



# Share The Passion



## Mexicans sure of success

EAST RUTHERFORD, July 4: Surprise group winners Mexico are confident they can overcome suspension-hit Bulgaria on Tuesday to set up a World Cup quarter final with champions Germany, reports Reuter.

"It's true that we prefer playing Bulgaria rather than Nigeria or Argentina but we aren't going to underestimate anyone," said colourful Mexican goalkeeper Jorge Campos.

The two teams met in the 1986 World Cup at the same second round stage, host nation Mexico winning 2-0 before going out on penalties to West Germany in the quarter-finals.

The Mexicans approach the match confidently after recovering from an opening game loss to Norway to head preliminary Group E, which also includes Ireland and Italy.

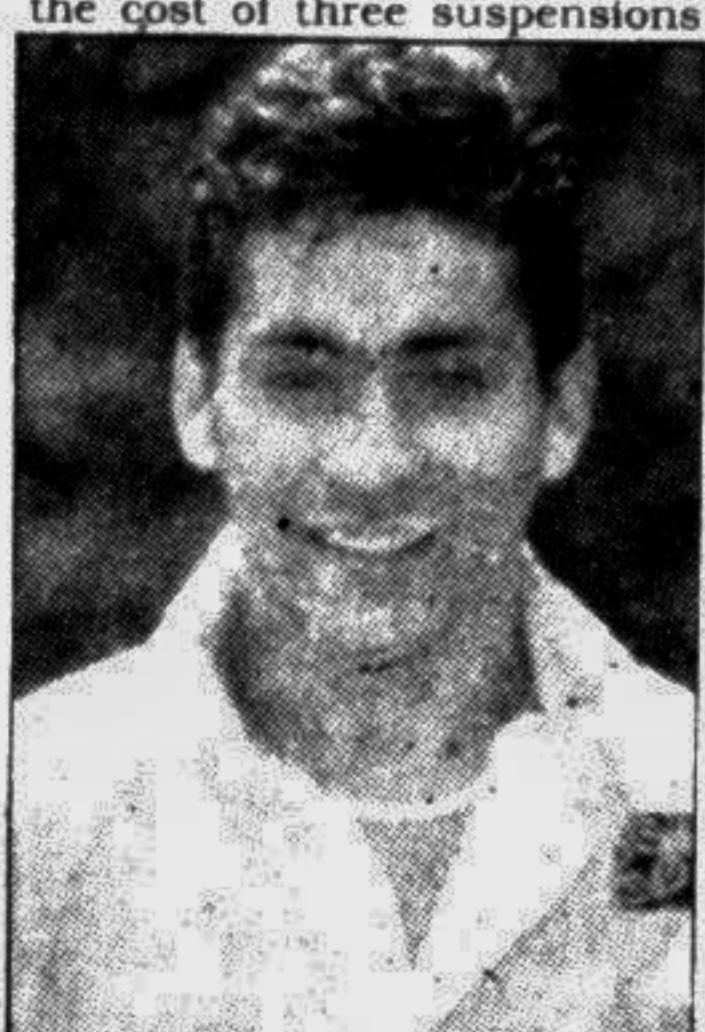
"Why shouldn't we go all the way to the final? We've come through the toughest World Cup group," Campos said.

Bulgaria suffered a 3-0 drubbing by Nigeria in their opening group D match to extend their miserable record in the World Cup finals to played 17, lost 11, drawn six.

But they finally tasted victory by thrashing Greece 4-0 and upset everyone's travel plans when they defeated Argentina 2-0 last Thursday — in the wake of the Diego Maradona doping scandal to clinch second place in the

group.

That memorable win over the Argentines was secured at the cost of three suspensions



JORGE CAMPOS

Trifon Ivanov and Zlatko Yankov picking up their second yellow cards of the tournament while Tzanko Tsvetanov was sent off.

The absence of Ivanov and Tsvetanov leaves coach Dimitar Penev to reshuffle his defence and he is likely to call up the experienced Nikolai Iliev and Ilian Kiryakov to fill in. Daniel Borimirov, dropped after the Nigerian defeat, should replace Yankov in midfield.

