



PHOTO: AFP

RELIEF! Ecstatic Brazil teammates converge on Kaka and Ronaldo, the scorer and creator of the winning goal against Peru, at the Serra Dourada stadium in Goiania, Brazil on March 27.

Kaka Brazil's saviour

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil scraped a 1-0 World Cup qualifying win over Peru with a performance which its own coach said lacked inspiration while sharp-shooting Ecuador thumped Paraguay 5-2 Sunday.

Antonio Valencia, 19, playing his first competitive international, and Edison Mendez scored twice apiece, all from long range, as Ecuador came from two goals down in Quito.

Argentina (25 points from 12 games) and world champion Brazil (23) pulled further away from the pack in the 10-nation South American qualifying group this weekend.

Ecuador (19) also put daylight between itself and the other teams while only three points separate fourth-place Paraguay (16) and ninth-place Peru.

Uruguay (15), Colombia, Chile and Venezuela (all 14) are squeezed in between while last-place Bolivia (10) appears to be out of the running.

The top four nations qualify directly for next year's finals in Germany and the fifth playoff against the Oceania winner for another place.

Brazil striker Ronaldo said before the match in Goiania that

club and country were separate matters and he would put his unhappy Real Madrid form behind him against Peru.

The lethargic-looking number nine, jeered at one stage by the 50,000 crowd, squandered his side's two best first-half chances and blamed the heat for his display.

Ronaldo missed his kick altogether when he only needed to flick Cafu's cross into an empty net and shot weakly at Oscar Ibanez after being sent clear by Roberto Carlos.

The Brazil superstar however, atoned in the 74th minute when he slipped a fantastic pass through for Kaka to score the winner with his fifth goal of the qualifiers.

Brazil had not scored in its two previous qualifiers against Colombia and Ecuador. The goal

was its first in four hours 29 minutes of competitive football.

Paraguay raced 2-0 up in 15 minutes in Quito with a Jose Cardozo penalty, his sixth goal of the qualifiers, and a Salvador Cabanas goal on the break.

Ecuador recovered superbly, leveling by halftime after Valencia's low 33-yard shot was misjudged by the usually dependable goalkeeper Justo Villar and Edison Mendez netted with a measured shot from a similar range.

The same two players scored again inside five minutes of the second period, both efforts coming from outside the penalty area, while Marlon Ayovi added a fifth with a controversial penalty.

STANDINGS						
Standings after 2006 World Cup qualifiers in the South American zone played at the weekend (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):						
Argentina	12	7	4	1	23	25
Brazil	12	6	5	1	20	23
Ecuador	12	6	1	5	17	19
Paraguay	12	4	4	4	14	16
Uruguay	12	4	3	5	17	24
Colombia	12	3	5	4	12	11
Chile	12	3	5	4	11	12
Venezuela	12	4	2	6	13	17
Peru	12	3	4	5	13	14
Bolivia	12	3	1	8	12	10

Australia

FROM PAGE 12
Katiech added 71 for the sixth wicket before Gillespie was caught behind for 35.

Franklin had Katiech caught at mid-on for 35 and Warne caught at first slip for one, before eventually polishing off the innings by bowling Kasprawicz and then dismissing McGrath without scoring.

McGrath was clearly annoyed at being given out and was full of venom when New Zealand came out to bat again.

With his second ball he had Craig Cumming leg before wicket without scoring, and with the first ball of his third over he tempted Test debutant James Marshall to edge the ball straight to Justin Langer at third slip.

Four balls later the umpires ended play half an hour early because of bad light, to the relief of Hamish Marshall on three and Stephen Fleming on one.

Australia began the day on 219 for four, and New Zealand's only success in the morning session came with a piece of James Marshall brilliance when he ran out Michael Clarke for 22 in the sixth over of the day.

