

**Brazil's base near Frankfurt**

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

World champions Brazil have chosen a base near Frankfurt for the World Cup, the Brazilian Football Confederation said on its website.

The five-times world champions will have exclusive use of a hotel at Koenigsstein, around 20 kilometres from Frankfurt, during their stay in Germany.

Brazil kick off the defence of their crown against Croatia in Berlin on June 13, face Australia in Munich on June 18 and Japan in Dortmund four days later.

They will arrive in Germany on June 4, having spent the previous two weeks at an exclusive lakeside hotel in Weggis, Switzerland.

**Montgomery handed 2-yr suspension**

AFP, Lausanne

International sport's top tribunal on Tuesday found US sprinters Tim Montgomery and Chryste Gaines guilty of doping charges and banned them for two years in a climax to athletics' biggest doping scandal.

"The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) said in a statement that it had 'upheld the requests for arbitration filed by the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) in July 2004'.

"As a consequence, both athletes have been declared ineligible for a period of two years starting on 6 June 2005."

Montgomery, who was effectively stripped of his 100 metres world record set in September 2002 as his results from March 31, 2001 were annulled, and Chryste Gaines, plus US runners Alvin Harrison and Michelle Collins, were accused in June 2004 of doping violations by the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) despite a lack of positive tests.

**SA give Kallis**

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But on Wednesday, they again refused to rule him out and will now give him until the opening morning of the Test match to determine if he should play.

"We have explored various forms of treatment to get him ready for the Test match," team physiotherapist Shane Jabaar said in a prepared statement.

"His response has been slow but we're still hopeful that he will have a significant enough improvement to allow him to participate in the match.

"We give him until Friday morning before a decision is taken on whether he will play or not."

Kallis, a right-hander, was able to send down a few deliveries in the nets but did not lift a bat.

He has had cortisone injections and said he felt the treatment was working.

"(The injury's) getting better so I'm making progress," he said.

His inclusion or otherwise in the team has become the main focus in the lead-up to a match, despite some controversy over a so-called "war of words" between the two sides.

Veteran fast bowler Shaun Pollock said Kallis was important to the team but they would adapt if he was unavailable.

"Obviously it'd be nice if he plays, but as a team you deal with those kind of things," Pollock said.

"If he does or doesn't play, we've still got to perform as well as we can. It will be a blow for us but we need to move on if he doesn't play."

The Australians were even more enthusiastic about Kallis's abilities.

"He's been in super form over a long period of time now and were looking forward to facing the challenge of Jacques," opener Matthew Hayden said.

**Hayden doesn't**

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played but their role isn't just to look after batsmen."

But Hayden said Australia's batsmen had formed a close group, especially since their Ashes series defeat.

"Provided you can encourage players within the group to talk about each other's games, ultimately it comes down to a partnership in the middle," he said.

Hayden said the team also had enormous respect for Siddons and Hills.

"He (Siddons) is the kind of guy who is not going to tell you all the time what you want to hear," said Hayden.

"That's great because sometimes you do need a bit of a lift.

"I feel very comfortable that within our side, we've got a good base with our batting."

Cricket Australia this week appointed Troy Cooley as full-time fast bowling coach to start from May next year.

Cooley, a former Tasmanian bowler, was England's bowling coach in its Ashes series triumph earlier this year.

**Third Eng-Pak ODI today**  
**Inzamam against super-sub rule**

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq Wednesday called for scrapping the newly introduced super-sub rule in one-day cricket and suggested that the naming of a substitute player should be allowed after the toss if the rule was to continue.

"In the first place, (the) super-sub rule should be scrapped from limited-overs cricket," Inzamam told reporters ahead of Thursday's day-night one-dayer against England.

"If the rule was to be continued naming of substitute player should be allowed after the toss," he said.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) introduced a substitute system in May this year which allows sides to replace a player at any stage of a one-day international.

The replaced player is ruled out of the rest of the match, while the replacement is entitled to assume any remaining batting or bowling duties.

But the rule has come under criticism as a substitute has to be named before the toss, making it more favourable for the team winning the toss.

Australian captain Ricky Ponting also called for the rule to be

scrapped in its current form, while South African captain Graeme Smith and Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer called for its review.

The ICC, however, justified the rule and said it would remain on trial until March next year.

Pakistan's first use of the rule was spoiled when they lost the toss during their 42-run loss in the first match in Lahore on Saturday.

Pakistan levelled the series with a thumping seven-wicket win in Monday's second match, also played in Lahore.

