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DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 26, 2006

banglalink
Goal

banglalink picture of the day

England eliminate Ecuador

Focus on Ghana

AFP, Bergisch Gladbach

Breaking the all-time record for goals in the World Cup is not top of Brazil striker's Ronaldo's list but beating African side Ghana in Tuesday's second round clash is.

The 29-year-old's brace against Japan brought the Real Madrid star level with German Gerd Muller's mark of 14 but he said on Sunday that it wasn't really on his mind.

"I dedicated the two goals against Japan to my son Ronald, who was in the stands wearing a Brazil shirt," said Ronaldo, whose second goal especially undermined his critics who said he was too slow and too fat to be in the starting XI of the five-time champions.

"My target is to win the World Cup and if I score goals all the better."

"I am not obsessed being the leading scorer at the World Cup or breaking records."

"I am of course delighted to have equalled the record of 14 goals and if I take it to a new level, I will be even happier but the objective remains as it always has been to win the World Cup."

"These landmarks are always around. For instance if I score against Ghana I could be the player to score Brazil's 200th goal at a World Cup finals, but so what. Beating Ghana is the most important thing," added Ronaldo, who was top scorer at the 2002 edition including both goals in the 2-0 win over Germany in the final.

While beating Ghana remains his next target, Ronaldo accepts that the African giants will be no pushover.

"We are in good form, and well prepared to take on whoever is the opponent," said Ronaldo, who like his teammates failed to convince in the first two matches, a 1-0 win over Croatia and a 2-0 win against Australia.

"Now it is the turn of Ghana, who we know well."

"We have watched their matches (the first two a 2-0 defeat by Italy and a 2-0 victory over Czech Republic) and we will try and prey on their weaknesses."

"We know the players well, as 21 of the 23 play in Europe."

"However we must not be complacent, as they have plenty of win the World Cup."

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CAPTAIN'S ACT: England captain David Beckham is on cloud nine after scoring the lone goal off a freekick against Ecuador in their World Cup round of 16 match at Stuttgart's Gottlieb-Daimler Stadion on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

AFP, Stuttgart

England captain David Beckham fired his team into the World Cup quarterfinals here Sunday, scoring the only goal in a 1-0 victory over Ecuador.

Beckham curled in a trademark freekick on the hour to become the first Englishman to score goals in three World Cups and set up a last eight showdown with either Portugal or Holland next Saturday. But the Real Madrid star's first

international goal for 13 matches could not mask another lacklustre display from England, who again looked vulnerable at set-pieces and struggled to click in hot, humid conditions at the Gottlieb-Daimler Stadion.

Manager Sven-Goran Eriksson's decision to unveil yet another new-look line-up fell some way short of being a resounding success, with Tottenham midfielder Michael Carrick unconvincing in the midfield holding

role. England also looked desperately bereft of penetration in attack, where too often Wayne Rooney was forced to chase lost causes in his unfamiliar role as the lone striker in a 4-1-4-1 formation.

On the odd occasions where England did threaten, poor finishing let them down, with out-of-form Frank Lampard missing a golden opportunity to kill the game on 73 minutes when he blazed over after a superb cut-back from

Rooney.

Beckham said he was delighted to have silenced his critics.

"I have been struggling in training and Wazza (Wayne Rooney) said to me before the match, 'You have been terrible for the past two days so you are going to get one tonight!'"

"And I got a text message from (Real Madrid teammate) Roberto Carlos saying 'score me a freekick'. It brought me good luck," Beckham said.

He said he believed England would improve as the tournament went on.

"We're in the quarterfinals and we haven't performed as well as we can do. It will come."

Beckham admitted he had been physically sick shortly after scoring.

"I did not feel well before the game but then I was fine in the first half. In the second half it just came out."

Eriksson said he was happy with his tactics.

"I think it worked. We should have scored more goals but I'm rather happy we're in the quarterfinals again and I hope we have a different result than last time" when England lost to eventual winners Brazil.

A lifeless opening 45 minutes saw England fail to create a single meaningful attempt on goal, two tame shots by Lampard and Rooney both easily saved by Ecuador goalkeeper Cristian Mora.

