



WE DID WIN ON TOUR, YOU KNOW: Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons (L) explains to reporters as captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza looks on after their arrival at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday. (Story on page 17)

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Brazil to name new coach soon

REUTERS, Sao Paulo

Brazil will name a new national team coach to replace Dunga in the next few days, a spokesman for the country's football confederation (CBF) said on Wednesday. "The name of the new coach will be known between Friday and Monday," CBF spokesman Rodrigo Paiva told reporters.

The favourites to occupy one of soccer's hottest seats include Luiz Felipe Scolari, who led Brazil to their fifth World Cup title in 2002, Corinthians coach Mano Menezes, Fluminense's Muricy Ramalho and Abel Braga, who is coaching in the United Arab Emirates.

Ramalho won three consecutive Brazilian championship titles with Sao Paulo while Braga won the South American Libertadores Cup and World Club Championship with Internacional in 2006.

Menezes made his name when he led Corinthians, one of Brazil's most popular clubs, out of the second division in 2008 and guided them to the Copa Brasil title the following year.

With Brazil hosting the 2014 World Cup, pressure to win a sixth title will be more intense than usual.

Brazil were knocked out of the 2010 finals in South Africa by the Netherlands in the last eight.

Vuvuzela gets green light

INTERNET

Huddersfield have no plans to ban vuvuzelas from the Galpharm Stadium next season.

West Yorkshire neighbours Leeds and eight Barclays Premier League clubs - Tottenham, Arsenal, Birmingham, Everton, Fulham, Liverpool, West Ham and Sunderland - have so far banned the controversial horns that are synonymous with South Africa 2010.

But a Huddersfield spokesman said: "The decision comes down to our events panel which is a mixture of representatives of the stadium, club and safety team."

"Nobody has raised the possibility of banning them so far. We did use them at the Millwall league game last season - they were given out in the family stand."

"If the situation changes it will be considered by the panel."

Blues after Ramires

TELEGRAPH



Chelsea have reportedly made an offer for Benfica's £20million-rated Brazilian World Cup midfielder Ramires.

The Premier League champions and Bayern Munich have been linked with the 23-year-old and his agent claimed the pair had contacted Benfica about a deal, according to the Mail.

Manchester City have also made a move for Ramires, who joined the Portuguese club last summer in a £6.5million deal and featured in four of Brazil's matches at the 2010 World Cup.

Ramires, full name Ramires Santos do Nascimento, earned the nickname 'Blue Kenyan', or Queniano Azul, at Cruzeiro, due to their blue strip and fans saying he had the endurance of a Kenyan marathon runner.

He started impressively with Benfica, winning a league and cup double, as well as per-

forming well in the World Cup after his surprise call-up to the squad.

His booking in the group match with Portugal ruled him out of Brazil's quarterfinal which Brazil eventually lost to Holland.

Chelsea, aware Ramires would soon attract the attention of Premier League rivals, have now made a solid offer for the player after preliminary enquiries before the World Cup.

"My agent has told me that a number of clubs are interested in signing me," said Ramires.

"We all know that the World Cup is the perfect stage to prove your worth. It would be a dream for me to play for a big club such as Barcelona, Real Madrid or Chelsea."

Chelsea manager Carlo Ancelotti will need to add to his midfield after losing Michael Ballack and Joe Cole, and with Deco due to return to Brazil.

Although Yossi Benayoun has been brought in from Liverpool, Ancelotti knows Ramires can give him options in various positions and is still young enough to adapt to life in England.

Gerrard now happy

AFP, Liverpool



Steven Gerrard has hinted he will stay at Liverpool after the Reds captain revealed he was delighted by the club's capture of England midfielder Joe Cole.

Gerrard had been linked with a move to Real Madrid after Liverpool endured a dismal campaign last season, finishing seventh in the Premier League and failing to advance past the Champions League group stage.

It is four years since Liverpool won a trophy and it was suggested Gerrard was keen to move to a team who were regularly in the hunt for silverware.

Even the appointment of new manager Roy Hodgson was not expected to convince him to reject Real boss Jose Mourinho, who twice tried to sign Gerrard when he was in charge at Chelsea.

But the England international has held talks with Hodgson, who replaced Spaniard Rafael Benitez at Anfield, and he is impressed with the former Fulham manager's plans, as well as the move to sign Cole from Chelsea on a 90,000 pounds-a-week, four-year contract.

"I made it clear that I simply needed to concentrate on the World Cup and then have a decent holiday with my family," Gerrard told Liverpool's website.

