



PHOTO: AFP

THREE IN ONE! Superstar Ronaldo stands between two training dummies at Ulsan yesterday during a practice session.

Phenomouth!

FROM PAGE 13
but I will do it," he said at the time.

Two-and-a-half years of injury misery and continued speculation about what happened at the 1998 World Cup final France have clearly riled a player who until France '98 had only enjoyed success.

After he underwent the second of two operations on his right knee, there was even speculation that Ronaldo's career could be over.

Ronaldo admitted this week that the continuing doubts had left him exasperated.

"Everything that has been said and written about me has been about my injuries and now I have got the chance to give them something else to talk about," he said.

"I'm going to try and play well and score goals and forget everything that has happened."

Inzaghi much better

FROM PAGE 13
league champion Kashima Antlers, twisting his left knee, which was operated on in December. Doctors performed a scan that night, and said that with a few days of therapy he would be back.

"The game was going pretty well," Inzaghi said. "But I felt this pain and I decided it was better to stop."

"It's normal that after an injury you think troubling things. I didn't want to miss this great chance at the World Cup," he said. "But today I worked out, and didn't feel a thing."

"The best thing is that I'm still here."

At the morning practice, the other Italian players practiced ball skills in an exercise that hinted at a new attack strategy for its match against Ecuador. All the indications were in the team bibs the players wore: the neon yellow apparently the starting lineup, the red ones the reserves.

Atalanta's Cristiano Doni was in a first-team bib, but attackers Alessandro Del Piero of Juventus and Vincenzo Montella of AS Roma - both of whom have been fighting for a place in the starting lineup - wore reserve bibs.

Coach Giovanni Trapattoni was apparently planning to move Francesco Totti of Roma -- the team's key playmaker -- to the front to take the second striking slot beside Inter Milan's Christian "Bobo" Vieri.

Totti hinted at his new role on Tuesday when asked who would best fill in for Inzaghi.

"Including me?" he responded. "With Bobo, it could be me or Del Piero."

With Del Piero in a red reserve bib Wednesday, it looked likely to be Totti. This would give him a less tiring role as he gets back into shape after missing two months due to a thigh injury.

Trapattoni has been using a 3-4-1-2 formation, with Totti the "1" behind the two strikers. Now, he appears to be shifting to a classic 4-4-2.

In a striking role, Totti could hang deep in enemy territory next to burly attacker Vieri, meaning he would likely have to run less. Doni, known as the "vice-Totti," would fill in behind him, taking a position in the left midfield.

Another possible reason for the new setup is Ecuador. Trapattoni, as well as several Italian players, have acknowledged they are studying videos of their first opponents, and several have noted right-back Ulises De la Cruz in particular.

De la Cruz is known for his attacking runs up the flank, so Italy's adding an additional defender would allow veteran left-back Paolo Maldini to shift further to the flank and dampen the attacks of the Ecuadorian.

It was unclear how long into the tournament Italy's new formation might last. With Inzaghi looking nearly fit again, it could be just one match -- though Italy's success in that contest is likely to have an impact.

CUP CORNER

FROM PAGE 13
Meanwhile Jacques has warned France they can expect a rough ride at this year's tournament. "France are the world champions. All the teams will want to beat us, so we must be at the top of our game," he added.

OH NO! ONO

AP, Mori
The mystery surrounding Japan midfielder Shinji Ono continues.

Japanese football officials on Wednesday denied reports that Ono was suffering from appendicitis and said he was scheduled to show up at the team's training base here later Wednesday.

"He'll be arriving here later tonight," said Tsuyoshi Kitajima, a member of the Japan Football Association's communications department. "He hasn't been admitted to a hospital."

Philippe Troussier's squad practiced Wednesday evening but Ono didn't take part.

Ono could be seen clutching his side during Saturday's 1-1 draw with Sweden at Tokyo's National Stadium and later complained of stomach pains.