In their biggest game of their lives having never before gone beyond the group stages, better

finishing from Ecuador striker Carlos Tenorio should have seen the South Americans take the lead on 11 minutes after a dreadful defensive blunder by England centre-half John Terry.

Terry slipped and mis-hit a back-header to Tenorio, who raced clear with only Paul Robinson to beat.

But with the England keeper at his mercy Tenorio took just a fraction too long and his shot was deflected onto the bar courtesy of a superb sliding cover tackle from leftback Ashley Cole.

That let-off was symptomatic of an error-strewn start by England, and their defence looked at sixes and sevens only moments later when an Ecuador free-kick created panic in the six-yard box.

Neither Terry nor Rio Ferdinand looked comfortable at set-pieces, and Robinson also failed to convince whenever the ball was crossed into the box, most notably when he flapped at a cross on 45 minutes.

Despite several renditions of

LEADING SCORERS

AFP, Berlin

World Cup leading scorers after Sunday's England-Ecuador match:

- 4: Klöse (Germany)
3: Crespo (Argentina), Fernando Torres (Spain), Maxi Rodriguez (Argentina), Podolski (Germany)
2: Bosacki (Poland), Bravo (Mexico), T Cahill (Australia), Delgado (Ecuador), Dindane (Ivory Coast), Frei (Switzerland), Gerrard (England), Henry (France), Ronaldo (Brazil), Rosicky (Czech Republic), Shevchenko (Ukraine), C Tenorio (Ecuador), Villa (Spain), Wanchoppe (Costa Rica)
1: Adriano (Brazil), Ahn Jung-hwan (South Korea), Al Jaber (Saudi Arabia), Al Kahlani (Saudi Arabia), Allback (Sweden), Aloisi (Australia), Appiah (Ghana), Bakhtiarzadeh (Iran), Barmetta (Switzerland), Beckham (England), Cambiasso (Argentina), J Cole (England), Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal), Crouch (England), Cuevas (Paraguay), Deco (Portugal), Dempsey (United States), Dramani (Ghana), Drogba (Ivory Coast), Flavio (Angola), Fonseca (Mexico), Fred (Brazil), Frings (Germany), Gilardino (Italy), Gilberto (Brazil), Golmohammadi (Iran), R Gomez (Costa Rica), Gyan (Ghana), Jaquinta (Italy), Ilic (Serbia-Montenegro), F Inzaghi (Italy), Jaidi (Tunisia), Jaziri (Tunisia), Juanito (Spain), Juninho (Brazil), Kaka (Brazil), Kalou (Ivory Coast), Kalinichenko (Ukraine), Kaviedes (Ecuador), Kewell (Australia), Koller (Czech Republic), B Kone (Ivory Coast), N Kovac (Croatia), Lahm (Germany), Larsson (Sweden), Lee Chun-soo (South Korea), Ljungberg (Sweden), Maniche (Portugal), Marquez Alvarez (Mexico), Materazzi (Italy), Messi (Argentina), Mnar (Tunisia).

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THIRD EYE

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

First thing is first. After the conclusion of the first two matches in the Round of 16 (both exciting spectacles in and of itself) we have ourselves a peach of a quarterfinal tie. No matter that it had been quoted in the media from since the day that the draw was made, but Germany against Argentina looks likely to be quite possibly the tie of the tournament so far even disregarding history. In this World Cup alone both teams have scored ten goals and conceded two each. Equally impressive? Not quite; but that takes nothing away from the charm of the occasion. It will indeed be a marvellous spectacle -- hopefully.

However I am going too far ahead of myself. What concerns us now is not the clash that awaits us four days from now but how the two protagonists reached there.

It was the end of the dream for Sweden and Mexico, both teams more than capable of springing up a surprise or two. But while the latter showed great energy and verve in their loss to Argentina, the Scandinavians were strangely subdued and overawed by the occasion as they crashed to a German side 2-0 in Munich.

And it could have been much

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Switzerland v Ukraine	12:50 am (Tuesday)	Cologne

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