BRIEF SCORES
NEW ZEALAND: First innings 292 (H Marshall 76, Fleming 65; McGrath 3-49, Warne 3-63)
AUSTRALIA: First innings 383 (Ponting 105, Gilchrist 60, Franklin 6-119)
NEW ZEALAND: Second innings 11-2 (McGrath 2-7)

'The team lacked happiness'

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira criticised his team for lacking inspiration in Sunday's 1-0 World Cup qualifying win over Peru, while the players blamed the heat for their mediocre performance.

Parreira, who rarely attacks his side, lost patience after the five-times world champions left it until the 74th minute to score. It was their first goal in four hours 29 minutes of competitive football.

"The team lacked happiness and inspiration," said Parreira. "Given the quality of Brazil's players, we should have created a lot more scoring chances than we did."

"The team was slow and heavy. We got it wrong by playing down the middle and we made it easier for Peru to mark us."

Ronaldo, who missed an open goal but supplied the pass for Kaka's winner, said the players suffered in the afternoon heat of Goiania.

Midfielder Emerson echoed Ronaldo's comments. "The heat was an added difficulty."

Brazil fullback Roberto Carlos criticised Peru for what he claimed was an over-cautious approach.

"All our games are difficult, like this one. All our opponents stay back," said the Real Madrid player, who was exasperated at the crowd's impatience.

"When we win 1-0 here in Brazil, it appears that it's worth nothing."

The crowd's attitude also upset Parreira, especially when they jeered Ronaldo.

"The supporters forget very easily about everything he has done for the national team," he said, "Ronaldo is and will be one of the best players in world football and we're lucky he's Brazilian."

And the Brazil coach defended Ronaldo amid criticism that the Real Madrid ace should have been substituted.

Carnage in Mali

AP, Bamako, Mali



A World Cup qualifier at Mali was stopped when fans rioted following a go-ahead goal by Togo in the 90th minute.

Fans blocked a main road with flaming tires and smashed car windows after they invaded the field on Sunday. Police fired tear gas as protesters descended on the capital's main African Unity Avenue.

Precise numbers of those injured or arrested were not released.

The multistory building housing the local Olympic committee was burned down, committee director Habib Sissoko said.

Fans at the packed 70,000-seat stadium saw Mali take the lead on Soumaila Coulibaly's goal in the 12th minute. But Salifou Mustapha tied it in the 83rd minute, and Kader Koubadia put Togo ahead 2-1 in the 90th. Police fired tear gas at dozens of angry fans who ran onto the field after the goal.

State television cut its live transmission just after police fired the gas canisters.

As fans stormed down the main street, some screamed about the play of Mali's top players.

Thousands of fans, joined by residents who were not at the match, marched to the city center, setting up barricades of burning tires and throwing rocks and stones at traffic lights, billboards and vehicles. The window of Bamako's biggest bakery, the Patisserie Almandine, was smashed and the store was looted. One man was eating a cream cake as he carted a chair away on his head.

Cellular telephones, money and cameras were stolen from passers-by.

Several monuments were reduced to rubble, including the Ministry of Africa Tower at Faladie Square, the site where the president receives foreign dignitaries.

GM chess from April 4

SPORTS REPORTER

The seventh United Insurance Grand Masters Chess Tournament will start from April 4.

Nearly 50 players including Grand Masters, International Masters, FIDE Masters and rated players from seven countries will take part in the 11-round Swiss League basis tournament.

Football Festival from April 2

SPORTS REPORTER

The AFC (Asian Football Confederation) Under-13 Football Festival will begin at BKSP in Savar from April 2.

Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and hosts Bangladesh will take part in the six-day festival.

The event is just not about winning but is more to do with earning points for skill, behaviour and other aspects of fair play.

Pakistan will be the first team to arrive in Dhaka today, followed by Sri Lanka tomorrow. All teams are expected to be in Dhaka by March 31.

Joy grips Pakistan

AFP, Islamabad

People swarmed the streets of several Pakistani cities setting off fire crackers and handing out sweets as celebrations erupted after Pakistan beat India in the final Test at Bangalore Monday to square the historic series 1-1.