"I wanted the chance to meet Roy Hodgson privately and having done so I'm very impressed with his plans for the future of the team."

"I've only just returned to training at Melwood with some of the other World Cup players, but I can't wait for the new season to start."

Hodgson had revealed Gerrard played a key role in the Cole signing after talking to the midfielder about the positives of playing for Liverpool during their time together at the World Cup in South Africa.

And Gerrard, 30, can't wait to line-up alongside his England teammate at the start of the new Premier League season.

"It's a great signing for us" he added. "I know Joe well through the England set-up and have seen first hand just how good a player he is."

"He's proved his ability over many years in the Premier League, sometimes against us - so it will be fantastic to play alongside him in a red shirt for Liverpool."

"I've told him what a great club this is and I'm sure Joe's the sort of exciting talent our fans will love to see."

Scrappy United

REUTERS, Philadelphia



English soccer giants Manchester United beat the Philadelphia Union 1-0 Wednesday in a scrappy game against Major League Soccer's newest team.

United emerged with a victory at Lincoln Financial Field but laboured in their second pre-season frenzy after beating Scottish team Celtic 3-1 last week in Toronto.

The winning goal came in the 76th minute after Danny Welbeck intercepted a sloppy pass in midfield and ran straight through the defense before passing to Gabriel Obertan who slotted the ball home.

Bulgarian striker Dimitar Berbatov nearly extended United's lead, hitting the crossbar from close range in the 80th minute.

United Coach Alex Ferguson praised Philadelphia's aggressive play.

"It was the sort of game we needed," Ferguson told reporters after the match. "They were very good opponents."

Ferguson said that United was flush with youthful talent this season.

He said he would consider lending Welbeck and Tom Cleverly, who played in central midfield on Wednesday night, to other Premier League clubs to give the youngsters more competitive experience.

The Scot declined to comment on speculation that central defender Nemanja Vidic, resting after his World Cup exploits with Serbia, might leave United, saying, "I can't clarify it at all."

Asked if he would play for the Manchester team this season, Ferguson replied, "I believe so."

The Forlan Supremacy

SHAYAN S. KHAN



At the start of the 59th minute in the Uruguay-Germany play-off for bragging rights for the third place in the World Cup, a strange thing happened. It was strange, because for the duration of the month long extravaganza in South Africa, it had not been spotted, and if anyone cares enough to look through the archived footage one day, it is well worth a wager that claim will stand the test.

Diego Forlan had a moment of mediocrity, with a pass that one might describe most accurately as pedestrian, looking destined for German feet from the moment the usually magisterial Uruguayan received and turned in the middle of the park, before signing off on a half-hearted punt upfield.

It was pedestrian, because it was bereft of all the clarity and conviction of purpose with which he had hitherto either played the ball, or presided over it, throughout the tournament, right from that opening night in Cape Town where he stood out like a bespoke suit in a flea market containing eleven Frenchmen gnawing away at the fabric of the occasion.

It was also significant, because it was the definitive antithesis to the arresting nature of the football Forlan had played, of how he had led his team like a Spartan general over the course of the tournament, beating constantly as the unrelenting heart of a highly impressive comeback by Uruguay to the centre of the footballing world's attention. As the talisman for the re-emergence of a sorely missed third force from Latin America, to placate the world's hunger for the flair associated with Latin football, but free from the stale indulgence of Brazil and the disappointing monotony of Argentina.

In South Africa, there was more verve, much more guile, executed with more razor-sharp intent, a more measured swag-ger even, in the football played by Walter Tabarez's Uruguay, who deservedly did better than both the token South American behemoths. And it was all personified in the gladiatorial figure of Diego Forlan.

To say he took Uruguay to the semifinals single-handedly would be a disservice to his teammates. But one can hardly mistake the shoulders upon which La Celeste were being carried for any other than those of the man they call Cachabacha, which is quite ironic when you consider it's a term used to describe an old lady in Spanish.

However, it is much more colourful than what the English press came up with during two-and-a-half disappointing seasons at Manchester United, where they called him, rather unimaginatively, 'Diego Forlorn'. Having taken eight months to net his first goal for the English giants, he never really managed to settle in the cold north of England and eventually moved to sunnier climes with Villarreal, the plucky Spaniards, in 2005.

But even Sir Alex Ferguson, normally so tacit in praise, has admitted he could have been a hero at Old Trafford, and that he was sold too cheaply considering his all-round ability.

