



PHOTO: AFP

ITALY VS CROATIA

Trap's simple target

REUTERS, Sendai

Italy take on Croatia on Saturday chasing goals and the chance to seal their place in the second round of the World Cup.

The Italians, who notched up a solid 2-0 victory over Ecuador in their opening group G game, can qualify if they win and Mexico fail to beat Ecuador in the group's other match. Croatia, who lost 1-0 to Mexico in their opening game, need a result to keep alive their hopes of making progress in South Korea and Japan.

Despite an impressive display in their first outing, Italy will alter their personnel and formation against the Croats, putting out one of the most potent attacks in the game.

Coach Giovanni Trapattoni has opted for an adventurous formation with the 'terrible trio' of Francesco Totti, Christian Vieri and Filippo Inzaghi in attack.

Italy may be famed for their impressive defence, which has conceded just 10 goals in their last 20 World Cup finals games, but they now possess an attack which has equally impressive statistics.

Vieri, who scored both goals against Ecuador, has claimed seven goals in six games in the finals after notching five goals in five during the World Cup in France four years ago.

Inzaghi scored seven goals in seven appearances during the Italians' unbeaten qualification campaign.

"We have forwards that all the world envy and we have to exploit that opportunity to create problems for Croatia," said Trapattoni.

Behind the goal-a-game strike pairing will be Francesco Totti, no mean marksman himself but far more effective in the role he will reclaim on Saturday -- threading through the passes for others.

"Totti is in very good shape and I prefer to take advantage of all his qualities," said Trapattoni.

Inzaghi missed the opening group G victory over Ecuador due to a knee injury picked up in a friendly match against Kashima Antlers and Totti partnered Vieri in attack.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



PHOTO: AFP

MERVELLOUS MORIENTES: Spain striker Fernando Morientes (L) gets his header on target while Paraguay custodian Jose Luis Chilavert looks on at Jeonju yesterday.

Maldini limping

REUTERS, Ibaraki

Italy captain Paolo Maldini could miss the group G game with Croatia on Saturday after twisting an ankle in training on Friday.

Maldini limped off towards the end of Italy's training session and team doctor Andrea Ferretti said he would need to take another look at the injury tomorrow.

"He twisted his left ankle. There is no swelling but there is some pain, we need to wait 12 hours. It is just a question of the pain," said Ferretti who said the defender had a "more than 50 percent chance" of being fit.

Maldini said he was optimistic of his chances of being fit: "I hope so, I believe so. It is not too bad we will see tomorrow if it swells up or not. I hope to make it because it is an important game for us," said the Italy captain.

Italy coach Giovanni Trapattoni was also upbeat about Maldini's chances.

"I think it is nothing serious. The player is also optimistic himself and the doctor is quite optimistic. We will have to weigh it up tomorrow but of course I have to think of solutions for a team without Maldini," said the Italy coach who said he would not take any risks on his captain.

Should Maldini miss the game he would be unable to beat Lothar Matthaeus record of 25 appearances in World Cup finals matches.

Maldini currently has 20 appearances with six possible games to go if Italy went all the way in the competition.

Rivaldo thrilled

AFP, Ulsan

Barcelona ace Rivaldo rates the current Brazilian front line the best he's played with and said Thursday it's only a matter of time before the goals start flowing.

"This is probably the best forward line I have played with in the international team," he said of Ronaldo, Juninho and Ronaldinho.

"So when we play together the defenders of the other sides get worried. This makes it easier for us and harder for them. The goals will come."

His comments will have Brazil's next opponents China shaking in their boots, particularly as they face the daunting task of taking on the

four-time world champions without their two most experienced defenders.

Brazilian coach Luiz Felipe Scolari complained after their 2-1 win over Turkey on Monday that the team needed to improve on the final touch. Brazil had 19 shooting opportunities but converted just one, barring the dubious penalty that won them the match.

Rivaldo, who has won 63 international caps, said they had been working on it during training this week.

"We're still adapting to the system Mr. Scolari wants to apply to the team," he said at a training session at the Mipo Field here.



