DHAKA MONDAY OCTOBER 8, 2001

SPORT

The Daily Star

England catch plane to finals

Italy, Croatia, Portugal, Russia, Denmark also on board



beaters - no less a man than former Germany boss Franz Beckenbauer rating Sven-Goran Eriksson's men one of his three favourites for the trophy

David Beckham rescued England from the brink Saturday as England flirted with disaster before scraping into next year's World Cup finals thanks to his injury-time equaliser in a 2-2 home draw with Greece.

Beckham wove his deadball magic to stun Group 9 rivals Germany, whose own campaign fizzled out with a 0-0 stalemate against Finland which forces them into the play-offs.

Joining England in the finals in Japan and South Korea next summer were Italy, who beat Hungary 1-0 in Parma with an Alessandro Del Piero freekick to wrap up Group Eight.

Croatia. Portugal. Russia and Denmark also booked their passage

After last month's 5-1 win over the Germans in Munich, England had been touted as potential world

Cup after Saturday's matches:

Russia

Slovenia

Yugoslavia

Switzerland

Faroe Islands

Luxembourg

Portugal

Holland

Estonia

Cyprus

Andorra

Denmark

Bulgaria

Iceland

Czech Republic

Northern Ireland

play off against Belgium

Rep. of Ireland

off against Asian team

off against Romania

STANDINGS

Collated tables from Europe's nine qualifying groups for the 2002 World

* Group winners qualify automatically for the finals. The nine group

Group One

5

4

2

0

0

Group Three

2

Denmark win group and qualify for World Cup Finals. Czech Republic

10

10

9

runners-up and the third-placed Asian team qualify for play-offs

(played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points)

5

5

4

0

6

0

4

3

0

10

10

10

10

10

10

10

10

10

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10

10

10

10

10

In reality, England turned in a nervous showing at Old Trafford before Manchester United

idfielder Beckham rescued them at the death with a brilliant swirling freekick at the Theatre of Dreams seconds after the Germans had failed to break down the Finns in Gelsenkirchen. The two draws mean England

who began disastrously with a 1-0 defeat by Germany at Wembley which spelt doom for Kevin Keegan's reign and a new challenge for Swedish coach Eriksson - win the group on goal difference which swung massively in their favour after their success in Munich. Eriksson was admirably com-

posed afterwards for a man who had been staring catastrophe in the face barely 20 seconds from the final whistle "It was a marvellous afternoon -

maybe not football-wise because don't think we played very well today," Eriksson said.

18

17

22

18

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23

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14 14

11

4



Striker Alessandro Del Piero (R) is about to take the scoring free-kick against Hungary in their World Cup qualifier in Parma on October 6.

Eriksson saluted Beckham for his coolness and for his inspirational showing

"Beckham played one of the best games I have ever seen him play today," said the Swede. "He ran all over the pitch and was a big captain for England.

'It was dramatic," said Eriksson of the final outcome. "But you always hope until the end of the game." As England celebrated there was misery for Scotland, who bowed out despite a 2-1 win in Glasgow over

place in Group Six. Scottish coach Craig Brown resigned afterwards.

paign," said Brown

0 Portugal win group and qualify for World Cup Finals. Rep. of Ireland play

Boksic strike brought victory in

Holland later beat Andorra 4-0 in the same group but that result was academic

after 36 minutes through Angelos Charisteas' angled drive and then fluffed a series of chances.

Substitute striker Teddy Sheringham headed England level seconds after coming on after 68 minutes but Demis Nikolaidis scored straight from the restart.

England were awarded a dubious free-kick and Beckham duly obliged. Germany huffed and puffed and now have to see off Group Five runners-up Ukraine in next month's two-leg playoff. They will play in Kiev on November 10 and in Dortmund

The three-times world champions face missing out on the finals for

beating the Faroe Islands 3-0 and will play Romania, runners-up to Italy in Group Eight, in the play-offs.

Slovenia finished second after

a glance

Collated results of World cup qualifiers played on October 6. **GROUP 1**

okanovic 19, Predrag Mijatovic 58, Mateja Kezman 61, 72, Savo Milosevic 63, 68) Luxembourg 2 (Peterson 37

Cristophe 52) Russia 4 (Vladimir Beschastnykh 14 pen, 20, 38,

Yeaor Titov 83 Switzerland 0 Slovenia 3 (Nastja Ceh 13, 31, iganj 82) Faroe Islandes 0

GROUP 2 Ireland 4 - Ian Harte 3, Niall Quinn 11 , David Connolly 63 , Roy

Keane 68 Cyprus 0 Can't ignore Baggio AFP, Milan

Football-crazy Italy woke up Sunday morning with a hangover as the nation celebrated qualification for the 2002 World Cup Finals, a feat achieved by the 1-0 victory over Hungary at Parma.

