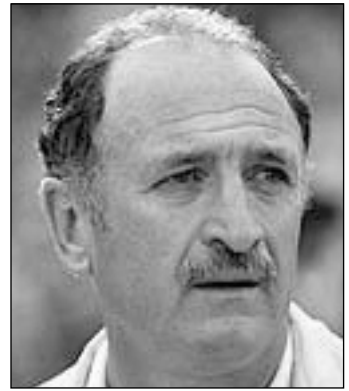


Phenomenon will never be the same?

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Ronaldo may have won a fifth World Cup for Brazil a month ago with his two goals in the final against Germany - but he will never be the player he was before extensive knee surgery, Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari said Saturday.



LUIZ FELIPE SCOLARI

"These are things we have to consider," said Scolari, perhaps the chief beneficiary of Ronaldo's dead-eye finishing in Asia having himself come in for criticism after a poor qualifying campaign. Scolari revealed he had been at pains to tell the 25-year-old striker he had to curb his individualistic streak for the good of the team.

Bring on Ronaldo!

Football

REUTERS, Milan

Brazilian World Cup winner Rivaldo, who has signed for Italian club AC Milan, says he can't wait to face compatriot Ronaldo in the Milan derby.

Rivaldo became a free agent after cancelling his contract with Spanish club Barcelona last week and on Saturday signed a three-year deal with Milan.

The Brazilian joins his new team mates on Thursday - the same day the Serie A fixture list is published. The move means that the two stars of the Brazil team that won the World Cup last month will both play their football at the San Siro stadium shared by Rivaldo's Milan and Ronaldo's Inter.

"I can't wait to play in the derbies at the San Siro," Rivaldo told the daily Gazzetta dello Sport. "It will be a huge party for all the fans and I hope they will enjoy it. I never imagined that such a scenario could become reality and I am really curious to see what it will be like."

Brazil beat Germany 2-0 in the World Cup final in Yokohama in June and Rivaldo will team up with two other members of that squad when he arrives at the plush Milan training centre on Thursday - central defender Roque Junior and reserve goalkeeper Nelson Dida.

"That is one of the details that made me decide in favour of joining Milan," said Rivaldo. "I talked a lot with Roque Junior and Dida and also (Milan left winger) Serginho told me a lot of positive things about the club - their organisation, their structure and the way in which they treat players."

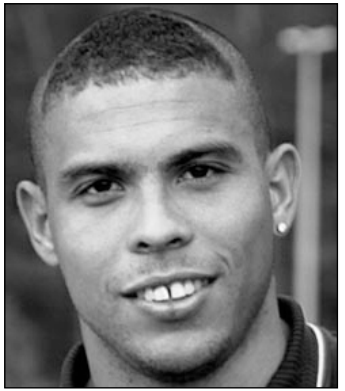
"It was Serginho who told me not to have doubts about choosing Milan. "There were other offers it is true but Milan clearly rated me very

highly and made me feel that I am still an important player, in short they were the team that straight away gave me the impression that they counted a lot on me.

"That is why I immediately considered it the best solution - they treated me like a world champion."

Rivaldo said he had always hoped to play in Italy at some stage during his career, which so far has seen him play for Brazilian clubs Corinthians, Palmeiras and Spanish sides Deportivo Coruna and Barcelona.

"It wasn't some spur-of-the-moment decision to come to Milan because I have always had the idea



RONALDO

that one day I would play in Italy. "Milan stepped forward with the seriousness you expect from a big club. I have always considered them to be on the same level as Barcelona because they have always been among the top sides," said the 30-year-old attacker.

Rivaldo said he had been close to a move to Italy before he left Brazil for Spain. In 1996 his club Palmeiras were backed by an Italian dairy company that own Serie A club Parma and he almost joined the Italian side who were then coached by current Milan boss Carlo Ancelotti.

The Brazilian opted for Deportivo but says he is glad to have the chance to play for former Juventus coach Ancelotti now. "Ancelotti is an excellent coach, otherwise Milan would not have put him in charge of such an ambitious line-up - it will be good to work with him" said Rivaldo.

Ancelotti meanwhile is confident that the former World Player of the Year will boost their hopes of lifting their first Serie A title since 1999.

"Rivaldo is outstanding. With him it will be easier to win the Scudetto. Now I have many champions and an attacking team. Somebody will have to sit on the bench but I don't think that will be a problem," Ancelotti said.