The key being all-round ability. On the evidence of his last three seasons in Spain's Primera Liga, topped off now by a stellar



DIEGO FORLAN

World Cup, a strong case can be made that Forlan is the most complete forward of his generation. How many others are there as equally adept at finishing with either right or left foot, from almost anywhere inside the box, and some distance outside it? He might not be the daintiest dribbler, but his strong physique is complemented by enough sleight of foot to create just that half-yard of space that he needs to unleash one of his lethal shots, as with that searing equaliser in the semifinal against the Dutch. Over the years, he has also acquired an acute sense of positioning that can see him arriving to stab the ball home from six yards out (as you might have seen him win the Europa Cup for Atletico this year), or dropping deep and orchestrating his team's build-up play with his neat, concise and

intelligent passing. To top it all, he is absolutely deadly on free-kicks (ably demonstrated by that unstoppable strike against Ghana), and takes all of Uruguay's corners to boot.

During the World Cup, all these considerable powers were on display at their zenith, helping him to tower sufficiently above the rest to become the first ever winner of the prestigious Golden Ball award from a side that didn't compete in the final. That in itself is testament to just how far ahead he was of the rest. Rarely has any World Cup since Maradona '86 seen an individual carry a team with such aplomb, his redoubtable talent and single-minded determination rubbing off on the lesser players around him, lifting them beyond the scope of their potential.

It was almost enough in the end to at least match a very good German side. With his final act before bidding goodbye, that heart-stopping free-kick, his crashed against the German bar, he could have walked away with the Golden Boot as well. It was the last kick of the game, and yes, for a moment then he did look forlorn. But by then, in stature he was already a giant.

(Shayan S. Khan is managing editor of the Dhaka Courier)

Klose snubbed Prem offers

INTERNET

World Cup star Miroslav Klose claims he snubbed interest from the Premier League to stay and see out his contract with Bayern Munich.

The Germany international's four goals in South Africa made him a sought-after commodity once again, despite having netted just three times for his club last season.

Yet despite inquiries about his availability from England, the 32-year-old has opted to stick with Bayern and see out the remaining 12 months of his contract.

"There were two enquiries from England which I passed on to his agent," revealed chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge in Sport Bild magazine.

"He informed me that Miro desperately wants to stay in Munich."

But Klose knows he will have to fight to win a place in coach Louis van Gaal's side next season, with Ivica Olic currently the Dutchman's preferred out-and-out striker.

"We have five strikers, yet I only want two. I have been saying that for a year," said Van Gaal today.

"At the start of last season I wanted to play with two strikers, who were (Mario) Gomez and Klose, but that didn't work, so I established a 4-4-1-1 formation."

More bad news for Ribery, Benzema



AFP, Munich

German prosecutors opened Thursday a preliminary probe into allegations French footballer Franck Ribery had sex in Munich with a prostitute knowing she was under 18.

"We are looking into whether to begin a formal investigation," Barbara Stockinger, a spokeswoman for the public prosecutors' office in the southern city, home to Ribery's club Bayern Munich, told AFP.

Ribery has never denied having paid for sex with Zahia Dehar, now 18, but his lawyer has told reporters that the player had had no idea in 2008 that she was under-age. Dehar has also said he was unaware of this.

Dehar has said that Ribery had her flown over from Paris and that they had sex in a luxury Munich hotel on the player's 26th birthday in April 2009. He has admitted paying for her flight and hotel room.

Ribery, now 27, was hauled in for seven hours of questioning by Paris magistrates on Tuesday. He was charged with having sex with an under-age prostitute and then released.

His French international



Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho playfully kicks Karim Benzema during a training session at Real Madrid's training grounds in Valdebebas, outside Madrid yesterday. Benzema and his fellow French international Franck Ribery are facing trial on suspicion of soliciting sex with an under-age prostitute.

teammate Karim Benzema, 22, was also detained for questioning and charged over his alleged relations with the same teenage call girl.

Stockinger stressed that German prosecutors would await the outcome of the French investigation and that the married attacking midfielder could not be prosecuted for the

same crime twice.

Like in France, in Germany the general age of consent is 15 years, but in the case of prostitution a young person remains legally a minor until he or she reaches 18.

But while the maximum penalty in France is three years in prison, in Germany it is five years.



Paul, the famed oracle octopus that predicted all the results of Germany correctly and the World Cup final between Spain and the Netherlands, is presented with a jersey at the Sea Life Aquarium in the western German city of Oberhausen yesterday. The octopus on Thursday was nominated as the "favourite friend" of Spanish town Carballino.

PHOTO: REUTERS