Mexican waves marked the closing minutes of the match that ensured Italy topped Group Eight, avoiding a two-legged play-off with Slovenia

But not all was sweetness and ight as coach Giovanni Trapattoni and his players lambasted the behaviour of supporters earlier in the match.

The spectre of the absent Roberto Baggio hung over proceed-ings rather like Banquo's ghost at MacBeth's banquet with fans whistling and calling out the name of the 34-year-old Brescia striker, who has never been picked by Trapattoni since he replaced Dino Zoff after Euro 2000

Trapattoni's recent admission that Baggio, who has played in three World Cups, was in his mind for the finals next year has met with enthusiasm from fans but concern by many players - notably Francesco Totti and Alessandro Del Piero - the Brescia star is thought by some to be a disruptive influence.

ful shot into the top right-hand Asked at the final whistle about the crowd's whistles and calls for corner to level the scores at 2-2. Baggio, Trapattoni - not for the first time this week - lost his temper.

"It's an unkind gesture towards those who took us to the World Cup," said Trapattoni. "Remember that Italians.

'Trap' was not finished. When his summer and condemned Germany press conference began he pre-empted inevitable questions, sayto the uncertainty of a two-legged play-off against Ukraine. ing: "I said yesterday I would take no questions about Baggio so I am anticipating before you ask - those pulled hamstring, led the plaudits for whistles were unkind Beckham who also supplied substi-

'It is true that the national team is for everybody but it is even more true that it is made up of this group, these lads. I go abroad and people tell me 'you Italians are masochists' So look at this success tonight and draw the right conclusions.

day as the hero," said Owen. Baggio, known as the 'codino divino' (divine ponytail) because of class player he is and that one of his trademark hairstyle and Buddhist beliefs, may be admired for his skill but he has not always made for a harmonious team. Cup."

Del Piero, whose freekick goal sealed victory for Italy, was as depressed as his coach afterwards, saying: "It (the crowd reaction) made us all feel bad. It was at the moment when we really needed the public to support is.

The Juventus striker had before the match admitted that Baggio's presence at the 1998 World Cup had destabilised the team.

That echoed remarks made by Parma defender Fabio Cannavaro and especially Totti who had said that Baggio should only be welcomed back in the national team under very specific circumstances.

"The important thing is for every-thing to be made clear first so as not to cause problems later," said Totti when asked about Baggio, once the most expensive player in the world and who starred in the 1994 World Cup but missed the shoot-out penalty in the final that handed victory to Brazil

But Italy have many reasons to feel confident as they prepare for their tilt at what would be a fourth world title next year.

They have a solid defensive unit of goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon and a three-man defence of veteran Paolo

Hail Beckham

harsh on Beckham, who showed 2002 FIFA WORLD CUP why interim coach Peter Taylor KOREA JAPAN decided to hand him the captain's armband before Eriksson's arrival in

Should England's players be

allowed to raise a glass this week-

end, they might want to do so in the

direction of David Beckham whose

iniurv-time equaliser sent his side to

Several England stars were

the World Cup finals here Saturday.

age to their influential captain.

into injury-time.

and looking as if they would con-

cede automatic qualification to

Cool as Eriksson himself,

Beckham - wearing his trademark

white boots - wrapped his right foot

around the ball and curled a delight-

The Manchester United

nidfielder's last-gasp strike at Old

Trafford ensured England won the

group on goal difference to qualify

for Japan and South Korea next

Liverpool striker Michael Owen,

who missed the match because of a

tute striker Teddy Sheringham with

"If you're that good a player you'll

"You always know what a world-

always come out at the end of the

were anonymous for long periods.

the pass for England's first goal.

AFP, Manchester

January. Eriksson agreed with Owen that Beckham played a vital role in resurrecting England's hopes of automatic qualification when a play-

off had looked inevitable. "You could see he wanted really hard to win this and he showed again he is a really great captain," said the 53-year-old Swede.

reprimanded by England coach The former Lazio coach was a Sven Goran Eriksson this week for relieved man at the final whistle. The boozing in midweek, but the Swede normally phlegmatic Eriksson may find it difficult to keep his squad jumped out of his seat and hugged from enjoying a beer or two in homthe rest of his coaching staff as the home fans went wild. Trailing 2-1 to also-rans Greece

"It seemed as though it would be a non-day but of course at the end it was incredible." said Friksson

Group Nine rivals Germany, "Germany finished 0-0 and then England were awarded a free-kick David Beckham stepped in and 25 yards from goal three minutes scored another great free kick.