Mexico are deprived of the suspended Joaquin Del Olmo in defence and are set to recall Ramon Ramirez in his place. Ramirez starred in Mexico's Copa America campaign last year when his country lost out

in the final to Argentina. Veteran Mexican striker Hugo Sanchez — famous for the somersaults with which he celebrates his goals — has not been picked for the last two games and coach Miguel Mejia Baron is likely to leave him on the bench again.

Bulgaria have never been past the second round in the World Cup but they have rarely had such a potent attack as formed by Stoichkov, Emil Kostadinov and the veteran Nasko Sirakov.

"I wouldn't swap them for any other strikers in the world," said Penev after the win over Argentina.

Bulgaria and Mexico last met in January, playing out a 1-1 friendly draw in California, the Bulgarians scored from a penalty conceded after Campos had lost the ball on one of his risky sorties up the field.

### PROBABLE TEAMS

**MEXICO:** 1-Jorge Campos, 2-Jorge Rodriguez, 2-Claudio Suarez, 3-Juan Ramirez Perales, 5-Ramon Ramirez, 4-Ignacio Ambriz, 6-Marcelino Bernal, 8-Alberto Garcia Aspe, 10-Luis Garcia, 11-Zague, 7-Carlos Hermosillo.

**BULGARIA:** 1-Borisлав Михалов, 2-Емил Кременлев, 15-Николай Илев, 5-Петър Хубчев, 16-Иlian Kiryakov, 11-Daniel Borimirov, 9-Yordan Lechkov, 20-Krasimir Balakov, 7-Emil Kostadinov, 10-Nasko Sirakov, 8-Hristo Stoichkov.

Referee: Jamal Al-Sharif (Syria). Kick-off: 2035 GMT.

The Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) has formally withdrawn its bid to host the 1997 ICC Trophy, a tournament involving the associate members of the International Cricket Conference, leaving Malaysia and Canada to fight it off.

## Escobar's killer arrested

MEDELLIN, Colombia, July 4: Colombian police said Sunday they had captured the man who shot and killed Andres Escobar Salazar, a member of the country's World Cup soccer team, reports Reuter.

General Jairo Antonio Rodriguez, national police head of intelligence, told local radio that the man had confessed to shooting Escobar outside a restaurant in eastern Medellin early Saturday after a heated argument.

"We have concluded for now that the author of the shots was Humerto Munoz Castro," Rodriguez said.

The identity and participation of the author of the crime has been proven."

Rodriguez said they confiscated a .38 calibre pistol from Castro but only after ballistic tests would they know if it was one of the weapons used to kill Escobar.

Police said they also arrested a suspected accomplice who was not identified and were searching for at least one other man and a woman.

## BCCB pulls horns in

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) has formally withdrawn its bid to host the 1997 ICC Trophy, a tournament involving the associate members of the International Cricket Conference, leaving Malaysia and Canada to fight it off.

The ICC settles the issue at Lord's on July 6.

BCCB's decision, taken in a board meeting, chaired by the board president Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman, on June 26, came as a sequel to Malaysia's request to help enhance their chances of hosting the meet by staying out.

Meanwhile, a two-member delegation, comprising the two BCCB vice presidents, Raisuddin Ahmed and Saber Hossain Chowdhury, is now in London to back Malaysia's bid in today's associate members voting.

"Diego's absence was terrible, fundamental," said defender Oscar Ruggeri, Maradona's teammate in the championship side of Mexico 1986 and the runners-up in Italy '90.

Argentina had beaten lowly

Greece 4-0 and African champions Nigeria 2-1, with a confident Maradona at the helm of a steady ship.

But only hours after being kicked out for testing positive for ephedrine, a stimulant banned by FIFA, Argentina lost to Bulgaria 2-0 and went from first to third in Group D. The final blow came against the speedy Romanians in the Rose Bowl.

"We're leaving, sadly — but with dignity," Basile said.

Maradona's shadow hovered in the press conference after the final match, when Basile, without naming his star player, said: "We started well... winning and putting on a show. But then came the problem: you're all familiar with and the team fell apart.