PHOTO: AFP

CHILLING SMILES FOR CHINA! Brazil superstars Ronaldo (L) and Rivaldo in a cheerful mood during training at Jeju yesterday.

Grand goal ritual

AFP, Seoul

Nigerian star Julius Aghahowa lived up to his star billing on Friday even if his teammates did not, scoring his first World Cup goal with a soaring header against Sweden.

The goal was spectacular enough.

More so were the seven backward somersaults with which he celebrated his effort.

And the only pity was that his trademark twists won't be seen

much more at the finals with the Nigerians on their way home after losing their second straight match to Sweden.

The lithe 20-year-old with a bent for gymnastics currently plays for Ukrainian side Shakhtar Donetsk.

Yet his post-goal routine and a record of 12 goals in 19 internationals should ensure that he will soon be performing on a bigger club

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Bora's secret

AFP, Seogwipo

Chinese coach Bora Milutinovic on Friday explained the secret of his rapport with the country's players -- his translator is under instructions to ignore their insults.

The Yugoslav coach, who speaks no Chinese, was discussing the situation of Slovenian star midfielder Zlatko Zahovic, who was sent home after yelling deeply personal abuse at the team's coach.

"It is easy for me. I tell (my translator) never to translate things which are bad, only things which are

good," joked Milutinovic, who speaks to his players in Spanish, a legacy of years spent in Mexico.

"That is always my excuse: I do not understand."

He added that translator Yu Huaxian, who has shadowed Milutinovic throughout his time with the Chinese, had similar instructions not to pass on the coach's curses.

On a more serious note, Milutinovic backed Slovenian coach Srecko Katanec in his decision to eject the country's best player on

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



PHOTO: AFP

NO HOOLIGAN-PASSING! Security personnel on full alert as fans enter Sapporo Dome for the Argentina-England clash yesterday.

TV angle

SHAYAN KHAN

The surprises just keep on coming at the World Cup. At the end of today's matches, we are left with the prospect of the world champions being knocked out, and a rookie team from West Africa taking their place in the second round.

Senegal's refreshing attitude towards the game has seen them win the admiration of everyone. They started their game against Denmark nervously, typified by Salif Diao's clumsy challenge on Tommasson in the 15th minute. Tommasson himself put away the resulting penalty and it seemed Senegal were on their way back to earth. But for the rest of the first half, Denmark were on the backfoot as the Africans came forward in search of the equaliser. However, they could not take any of their chances and at halftime the score remained 1-0 to the Europeans. In the second half, Bruno Metsu reverted to the 4-2-2 formation for his team, and Senegal started in very attacking

mood. The equaliser was almost inevitable, and it came in the form of arguably the goal of the tournament. The Africans broke from their own box, exchanged five quick passes along the length of the pitch to take the ball forward, and then Diao finished beautifully. It was the perfect counterattack, and the Danes were helpless to stop it. Les Lions then continued to take the game to their more illustrious opponents, but there were to be no more goals in the game. Diao later completed his eventful game by getting sent off for a rough two-footed tackle. In the end, 1-1 would leave both sides happy, since Denmark could have been denied even that and for the Senegalese, every point is a reason for joy.

Saudi Arabia showed great character against Cameroon, after their chances of doing anything in this game were written off by everyone. Despite the loss, Saudi's perfor


SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Round 5, Draw in Chittagong on June 21

(Competition information, prizes and rules on June 7 issue)

The Daily Star RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz, Round 5 Ends June 20, 2002

Tick (Ö) the correct answers

- Record of most World Cup finals appearances goes to Joff Matthaus Milla
- Only country to play in every World Cup Argentina Brazil Germany
- Middle name of Diego Maradona is Alberto Armando Admundo
- Which WC final was decided in penalty shoot-out 1998 1994 1990
- Who is this?  Figo Raul Batistuta

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms).....Age.....
 Father's nameOccupation
 Address
 Telephone (if any)Signature Date.....

Write with a ballpoint pen in clear BLOCK letters. Cut along the dotted lines and mail to OR drop in the Quiz Box at The Daily Star. You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz 5."

JOIN The Daily Star BANDWAGON TO BOOST FOOTBALL IN BANGLADESH