The news of Rivaldo's split from FC Barcelona had put the world's top teams on alert, as his performances in the World Cup had showed just why he is still so highly rated. While it should be surprising that Barca were willing to release one of the world's top players, the personality clash between Rivaldo and returning coach Louis van Gaal made it difficult for the Brazilian to stay.

The cause of the friction was something that happened during van Gaal's first spell as Barca coach. He chose to play Rivaldo wide on the left, much to the displeasure of the player, who told the press that he wanted to be moved into the middle. This angered van Gaal, who dropped him for two games. "With only one year left on his contract, Rivaldo had been linked with a few teams early in the summer, though it looked like he might have resolved his dispute with the Dutch coach. However, the shock announcement was made over the weekend, and Rivaldo was quick to blame one man: "Van Gaal is the main cause of my departure," he told the Spanish press. "I don't like van Gaal and I am sure that he doesn't like me either

No good news from Butcher

INTERNET, London

England's injury worries took a turn for the worse with the news that Mark Butcher's knee operation appears to have been unsuccessful.

The batsman underwent key-hole surgery following the final Test against Sri Lanka last month in the hope of curing his long-term problem in time for the India series.

But Butcher told the Sunday Express: "The knee is only average, it's still sore. The problem I've had for some time is still there and it's a concern."

"The operation I had didn't really find anything and I don't know what the next step is.

"I can play at the moment, but I can't run flat out. I am waiting to hear what the management think should be the next step."

Butcher was drafted in to open the batting for the first Test after Marcus Trescothick suffered a broken thumb that will keep him out of the summer series.

England, who moved to 450 ahead of India at close of play on Saturday, are also below strength in the bowling department.

Bowlers Darren Gough, Andrew Caddick and Alex Tudor were all ruled out of the Lord's Test due to injury.

Uphill task

FROM PAGE 13 Total: (For 2 wkts in 32 overs) 121 Fall of wickets: 1-61, 2-110 To bat: S Ganguly, V Laxman, A Agarkar, A Ratna, A Kumble, A Nehra, Zaheer Khan

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Rows include Hoggard, Flintoff, White, Jones, Giles, Vaughan, and Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (South Africa) and Russell Tiffin (Zimbabwe).

Sabrina, Suraiya

FROM PAGE 13 Minnett and Victoria Eaton earned third spot.

"Suma and I have both been doing well. We've shot some good scores recently, so we expected to set a new record," said 33-year-old Bhagwat who was fifth at the last Games in Kuala Lumpur in 1998.

"It was a great shoot for me today. In practice, I had problems stabilising my rifle, so I did a lot of talking to myself this morning and I just had to focus my mind on perfection."

"We were really determined to do well today because seeing the men win on Saturday was a real morale boost for the team."

Her 28-year-old partner, shooting in her first Commonwealth Games, was equally delighted. "I had no problems," said Shirur. "I was very well focused. I have been concentrating on my performance throughout training and I was determined to do well."

The Indian women finished 14 points ahead of Bowes and Mcredy.

Bowes, 36, was the defending title she won in Malaysia and had been going for what would have been the fifth gold of her Commonwealth Games career and she was playing with the 18-year-old Mcredy who wasn't even born when Bowes made her international bow at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

"I shot a personal best and I got a medal too. The two don't always go together, so I am happy," said Bowes.

Singh and Moraad were overjoyed with their Double Trap Pairs title especially as all of the pre-tournament talk had been of a classic Australia and England confrontation.

Australia's Michael Diamond, who successfully defended his Trap Pairs title on Saturday, teamed up with Mark Russell and was expected to feature in a dogfight with England's Olympic champion Richard Faulds and John Bellamy.

But it was the Indian duo, playing in their first Games, who stunned the Aussies winning the title on countback after both teams had been locked on 184 points leaving England to settle for the bronze, two points behind.

Moraad, 41, put their success down to solid teamwork. "It will give us a great psychological advantage going into the individual events later in the week."

AB Bank TT

FROM PAGE 13 Federation. Champions and runners-up of the First Division League will be promoted to the Senior Division next year.

Abu Hanif Khan, president and managing director of the sponsor Arab Bangladesh Bank Limited, inaugurated the competition. Markus Babel then went close but his header from Nick Barry's free-kick sailed just past the woodwork.

Orient h'ball

FROM PAGE 13 Talukder declared the eight-team meet open at the new handball court. Mahabubuzzaman, the managing director of the sponsors Orient Food Company Limited, was also present on the occasion.



