

DHAKA FRIDAY JUNE 23, 2006

No additional damage to Owen

AFP, Newcastle
 Newcastle moved quickly on Thursday to end fears that the club's England striker Michael Owen had suffered a worse injury than initially thought.
 Reports had suggested the ruptured anterior cruciate knee ligament Owen suffered in England's World Cup Group B clash against Sweden on Tuesday was complicated by further damage to his medial ligament.
 But the Premiership club insist the 26-year-old, who returned to Newcastle's training ground with his father Terry and met the club's physios Paul Ferris and Kevin Bell on Thursday, sustained no additional damage.
 A statement on the club's website said: "While Owen has ruptured the anterior cruciate ligament, newspaper reports claiming he has also suffered serious damage to his medial ligament are inaccurate. It also remains too early to say how long Michael will be missing."
 Owen is determined to return to full fitness as soon as possible to reward Newcastle's loyal fans for their faith in the former Real Madrid star.
 An injury-plagued season meant he played just 11 times for Newcastle after his move from Real last summer.
 But a deluge of messages wishing him well have given Owen an extra incentive to recover from the horrific injury.
 He said: "The injury is a big blow because after the World Cup, I was really looking forward to the new season with Newcastle United."
 "Now I have to accept I'm going to be out for a while again, but what will help me is the support of the fans, and I really appreciate all the messages they have sent in and their best wishes."
 "And I look forward to the day I can thank them by getting back out on the pitch and scoring goals for the team in a Newcastle shirt."

Ronaldo secret spilled

AFP, Rio De Janeiro
 A great Brazilian mystery long shrouded in secret has been resolved. Ronaldo weighs 90.5 kilos (198 pounds), just 500 grams above the ideal weight of a man 1m83m (6'1") tall, Brazil physical trainer Moraci Sant'anna has revealed.
 Sant'anna told Globo News TV the Real Madrid star, world champion in 2002 but widely accused of now carrying too much around the midriff, had been up to 95 kilos but "now he is close to his ideal weight."
 Coach Carlos Alberto Parreira said last week that Ronaldo was very strong but "his body has changed. He is not the youngster he was in 1994."

Messi's big birthday!

AFP, Leipzig
 Lionel Messi turns 19 on Saturday and is determined to make it a double celebration by outfoxing Barcelona teammate Rafael Marquez and firing Argentina into the World Cup quarterfinals.
 Messi, who came into the tournament carrying an injury, started the 0-0 draw with the Netherlands which gave Argentina top spot in Group C and a last 16 clash against Marquez' Mexico.
 Now the highly-rated teenager is hoping that he's done enough to convince coach Jose Pekerman that he is worth a place in the starting lineup as Argentina look to take another step closer to a third world title.
 "Mexico are a strong team and play good football," said Messi.
 "I feel fit enough to get through 90 minutes because this is when the real World Cup begins."
 Marquez believes that Mexico can tame Messi and his free-flowing teammates but knows they have a point to prove after they scraped into the second round with four points from their three group games.

Mexicans irk Pekerman

AFP, Frankfurt
 Mexico will be tough opponents in the last 16 of the World Cup, said Argentina coach Jose Pekerman, after his side battled to a 0-0 draw with the Netherlands to finish top of Group C.
 "I have a very positive image of Mexico," said Pekerman.
 Mexico finished runners-up in Group D after beating Iran 3-1, drawing 0-0 with Angola and losing 2-1 to group winners Portugal, who beat the Dutch in the knockout phase of football's showpiece tournament.
 "Mexico are where they are because of how they have played. They are high in the FIFA rankings and played well at the Confederations Cup last year."
 "It will be a good match. They have many very good players. They will be a strong opponent, and it's the World Cup, so every game is difficult."
 "Mexico are always able to score goals," he added. "They are technically skilled and highly competitive team. No team can ever believe that Mexico is not a strong rival."

