



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN  
LET'S KICK DOWRY OUT! This photo taken yesterday shows a banner displayed on top of a team-bench at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur that says 'if a woman is killed for dowry, the perpetrator will be punished by the penalty'. The banner is part of a Bangladesh Football Federation initiative to create awareness against the evils of dowry.

## Rajib atop alone

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib took a solo lead in the Destiny-2000 Open FIDE Rating Chess Tournament after the sixth round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

In a battle for the top spot, Rajib beat fellow IM Abdullah Al Rakib to secure full six points.

In the day's other matches, Nasir beat Shafiq, Shakil beat Moni, Parag beat Ali, Monir beat Jamal, Uten beat Zahid, Javed beat Liza, Asad beat Sohel, Mustafa beat Mahmood, Amir beat Shahid, Lavlu drew with Amin, Nipa drew with Iva, Palash drew with Shahin and Delwar shared points with Reza.

## Sharp TT from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The First Sharp Blade Open Table Tennis competition begins today at the Woodenfloor gymnasium.

The Bangladesh Table Tennis Players' Welfare Association has organised the tournament.

## Aussies aim

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last year's 125-run World Cup final win against India in Johannesburg, said Australia had yet to select a starting side.

"Given we have spent the past week at Southampton (close to Hampshire's Rose Bowl base where Michael Clarke has also starred for the southern county this season) we haven't had an opportunity to look at the conditions at Lord's.

"We will finalise the side tomorrow (Saturday) morning as we look to match our line-up to the conditions. It's a fairly flexible squad, so there are plenty of options there."

Australia have yet to win the Champions Trophy, a 'mini World Cup', but Ponting whose side begin the event against rank outsiders the United States at the Rose Bowl on September 13, predicted his side would have no trouble peaking for the tournament.

"By the time we have played Pakistan, followed by our lead-up match against Hampshire, I'd like to think we'd be playing somewhere near our best for the start of the Champions Trophy."

Now guided by former South Africa coach Bob Woolmer, Pakistan should be a better team for their Dutch experience.

And after that defeat the ex-England batsman said he couldn't wait for another crack at the world champions.

"The more you play against them (Australia), the more you learn how to play, and the more you can get your team closer to them."

## A classic

**FROM PAGE 13**  
one goalkeeper Aminul's nightmare. Muktis refused to sit back but Enamul and Kabir's efforts were denied by substitute custodian Biplab, the national number two who proved his worth despite being ignored by the team management in this competition.

There were more fireworks but Monwar failed to utilise another trademark through by Arman when he shot the ball straight at the lone keeper while Emily put the ball wide twice from close range to deny the Gopibagh outfit from a bigger victory.

Yellow cards: Titu (Brothers) and Deen Mohammed (Muktijoddha).

### TEAMS

**BROTHERS UNION:** Mohammed Ali (Biplab, 65th minute), Titu, Rajani, Suján, Parvez Babu, Iqbal, Monwar, Arman, Abul (Rikto, 32nd), Topu (Emily, 55th) and Alfaz.

**MUKTIJODDHA SANGSAD:** Aminul, Hassan Al Mamun, Papal, Deen Mohammed (Ghansah, 46th), Belal, Kabir, Tushar, Biddiut (Enamul, 64th), Moni, Kanchan (Masud, 82nd) and Tipu.  
**Referee:** Mansoor Azad.

# A new era begins

AFP, Paris



A new look France will set out on the road to the 2006 World Cup finals against Israel here on Saturday boosted by the return from injury of captain Patrick Vieira.

The Arsenal skipper has been out of commission since France's failed Euro 2004 campaign but is confident of adding to his 72 caps at the Stade de France.

"I am fit to play Saturday night. I've been training for 10 days with Arsenal," Vieira, who was nursing an injured thigh, said.

Vieira's return is timely as the 1998 World Cup champions look to a brave new world after the retirement this summer of four of their anchormen - Marcel Desailly, Zinedine Zidane, Bixente Lizarazu, and Lilian Thuram.

Talismanic goalkeeper Fabien Barthez had planned to join the slippers and pipe in front of the fire club but the Marseille stopper on Thursday said he would commit himself to his country for the next two years.

Yet he is unavailable for Saturday's game and the next qualifier against the Faroe Islands on Wednesday due to a right foot injury, his place being taken by Lyon's more than capable Gregory Coupet, who will be winning his ninth cap.

David Trezeguet is also out of contention meaning only Vieira and his Arsenal teammates Thierry Henry and Robert Pires are left standing from the Class of '98.

Their fortunes are being guided now by former French Under-21 coach Raymond Domenech, whose

authoritarian manner is somewhat removed from life under his somewhat sedate predecessor, Jacques Santini.