Inzamam defended naming off-spinner Arshad Khan as super-sub in both the matches.

"We named Arshad because we thought the pitch at Lahore stadium would help spinners," said Inzamam.

In contrast, England's super-sub Liam Plunkett came into the side for Kevin Pietersen and took 3-51 on debut on Saturday, and Vikram Solanki came into bat as super-sub in the second match, scoring 38 not out.

England, already without their injured captain Michael Vaughan and spinner Ashley Giles, were further hit after hard-hitting batsman Kevin Pietersen had to return home Tuesday with back problem and rib cage injury.

The tourists, who said they don't

need Pietersen's replacement, arrived in the troubled city of Karachi Wednesday afternoon and were escorted to team hotel under heavy security.

England, who rejected Karachi as a five-day Test venue, only agreed to play in the violence-hit city after assurances of foolproof security from the Pakistani government.

Pakistan will be boosted by the return of all-rounder Shahid Afridi who was banned for two one-dayers and one Test over charges of damaging the pitch during the second England Test at Faisalabad.

**TEAMS**  
**PAKISTAN (from):** Kamran Akmal, Salman Butt, Younis Khan, Mohammad Yousuf, Inzamamul Haq (captain), Shahid Afridi, Abdul Razaq, Shoaib Malik, Navedul Hasan, Shoaib Akhtar, Danish Kaneria, Mohammad Sami, Arshad Khan.  
**ENGLAND (from):** Markus Trescothick (captain), Matt Prior, Andrew Strauss, Vikram Solanki, Paul Collingwood, Andrew Flintoff, Geraint Jones, Ian Blackwell, Liam Plunkett, James Anderson, Steve Harmison, Ian Bell.

**'Argentina will be ready for World Cup'**

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Argentina are aware of the strengths of their World Cup Group C rivals but will be ready to have a good tournament, coach Jose Pekerman said.

Pekerman's seeded team were drawn in one of the toughest groups with the Netherlands, Serbia & Montenegro and Ivory Coast for the June 9-July 9 tournament in Germany.

"The team will be in good shape when they get to the World Cup. We have a very good team and I'm sure we'll have a great World Cup," Pekerman told the Argentine news agency Telam in an interview published on Tuesday.

"You have to go to the World Cup in your best form. We Argentines are affected by our elimination in the first round of Korea-Japan," he said referring to the 2002 tournament.

Pekerman implied that talk about how tough Argentina's group rivals are has been based largely on their poor tournament four years ago in an even tougher group with England, Sweden and Nigeria and their erratic form in the last six months.

"But if the team were okay (now), like for example in the first half at home against Brazil, we wouldn't even worry today about our rivals," he said. Argentina beat Brazil 3-1 in Buenos Aires in June to clinch an early World Cup berth.

"Brazil are the best team at the moment, for the way they play. I like their players, their ideas, their football...and England are getting there with greater aspirations than 2002. Position by position, they are complete and will do very well."

Pekerman is leaving himself with little further preparation, however, saying: "There are six months left for the World Cup but we're only going to play one (warm up) friendly, maybe against Croatia."

"In other words, the state in which the players get there will depend on what they do with their clubs."

He said he had never called up Juan Sebastian Veron of Inter Milan, Argentina's captain in 2002 when he was a Manchester United player, because "up to now there is a squad that has responded (to my wishes)."

**Benitez full of praise for Gerrard**

Football

REUTERS, Tokyo

Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez has hailed captain Steven Gerrard's "unselfish" contribution to his side's surge up the Premier League table this season.

Benitez made five signings after Liverpool's European Champions League triumph in May but the Spaniard acknowledged keeping Gerrard was his best decision.

"The first and most important was the player I re-signed -- Steven Gerrard," Benitez told Fifa.com.

"He was free as well which I thought was a good bit of business."

Liverpool turned down a bid of around \$56 million from English champions Chelsea during a turbulent pre-season that strained relations between Benitez and Gerrard.

However, Benitez had nothing but praise for his captain as Liverpool prepared for their Club World Championship semifinal with Costa Rica's Deportivo Saprissa on Thursday.

"He is improving every year," Benitez said. "He can play anywhere. He is so unselfish in that respect. He always thinks about the team and not about himself."

Benitez had words of comfort for much-maligned striker Peter Crouch, who has struggled for goals since joining Liverpool from Southampton.