Pakistan's hat-trick hero Sohail Abbas is about to score the third goal against England in the Commonwealth Games men's hockey tournament at the Belle Vue Stadium on July 27.

Pakistan's solid start

Zaman, Pakistan's new coach, brushed aside suggestions his was a one-man team.

"Even during penalty corners, the other players deceive the rivals by moving the other way, giving Abbas space of take his hits," he said. Abbas said he owed his expertise to "some 450 penalty corner hits I make every week."

"I know the team depends on me for scoring goals and I can't let them down," he said. "Its good I can contribute to Pakistan's victory."

England's goalkeeper Simon Mason conceded Abbas made all the difference. "Take him out and it was a very even game," he said.

"His first two shots were the best penalty corner hits I have faced, they were unstoppable."

Australia's easy win over New Zealand, after conceding an early goal, was fashioned by two goals each from veteran strikers Craig Victory and Troy Elder.

Australia, runners-up to Germany at the World Cup, did not miss their inspirational captain Paul Gaudoin who limped off early in the second half with a hip injury.

"We had a tentative start, but I was very pleased the way we played in the second half," said Australian coach Barry Dancer. "I don't think we handled the Kiwis well in the opening few minutes. It may be because the lads did not adjust quickly enough to the slippery surface."

Dancer said Gaudoin would be sent to hospital for tests to determine the seriousness of the injury, but former international Tahir

but hinted he may not start against South Africa on Sunday.

The South Africans found themselves jeered off the field for giving unfancied rivals Barbados a hard time.

South Africa led 6-0 at half-time, four of those goals coming in the first 12 minutes of play.

Many among the 2,500 spectators at the Belle Vue complex jeered any further attacking moves by the South Africans while lustily cheering every time a Barbadian got possession of the ball.

The crowd erupted when Barbados, trailing 7-0, finally scored in the 41st minute - a penalty corner by Mark Murray which deflected off a defender's stick into the goal.

"It was a great experience to play out there," said Barbados coach Ralph Watson. "We'll get better, I promise you."

The South Africans played down the unusual response from the stands, saying the crowds often supported the underdogs.

"We have the points in the bag, so it does not matter," said coach Robert Pullen. "We look forward to the next game against the Australians on Saturday."

Barbados qualified for their first major international meet by virtue of being the Caribbean champions.

The move to grant one spot to each of the Commonwealth Games regions has generated controversy after former world champions India and growing power Malaysia were kept out of the competition.

individual athletics event - Ezekiel Kemboi filled second.

"I was just jogging," was Stephen's dismissive remark and it was echoed by his two team-mates as they had the race to themselves from the 200m mark.

South African Frantz Kruger won the discus title breaking the Games record for the second successive day with a mark of 66.39 metres.

The 27-year-old medical student, who won silver four years ago and Olympic bronze in 2000, held off Canada's Jason Tunks - who won bronze in 1998 - and defending champion Bob Weir.

The Englishman had to settle for bronze at the venerable age of 41 and 20 years after he claimed the Commonwealth title in the hammer when Kruger was just seven!

Tunks posted a best of 62.61m while Weir had 59.24m. The Australians got on the gold trail with the heptathlon as Jane Jamieson won and her compatriot Kylie Wheeler took silver while Ghana's Margaret Simpson was third.

Crespo for Veron?

AFP, London

Manchester United's Argentine midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron could be heading back to Lazio with compatriot Hernan Crespo heading in the opposite direction to Old Trafford, according to British media reports on Saturday.

Lazio are believed to be interested in a swap deal that would also involve United writing off the debt of 10.5 million pounds (16.6 million dollars) owed to them by the Italian club for the 16.5-million-pound (26-million-dollar) sale of Dutch defender Jaap Stam last season.

Lazio spokesman Guido Paglia was quoted in The Guardian as saying the Rome club were keen to bring Veron back to Italy and offload striker Crespo, a 35.7-million-pound (56.4-million-dollar) signing from Serie A rivals Parma in the summer of 2000.

"It is very possible a swap deal will be done with Manchester," he said.

"(Lazio President Sergio) Gragnotti likes Veron very much and he will always be popular with our supporters. We would like him back but we must wait until August before initiating moves.

"If Manchester contact us before then with a proposition to sell Crespo, we will start discussions. But we are waiting for news from Veron's agent Gustavo Mascardi."

Gunners' Silva-lining

Football

INTERNET, London

Arsenal have signed Brazilian World Cup winner Gilberto Silva from Atletico Mineiro.