"It's a great victory for Pakistan," fan Jilil Ahmed said in the border city Lahore, where cars and motorbikes thronged the roads blaring their horns, witnesses said.

"I bought two kilos of sweets and distributed it among my employees and other shopkeepers in the bazaar," Taj Bao, owner of a tailoring shop in the Bhati Gate neighbourhood, told AFP.

In Islamabad, Sher Baz said: "Glued to my television set, I continued to pray for Pakistan team's victory. I will now say special prayers to thank God."

"It's a great win and all credit to the Pakistani team," former Pakistan cricket hero Imran Khan told AFP.

"It's always difficult to come back in the series after one down and all credit goes to Inzamam for leading from the front and that too in his 100th Test match," he said.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf hailed his country's cricket team's victory against rivals India, saying that the nation was proud of their achievement.

The team's "magnificent all-round effort" earned them a thrilling win in the last session of the Test match, said Musharraf, himself a cricket fan who is expected to watch the last one-day international in India next month.

Bowler O M R W
Sami 21 5 84 2
Razaq 13 3 34 0
Kanerla 24.5 10 46 2
Alfridi 17 7 13 3
Arshad 14 8 21 2

Result: Pakistan won by 168 runs and the three-Test series is drawn 1-1.
Man-of-the-match: Younis Khan.
Man-of-the-series: Virender Sehwag.

Mourinho plays for peace

Football

AFP, Ramat Gan

Wearing a blue jersey with the slogan "Jose Mourinho coach for peace" Chelsea's Portuguese manager kicked off his Israeli peace tour at the Ramat Gan stadium near Tel Aviv on Sunday.

The Blues boss has travelled to Israel to watch mixed teams of Palestinian and Israeli children play football as part of a peace initiative.

And surrounded by some 200 children of Israeli and Palestinian origin Sunday Mourinho said that he wanted his presence in the Middle East to act as a sign of hope.

"I came to show this country (Israel) is safe and going in the right direction," said Mourinho, in Israel at the invitation of Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

The children wearing jerseys inscribed with "the right of play" are all members of the Shimon Peres Centre for Peace founded by the 1994 Nobel peace prize winner.

"The fact I came here is a perfect example for hope," Mourinho said, adding that he would also give a talk to Palestinian and Israeli football coaches during his stay.



PHOTO: AFP

LET'S SEE YOUR TOUCHES JOSE! Chelsea's Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho prepares to kick the ball during a Palestinian-Israeli indoor soccer match in Tel Aviv on March 27.

Rain hampers

FROM PAGE 12
finish Day One on 220-5 at the Barisal Stadium.

Syed Russel gave the visitors a perfect start after they have decided to bat when the left-arm pacer removed both openers Imran Ahmed and Hannan Sarkar (5) for only 20 runs.

But the Barisal middle-order overcame the early hiccup as Raqibul Hasan added 31 off 66 balls and wicketkeeper Shahin Hossain made a 76-ball 28.

National left-arm spinner Manzarul Islam Rana dismissed both batsmen and finished with a two-wicket haul. Nadif was unbeaten on 32.

SYLHET-DHAKA

Dhaka's right-arm pacer Talha Jubair shone in the last session picking up two wickets for 27 runs.

Golam Rahman was batting on 25 and Syed Parvez Ahmed remained not out on 12.

CORES IN BRIEF

RAJSHAHI-CHITTAGONG CHITTAGONG: First innings 206 all out in 60.3 overs (Nazimuddin 21, Faisal 32, Sabbar 48, Ahsanullah 38, Waskurni 20 not out, extras 19; Shahajada 3-42, Sumon 4-55, Alamgir 2-21).

RAJSHAHI: First innings 81 for 2 in 27 overs (Zahirul 32, Raqibul 12, Reza 22 not out, extras 15; Waskurni 2-41).

KHULNA-BARISAL BARISAL: First innings 220 for 5 in 91 overs (Raqibul 31, Shahin 28, Proshenjit 80 not out, Towhid 22, Nadif 32 not out, extras 19; Russel 2-38, Rana 2-31).

