

Ronaldo returns in September

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira said Thursday that Ronaldo will make his return to the national team in the World Cup qualifier against Chile in September.

Ronaldo was left out of Brazil's 3-1 defeat to Argentina on Wednesday for having asked to be omitted from the June 15-29 Confederations Cup in Germany for personal reasons involving his fiancée Daniella Cicarelli.

"Ronaldo is certainly very important for Brazilian football and will return to the team as previously announced," Parreira told the online version of the Brazilian sporting daily Lance!

Initially named in the 22-strong squad for the World Cup qualifiers against Argentina and Paraguay last Sunday, the Real Madrid star was dropped after his request to miss out on the German tournament.

Wednesday's defeat left Brazil, the reigning world champions, needing three points from their last three matches to guarantee a place in the football showpiece in Germany next year.

Argentina's win guaranteed their place in the finals.



I SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE! Brazilian superstar Ronaldo (L) watches the Brazil-Argentina World Cup qualifier from his house in Rio de Janeiro on Wednesday.

Satisfaction guaranteed!

AFP, Berlin

Around 40,000 prostitutes will offer their services to football fans at the 2006 World Cup in Germany, according to experts.

Supporters from across the globe will flock to watch their respective teams in action at the World Cup, running from June 9 to July 9, offering a bigger market for prostitutes to exploit.

"It goes without saying that the World Cup is a great opportunity to make money," said Katharina Cetin, an official at the Hydra prostitute advice centre in Berlin.

Cologne and Dortmund, two of the host cities for the World Cup, have even erected a number of wooden 'sex huts' for the football showpiece with condoms and showers at hand.

The idea is to keep the prostitutes and their clients away from public places and Berlin is considering following suit.

"It is better than having the couples in public areas," explained Dirk Lamprecht, a member of the administrative council in Berlin.

Prostitution was legalised in Germany in 2001 but only in designated areas.

Rangamati soccer

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Borkol moved into the semifinals of the Zila Parishad Junior (Under-14) Gold Cup football tournament defeating Sujon Smriti Sangsad 3-2 in the tiebreaker in a quarterfinal match at local stadium yesterday.

Both sides were tied at 2-2 after 90 minutes.

The winners will now play Sapchhari Ribeng Club in the second semifinal on June 13. Kaptai meet Rangamati Sadar in the first semi tomorrow.

Shoaib sad at Moody exit

BBC ONLINE, undated

Shoaib Akhtar has voiced disappointment at the departure of Worcestershire's Director of Cricket Tom Moody.

The Pakistan pacer will make his debut for the club in Sunday's game against Bangladesh.

But he said: "What prompted the move here? Tom Moody. It's as simple as that. He was the biggest reason."

Moody left to become coach of Sri Lanka's national team, leaving former wicket-keeper Steve Rhodes to take charge of the first team at New Road.

"I think Steve is going to do well. I've spoken to him a few times and he has a lot of experience. He seems like a gentleman and easy-going," said Shoaib.

"I think what matters is that the 15-16 guys, along with the coach, have to work together. No coach can go in and make things happen on his own."

"The team has to listen to the coach and the coach has to listen to the team and work things out together and make things happen."

PEPSI VOLLEYBALL

Pabna clinch title

SPORTS REPORTER

Pabna clinched the Pepsi inter-district women's volleyball title outplaying Rajbari 3-0 at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

Tangail finished third beating Rajshahi by same margin in the place-deciding match.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Begum Selima Rahman witnessed the match and distributed prize among the winners.

Diego gets Napoli farewell

Football

AFP, Rome

Diego Maradona has been granted a special testimonial match so he can say a proper farewell to Napoli, the team he helped turn into one of the most feared in Europe during the late 1980s and early 90s.

The 44-year-old Argentine legend returned to Naples on Thursday, his first visit to the Italian city since leaving under a cloud of controversy 14 years ago.

Maradona, who led Napoli to two Italian league titles and a UEFA Cup triumph in seven seasons, came back to appear in a benefit match for his former Napoli team-mate

Ciro Ferrara, who is retiring from football. "Diego will return to Napoli on October 30 for his farewell match," said Rosa Iervolino Russo, the Mayor of Naples.

Maradona, who didn't play in Ferrara's match due to a knee injury, stole the limelight when he did a lap of honour before kick-off in front of

70,000 fans.