Ono just completed a successful first season with Dutch first division side Feyenoord. The 22-year-old playmaker is one of Troussier's best players and his absence would be a major blow to Japan chances of advancing beyond the first round, where they play Belgium, Russia and Tunisia.

Ono is expected to start on the left side in Japan's opening match against Belgium on June 4. If he wasn't fit to play, Troussier would have the option of playing Brazilian-born midfielder Alessandro Santos.

YOUNGMAN DI LIVIO!

AP, Sendai
Don't call me grandpa! Or uncle, for that matter.

The 35-year-old Italy midfielder Angelo Di Livio may be the oldest member of his team, but there's no need to rub it in. Asked if he felt like the big brother to his 22 teammates -- some as young as 24 -- the Fiorentina player grinned.

"Brother, yes. Uncle, no," he said.

On his relations with the younger players, he bridled a little at the suggestion of any generation gap.

"Relations are good," he said. "I get along with everyone."

The team has set up its training camp in this northeastern city, replete with Internet access, video games and other toys to make a young man happy. They've also shipped over kilos and kilos of Italian food, to ensure that the players feel at home and get the right nutrition.

Di Livio said he was a little disappointed not to get a chance to try Japanese food.

"We'd like to try some," he said. "They stop us because he have to eat in a particular way." z

Blatter blazes

FROM PAGE 13
powerful head of UEFA, the European Football Union, Lennart Johansson, a bitter rival of Blatter who lost out to the Swiss four years ago for the presidency.

In the event there was little drama, as the skillful Blatter had deftly maneuvered himself into a near unbeatable position over the last few weeks travelling to the four corners of the globe in the process.

Blatter gave a nod of recognition to his critics saying that he had heard their criticism.

"I got the message, the message to me is to restore peace. I have to reinstate peace within this family and I will do it, I will do it," he said.

"The verdict is there and I would like to warmly congratulate Mr Blatter who has been given your vote of confidence," Hayatou said.

"He can count on my cooperation as has been the case in the past."

"But 59 votes is not insignificant so I want to say how satisfied and relieved at the end of this election."

Blatter's victory spells almost certain doom for FIFA secretary general Michel Zen-Ruffinen, once upon a time Blatter's right-hand man.

It was his explosive report to the executive committee on May 3 that led to the charges being levelled against Blatter in a Zurich court.

Zen-Ruffinen had also accused Blatter of running FIFA like a dictator and keeping vital financial information from him, making it impossible for him to do his job properly.

'There's no one

FROM PAGE 13
German club side Kaiserslautern.

He joined English Premiership strugglers Bolton and fought his way back into French coach Roger Lemerre's plans, although a serious injury to fellow midfielder Robert Pires helped his cause.

Now the most capped player in the current French squad will be asked to fill Zidane's creative role after the inspirational midfielder partially tore a thigh muscle in the friendly against South Korea on Sunday.

But Djorkaeff said no one could truly replace the man who played such a huge role in France's World Cup win.

"I've played in the midfield role when he's been missing before," he said. "But I've never been in the French team to replace anyone."

"Zidane is irreplaceable. I've never come into a match saying 'I'm playing in place of so-and-so'. I've got enough international selections under my belt to be worth my place."

"It's no problem to me whether I play in the midfield, on the right or the left. The most important thing is to play," added the 34-year-old who has played 80 times for his country.

"I hope I will play, because I really want to."

"But I was already extremely satisfied to start the match against South Korea on Sunday when everyone was available and no one was injured."

"However I'd be happy to play the opening match when you consider the season I've had, the way it could go for me and the event it represents."

Djorkaeff said Zidane's injury would show the world that France remained a multi-faceted team.

"This injury shouldn't worry anyone in the squad or sow any seeds of doubt. In fact, it should help the players to pull together precisely because it is Zidane."

"The French team places more emphasis on the team than on individuals."

Zen-Ruffinen unruffled



AFP, Seoul

FIFA general-secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen defiantly refused to resign here Wednesday in the wake of bitter rival Sepp Blatter's landslide re-election as president of football's world governing body.