"Peter Crouch is a player who everyone knows about," Benitez



STEVEN GERRARD

added. "I am sure he will score a lot of goals."

Liverpool are on a 10-match unbeaten run and tied a club record of 10 clean sheets in a 2-0 win over Middlesbrough at the weekend -- their seventh successive Premier League victory.

**Becks awaits Keane arrival**

REUTERS, Madrid

David Beckham is still hoping that Real Madrid will sign his former Manchester United team mate Roy Keane even though their interest appears to be fading.

"If we've got a chance of signing Roy Keane and I was asked about it then I would say we should," the England captain told a news conference on Wednesday.

"He brings a lot to a team and I've never played with a better leader of the pitch."

"I would recommend him because Roy Keane is an incredible player and person...but I don't know what is going to happen as there have been a lot of changes at this club."

Beckham said he did not believe Keane's age should stop him joining the Primera Liga club.

"What Roy Keane brings to a team on and off the pitch is special," Beckham said. "Even when he's been injured or even when he didn't play in the European Cup final he gave players a lift."

Beckham hinted that the Ireland international, who left United last month after 12 years at Old Trafford, may join Celtic.

"It's his decision where he will end up and I know that Celtic is the club he supports and people have linked him with there since he left United," Beckham said.

**Ganguly dropped again**  
**Ex-BCCI official smells a rat**

Cricket

AFP/PTI, undated

Indian selectors on Wednesday dropped former captain Sourav Ganguly from the squad for the third and final Test against Sri Lanka to be played in Ahmedabad from Sunday.

Ganguly, who has not been part of recent one-day teams, was replaced by Mumbai opener Wasim Jaffer in the Test team.

"We have been wanting to give our middle-order batsmen like Yuvraj Singh and Mohammad Kaif more chances so we decided not to pick Ganguly," said chief selector Kiran More, a former India wicketkeeper.

Jaffer played seven Tests for India from 2000 to 2002 with limited success but has shown good form in recent domestic matches.

Ganguly made 40 and 39 in the second Test here but has stiff competition from Yuvraj, who scored an impressive 77 not out in the second innings here, and Kaif who could not make it to the playing eleven.

India were without opener Virender Sehwag because of a throat infection, with Rahul Dravid

and Irfan Pathan opening the batting once each here and making things easier for the team management to push in an extra middle-order batsman.



SOURAV GANGULY

India won the Test here on Wednesday to go 1-0 up in the three-match series after the first Test ended in a draw in Chennai.

Dravid was retained at the helm for India's upcoming tour of Pakistan in January and England's tour of India starting in March.

Meanwhile, hinting that Ganguly

had been made a victim of BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) politics, its former joint secretary Goutam Dasgupta on Wednesday alleged that the talented left-hander's removal from Test squad was "motivated" and "guided by reasons other than cricket."

"This decision is unfortunate and irrational. Ganguly paved the way for an Indian win in the Delhi Test by batting responsibly and forging good partnerships in both innings. How can they even think of dropping him?" an upset Dasgupta said.

Finding fault with the logic advanced for dropping the cricketer from the side for the Ahmedabad Test, Dasgupta told PTI. "When Ganguly was kept out of the one-day squad, some people put forth the argument that a winning combination shouldn't be disturbed. Then how come Ganguly has been axed only hours after India won the Test? This decision is motivated. Performance has not been the criterion for his removal," he said.

The Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) also termed as "unfortunate" the decision of the national selectors to sack Ganguly from the team, and said the left-hand batsman did not deserve to be treated like this.

**Lazio fined, Di Canio avoids punishment**

AFP, Rome

Lazio were fined 8,000 euros on Tuesday for letting their supporters show a neo nazi symbol in the stands at the weekend but striker Paulo Di Canio was not punished for making a fascist salute.

The Italian football federation however has opened an inquiry into the player's actions on Sunday in the away game at Livorno.

It is not the first time Di Canio's politics have landed him in hot water. In March he was fined 10,000 euros for giving a fascist-style salute at the end of the Rome derby two months earlier.

Livorno were also fined 20,000 euros for a series of problems including the throwing of a small firework at the Lazio team bus as it entered the stadium.

Games between Livorno and Lazio are always tense because of the political leaning of the clubs' supporters. Livorno have always had a strong left-wing following, while Lazio supporters have links to the far right.

**Media lambastes Ferguson**

Football

AFP, London

England's media on Wednesday rounded on Sir Alex Ferguson, accusing the Manchester United boss of rank hypocrisy over his claim that the press were pursuing a vendetta against him and his club.