Pekerman said he had not been disappointed with the goalless draw against the Netherlands, despite his side dominating the first-half before easing off after the interval to allow the Dutch back into the game.
 "We could have won the match, which was highly competitive, because we had more goal-scoring possibilities," he said.
 "But it was difficult. We were both qualified for the round of 16 but we had to be very prudent and also take into account that both teams can play good football and can win."
 "I'm satisfied. The team were good and the players took into account what they had to do. Whatever was lacking, we'll compensate for that in the next game in three days' time (in Leipzig on Saturday)."
 "During the first half we were closer to scoring, and perhaps we lowered the tempo in the second half, maybe we felt our fatigue."
 "It was difficult," said man-of-the-match Tevez who plays his club football for Corinthians in Brazil.
 "We haven't played the kind of football that we like to play but we were facing a very strong team."
 "We kept the ball well. All that was missing was goals."
 Teenager Messi, who like Tevez was called up to start the match as Pekerman rested favoured strike duo Hernan Crespo and Javier Saviola, both yellow-carded in the previous match, admitted the Dutch defenders had raised their game.
 "The desire by us to do well was there," Messi said. "We tried to up the pace but the Dutch defence was a wall."
 With an apparent embarrassment of riches up-front, Pekerman said it was important to remember that "to win the World Cup, you need players to come in off the bench and play well".
 Pekerman called Tevez and Messi "two great players who are very important for us. They're good to incorporate into the team."
 "I couldn't take risks with yellow cards. It's very important that players coming in had the motivation to win and play well."

Michel to leave Elephants

AFP, Munich
 Veteran coach Henri Michel announced on Wednesday he would not be seeking a new contract with Ivory Coast and would instead be taking up the reins at an unnamed Qatari club.
 The 58-year-old Frenchman took Ivory Coast to their first World Cup finals and to the African Nations Cup final where they lost on penalties to hosts Egypt in January.
 Ivory Coast showed why they are regarded as one of Africa's most gifted teams when they recovered from two goals down to beat Serbia and Montenegro 3-2 in their final Group C match where both sides finished with ten men.
 Departing with two defeats and a victory from probably the toughest group, which also included Argentina and Netherlands, it could all have been so different if only they had enjoyed a bit more luck and been less naive defensively.
 Despite being eliminated from the World Cup, both heavily-changed teams went at it hammer and tongs from the start before a capacity 66,000 crowd in a bid to restore their pride.
 Even with six changes to their starting lineup against the Serbs, Ivory Coast carved out as many goalscoring chances as most other teams make in two or three matches.
 However Michel, who has already coached in the Gulf having been in charge of the United Arab Emirates, has also been criticised for his team not making it through



PROUD OF YOU MATES: Suspended captain Didier Drogba (L) joins celebration after Aruna Dindane (3rd from R) scored Ivory Coast's second goal against Serbia and Montenegro at the Allianz Arena in Munich on Wednesday.

Vieira wishes for Henry goals

REUTERS, Hameln
 Patrick Vieira turns 30 when France play Togo in their final Group G match on Friday and wants some Thierry Henry goals as a present.
 "A player like Thierry Henry is capable of making a difference by scoring at any time and I believe he can win it for us," Vieira, who played alongside Henry at Arsenal before moving to Juventus, told reporters on Wednesday.
 "The fact that we played together for a long time means I know where to find him on the pitch," Vieira added. "I have to concentrate on that because that can make us win the match."
 France, who started with draws against Switzerland and South Korea, need to beat Togo by two clear goals in Cologne to make sure of advancing to the knockout stages.
 "So far we've been playing with the handbrake on," Vieira said of France's sluggish start.
 "We have a defence we can rely on which is a solid basis but maybe we've been playing too defensively. Now we must race the ball forward a little bit more and make sure we put Thierry Henry in a position to score."
 France's most prolific striker with 34 goals, Henry has scored their only one at this World Cup, in Sunday's 1-1

draw with South Korea.
 The 28-year-old, however, has not looked the player he is for Arsenal and France need more from him to avoid another early exit after leaving the 2002 finals without a win or a goal.
 Henry should receive some help on Friday with coach Raymond Domenech expected to pair him with Juventus marksman David Trezeguet up front.
 The two are among the world's most lethal strikers at club level but, surprisingly enough, rarely start together for France.
 "It doesn't make much difference

