



## 'Reputations count for nothing'

SAN JOSE, June 24: Brazil said on Thursday the shock demise of Colombia at the World Cup had served as a warning that reputations count for nothing in soccer, reports Reuter.

"What happened to Colombia is without doubt a lesson for us," said Brazilian striker Romario the day after Colombia, one of the pre-tournament favourites, lost 2-1 to the United States, leaving team dependent on a mathematical miracle to reach the second round.

"When you get on to the pitch, everyone is equal. There aren't any stupid teams any more," said Romario, adding: "Colombia were a tremendous disappointment."

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira was also wary of his team being widely tipped to win the competition.

"We have been favourites for the last five competitions and look where that has got us," he said. Brazil last won the World Cup in 1970s. "We have to forget about this business of being favourites."

Brazil, who beat Russia 2-0 in their opening World Cup match on Monday, face Cameroon on Friday in a Group B game.

On Thursday, around 3,000 drum-beating, flag-waving fans packed a stand at Santa Clara University simply to watch their idols practice free kicks in a routine training session.

## Colombia in state of mourning

BOGOTA, June 24: Deserted streets and inconsolable headlines mourned Colombia's World Cup disaster on Thursday while police stood guard outside players' homes after the team received death threats, reports Reuter.

Millions of fans had looked forward to a night of celebrations to erase the team's nightmare 3-1 defeat by Romanian in their opening match but the United States shattered the hopes with a surprise 2-1 win on Wednesday.

City streets throughout the country were deserted after the game and in Bogota only a handful of fans drove around honking their car horns in disappointment.

Newspapers expressed the nation's sense of shock at the defeat with angst-laden headlines.

"Colombia, what pain, what grief," read one.

"Colombia's dream died in the United States," declared another as sports commentators slammed the team, saying there was nothing to justify the poor showing.

The World Cup — a total failure for Colombia," said Hernan Palaez of the Caracol Radio network from Pasadena, California, where the game was played.

The defeat effectively dumped Colombia, one of the pre-tournament favourites, out of the competition.

Bogota police said they were taking no chances over the death threats which forced midfielder Gabriel Gomez out of the team before Wednesday's match even though they could not say whether they were a hoax or not.

Team coach Francisco Maturana and Gomez were both threatened by an unidentified group in Medellin who said they would bomb family homes if Gomez played.

Gomez did not play and was replaced by Herman Gaviria, who plays for Atletico Nacional in Medellin.

## ROK, Asia's role model?

HANOI, June 24: South Korea's progress in the World Cup has won ecstatic praise in Vietnam, where Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet said the team as "the pride of Asian football," reports Reuter.

"We Vietnamese should try to imitate them," he was quoted by the Lao Dong newspaper received Friday.

South Korea has so far drawn 2-2 with highly-fancied Spain and 0-0 with Bolivia.

His total earnings are said



Italy's Daniele Massaro is stymied by Norwegian Erik Mykland during a Group E encounter at New Jersey's Giants Stadium on June 23. Italy won 1-0 to earn a new lease of life in the 15th World Cup.

— AFP photo

## Bitter rivals battle anew



ORLANDO, June 24: Belgium and the Netherlands, given a fright by less-fancied opposition in their opening Group F matches, battle for early assurance of a second round World Cup place on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Belgium scraped through 1-0 against Morocco in Orlando in their first game and the Dutch came from behind to grab a late 2-1 win over Saudi Arabia in Washington.

It was a chastening experience for both, particularly the Dutch who were caught cold by a 19th minute Saudi strike before Wie Jonk hauled them back with a goal after the interval and substitute Gaston Taument headed the winner three minutes from the end.

"I feel we should thank them for what they did," Dutch striker Dennis Bergkamp said. "They woke up up. We were asleep in that game until the second half and I think it has done us some good."

Taument may well get his chance on the right wing in the starting line-up against Belgium in preference to Marc Overmars, the player he replaced in the second half last Monday.