Surrounded by scores of security guards, he blew kisses to the crowd and twirled a Napoli scarf above his head before taking the microphone. "It's been a long time and I have missed Napoli and the people of Naples," said the 1986 World Cup winner.

"I hope to come back to Napoli again. Remember me with all your heart with the same affection that you have showed me this evening."

Ferrara paid tribute to Maradona, who despite recent health problems looked fit and well. "It was an unforgettable evening," said the central defender, who spent 11 seasons with Napoli before joining Juventus where he finished his career.

"I want to thank my colleagues and above all the 70,000 people here. I am very happy that they were able to see Diego. It was wonderful to see him again after 14 years."

Maradona joined Napoli from Barcelona in 1984 and used their underdog status as a motivational tool, turning the club into a symbol of southern working class pride.

But he fled in 1991 after receiving a 15-month ban for testing positive for cocaine and was investigated for alleged connections to a Neapolitan mafia vice ring.

It proved to be the start of a spectacular fall from grace and despite moderate success elsewhere he was never the same player after leaving Italy.

Napoli have fallen on hard times since he left and are currently in the third division.

But they could be promoted to the second division if they win a two-legged play-off final against local rivals Avellino.

Argentine legend Diego Armando Maradona shows off his magical ball controlling skills at the San Paolo stadium in Naples on Thursday while attending former Napoli teammate

Ciro Ferrara's farewell match.

PHOTO: AFP

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PHOTO: AFP

Harmison misses warm-up

BBC ONLINE, London

England fast bowler Steve Harmison has been ruled out of Saturday's Twenty20 warm-up game against Hampshire because of an ankle injury.

Harmison first felt pain in his left ankle during the second Test against Bangladesh at the Riverside.

He was given a cortisone injection to ease the discomfort. But he has not recovered enough to be risked at the Rose Bowl, where England will also face Australia on Monday in a Twenty20 international.

No decision has yet been taken on Harmison's participation in that game, and it is not thought the injury is serious.

"He also had some scans earlier this week and they were all clear," a team spokesman commented.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12 the total before he was last man out.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Bangladesh innings in the one-day (D/N) practice match against Derbyshire at the County Ground on Friday:

BANGLADESH				
Omar c Sutton b Sheikh	9			
Iqbal run out	0			
Saleh c Stubbings b Sheikh	4			
Imran run out	40			
Bashar c sub b Walker	49			
Aftab c Sutton b Walker	26			
Mashud c Sutton b Walker	1			
Rafique c Dean b Botha	36			
Mahmud b Gray	11			
Mortuza c Sutton b Gray	0			
Nazmul not out	1			
Extras: (lb-2, w-10)	12			
Total: (All out in 46.1 overs)	189			
Fall of wkts: 1-5, 2-16, 3-19, 4-99, 5-127, 6-134, 7-147, 8-177, 9-177, 10-189.				
Bowler				
Dean	6	0	23	0
Sheikh	8	1	15	2
Hunter	8	0	45	0
Gray	10	0	40	2
Botha	8.1	0	40	1
Walker	6	0	24	3

Toss: Bangladeshes

DERBYSHIRE: S Stubbings, G Welch, J Bryant, L Sutton, J Moss, A Botha, M Sheikh, A Gray, N Walker, I Hunter, K Dean.

The countdown

FROM PAGE 12 programme, which the artist later presented to the gathering.

Precisely 365 days ahead of the biggest single sports event on the planet, Schily emphasised the key role played by the forthcoming FIFA Confederations Cup from 15 to 29 June. The tournament was a vital pulse check for the German football team, but just as importantly, a test of every organisational element. "This small-scale World Cup will tell everyone - organisers, security personnel, and volunteers alike - what we're doing well and where we have to improve. We cannot let up in our efforts," declared the Minister, whose remit includes sport.

Schily accepted Germans were renowned as good organisers, and expectations were correspondingly high. "But we want to achieve more," the senior politician insisted. "Our goal is to stage a festival of football, which is truly 'A time to make friends'. We want to boost our nation's image. We will only succeed if everyone continues to invest passion and commitment into the preparatory phase."

The event to commence the countdown correspondingly focused on forward planning for the 2006 FIFA World Cup. "You can rely on Germany," Blatter enthused. "Whenever we come forward with a question, they're ready with an answer."

Players and officials of the Pabna team pose with the trophy after beating Rajbari in the final of the Pepsi inter-district women's volleyball competition at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.