"The tickets for the World Cup were ours." Greece, who had previously lost

six out of their last seven meetings with England, took a deserved lead after 33 minutes through Angelos Charisteas' angled drive.

The Greek players, who were evacuated from their Manchester hotel after a fire alarm went off in the early hours of Saturday morning, looked far more alert than their English counterparts who seemed nervous throughout.

But former United idol Sheringham headed England level against the run of play after 68 minutes to give the home side fresh hope

However, their joy lasted less than 60 seconds. Slack defending allowed Demis Nikolaidis time to slot home Greece's second goal.

With time running out, England were awarded a dubious free-kick and Beckham made no mistake.

these days he was going to take us The England captain had a to, or maybe even win us, a World number of chances from dead-ball situations but it did not look like it

The stoppage-time leveller was was going to be his day until his late just reward for Beckham. He was winner. inspirational to his colleagues who "One had to go in," he said. failed to produce the heroics which "I had quite a few free-kicks and earned them an historic 5-1 victory was disappointed with most of them. over Germany in Munich last month.

"When I got my last chance Playing in front of his home Teddy Sheringham said he would crowd, Beckham stood apart from have it but I decided I'd take it.' his colleagues, several of whom And when the ball flew into the

net Beckham's transformation from Aside from the tireless captain. public enemy number one, after his England's midfield failed to contain sending-off against Argentina at the Greeks, who were unlucky not to France 98, to national hero was complete

But defeat would have been





England.

Latvia which could only secure third

manager I'd decided some time ago that this would be my last cam-

unfortunately it won't."

France, won the group after an Alen

Russia win group and qualify for World Cup Finals, Slovenia enter play **Group Two**

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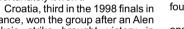
20

12

24

'In terms of my time as Scotland 8

"I hoped it would finish in Japan -



four days later.

But the greatest drama was at Old Trafford where Greece could and should - have buried a disjointed The visitors took a deserved lead

But with time running out,

Results at

Yugoslavia 6 (Slavisa

Group Four												
Sweden Turkey Slovakia Macedonia Moldova Azerbaijan	9 9 9 9 9	7 5 4 1 1	2 3 2 4 3 2	0 1 3 4 5 6	17 15 11 11 6 4	3 8 9 13 17 14	23 18 14 7 6 5					

Sweden win group and qualify for World Cup Finals. Runners up play off against runners-up in Group Seven

Group Five

Poland	10	6	3	1	21	11	21
Ukraine	10	4	5	1	13	8	17
Belarus	10	4	3	3	12	11	15
Norway	10	2	4	4	12	14	10
Wales	10	1	6	3	10	12	9
Armenia	10	0	5	5	7	19	5

Poland win group and gualify for World Cup finals. Ukraine play off against Germanv

Group Six

Croatia Belgium Scotland Latvia San Marino	8 8 8 8	5 5 4 1 0	3 2 3 1 1	0 1 1 6 7	15 25 12 5 3	2 6 16 30	18 17 15 4 1	
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Croatia win group and qualify for World Cup finals, Belgium play Czech Republic in play-off

Group Seven

Spain Austria Israel Bosnia	8 7 7 7	6 4 3 1	2 2 2 2	0 1 2 4	21 9 10 7	4 7 6 12	20 14 11 5	
Liechtenstein	7	0	0	4	0	12	0	

Spain win group and qualify for World Cup finals

Group Eight

Italy Romania Georgia	8 8 8	6 5 3	2 1 1	0 2 4	16 10 12	3 7 12	20 16 10	
Hungary	8	2	2	4	14	13	8	
Lithuania	8	0	2	6	3	20	2	

Italy win group and qualify for World Cup finals, Romania play Slovenia in play-off

Group Nine

	England Germany Finland Greece Albania	8 8 8 8	5 5 3 2 1	2 2 3 1 0	11 11 2 5 7	6 4 12 7 5	6 10 7 17 14	17 17 12 7 3	
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England win group and qualify for World Cup Finals, Germany play Ukraine in play-off against Ukraine

PHOTO: AFP

FACE OF ENGLAND: A young English fan poses for a photographer before start of the England-Greece World Cup gualifier at Old Trafford on October 6.

the first time since 1950, when FIFA Zagreb over Belgium, who now head for the playoffs to face Group excluded them in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Otherwise Three runners-up Czech Republic, they have always qualified. 6-0 winners over Bulgaria in Prague.

Denmark made sure of winning Oliver Bierhoff hit the woodwork that Group by blasting Iceland 6-0 but the Germans never looked as if with Schalke 04 striker Ebbe Sand they believed in their chances. and Everton's Thomas Gravesen Germany coach Rudi Voller said

he had to accept his country's fate and vowed to get things right in the plavoffs.