DHAKA-SYLHET SYLHET: First innings 55 for 2 in 27 overs (Golam Rahman 25 not out, Moniruzzaman 11, Imtiaz 4, Parvez 12 not out; Talha 2-21).

One Test ban

FROM PAGE 12
series in the West Indies in May this year.

Broad, a former England opener, found Inzamam guilty of excessive appealing and showing dissent over an umpiring decision.

Inzamam reacted angrily after New Zealand umpire Billy Bowden had ruled Indian opener Virender Sehwag not out following an appeal for caught behind off the bowling of paceman Mohammad Sami early in the day.

Pakistani players were also found to be involved in excessive appealing for which the captain was responsible under the International Cricket Council (ICC) rules.

Earlier this year, the ICC admitted that Broad made a mistake by not banning Inzamam over his team's slow over-rate in a one-day tournament in Australia.

The Pakistan captain was also fined 50 per cent of his match-fee for his side's slow over-rate during the one-day series at home against India last year.

Pakistan

FROM PAGE 12
Pathan c Youhana b Arshad 0
Harbhajan c Younis b Kaneria 8
Balaji lbw b Kaneria 31
Extras: (b-8, lb-8, nb-5, w-10) 30
Total: (All out in 89.5 overs) 214
Fall of wickets: 1-87, 2-108, 3-118, 4-127, 5-135, 6-164, 7-164, 8-189, 9-210

Bowler O M R W
Sami 21 5 84 2
Razaq 13 3 34 0
Kanerla 24.5 10 46 2
Alfridi 17 7 13 3
Arshad 14 8 21 2

Result: Pakistan won by 168 runs and the three-Test series is drawn 1-1.
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Man-of-the-series: Virender Sehwag.

USA find Mexico unbeatable at home

AFP, Mexico City



Mexico continued a home-field mastery of arch rival United States here Sunday, taking a 2-1 victory that snapped a 16-match US unbeaten

streak. Jared Borgetti headed home a goal in the 30th minute and Antonio Naelson Sinha added another in the 32nd minute for Mexico.

Eddie Lewis scored the lone US goal in the 58th minute, the first US goal in Mexico since 1984, but it was not enough to rescue the Americans.

The Mexicans improved to 22-0 with one draw in home matches over 71 years against the US men, taking a measure of revenge for a round of 16 loss to the US squad at the 2002 World Cup in South Korea.

The US team had not lost in 13 months since dropping a 1-0 road decision to the Dutch. The US squad saw the end of a 31-match unbeaten streak against North American rivals dating to 2001

INDEPENDENCE DAY EVENTS

SPORTS REPORTER

Goals on either side of the break by Rafiqul Islam Kamal and Maksud Alam Habul gave star-studded Old Dhaka Hockey Development Board a hard-fought 2-1 win over Bangladesh Navy in the Independence Day Hockey Tournament at the Maulana Bhashani National Stadium yesterday.

Skipper Kamal, who scored six goals on the previous day, put the Old Dhaka outfit ahead in the 17th minute but Hossain drew level for Navy in the very next minute.

Habul slammed the match winner for Old Dhaka in the 51st minute.

In the day's other match, a 57-minute strike by Sharifuzzaman gave Bangladesh Army a 1-0 win over Bangladesh Air Force.

BASKETBALL
Bangladesh Navy defeated Bangladesh Air Force 79-61 in the opening match of the Independence Day Basketball Tournament at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

Miji shot highest 19 points while Sulip scored 18 and Rashed caged

"I'm trying to be a member of a better world. I think the job Mr. Peres is doing is very important.

"I believe in what he is doing and if I can share my part, I'll do it. I'm ready for it. The reason I came is just to give my cooperation to Peres.

"I just try to share and help this beautiful cause."

Peres said that they were trying to show that football could bridge the gap between Jews and Arabs, with 1,400 children now members of his Centre for Peace.