The 25-year-old midfielder has joined the Gunners on a long-term contract for a reported £4.5m fee, subject to a work permit.

Silva played in every single minute of Brazil's seven matches during their triumphant World Cup campaign in Korea and Japan this summer.

"I am delighted to be joining Arsenal," said Silva.

"They are the champions of England and have a squad full of world-class international footballers.

"I am really looking forward to living in London and playing for one of the best teams in Europe."

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was equally pleased that Silva had opted for a move to

Highbury. Silva joins French defender Pascal Cygan and Uruguay keeper Fabian Carini as Arsenal's summer signings. And the Arsenal boss reckons his

joined us," said Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger.

"He is a naturally gifted, world-class player who has proved by his performances in Japan during the summer that he is a winner.

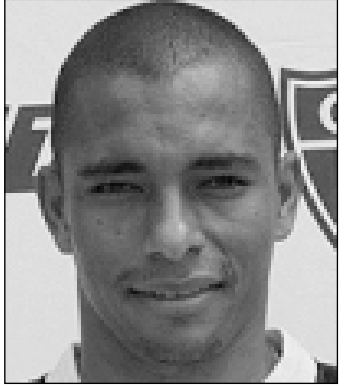
"He will give us extra quality and his competitiveness in midfield will provide us with a good balance and added strength."

"We need to defend our title successfully this season, the same way they did," Wenger added in the News of the World newspaper.

"We had the best team last season - I am convinced we have made that team even better. I am convinced we will win the Premiership again.

"Last season we had players like Lee Dixon and Tony Adams coming to the end of their careers. Yet overall we still had the stronger squad."

"That squad is even more powerful now." Silva will now join up with his new team-mates at the club's pre-season training camp in Austria.



GILBERTO SILVA

squad is still better than rivals Manchester United, despite the Old Trafford club breaking the bank to land £30m signing Rio Ferdinand. "I am delighted Gilberto Silva has

Keane keen to come back

Football

REUTERS, London

Roy Keane has said that he would like to play for the Republic of Ireland again but only if present coach Mick McCarthy vacates his post.

The Manchester United captain was axed from the Irish World Cup squad in May after a blazing row with McCarthy at the team's Korean training camp and it appeared that

his international career was over. However, the 30-year-old midfielder was quoted in the British media on Saturday as saying a return was possible.

"Hopefully, I might get back to playing for the Irish team again. But I will only go back if there is a new manager - and that is out of my hands," he said in the Daily Express.

Keane's refusal to apologise for what happened in Korea angered many Irish fans and the player was expecting a cool reception when Manchester United played a pre-season friendly against Dublin side

Shelbourne last weekend.

But the rousing welcome he received from the 11,000-strong crowd has convinced Keane to reconsider the possibility of adding to the 58 appearances he made before his bust-up with McCarthy.

"When I went back home in the summer a lot of the mail was positive," he said. "And the reception I got when I went back to Ireland with United was fantastic, quite moving."

"It made me realise how important going back there and playing for Ireland is. In general, the Irish fans have been very supportive."

Keane went on to add: "No one was more disappointed than me about what happened at the World Cup, but life moves on and I hope the Irish team moves on."

But with McCarthy signing an extended deal with Ireland after guiding them to the second round in Korea and Japan, Keane's desire to return may never reach fruition.

Diouf on target

INTERNET, Zurich

Liverpool's new signing El-Hadji Diouf kept their pre-season unbeaten run going with the equaliser against Wolfsburg.

Wolfsburg, who only finished 10th in the German league last season, took an early lead when Robson Ponte caught Jerzy Dudek unawares from 35 yards.

Michael Owen, making his first pre-season appearance, had Liverpool's best chance of the opening spell but scuffed his shot wide.

Markus Babel then went close but his header from Nick Barry's free-kick sailed just past the woodwork.

Then six minutes from the break Liverpool drew level as Diouf, who had come close only moments earlier, rose above the Wolfsburg defence and smartly headed home from a well-weighted Bernard Diomedee corner.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Steffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 21 mins and a Cryptoquip section at the bottom.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid and solution. The solution is: D D N L W D Z V M T V Z W X Q X W D O R O T L Y V L O M V V R R X X R T R T V J F N X O R Q D G V Q J B P L Y V P X B G B L Z F J. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals T.



Major General (ret'd) Anwarul Kabir Talukder, State Minister for Finance and Planning, inaugurates the Orient Bread Cup Handball Tournament at the handball ground near Bangabandhu Stadium yesterday.