Zen-Ruffinen had been Blatter's accuser-in-chief in the run-up to the presidential election, releasing a sensational dossier linking the FIFA boss to corruption and financial mismanagement.

With Blatter receiving a resounding mandate as FIFA president in Wednesday's vote - overwhelming African candidate Issa Hayatou by 139 votes to 56 - Zen-Ruffinen's future is now uncertain.

But Zen-Ruffinen, who last week accused Blatter of running a 'reign of terror' at FIFA headquarters, said he has no plans to quit - and predicted a fresh round of bloodletting.

"I won't resign," Zen-Ruffinen said. "Certainly not - why should I?," added Zen-Ruffinen, accusing FIFA's congress members of putting their own concerns ahead of football's wider interests.

Zen-Ruffinen later acknowledged however that he faced the axe. "I always knew that if Mr Blatter won then I would be in trouble," he said.

Blatter confirmed Zen-Ruffinen's

worst fears at a post-victory press conference.

"He's in trouble, he said to one of your colleagues - and he is in trouble," he said, before hinting that he would seek a review of Zen-Ruffinen's post-shortly.

"For the time being he is still here. I have said give me 100 days to present the structural changes in FIFA that I envisage. We will discuss changes at the next FIFA executive committee. There won't be any



MICHEL ZEN-RUFFINEN

changes before then.

Earlier Zen-Ruffinen dismissed Blatter's post-election call for unity within FIFA, saying disagreements over the exact state of FIFA's finances remained.

"He's going to find it very difficult to re-unify this divided family," he said.

Beckham the buzz world



AFP, Tokyo

England captain David Beckham has become the latest obsession for Japanese women as local media coverage on the Manchester United midfielder with movie star looks soared ahead of the World Cup finals.

"I have never seen such a beautiful face," said 17-year-old high school student Yoko Hatada.

"I saw him on TV and fashion magazines featuring good-looking football players... He is incredibly handsome. I'm dying to get a glimpse of him," she said.

When Beckham arrived at Kansai International Airport near Osaka, western Japan, on May 25, some 800 fans were there to greet him with television pictures later showing young women screaming as he passed by.

"His arrival was like one of a movie star. We were overwhelmed by the number of fans coming to the airport," said a Kansai airport official.

The arrival of the English squad was aired on major television networks and tabloid television programmes featured Beckham's latest Mohican hairstyle along with his past skinhead and blonde hair styles.

For 26-year-old housewife Aiko Akano, the sudden media coverage on Beckham rekindled her long-forgotten passion for the 27-year-old British heartthrob.

"I became his fan four years ago during the previous World Cup finals in France. I was pregnant then and have since had two children. I hardly saw him anywhere in the Japanese media," Akano said.

"But as Beckham's media exposure suddenly increased, he relit my flame," she sighed.

Akano denied being a groupie, but confessed she had visited a

luxury hotel where the British team are based in Awaji island, which lies opposite the western city of Kobe and some 500 kilometers (300 miles) southwest of Tokyo.

"I caught a glimpse of him as he was getting out of a bus. I felt very fortunate and lucky," said the housewife who lives near Kobe.

Sayaka Nukui, a 27-year-old nurse at a high school, said Beckham was a hot topic she could chat about with her students.

"My students including boys are crazy about him," Nukui said. "I've never been interested in soccer players but he is just too good-looking," she said.

"Since he came to Japan, I watched him on TV and fell in love with him."

His book titled "Beckham: My World" was translated into Japanese and has already sold over 50,000 copies nationwide since its launch on May 1. Last week Akano bought the autobiography priced at 2,000 yen (16 dollars).

"The book ranked the top in our sports book sales," said Susumu Tsuchida, a clerk at Book First in Shibuya, one of Tokyo's trendiest districts.

"We also sell a picture book on Del Piero, but his is not even close to Beckham's book," Tsuchida said, referring to Italian striker Alessandro Del Piero.

Harte may hurt

FROM PAGE 16
"It goes like a bullet when you hit it though if you don't connect properly then it could land out by the cornerflag!"