WC BRIEFS

AFP, Berlin
 For Japan's Brazilian-born winger Alessandro "Alex" Santos, listening to the national anthems in a match-opening ceremony must be a moment of mixed feelings -- especially when Japan are up against Brazil.
 "That's the national anthem which I have heard as long as I can remember and I will hear for a long time to come," the 28-year-old said of the hymn for the country of his birth, on the eve of the Japan-Brazil Group-F match.
 "It must make me feel in a way I can hardly describe when I hear it at this kind of place," said Santos, who came to Japan as a high school footballer and became a Japanese national to compete in the 2002 World Cup finals.
Lucky orphans
 Six Croatian orphans were to carry the FIFA flag at the Stuttgart stadium before the start of the Group F match between Croatia and Australia.
 "I cannot eat anymore. I cannot sleep...this huge crowd will be watching us," Denis, 13, told Jutarnji List daily newspaper ahead of the match.
 For Denis and his friends aged between 13 and 15 -- four boys and a girl -- it will be the first trip outside Croatia and first trip by plane. The costs are covered by local donors.
 The teenagers are all "model students" from a Zagreb orphanage.
Ticket for a BMW!
 Ticket scalpers have, as ever, floated around the World Cup like a bad smell, hoping to make a killing and tickets for some matches involving sides whose fans outstrip their allocation such as England. But some touts are a little optimistic.
 "Change my ticket ... for a BMW," read the placard held by one Mexican fan ahead of their final group game against Portugal.
Bravo 35
 Omar Bravo gave Mexico a nervy time against Portugal after missing a penalty which could have calmed his side as they chased a draw which would have guaranteed a place in the last 16 even if Angola had beaten Iran. But by smashing the ball over the bar he provided the 35th missed spotkick in World Cup history. In all, 182 have been awarded since the tournament started in 1930 and 147 have gone in, Simao Sabrosa on target for the Portuguese.



BACK TO THE FOLD: French forward David Trezeguet, who is likely to start against Togo, plays with a ball during a training session at the Weserbergland stadium in Arzenen.

The Daily Star
RANGS TOSHIBA
 WORLD CUP QUIZ 2006
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THIS CAN BE YOURS

2006 Round 4, Draw in Chittagong
 (See June 8 issue of the Star Sport for competition information, prizes and rules)

The Daily Star RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz Round 4, Ends June 29, 2006

Tick (✓) the correct answers

1. Who scored the first goal in the 2006 World Cup?	Klose <input type="checkbox"/>	Lahm <input type="checkbox"/>	Wanchope <input type="checkbox"/>
2. The smallest nation to have played in the World Cup finals is:	Trinidad & Tobago <input type="checkbox"/>	Cameroon <input type="checkbox"/>	Jamaica <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Which Asian player scored in three World Cup finals?	Nakata <input type="checkbox"/>	Sami Al Jaber <input type="checkbox"/>	Ali Daei <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Which World Cup final match ended goalless during the regulation time?	Italia '90 <input type="checkbox"/>	Argentina 78 <input type="checkbox"/>	USA '94 <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Who is this player?	Totti <input type="checkbox"/>	Kaka <input type="checkbox"/>	Messi <input type="checkbox"/>

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms).....Age.....
 Father's name.....Occupation.....
 Address.....
 Telephone (if any).....Signature.....Date.....

Write with a ballpoint pen in clear BLOCK letters.
 Cut along the dotted lines and mail to OR drop in the Quiz Box at The Daily Star
 You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz 4."

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banglalink goal pick & win contest

how to participate :

how to pick your team?
 Write Message: pw ukr
 Phone Number: 2006
 go to message option type pw<space> 1st 3 letters of country send to 2006

in case of a draw?
 Write Message: pw ukr draw
 Phone Number: 2006
 go to message option type pw<space> 1st 3 letters of country<space>draw send to 2006

to know your accumulated points type 'pt' and send to 2006 today's matches

match1 : Ukraine (ukr) vs Tunisia (tun)
 match2 : Saudi Arabia (sau) vs Spain (spa)
 match3 : Switzerland (swi) vs South Korea (sou)
 match4 : Togo (tog) vs France (fra)

banglalink you, first!