"Look what football has brought to understanding between Jews and Arabs, between Palestinians and Israelis," he said in reference to the Arab team of Bnei Sakhnin, the winners of the Israeli Cup who have players who are both Jewish and Arab.

And it was an Israeli Arab, Abbas Suan, who scored the equaliser in Saturday's World Cup qualifier against the Republic of Ireland.

"At the Peres Peace Centre we think that football is a language, a means for Palestinian children and Israelis to get to know one another and to have common activities," said Ron Pundak, one of the architects of the 1993 Oslo accords between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Women booters off to India

SPORTS REPORTER

A 32-member Under-17 Bangladesh women's football team left Dhaka last night for India to play three practice matches as part of their preparations for the AFC U-17 Women's Football Championship.

The AFC meet will be held in South Korea from April 16-27.

The first Bangladesh women football team to travel across the border will play exhibition matches in Kolkata, Haldia and Durgapur before flying to Seoul on April 13 to mark their debut in any international soccer tournament.

The Bangladesh spent three months in a residential camp in Dinajpur.

STANCHART SCHOOL CRICKET

Exciting win for Ashrafabad

SPORTS REPORTER

A five-wicket haul by Rakib (5-40) steered Ashrafabad High School (147) to snatch an exciting one-run win against Sheikhdi Abdullah School (148) in one of yesterday's five matches of the Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket Tournament (Under-17) at the Gulshan Youth ground.

National Bangla High School (267) recorded their second victory when they dumped St Gregory's (108) by 159 runs at the Residential Model School ground while Motijheel Government High School (182) defeated University Laboratory School (113) by 69 runs at the same venue.

In other matches, Shourav Smriti Vidyalaya (217-6) headed a four-wicket defeat to Willes Little Flower (216) at Lalmatia Housing Society School ground while Titas Gas Adarsha High School (239) beat Shahidullah UMB (165) by 74 runs at Dhanmondi Club ground.

FIRST 2 ODIS

India leave out Laxman and Kumble

AFP, Bangalore

Leg-spinner Anil Kumble and middle-order batsman Venkatesh Laxman have been dropped from India's squad for the first two one-dayers against Pakistan, the national selectors announced here on Monday.

India made two more changes from the team which lost the third and final Test against the tourists by 168 runs, omitting wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik and opener Gautam Gambhir.

Batsmen Dinesh Mongia and Mohammad Kaif, left-arm spinner Murali Kartik and wicketkeeper Mahendra Dhoni have been included in the 14-man squad.

Kumble has taken 323 wickets in 260 one-dayers, while Laxman has made 2,309 runs in 83 matches.

India and Pakistan will now play six one-dayers, the first match starting at Cochin on April 2.

SQUAD
Sourav Ganguly (captain), Virender Sehwag, Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Mohammad Kaif, Yuvraj Singh, Dinesh Mongia, Mahender Dhoni, Irfan Pathan, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan, Laxmipathy Balaji, Murali Kartik, Ashish Nehra.

ROWING
Abul Hossain's boys dominated the Independence Day rowing competition as the Dhaka district teams took the first and third places yesterday.

The second place went to Lutfar Rahman's team from Daudkandi, Comilla.

A total of eight teams took part in the competition held on the River Buriganga.

Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Khondokar Mosharrar Hossain distributed trophies. State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Rezaul Karim was also present as special guest.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	38 Little, in	DOWN	22 Jackson
1 Bunch of hoodlums	39 Name of a soft drink	1 Lyons	Hole's river
5 Flirt	42 Letter	21 popes	24 Cyclist
9 Felon's flight	44 Sketch	42 Letter	31 Armstrong
12 Sandwich treat	48 Pub order	3 In the vicinity	25 Moo
13 Palette choices	49 Passen-ger's	4 "Laugh-in"	30 goo gai pan
14 "I" strain	50 Faction	5 En-trances	35 moo pan
15 "Kiss	51 Drops on the lawn	6 "That hurts!"	26 "Believer"
16 Puts on a show	52 Actress	7 Releasee	27 Hudson co-star
17 Chic no more			