"The goalkeepers will have to be on their guard because the speed it goes they may still be standing on the same spot when the ball goes past them."

"Thus far I have more or less been hitting it true but I need a bit more practice," he added.

Harte, who like Kelly has come in for some stick both at club and international level for his defensive frailties, said he hoped Cameroon lapsed into their old ill-disciplined selves.

"Nobody can agree on the figures so that dispute is going to continue and the people on the executive committee who lost today are going to carry on the fight."

Despite Zen-Ruffinen's insistence that Blatter's opponents would continue to take up the fight, several of the Swiss official's most strident critics joined the call for peace.

"It's a stunning victory and the result was amazingly clear," said Scottish FIFA vice-president David Will, who heads the finance committee probing FIFA's books. "The Congress has spoken and now we have to work together. It won't be easy but I hope we can."

UEFA president Lennart Johansson, who himself was beaten by Blatter in the 1998 elections, said it was time to draw a line under the infighting.

"You fight the match until its over and then you have to work together," the veteran Swede said.

"I noted the result with some surprise - he has worked for FIFA a long time, people know him. We've had the match now we have to accept the result," added Johansson.

Powerful South Korean official Chung Mong-Joon echoed Johansson's words. "I hope we can work together," Chung said. "We have to bring FIFA together. This result was no accident we have to accept it and move forward."

"In terms of sports book sales, Beckham's book was unprecedented and almost 90 percent of book buyers are women," he said.

The book's Japanese publisher PHP Institute Inc. said it had received a number of thank you letters from female customers.

"Female customers appeared to be touched by his private photos" with his wife Victoria and their son Brooklyn, said Yuji Kimigami, an official for PHP Institute.

"His story has a lot of drama. He went through some difficulties in his life and came back as the captain of the British team. The book was well received in today's Japan which is devoid of leaders," Kimigami said.

Cross breed Lions!

FROM PAGE 16
Since assuming control of the Indomitable Lions, Schaefer has managed to work wonders, leading the sleeveless Cameroonians to their fourth African Nation's Cup. The side became the first in 37 years to successfully defend its title.

Schaefer's popularity with the players also helps.

The 52-year-old is famous for his warm, openhearted attitude, which over the years has served to ripen several young players into international stars, such as Bayern Munich's goalkeeper Oliver Kahn and midfielder Mehmet Scholl and Jens Nowotny of Bayer Leverkusen.

Schaefer's affectionate "buddy" style of coaching has already helped form a bond with the Cameroon players.

"The close relationship between the coaching staff and the players can lead Cameroon to glory," predicted the legendary Roger Milla, a pillar of Cameroon's national team

in the late 80s and 90s.

Milla also knows about language barriers.

At the 1990 World Cup in Italy, Milla and his team were almost totally unable to understand then-coach Valeri Nepomniachi of Russia, who spent most of his time silently watching them from the bench.

But that did not prevent them from creating a sensation, becoming the first African team to reach the quarterfinals before being knocked out by England in extra time.

This time, after winning back-to-back African Nations Cup titles as well as Olympic gold, Cameroon is looking to become the first African nation to reach the semifinals.

And after suffering opening-round exits in 1994 and 1998, the Indomitable Lions have returned famished this year, with what is considered its strongest side in history.

Across the Green Line

FROM PAGE 16
The men will all watch the crunch game in Group F together on a large screen at Nicosia's UN compound.

"There won't be any hassle, we do expect lots of shouting, and if the Argentines win they definitely know how to celebrate," said Hayhurst.

Some way down the 180-kilometre (110 mile) ceasefire line, in the base of the main Argentinian contingent, there is a similar message of mutual bonhomie, underpinned by a burning desire for the tournament favourites to lift the trophy for a third time.

"Everybody is talking about the big game ... we have a good team and we will try to overcome England ... it's a game we must win," Argentine contingent commander Lt Col Jose Antonio Cimmarusti told AFP.