Belgium team chief Paul Van Himst envisages a change in his formation to meet the threat he knows he can expect

the Dutch to pose down the wings and to shore up deficiencies exposed by the lively Moroccans in midfield.

Central defender Philippe Albert, who missed the Morocco match because of suspension, looks sure to return and — for this clash at least — the attack will almost certainly be reduced from three strikers to two.

Luc Nilis is likely to stand down, leaving Sunday's goalscorer Marc Degryse and Croatian-born Josip Weber, five-goal hero on his Belgian debut against Zambia earlier this month, up front.

Apart from a goalless draw in a 1987 friendly, Belgium and the Netherlands have not met since two World Cup qualifiers in late 1985.

Each won one but the Belgians went through to the 1986 final tournament in Mexico where they reached the semifinals before falling to eventual champions Argentina.

Dutch coach Dick Advocaat played down the rivalry between the two teams.

"It is not extra motivation to us that it is Belgium and that it is so long since we played them," he said. "You don't need any motivation when you are playing in the World Cup."

"They have a different style from us. They play on the counter-attack but we always play full-out attack."

Referee: Renato Marsiglia (Brazil)

Kick-off: 1635 GMT

## Campos: Mexico's chameleon



ORLANDO, June 24: Jorge Campos, the man in the fluorescent number one jersey, is more than a goalkeeper for Mexico, reports Reuter.

He is a sometime striker, the team's chief clown, the fans' top pin-up and the best known player in the team other than Hugo Sanchez. He has twice played as a striker for Mexico as well as winning more than 40 international caps in goal.

But he is still regarded by many observers at the World Cup finals as a cross between a joke and an enigma. Opinions are split: Is he a fine goalkeeper, as Ireland coach Jack Charlton claims, or is he an entertainer with little value to his team?

Within the Mexican squad's hotel, he is always the first to enjoy a game of pool or to attract the attention of female admirers.

At 27, the former surfing star from Acapulco is hoping this World Cup will give him his chance to move from Mexico to a professional club in Europe.

But the problem for Campos, who always wears garish pink, yellow or green out-fits, is that few clubs may trust him not to make the kind of crazy charges upfield which have earned him his reputation as a striking goalkeeper.

Campos said: "I see myself

to be around one million dollars a year, including endorsements and personal sponsorship deals, but he wants to follow the Sanchez route across the Atlantic.

He currently plays for



JORGE CAMPOS

Universidad Nacional Autonoma De Mexico (UNAM), known as the Pumas, for whom he once played a full season as a striker in 1991-92.

"I love to score goals and I love to play in the attack," he said. "It is what the game is for."

For a goalkeeper, Campos is small at only 1.75 metres but he has a springy jump and startling agility borne out of his surfing days. Despite his stature he is Mexico's superstar.

Campos said: "I see myself

as an example to youth. I think I have to be a role model for those who look up to me. The young people in Mexico are our future."

Among Mexicans, Campos is known affectionately as "El Rayaso" — the clown — because of his multi-coloured jerseys. He has designed 50 different styles for the youth market in Mexico City and they are his trademark.

If he succeeds with Mexico in Friday's Group E clash with Ireland and achieves his eventual dream of a move to a big European club, it would be a wrench to leave his large family — which includes three brothers and four sisters — and his home at Plan De Los Amates near Acapulco.

Many of the 800 residents of this coastal village are reportedly related to Campos by blood or by marriage and his family owns a small ranch. His father runs a construction materials trucking company and paid for his son to attend a private catholic school in Acapulco.

"For now, I am concentrating on this tournament and on our game against Ireland," he said in time-honoured soccer speak.

With Campos, however, there is always the smile and the unarguable fact that this is no ordinary player and certainly not one who honours conventions on or off the pitch.

His total earnings are said

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## Argentina wary of Nigeria

WELLESLEY, Mass., June 24: Who's afraid of Diego Maradona?