"We had two important absences," Basile said about Claudio Caniggia and injured striker

Maradona and injured striker

Diego Maradona, and his wife Claudia are escorted by Pasadena police

into the Rose Bowl Stadium before the start of the World Cup second round match between Argentina and Romania on Sunday. Maradona is working as a commentator for an Argentine television station.



## Once an idol, always an idol

BUENOS AIRES, July 4: Disgraced soccer star Diego Maradona is still the idol of Argentines, despite his forced withdrawal from the World Cup for testing positive for doping, according to an opinion poll published on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Eighty-nine per cent of those polled by the daily newspaper Clarin answered "yes" when asked, "Is Diego still an idol?" with 8.8 per cent answering "No" and 2.2 per cent saying they did not know.

The survey found that 40.8 per cent believed Maradona took ephedrine and related compounds banned by FIFA world soccer's governing body, without realising what he was doing, and 37.2 per cent said he was merely trying to treat a common cold.

Only 13.3 per cent of those polled said he took the drugs as performance-enhancing stimulants, as FIFA ruled on Thursday in suspending him indefinitely from international soccer. The remaining 8.7 per cent said they did not know why he took them.

Separately, President Carlos Menem said he was prepared to intercede with FIFA for a milder punishment for Maradona.

Menem, speaking to reporters at his 64th birthday party on Saturday, said he expected Maradona to call him asking for help and called on the nation to do what they could for him.

"The least Argentines can do for this lad, who is only 33, for his daughter, for his wife, for his parents, is help him overcome his problem," he was quoted by newspapers as saying.

## Refowns up

ZURICH, July 4: Swiss referee Kurt Roethlisberger admitted on Monday he was mistaken in not awarding a penalty to Belgium during their 3-2 World Cup defeat by Germany on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Belgian Football Federation officials have slammed the decision in the 70th minute of the second round match and called on soccer's ruling body FIFA to send Roethlisberger home and ban him from referring another international.

In a letter to Swiss tabloid Blick Roethlisberger said that he had watched a recording of the match on television later on Saturday and saw then he had been mistaken in not awarding a penalty after Belgian striker Josip Weber was brought down by German defender Thomas Helmer.

"I decided mistakenly. The Belgians were right to claim a penalty," wrote Roethlisberger, 43 and officiating his second World Cup finals.

"On the field I saw the scene from a distance of about 25 metres. At the crucial moment (German midfielder Andreas) Brehme and Helmer blocked my view. I had to decide in a split second. It was an intuitive decision," Roethlisberger added.

He said he was not trying to excuse his mistake.

## The piper of egression



PASADENA, Calif., July 4: Like a piper charming children in a fairy tale, Diego Maradona led and Argentina followed.

Argentina were flying high, scoring goals and winning converts. But overnight they lost Maradona — to a failed drug test — and the team soon followed him out of the World Cup as surely as if it were following his lead, reports AP.

One need only look at the scores to grasp what Maradona meant to Alfonso Basile's team.

With the controversial No. 10 as playmaker, Argentina won their first two games handily, by a combined 6-1 score. Without the 33-year-old captain the team lost two games in a row, including Sunday's thrilling 3-2 second-round loss to Romania, which knocked it out of the tournament.

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## Ideal blend for Vogts finally



CHICAGO, July 4: It took four games for Berti Vogts to find his ideal lineup, reports AP.

"If we had to play tomorrow, this is the lineup I would field," the German coach said Sunday, referring to his starting 11 in the 3-2 victory over Belgium one day earlier that qualified Germany for the World Cup quarterfinals.

Paul Goudoin, the 18-year-old Australian centre half, set up the first goal in the 22nd minute, leaving the simplest of knockouts for Mark Hager.

Germany won't have to play tomorrow, however. In fact, they won't have to play until Sunday.

The Germans are enjoying the benefits of a World Cup

system that favours the defending champions and the teams that win their first-round groups.

The Germans have a week to heal their wounds and regroup before they meet in East Rutherford, N.J. the winner of the round of 16 clash between Bulgaria and Mexico.

Vogts held a light workout Sunday for his players and then gave them off until noon Tuesday.

"The long break has its advantages and disadvantages," Vogts said. "The advantage is that we have seven days to get our players to recover from injuries.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

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