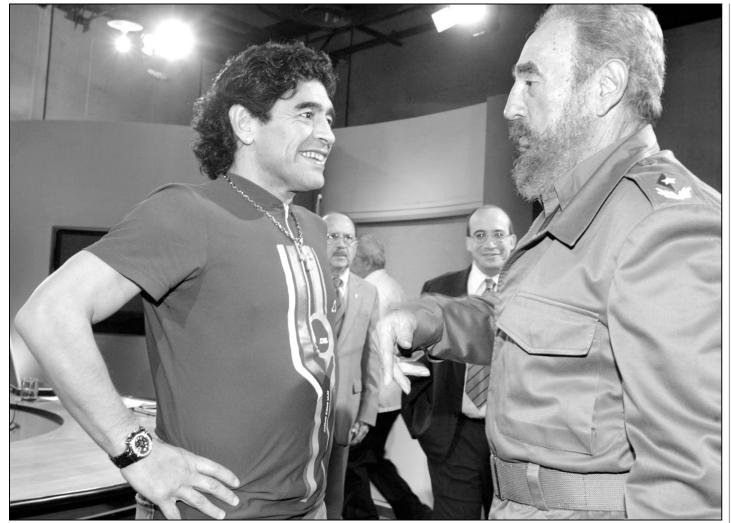


PHOTO: AFF YOU'RE COMING OVER FOR DINNER, RIGHT? Cuban President Fidel Castro talks to Diego Maradona before the recording of Castro's exclusive interview for Maradona's TV program "The 10's Night" in Havana on Thursday.

Maradona to lead anti-Bush march

HAVANA

Argentine soccer legend Diego Maradona has promised Cuban President Fidel Castro that he would be at the front of an anti-Bush march in Argentina next week.

US President George W. Bush will attend a summit of leaders from all countries from the Americas except Cuba in Mar del Plata, Argentina, November 4-5.

"I think Bush is a murderer. ... I'm going to head the march against him stepping foot on Argentine soil," Maradona said, appearing on Cuban television with Castro.

"I promised the 'Comandante' that I would do it and I will," the 44-yearold football legend said, referring to Castro.

"For me he is a god," Maradona said of the 79-year-old left-wing Cuban leader, whom he considers a friend and a father figure who helped him kick drugs.

Maradona was in Havana to interview Castro for his weekly television show in Argentina, which has brought the fallen star back to the limelight after years battling cocaine addiction.

PREVIEW: PRIMERA LIGA **Crisis teams meet**

Football

AFP, Madrid

Champions League contenders Real Madrid and Real Betis will be missing key players as they bid to reverse their slumping Spanish League form on Saturday.

Sixth-placed Madrid will still be without the injured trio of Ronaldo, Julio Baptista and Zinedine Zidane while England captain David Beckham is also doubtful after his back problem flared up during Real's 3-1 loss at Deportivo La Coruna on

Wednesday "We aren't having a crisis. The only crisis at the moment is bird flu," joked Real Madrid's Spanish international Ivan Helguera

Betis will be without Joaquin Sanchez and Melli Rivas who were sent off during their 3-2 home loss to Villarreal on Wednesday.

To add injury to insult, with both players getting their marching orders for allegedly abusing the referee on Wednesday, Betis's deadball This season, by co spoecialist Asscuncao also suffered a thigh injury and will miss Saturday's memory for refereeing mistakes, match. mainly concerning penalties being The two Reals will be looking given in error. enviously at surprise league leaders Osasuna, who play host to Espanyol with both Barcelona and Villarreal on Sunday, although the Pamplonabenefitting from questionable decibased side still worried about the sions, which gave them penalties at bottom of the table rather than the crucial moments in their midweek matches

3-2 win over Athletic Bilbao on win over Malaga in midweek.

Wednesday The vanquished Basques now lie to Celta Vigo

Barcelona and Real Madrid being the others - who have been ever-present in the top flight of Spanish football since the league was formed in 1928.

However, that streak could come to an end if their form continues to fail.

Second-placed Getafe travel to Deportivo La Coruna on Sunday hoping to do better than their near-neighbours Real Madrid as well as put Thursday's emphatic 3-0 defeat by Real Sociedad behind them

play host to Real Sociedad, having gone unbeaten in their last five league games to climb staedily up to third.