Reacting to an outburst in which Ferguson accused the media of harbouring a "hatred" of United, Wednesday's newspapers were filled with examples of the Scot treating journalists with contempt -- a subject which has, until now, been virtually taboo in the English press because of fears of reprisals from Old Trafford.

"Nasty put-downs, singling out individuals for vicious criticism, sneering, treating people with contempt and lack of respect -- Fergie turned it into an art form," commented the Daily Mirror.

The tabloid added: "His obnoxiousness is tolerated and indulged by everybody at United, of course, because the alternative is to point out

to him that his behaviour is boorish, rude and ignorant."

The Guardian mocked Ferguson's suggestion that United's problems were down to the media's attempts to "fragment" the club by publishing a list of "ten things the media didn't do", which included spending 20 million pounds on Old Trafford flops Diego Forlan and Louis Saha.

The Sun adopted a similar theme, pointing out that the media could hardly be blamed for United winning only half their home games this year, the club's early exit from the Champions League or the manager's decisions to sit David Beckham and sack Roy Keane.

The venom and sarcasm directed at Ferguson on Wednesday were triggered by his behaviour 24 hours earlier when the Scot cut short a press conference for national newspaper reporters after 74 seconds without taking any questions.

"Fergie's Lost It" was a popular theme among the headline writers after what was universally condemned as a childish display of petulance.

Prior to his brief meeting with the

newspaper reporters, Ferguson had spoken to a handful of broadcast and agency journalists, making clear his fury over a week of headlines calling for him to quit at the end of the season, or face being sacked by United's American owners.

"They are trying to fragment the club; the players from the supporters, and the supporters from the players," Ferguson claimed.

The Scot has never made any secret of his disdain for the media, regularly snarling "I'm not answering that," in response to anyone with the temerity to ask an even slightly difficult question.

He is unique among Premiership managers in not talking to the written press after league matches and has not spoken to anyone from Britain's national broadcaster, the BBC, in years.

Most astonishingly of all, even Manchester United TV, the club's in-house station, were briefly banned from the manager's office earlier this year.

**Sao Paulo scrape past Al Ittihad**

Football

AFP, Tokyo

South American giants Sao Paulo scraped through a tough test against Asian powerhouse Al Ittihad to book their place in the final of the World Club Cham-pionships with a 3-2 victory on Wednesday.

The silky skills of the boys from Brazil proved too much for the Saudi side, who bowed out with Asia's pride intact after a gritty performance that reinforced their standing as a disciplined and dangerous team.

With Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez watching from the stands, two goals from Amoroso, once the world's most expensive player, and a penalty by talismanic goalkeeper Rogerio Ceni sealed Al Ittihad's fate.

But the underdogs were worthy opposition and unlucky not to get a draw, reinforcing that the gap between Asian football and the rest

of the world is narrowing.

On an icy Tokyo night, Amoroso opened his account in the 16th minute when he chested down a long ball and his rifled drive deflected off defender Adnan Falahat, wrongfooting keeper Zaid Mabrouk.

Al Ittihad were slow out of the blocks and it looked like Sao Paulo were in for a romp with Real Madrid-bound Cichinho weaving his magic on the right flank, coming close to scoring twice.

But the Asian champions sparked into life after half an hour and captain Mohammed Noor drew them level on 33 minutes, picking up a rebound when Ceni spilled a shot from the dangerous Mohammed Kallon.

The Jeddah-based club had the South American champions rattled and came close to taking the lead but their dreams were shattered when Amoroso pounced onto a Cichinho cross two minutes into the second half.

When Aloisi was brought down

after 57 minutes the veteran Ceni, in his 16th year at Sao Paulo and famous for his scoring exploits, stepped up to convert the spot kick for his 53rd goal.

Ittihad responded like champions, with Asian player of the year Hamad Al Montashari heading in a Tcheco corner at the far post in the 68th minute to set up a dramatic finale.

But despite intense pressure, they were unable to break Sao Paulo's resolve and their dream of meeting Liverpool in the final on Sunday was snuffed out.

The Tricolours will now play either the on-form Reds or outsiders Deportivo Saprissa of Costa Rica, who play their semifinal on Thursday. Ittihad will have lift themselves against the loser of that match.

The tournament pits the club champions from each continent and also includes Africa's Al Ahly and Sydney FC of Australia, who fell at the first hurdle and will play-off for fifth place on Friday.