Domenech, whose regime includes banning his squad from using mobile phones on the massage table, reckons he's more of a colonel than a general.

"What's the difference? One gives orders, the other manages," he said when tackled on the subject this week.

Domenech will be looking for a sharper performance in these back-to-back qualifiers than the one that eked out a less than convincing 1-1 draw with Bosnia in last month's friendly in Rennes, after which he said: "There's no excuse for a lack of enthusiasm".

On the plus side he added dryly that he'd watched "sadder matches in the month of August" than this one.

With experienced defenders Desailly, Thuram and Lizarazu no longer around Domenech has plenty of reconstruction work to attend to.

"The priority is to build on solid bases," he stressed. "But in terms of the defence it's not important whether it consists of three, four or five players - defence is all about spirit - we saw that with the Greeks at Euro 2004."

A measure of the yawning gap in experience between the France team in action at the European Championships and the one that will turn out on Saturday can be gleaned from the fact that in Portugal Santini's defenders boasted 250 caps between them - Saturday's back line totals a mere 34.

While the hosts will be expected to get their World Cup campaign off to a flying start their opponents Israel insist they are not there to make up the numbers.

"I'd love to start this campaign on a

positive note," said Israel coach Avraham Grant.

"We are not going there with our hands up."

But assessing the task ahead he injected a healthy dose of realism when he pointed out: "In France they have 15 talented players for each position, but here we have to use a magnifying glass just to find one."

Israel lost both times to France in qualifying for Euro 2004 and Grant is aiming to make it to Germany as second in Group 4 to favourites France.

## FIXTURES OF EUROPEAN WC QUALIFIERS

SATURDAY

**Group 1:** Finland v Andorra, Romania v Macedonia  
**Group 2:** Turkey v Georgia, Denmark v Ukraine, Albania v Greece  
**Group 3:** Russia v Slovakia, Estonia v Luxembourg, Latvia v Portugal  
**Group 4:** Republic of Ireland v Cyprus, Switzerland v Faroe Isles, France v Israel  
**Group 5:** Slovenia v Moldova, Italy v Norway  
**Group 6:** Northern Ireland v Poland, Azerbaijan v Wales, Austria v England  
**Group 7:** Belgium v Lithuania, San Marino v Serbia-Montenegro  
**Group 8:** Iceland v Bulgaria, Croatia v Hungary, Malta v Sweden

## Somerset seek Fleming

BBC ONLINE, London

Somerset have confirmed they want New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming to lead them next summer.

Fleming is the longest serving captain in international cricket, having first been appointed in 1996.

"He knows how to lead teams in the dressing room and that's what we need," chief executive Peter Anderson told BBC.

South African skipper Graeme Smith is a possible alternative should the club fail to persuade Fleming to join them.

New Zealand played Somerset at Taunton on Thursday in a warm-up game ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy.

But Anderson refused to confirm whether he had taken the opportunity for talks with Fleming.

"I wouldn't say until anything is down on paper because there is many a slip between cup and lip."

## Diego Jr joins Genoa

TICKER, Genoa

Diego Maradona Jr., the teenage son of the Argentine soccer legend, has joined Italy's Serie B outfit Genoa.

The 17-year old Maradona appeared at a news conference Thursday, claiming he is not troubled by the expectations that come with his last name.

"I am calm," Maradona said. "My surname is not a burden for me. It might be for others, but not for me."

The younger Maradona reportedly was considering quitting soccer due to the constant media attention he received. His father is Diego Maradona, who led Argentina to the 1986 World Cup title and is one of the biggest stars in soccer history.

Maradona Jr. is a midfielder who had a trial with Scottish Premier League club Dunfermline earlier this summer, he accepted Genoa's offer following the financial crisis that hit Napoli. Last month, the Naples team was declared bankrupt by an Italian court, one week after being thrown out of Serie B due to a lack of financial guarantees.

"It is an honor for me to be here," Maradona Jr. said. "I hope I can repay the trust this club has placed in me."

The teenager said he is in no hurry to play with the big boys in Serie A.

"I am here to play a good season with the youth team and that is my primary aim," he said. "I start this adventure with my feet firmly on the ground, then if there is a possibility to play for the first team, we will see."

The elder Maradona, 43, has battled drug problems in recent years.

In May, was hospitalized in Argentina with what was said to be severe cardiac and pulmonary problems. He was transferred to a clinic specializing in drug rehabilitation but had to be sedated to prevent him from leaving.

## The symphony

FROM PAGE 13

played by baritone Johan Hallsten. A black player tackles a white opponent in the penalty area. The referee doesn't blow his whistle for a penalty, and Hebe pays the price with her life as the fury of the hooligans bear down upon her.