It will not just the players being watched this weekend but also the men in the middle.

at the foot of the Spanish first division and face a crunch match at home

Barcelona's Brazilain defender

Edmilson, admitting that the

Catalans had been lucky in their 2-0

divsion referees on the FIFA register

Reigning champion Barcelona

However, with nine Spanish first

FIXTURES

of officals, the questions being asked about the competance of Spanish referees could have repercussions

Athletic are one of three teams beyond Spain's borders.

Saturday (kick off times in GMT): Real Betis v Real Madrid (1900), Athletic

Bilbao v Celta Vigo (2100) Sunday: Alaves v Cadiz (1600), Deportivo La Coruna v Getafe (1600), Real Mallorca v Sevilla (1600), Osasuna v Espanyol (1600), Valencia v Racing Santander (1600), Real Zaragoza v Malaga (1600), Barcelona v Real

Sociedad (1800), Atletico Madrid v Villarreal (2000) **Ronaldo returns**

to Madrid

MADRID

Ronaldo answered Real Madrid's SOS as he arrived back in Madrid following

No spin doctor required

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan can tame England in their forthcoming Test cricket series without hiring a "spin doctor" to make local pitches friendly for their leg-break specialists, an official said Friday.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Shaharyar Khan ruled out hiring curator Andy Atkinson -- himself an Englishman -- who has prepared pitches for Pakistan for their home series over the last two years.

"We don't want to cheat," Khan told reporters.

"The home advantage should be underlined but we have a balanced pace and spin attack so we want sporting tracks."

"We are neither in search of a curator who can prepare spin pitches for us, nor are we calling Andy Atkinson to prepare pitches against England," Khan said. Atkinson's services helped Pakistan

beat Bangladesh and South Africa at home but they lost an all important series against India, the first between the arch rivals in Pakistan for 14 years.

Pakistan meet England in the first of three Tests in Multan starting from November 12, amid expectations that the hosts might play two leg-spinners to outwitAshes-winnersEngland. "We have discussed with captain

Inzamamul Haq and coach Bob Woolmer on what type of pitch we want and can assure that it will be a sporting pitch with bounce," said Khan. England captain Michael Vaughan

was unruffled by Pakistan's spin plans, saying his side has improved against spinners

"We have improved against spinners and played Shane Warne reasonably well," Vaughan said, referring to the legendary Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne, who despite taking 40 wickets failed to stop England winning the Ashes 2-1.

Khan said there were clear directives from the International Cricket Council (ICC) over pitch-making and he insisted the PCB would adhere to them.

"The ICC has clear directives on how to make pitches and ICC has (previously) criticised a pitch in the neighbouring country as under-prepared," said Khan, referring to India's narrow 13run win over Australia last year.

The Bombay pitch proved a vicious turner as Australia lost the Test inside three days with leg-spinner Anil Kumble taking five wickets in the first innings, off-spinner Harbhajan Singh chipping in with five and part-time Australian leftarmer Michael Clarke taking six in the second

England open their tour with a three-day side game against PCB Patron's XI at Rawalpindi from Monday.

England FROM PAGE 12

Vaughan said he was pleased that so

Can Milan stop the run? Football

PREVIEW: SERIE A

AFP. Rome

AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti is confident his team can end Juventus' record-breaking run of nine straight victories and prevent the title race from becoming a procession for the reigning champions.

Leaders Juventus, whose 2-0 win against Sampdoria on Wednesday set a new record for the best ever start to a Serie A campaign, face Milan at the San Siro in a crunch Scudetto showdown on Saturday

Juventus have a five-point lead over Milan but their closest rivals have won their last six games and Ancelotti feels the fixture has come at just the right time for his resurgent side.

"Juve have started brilliantly but this is a different Milan to the one which took four points from the first three games." he said.

WI make solid

got away to an opening stand of 130. The other opener Chris Gayle chipped in with 58 as the tourists went to stumps on the second day at 252 for three off 66.2 overs in reply to Queensland's first innings 323.

The tourists moved to within 71 runs of the Oueensland total in an encouraging showing ahead of next Thursday's opening Test against Australia at the Gabba here

Smith came into the four-day tour opener vying with all-rounder Wavell Hinds to be Gayle's Test opening batting nartner but has nailed down the spot with his entertaining hundred.

Hinds broke a little finger while fielding on Thursday and Smith's commanding 197-ball knock has ensured a start in at least the first two Tests in the three-match

Smith's only blemish was a low edge off leg-spinner Ryan Le Loux that was dropped at slip by Martin Love when he was 43 before he holed out to spinner Chris Simpson late in the day.