Although Cimmarusti tries hard to convince that the Argentines will treat victory or defeat with behaviour befitting professional soldiers, it is difficult to believe there will be no ribbing of colleagues or the odd show of bravado.

"We will celebrate with a lot of noise but we won't overdo it, we are professionals," said the commander.

But with the kind of do-or-die attitude Argentina attaches to football, tensions will surely be running high. "We have a saying

that if somebody doesn't know how to play football he can't be Argentinian," said Cimmarusti with a smile.

A tour of duty on a Mediterranean island far from the football action does have its plus points, though.

"It's great not having the wife out here shouting to stop watching the football, so we can just enjoy ourselves and relax," one British soldier, who preferred not to be named for domestic reasons, told AFP.

Month of relief?

FROM PAGE 13
earns 80 Taka (1.5 dollars) a day, gave her football-mad son 120 Taka to buy a Brazilian flag.

Vendors are busy cashing on the craze by selling caps and T-shirts with pictures of even former stars like Diego Maradona, who has a large fan club in Bangladesh.

Critics say the hottest choice of the younger generation here is Argentina.

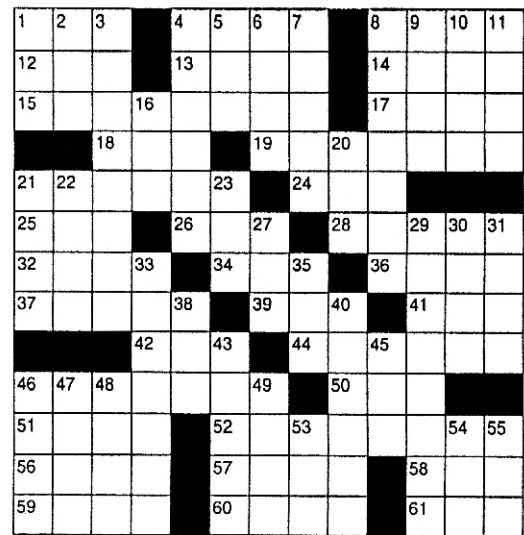
Japan's refusal to give Maradona a visa due to past drug offences disappointed many Bangladeshi fans, who urged Tokyo to reconsider the decision.

Former Test cricket captain Naimur Rahman is rooting for Brazil, while his successor Khaled Masud, son of a renowned former footballer, also favours the Samba tune.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Greek letters
4 Son of Noah and
8 Retain
12 Interfaken
13 Course the
14 Ron's love
15 Marriott rival
17 Masked fur-bearing
18 Bad hair-piece
19 English writer
21 Black eye
24 Brillo rival
25 Become one
26 Hudson co-star
28 Ziti, e.g.
32 Saroyan's "My Name is —"
34 Yak
36 Pronoun
37 Paycheck enhancement
39 Ruin the veneer
41 Braggart's problem

DOWN
1 Faux —
2 Potsdam pronoun
3 "Oomph Girl" Ann
4 Put on a show
5 Chapeau
6 Penia-teuch bk.
7 Revealing fashions
8 Metal cutter
9 Bassoon's cousin
10 Androcles' friend
11 Hide-aways
16 Take off
20 Filch lad
21 Mop move
22 Long lunch
23 Scott Joplin's style
27 Sweet potato
29 Skilled sleuth
30 Take-out request
31 Cupid's specialty
33 Ninja
35 Sosa's lool
38 Enervate
40 First Derby-winning filly
43 Mosquitoes, e.g.
45 Unrefined
46 Arrived
47 State for sure
48 Winning margin, maybe
49 Old woman's home?
53 Notable period
54 Overseas agreement?
55 Rep.'s rival



CRYPTOQUIP

J L H B H E L U F K A F H M H F ' S
E H U K F B T C F C B ' J M X I J
S P M L . F T P H I I F J ' I U

I S U Y Y - A K F M H J X P A H H .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF IT WERE POSSIBLE FOR A NOISY PIG TO GET LARYNGITIS, WOULD IT BE DISGRUNTLED?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals E

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.