Not Nigeria's "Super Eagles," who met two-time world champion Argentina on Saturday coming off a triumphant 3-0 World Cup debut against Bulgaria, reports AP.

"Maradona is a respected player," said Nigeria's Dutch coach Clemens Westerhof. "We respect him, but we are not afraid of him after the last match. We respect Argentina, but we are not afraid."

Both teams won their opening games and know they have relatively weak opponents in their last games, so the Group D match could turn into a goal-chasing clash of two powerful forward lines.

Maradona, the Argentina team captain back from drug addiction and other controversies, opened his fourth World Cup with a brilliant goal that added to three by Gabriel Batistuta in a 4-0 romp over Greece Tuesday.

But Maradona counselled caution against Nigeria.

"We have to be very careful. The Nigerians are extremely fast, and we can't give them a millimetre of advantage on the field."

Nigerian star Rashidi Yekini, who scored a goal against Bulgaria, will challenge Maradona for the limelight.

"All our players are in high spirits and raring to go," Nigerian team spokesman Austin Mgbolu said.

With two games played in four-team Group D, Argentina leads Nigeria on goal difference. Both have three points.

But even with a plus inexperienced and a resounding start, there's a watchword to Colombia, the 1978 and 1986 champions and 1990 runners-up: Remember Cameroon.

Argentine fullback Oscar Ruggeri recalled playing in his team's shocking 1-0 opening loss in the 1990 World Cup against Nigeria's southern neighbor. He urged his compatriots to be cautious.

"That day we came into the field full of confidence, and look at what happened," Ruggeri said. "And don't forget Nigeria plays in a similar style as Cameroon."

Argentine coach Alfio Basile was trying to keep his players focused.

"We've just won a battle, not the war," he said of the game against the weak Greeks.

Referee: Bo Karlson (Sweden)

Kick-off: 2000 GMT

## Foxboro awaits fireworks

FOXBORO, Massachusetts, June 24: Argentina's reborn World Cup side look well enough equipped

to overcome the Cameroon syndrome when they meet Nigeria in a Group D match on Saturday — a clash between the champions of South America and Africa, reports Reuter.

But Argentina have made a significant improvement since the debacle in Buenos Aires and also shrugged off the unpopular defensive shackles of the 1990 World Cup.

Their strikers Gabriel Batistuta, hattrick scorer against Greece, and Claudio Caniggia — playing with a painful, bruised toe — can match, if not better Yekini and fellow striker Finidi George for speed and finishing.

Nigeria's Dutch coach Clemens Westerhof said Yekini, who scored in the Africans' 3-0 victory over Bulgaria in Dallas on Tuesday, should have had three.

"You have not seen the real Super Eagles yet," he said.

The key for Argentina lies in midfield where Basile will be looking for rising stars Fernando Redondo and Diego Simeone to found a solid base and dictate the pace.

Redondo, who will be playing his club football for Real Madrid next season, said: "Argentina have more options in attack."

Nigeria snatched the initiative from Bulgaria after the Europeans had failed to capitalise on a dominant start.

Westerhof did not feel the need to man-mark Bulgaria's Barcelona star Hristo Stoichkov, who he did not consider so much of a danger on the ball. But he will not give Argentina's captain Diego Maradona, at 33, still unmatched as a ball player, the same room.

Hitting that attacking mid-fielder Augustine Okocha of Eintracht Frankfurt might be given the man-to-man task, Westerhof said: "You don't put a woodpecker on Maradona, you put a star on a star."

Referee: Bo Karlson (Sweden)

Kick-off: 2000 GMT

Okocha, who is nursing a minor knee injury, said he was not sure whether he would play, but that if he did "Maradona will also have to mark me. I'll play when I have the ball."

The Nigerians, in their first finals believe they can win the group, to stay in the Boston area and play their second round match at the Foxboro Stadium, venue of Saturday's match.

## PROBABLE TEAMS

ARGENTINA: 12-Luis Islas.

4-Roberto Sensini, 13-

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