"Their top six batsmen ... they're pretty strong," Queensland skipper Jimmy Maher said. "It's a pretty good batting side so Australia have to bowl well against that sort of batting.

"They're pretty positive players and I Daren Powell (34 wickets in 12 Tests at reckon it will be a closer Test series than 37) was the best of the Windies' quicks people think." on the first day of the tour opener against

Maher was also impressed by the firstday efforts of quick Daren Powell (4-58) on a benign wicket and believed he would be an awkward proposition at the seamfriendly Gabba.

"All their bowlers ... have a bit of pace. They will come out all guns blazing against

"Our confidence is high and we'll be drought after five agonising months looking to stop Juve and end their "It feels like a great weight has been lifted from my shoulders," said the 32record-breaking run. With a victory on year-old forward who joined Milan from Saturday we can put ourselves right Inter Milan during the summer. back in the championship race."

"It's only natural to feel the tension Ancelotti's counterpart Fabio when you don't score for a while but my Capello stressed that setting a new team-mates have been really supportrecord for the best start in Serie A would be of scant consolation if his Juventus ive.

Fiorentina, in third place on 19 points, host winless Caglairi on Sunday while Inter Milan, who fell to fourth after a 3-2 defeat at home to Roma on Wednesday, play away to Sampdoria the day before.

FIXTURES

(all 1400 GMT kick-off unless stated) Saturday: Sampdoria v Inter Milan (1600), AC Milan v Juventus (1830) Sunday: Chievo v Empoli, Fiorentina v Cagliari, Lecce v Messina, Livorno v Parma, Reggina v Lazio, Roma v Ascoli, Treviso v Siena, Udinese v Palermo (1930)

Best not out of

Doctors treating football legend

George Best said Friday they had

managed to limit dangerous internal

bleeding but were keeping him

sedated on a respirator with his life

has overseen Best's treatment, said

the 59-year-old former Manchester

United and Northern Ireland winger's

condition was now "very definitely a

little better" than it was on Thursday.

did not want "to raise any hopes" as he

spoke to reporters outside the private

Cromwell Hospital in west London.

However, Williams cautioned he

"I never said that we give him a

Best, viewed by some as a near-

to the hospital on October 1 with an

infection that has spread to several

organs, including the liver and kid-

His condition had worsened

dramatically over the last few days as

the infection spread to his bowels,

changed his antibiotics and began

treating his blood loss in a different

Best's doctors on Thursday

The infection was linked to

immuno-suppressant drugs used to

help prevent the rejection of the liver

transplant Best received in 2002

good chance, but we go on treating

Roger Williams, the doctor who

danger yet

AFP, London

still in the balance.

Vieri was relieved to finally end his

Smith and Gayle combined for a quick-fire century stand before wicketkeeper Chris Hartley dismissed Gayle (58) with a neat leg-side catch off

side didn't end up retaining the title.

he said.

"It's a wonderful achievement but

If Juve extend their winning run to 10

what really counts is where we finish,"

league matches they will equal the

record for the number of consecutive

Serie A victories in a season (not just

from the start). Three teams share the

record, Juventus (1931-32), AC Milan

Christian Vieri, who scored his first

goal since May 15 in Milan's 3-1 win at

Empoli, could retain his place with

Andriy Shevchenko still recovering from

(1950-51) and Bologna (1963-64).

an ankle injury.

leg-spinner Ryan Le Loux. Hartley also produced some sharp glovework to end an entertaining cameo by vice-captain Ramnaresh Sarwan (37 off 32 balls) with a leg-side stumping.

Batting superstar Brian Lara failed to appear at the crease because of a sore little inger on his right hand that was injured when he dropped a catch in the slips Thursday.

However, Windies team management said the record-breaking left-hander would bat Saturday with little discomfort. Captain Shivnarine Chanderpaul will

resume on Saturday on 11 not out with Marlon Samuels on 20. Queensland's four fast bowlers --

him day by day. He is a very sick man," including Test all-rounder Shane Watson Williams said. (0-40) and former Test paceman Michael Kasprowicz (0-48) -- could make an equal to football greats Pele and Diego impression on a wicket that stayed low Maradona in his prime, was admitted

and gave assistance. Play was delayed for three hours after overnight storms flooded the outfield.