The choir plays a fundamental role in this libretto. The young girls and boys of the Estonian 21st Century Orchestra personify the two teams, G.O.D. and O.N.D. (Good and Evil in Swedish), which correspond to Homer's clash between the Trojans and the Greeks.

For Am-Henrik Blomqvist, director of the piece and former football coach, says "the entire tragedy is concentrated in the tiers. We didn't need to add drama to the field. The intensity of one match was enough in itself."

"Football is like life. It evokes strong feelings. That's how I've gotten into my part," soprano Karlsson said.

With a mix of classicism and avantgarde, a giant screen towers over the choir flashing "pop-art" football pictures signed by Laang.

Television sports commentator sits facing a small screen, belting out his comments while a hooligan chorus wearing t-shirts with the logo "Troy FC" lid loose a torrent of abuse and belches. Agitation among players in the center circles.

The violence, intolerance and racism, a familiar curse of contemporary football, is expressed through dramatic violins accompanied by African percussion instruments and accordions. The effect is clear.

But "it's not obvious that we'll attract traditional opera amateurs", admits producer Ulrika Lind, who makes no secret of her ambition to suck in organizers of the 2006 World Cup in Germany with the opera's themes of fair-play and the fight against racism.

Laang meanwhile is exasperated by what he calls the "blindness" of the Swedish Football Federation when it comes to addressing these issues.

"I have contacted them to get them involved, and they told me that there was no racism in Swedish football."

"It is stupefying. Just a few hundred meters from here there is a plaque commemorating a supporter who was beaten to death after a game," he said.

AFP, Vienna



David Beckham has admitted that the 2006 World Cup is likely to be his last chance of winning a major tournament with England.

The England skipper will be 31 by the time of the finals in Germany in two years time and he recognises that his all-action style of play is unlikely to encourage longevity on the international stage.

"Maybe my legs will keep going for a few more years but maybe it is my last shot at a World Cup, to win something as big as that," Beckham said on the eve of England's opening qualifier, against Austria.

"There is a lot more football to be played but it would be nice to go into that competition and win it."

Having fallen at the quarter-final stage at the last World Cup and at Euro 2004, Beckham knows that his confidence in the current England squad being good enough to win a major tournament may look misplaced.

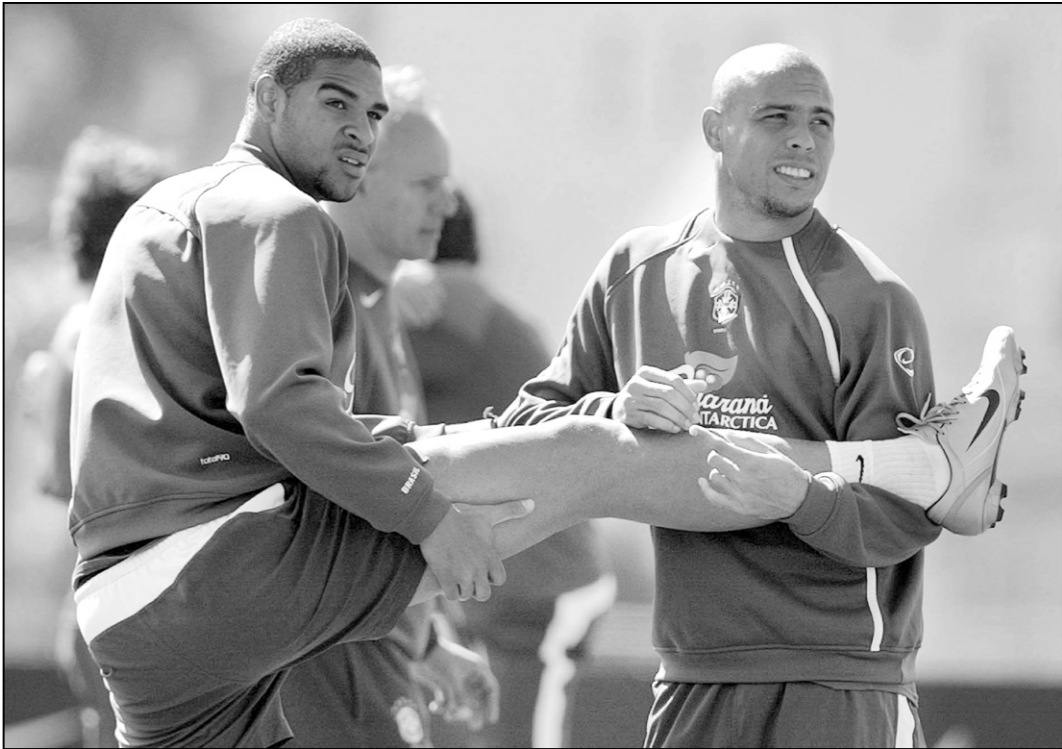


PHOTO: AFP  
Superstar Ronaldo (R) helps striking partner Adriano stretch during a training session in Teresopolis on September 2.