**Buffon suffers another injury**

REUTERS, Rome

Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon is expected to be out of action until the New Year after injuring his toe in training, the Serie A club said on Wednesday.

Buffon will miss his side's final Serie A fixtures of 2005 against Lazio and Siena but is expected to be fit in time for the away trip to Palermo on January 7.

The new setback added to an already frustrating period for the Italy international, who underwent surgery after damaging shoulder ligaments during a pre-season friendly with AC Milan on August 14.

**It's India**

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**Stikov cards:** Mehtab, Climax (India)

**TEAMS**  
**INDIA:** Sandip, Surkumar, Suresh, Gawli, Manju, Venkatesh, Climax, Mehtab (Hakkim, 73rd minute), Ajayan, Rahim Nabi and Baichung.  
**MALDIVES:** Imran, Jameel, Sabah (Habeeb, 78th), Assad, Nasir (Luthfi, 69th), Gasim, Fajeel, Shafan, Umar (Ismail, 46th), Ashfaq and Thariq.  
**Referee:** Al Yarimi Mukhtar (Yemen)

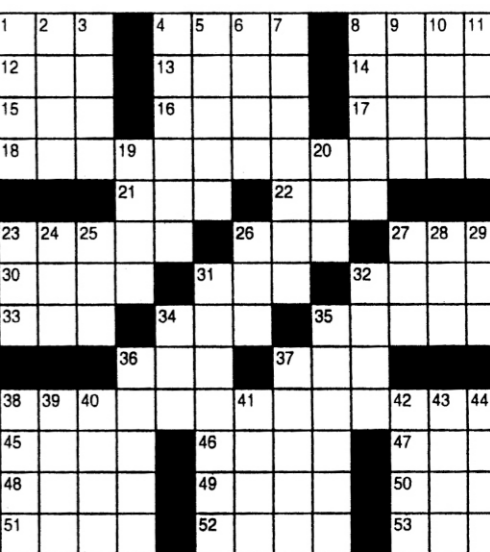


PHOTO:AFP

Sao Paulo forward Amoroso celebrates his second goal against Al Ittihad in the semifinals of the World Club Championship in Tokyo on Tuesday.

**CROSSWORD** By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
1 Andersen's lang.  
4 Mail org.  
8 Float down.  
12 Anger.  
13 Father of Japheth.  
14 Competent.  
15 Urchin's place?  
16 Pivot.  
17 "Did you ever --- lassie..."  
18 Start of a sentence.  
21 Craggy peak.  
22 Appomattox VIP.  
23 Go on all fours.  
26 Tormé or Tillis.  
27 Mainlander's memento.  
30 Take the wheel.  
31 Purchase.  
32 Updated information.  
33 Trellis climber.  
34 Branch.  
35 Computer hookup.  
36 Alter follower.  
37 Thither.  
38 End of a sentence?  
45 Caboose's place.  
46 Region.  
47 Scuttle.  
48 Lecherous look.  
49 Grub.  
50 "The Greatest".  
51 Ball-bearing items.  
52 "Phooey!"  
53 Roulette action.  
2 Neighbor-hood.  
3 Tide type.  
4 Pull the plug?  
5 Re Ra.  
6 Name of six popes.  
7 "To a Skylark" writer.  
8 Haste.  
9 Lamb outcome.  
9 Lend a surreptitious hand.  
10 Skeddadle.  
11 Blinge couple in a gossip column.  
20 Slithery one.  
23 Windy City, for short.  
24 Sharp-ton's title (Abbr.).  
25 Tarzan portrayer.  
26 It's the world!  
27 Took charge of.  
28 Lamb dam.  
29 Doctrine.  
31 Preserved a memory?  
32 Zlich.  
34 Way back when.  
35 Harass.  
36 --- Park, Colo.  
37 Meddler.  
38 Scheme.  
39 Major fashion.  
40 Last word in Gilligan's theme.  
41 Bellow.  
42 Obsessed seaman.  
43 Unrivaled.  
44 Polish prose.



**CRYPTOQUIP**  
KD IBIEFAVNF'USHZD -  
AHJINKNIHUPHTUIFVT  
XV LIX KZZ, K LTIUUFVT  
SHBICVXKVCUKPJCIUU.  
Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF A BUNCH OF HENS PULLED OFF A VERY CLEVER PLOY, I'D SAY THAT'D BE A CHICKEN COUP.  
Today's Cryptquip Clue: U equals S  
The Cryptquip 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.