King backs

is a firebrand.

Queensland taking 4-58, while Tino Best

from a foot injury, had coped with the

scrutiny over his bowling action after

being cleared by the International

Cricket Council of throwing after the Sri

King said Lawson, who is recovering

He thanked Cuba for giving him a haven for almost four years at a health farm where he still has a house and plans to rest when his television contract ends next year.

Following an operation this year to staple his stomach and cut his ballooning weight, a much slimmer Maradona launched a new career in August as television host.

The Castro interview is "icing on the cake" for his top-rated show, Maradona said

"I was missing the greatest one, and now I have him. -- INTERNET SOURCE

Edmilson back in Brazil fold

AP. Rio de Ianeiro

Ronaldo will be missing but Edmilson will return to the Brazilian national team for the first time in more than a year as the side plays its final two friendlies this year against the United Arab Emirates and a Kuwaiti select squad.

Coach Carlos Alberto Parreira selected 22 players Thursday for the games Nov. 12 and 15, summoning the base of the team he intends to take to the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

Nearly all of Brazil's regulars will be there, including Adriano of Italy's Internazionale, Robinho of Real Madrid, Kaka of Milan and FIFA World Player of the Year Ronaldinho of Barcelona. The big absence is Real Madrid striker Ronaldo, who is recovering from an injury to his left ankle. His replacement is Fred, a speedy striker who recently transferred from

Cruzeiro to France's Lyon. A surprise inclusion was defended Edmilson, a mainstay on the Brazilian team that won a record fifth World Cup in Japan in 2002 but who missed eight months after rupturing ligaments in his left knee while playing with Barcelona.

After his injury in October of last year, Edmilson returned to the field with Barcelona in May and has worked his way back into consideration by Parreira.

Edmilson has the advantage of versatility, playing in the midfield for Barcelona but equally comfortable on the back line.

"If we beat Espanyol then we'll have 21 points and that will give us half the amount that we need to ensure we stay up," said Raul Garcia, one of Osasuna's goalscorers in their

a spell in Brazil recovering from an has been one of the worst in recent ankle injury.

Real want their star man to continue his rehab in Spain with a view to playing the Brazilian in the November The issue stayed to the fore this week 19 clash with Barcelona.

"It's a tough injury. It isn't easy, but I am recovering," Ronaldo told reporters at Sao Paulo airport on Wednesday night.

"I'm returning to Madrid to con-"Referees make mistakes but tinue my rehabilitation." that's part of the game," said

Ronaldo suffered ligament damage against Atletico Madrid two weeks ago. -- INTERNET SOURCE many British people were helping the quake victims.

A representative of World Health organisation, Faiza Iqbal, hailed the cricketers' visit.

"It was nice of them to visit ... such visits help raise spirits," said Faiza.

After arriving in Pakistan for a 58day tour to play three Tests and five limited over games, Vaughan said he and his players were touched by the disaster.

"It was massive and we are here to play exciting cricket and bring smiles back to Pakistani people's faces," Vaughan said at his arrival press conference on Wednesday.

The England players will also take part in a fund-raising golf match in Lahore on December 4. They are expected to announce donations for quake victims after the first one-day international in Lahore on December

Pakistan Cricket Board has already announced that the entire gate money from the first limited overs match would be given to the government's relieffund.

SL succumb FROM PAGE 12

| Arnold c Dravid b Harbhajan | | | | | 15 |
|---|-----------|-------------|----|----|----|
| Dilshan lbw b Pathan | | | | | 0 |
| Farveez Maharoo | of c Yuvi | raj b Yadav | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| Vaas run out | | | | | 7 |
| Chandana not out | | | | | 19 |
| Zoysalbw b Yadav | | | | | 0 |
| Muralitharan b Harbhajan | | | | 15 | |
| Extras (lb2, w8) | | | | 10 | |
| Total (all out in 35.4 overs) | | | | | 22 |
| Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-13, 3-33, 4-54, 5- | | | | | |
| 54, 6-71, 7-80, 8-104, 9-104. | | | | | |
| Bowling: Pathan 8-0-37-4, Agarkar 7- | | | | | |
| 1-27-1, Yadav 10-1-32-2, Harbhajan | | | | | |
| 6.4-1-19-2, Kartik 4-1-5-0. | | | | | |
| INDIA | | | | | |
| Sehwag c and b Maharoof 3 8 | | | | | |
| Tendulkar not out 70 | | | | | |
| Yadav lbw b Muralitharan | | | | | 9 |
| Dravid not out | | | | | 2 |
| Extras (lb3, w4) | | | | | 7 |
| Total (for two wickets | | | | | |
| in 20.2 overs) | | | | 12 | 26 |
| Fall of wickets: 1-80, 2-115 | | | | | |
| Bowler: | 0 | Μ | R | | w |
| Vaas | 3 | 0 | 22 | | 0 |
| Zoysa | 4 | 0 | 37 | | 0 |
| Muralitharan | 7.2 | 0 | 35 | | 1 |
| Maharoof | 3 | 0 | 19 | | 1 |
| Dilshan | 3 | 0 | 10 | | 0 |
| Super-sub: Upul Chandana (SRI) | | | | | |
| replaced Dilhara Fernando | | | | | |
| Result: India win by eight wickets Man | | | | | |
| of the match: Irfan Pathan (India) | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Australia, I'm sure," he said