# Adriano nears a dream

REUTERS, Sao Paulo



Brazil striker Adriano, who scored seven goals as the world champions won the Copa America in Peru in July, is now hoping for a

chance to play alongside his former idol Ronaldo in Sunday's World Cup qualifier against Bolivia.

The match at the Morumbi stadium pits the top and bottom teams in the 10-nation South American qualifying group. Brazil, unbeaten after seven games, lead with 13 points while Bolivia are bottom with six.

Adriano, who stepped in after Ronaldo was rested for the Copa America, has never started a match alongside the Real Madrid player although he has played briefly alongside him three times after coming on as a substitute in friendlies.

"This is the best moment of my career and a partnership with Ronaldo would make it even better," Adrian told reporters at Brazil's training camp in Teresopolis.

"He's always been someone I look up to and now I'm making a dream come true."

But coach Carlos Alberto Parreira has such an embarrassment of riches at his disposal that he has yet to decide whether Adriano will start the match.

Ronaldo's regular partner Ronaldinho, who has been nursing an ankle injury which kept him out of

THE BRAZIL V BOLIVIA MATCH WILL BE TELEVIEWED LIVE ON TEN SPORTS AT 2:00 AM BANGLADESH STANDARD TIME ON MONDAY.

Barcelona's opening Spanish league game last weekend, looks almost certain to be fit and is ready to take his place in the team.

Adriano could still get a chance, however, against a Bolivia team which is expected to concentrate exclusively on defence.

Bolivia have lost 5-0 and 6-0 on their last two visits to Brazil and coach Ramiro Blacut has named three goalkeepers, nine defenders and only two forwards in their squad as they attempt to avoid a repeat performance.

Thirty-five-year-old midfielder Luis Cristaldo, who missed the 3-2 defeat by Ecuador last June through suspension, returns to a full-strength Bolivia team.

# Peru face a hot Argentina

REUTERS, Lima



Peru have an early chance to avenge their Copa America exit when they face conquerors Argentina in a World Cup qualifier on Saturday.

Peru's dreams of winning the event on home soil in July were wrecked when they lost 1-0 to the eventual runners-up in the quarter-final to a brilliant Carlos Tevez freekick.

They now face a huge task against a team which could contain up to seven members of the side which won the Olympic gold medal in Athens only one week ago.

Peru will also have to end a streak of four successive defeats against Argentina, which also includes a friendly played in the United States in June and both meetings in the qualifying competition for the 2002 World Cup.

The match comes at the end of a three-month marathon for Argentina which began with two World Cup qualifiers, continued with the Copa America -- where they lost on penalties to Brazil in the final -- and was followed by the Olympics.

It has been a period which has seen the emergence of young

players such as Luis Gonzalez, Javier Mascherano and 20-year-old Tevez, while some old favourites -- such as Hernan Crespo and Juan Sebastian Veron -- have fallen by the wayside.

Veron and Crespo were initially picked for the game but then dropped, apparently to appease their club AC Milan.

Midfielder Cristian Gonzalez promised there would be no let-up after winning the Olympic gold last

THE ARGENTINA V PERU MATCH WILL BE TELEVIEWED LIVE ON TEN SPORTS AT 5:30 AM BANGLADESH STANDARD TIME ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER

Saturday.

"It was an important achievement but now we have to face Peru and we have a duty to win," said Gonzalez, who played in the Olympics as one of three Argentina's three overage players.

"The fundamental thing is that we've been playing good football, which is something the public always demand."

Argentina go into the match in a comfortable position, lying second in the 10-nation South American qualifying group with 12 points from seven games.

can play some pretty good football."

Having admitted that his form at Euro 2004 had been affected by the turmoil in his personal life following an affair with his former personal assistant, Beckham has regained a spring in his step that was conspicu-



DAVID BECKHAM

ously missing in Portugal.

The recent confirmation that he and wife Victoria are expecting their third child appears to indicate that family life is on a more even keel and

Beckham said he had benefited from a good pre-season with Real Madrid, shedding the excess muscle he had built up by doing too many weights in the run-up to Euro 2004.

In last month's friendly against Ukraine, he was England's outstanding performer and on Saturday he is expected to get his chance to strut his stuff in the middle of midfield, courtesy of the groin injury which should rule Steven Gerrard out of the match.

"I'm more than comfortable playing in that role because I do it for Real Madrid and I can do it tomorrow," he said.

While insisting that he was happy to play wherever Sven-Goran Eriksson decided, there is no doubting his enthusiasm for being at the heart of things.

"Being in the middle gives you more chance of seeing more of the game, more of the play."

"You can play the ball right or left, whereas being on the right the options are limited. The only balls you can play are to the left."