"We are enormously disappointed. We played badly in the opening period and then we upped the pressure and had more chances in the second half - which unfortunately we didn't take," Voller said.

Elsewhere, the Ukrainians drew 1-1 in Poland, the Group Five winners, to edge Belarus out of second place. Belarus lost to a John Hartson goal in Wales as the Welsh bagged their first win in 13 attempts to end a record drought.

Russia, who missed out in 1998. advanced from Group One after Nuno Gomes bagged two with crushing Switzerland 4-0 aided by a Joao Pinto, Bordeaux forward Pauleta and Real Madrid maestro hat-trick from Vladimir Beschastnvkh.

Brown's side in third place and with

it elimination from the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea.

Brown, who has been under

severe pressure to quit since

Scotland's 2-0 defeat against

Belgium in Brussels on September

1, told Sky Sports News: "I had

decided a long time ago that this

Football Association) president

that (assistant coach) Archie Knox

could step in if there is no replacement available in the short term."

"I suggested to the (Scottish

would be my last campaign.

Brown resigns



both scoring two goals a piece.

to be decided.

scorer with 21.

The Republic of Ireland must also

The Irish, unbeaten throughout

head for the play-offs - in their case

against an Asian play-off winner yet

the tournament and who did tremen-

dously to push Holland into third

spot, hammered Cyprus 4-0 with

Niall Quinn heading the second to become his country's all-time record

lan Harte, David Connolly and

But Portugal won Group Two on

goal difference after cruising past

Roy Keane scored the others.

Estonia 5-0 in Lisbon.

Luis Figo also on target.

AFP, Glasgow

Scotland coach Craig Brown quit his post here Saturday as his side failed to qualify for next year's World Cup finals.

Although Scotland beat Latvia 2-1 here at Hampden Park in their final Group Six match, Croatia's 1-0 win over Belgium confirmed

lands 4 (Van Ho 1 pen, Clarence Seedorf 46, Van Nistelrooy 54, 90) Andorra 0

Portugal 5 (Joao Pinto 30 Nuno Gomes 53, 66, Pauleta 61 Luis Figo 84) Estonia 0

GROUP 3 Denmark 6

(Dennis Rommedahl 12, Ebbe Sand 15, 66, Thomas Gravesen 29, 35, Jan Michaelsen 89) Iceland 0

Malta 0 Northern Ireland 1 (David lealy 57 pen)

Czech Republic 6 (Vratislav okvenc 5, 67, Pavel Nedved 16, 76, Milan Baros 28, Tomas Rosicky 70) Bulgaria 0

GROUP4 Moldova 0

Turkey 3 (Asik Emre 5, Kahveci lihat 75. Manciz Ilhan 83)

GROUP 5

Armenia 1 (Hayk Hakopyan 73) Norway 4 (Bard Borgersen 50, 82, John Čarew 72, 90)

Poland 1 (Emmanuel lisadebe 40) Ukraine 1 (Andrey Shevchenko

Wales 1 (John Hartson 47) Belarus 0

GROUP 6

Croatia 1 (Alan Boksic 75) Belaium 0

Scotland 2 (Dougie Freedman 3. David Weir 53) Latvia 1 (Andrej Rubins 21)

GROUP 8

Italy 1 (Alessandro Del Piero Hungary 0

Romania 1 (Gheorghe opescu 88) Georgia 1 (Aleksandr lasvili 54)

GROUP 9

England 2 (Teddy Sheringham 68, David Beckham 90) Greece 2 (Angelos Charisteas 37, Demis Nikolaidis 70) Germany 0 Finland 0

Fabio Cannavaro.

Inter Milan's Marco Materazzi proved an able deputy for the injured Nesta on Saturday while Francesco Toldo is cover for Buffon. The midfield also looks strong

with Damiano Tommasi and Alessio Tacchinardi a solid axis in the centre and Gianluca Zambrotta and Francesco Coco on the flanks but Demetrio Albertini and Fabio

Liverani providing alternatives. Up front Trap likes to pair Del Piero with A<u>C</u> Milan forward Filippo Inzaghi with Totti just behind.

Trapattoni finished on an upbeat note. "Italy is a beautiful country of sun and sea. The analysis is good. We passed the first hurdle without any danger, we could have done it earlier but we are unbeaten," he

said. "We are a beautiful team. There claim but I want to thank the players tonight and those who did not play but who helped us get to the World Cup. I am happy for them and all Italians who wanted this."



PHOTO: AFP

BECKHAM TAKES OFF FOR JAPAN-SOUTH KOREA: England captain David Beckham's joy knows no bound after scoring the equaliser against Greece.