following decades of alcohol abuse Williams said earlier.

which began to bleed.

way, Williams added.

neys.

Mourinho made to think Football But several players looked to be

AFP, London Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho fears

PREVIEW: PREMIERSHIP

the effects of an already gruelling season may be catching up with some members of his side.

The League Cup holders lost their unbeaten home record under their Portuguese coach, and their grip on the trophy, when they were beaten 5-4 on a penalty shoot-out by Charlton in the third round of this season's competition at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday after the match finished 1-1 following extratime

Defeat ended Mourinho's run of 37 matches unbeaten at Chelsea's west London home and cut short all talk of the Blues completing a four-trophy clean sweep also including the Premiership, FA Cup and Champions

League Chelsea return to league action on Saturday at home to Blackburn with a commanding nine-point lead over

second-placed London rivals Charlton. Against the Addicks Mourinho made seven changes to the side that drew 1-1 with Everton at Goodison Park last Sunday and can now recall the rested Claude Makelele, Asier del Horno and William Gallas.

Frank Lampard, Joe Cole and Didier Drogba also played for one hour or less after coming on as substitutes.

struggling towards the end of extra-time and now they will find themselves up against a Blackburn side who enjoyed an extra day's rest after beating Leeds 3-0 in the League Cup on Tuesday. Meanwhile Chelsea skipper John

Terry angrily rejected claims from Everton striker James Beattie that the champions could be "bullied" out of a game

Terry, who saw his 41st minute goal against Charlton cancelled out on the stroke of half-time by Darren Bent, said: "We can take anyone on in a physical battle and we'll win, and then we'll get the ball down and play football and we'll win that as well."

Across the capital, third-placed Tottenham enter the north London derby in the unusual position of being ahead of arch-rivals Arsenal.

Arsenal have won eight and drawn four of their last 12 derby games so Tottenham fans will hope its 13th time lucky as they look to beat the Gunners for the first time in nearly six years.

Spurs have lost just once in 10 league games and under Dutch coach Martin Jol not only have they remained true to the club's attacking traditions, they've done so with a side full of English players including Paul Robinson, Ledley King, Jermaine Jenas and Jermain Defoe.

Thierry Henry is a major doubt for the visit to White Hart Lane with Arsenal's France striker facing more

fitness problems. Henry only returned from six weeks out with a groin injury in last week's Champions League clash with Sparta Prague, where his double strike saw him become the club's all-time leading goalscorer

> Henry also played in all of last Saturday's Premiership match against Manchester City at Highbury, but manager Arsene Wenger revealed the 28-year-old had suffered a setback.

But striker Jose Antonio Reves is fit again after recovering from bruised ribs and midfielder Freddie Ljungberg is available following a hamstring injury England full-back Ashley Cole remains sidelined with a stress fracture of the foot.

Manchester United are away to Middlesbrough, while basement side Everton travel to relegation rivals Birmingham and second-bottom Sunderland face fellow strugglers Portsmouth.

FIXTURES

Saturday: Birmingham v Everton, Charlton v Bolton, Chelsea v Blackburn, Liverpool v West Ham, Middlesbrough v Manchester United (1615GMT), Sunderland v Portsmouth, Tottenham v Arsenal (1200GMT), Wigan v Fulham (1145GMT) Sunday: West Brom v Newcastle (1500GMT) Monday: Manchester City v Aston Villa (1900GMT)