

Nasri vents anger at L'Equipe

AFP, Donetsk

France midfielder Samir Nasri revealed his angry reaction to scoring the equaliser in his side's come from behind 1-1 draw with England in their Euro 2012 Group D opener was aimed at a journalist from L'Equipe.

The Manchester City midfielder wheeled round after scoring his 39th minute equaliser and ran towards the touchline first putting his finger to his lips then withdrawing it screaming 'Shut your face!'

Speculation over who he was aiming his vitriol at quickly began to spread on Twitter -- with potential candidates said to include the media and members of the England coaching staff.

However, Nasri put the speculation to rest afterwards.

"I told him it was for him (the L'Equipe journalist)," said Nasri, who revealed that the journalist had posed him the same question.

He told French broadcaster TF1 that his mother, who has been ill in recent months, had been upset at the criticism of him.

Occasionally criticised by France coach Laurent Blanc for his failure to exert more of an influence in the national team, Nasri was a constant menace in Monday's game and was named the official man of the match.

Paraguay sack coach Arce

REUTERS, Asuncion

Paraguay have sacked coach Francisco Arce after the World Cup quarterfinalists from two years ago made a poor start to the qualifiers for the 2014 tournament in Brazil.

The Paraguayan FA (APF) announced the decision on Monday after Paraguay lost 3-1 away to Bolivia at the weekend to drop to second from bottom in the nine-team South American group.

"It is one of the hardest decisions I've had to take along with the board. Things did not work out as one wanted and it's a shame," APF president Juan Angel Napout told reporters after an emergency meeting.

He said a new coach would soon be named to take over from the 41-year-old former defender, who played at two World Cups and was handed the job when Argentine Gerardo Martino quit after last year's Copa America in which Paraguay reached the final.

Paraguay have registered one victory, one draw and three losses in five matches, leaving them five points behind Ecuador, who occupy the fourth and final automatic qualifying berth for the finals.



Ukraine star Andriy Shevchenko is ecstatic after scoring one of his two goals against Sweden during their Euro 2012 Group D match at the Olympic Stadium in Kiev on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

Sheva rolls back the years



UKRAINE 2: 1 SWEDEN
SHEVCHENKO 55, 62



IBRAHIMOVIC 52

AFP, Kiev

Ukraine's former European Player of the Year Andrei Shevchenko rolled back the years here on Monday as his second-half double inspired the Euro 2012 co-hosts to a come from behind 2-1 win over Sweden in their Group D encounter.

The 35-year-old Ukraine captain took his tally to 48 in 108 international appearances with two superb headers within seven minutes of each other - his opposite number Zlatan Ibrahimovic's neat 52nd minute finish had given the Swedes the lead.

The victory sees Ukraine - who are co-hosting the tournament with Poland - top the table after the other group match between France and England ended 1-1.

The Ukrainians carved out the best chances with another veteran Andrei Voronin forcing Andreas Isaksson to punch to safety from long range while one of the younger generation, Andrei Yarmolenko, was also denied by the Swedish 'keeper at closer range.

However, the Swedes should have broken the deadlock in the 40th minute but their captain Zlatan Ibrahimovic saw his free header just go the wrong side of the far post.

Ibrahimovic struck in the 52nd minute somewhat controversially as a Ukraine

player was lying injured but the Swedes played on regardless.

The Ukrainians failed to clear their lines and Kim Kallstrom managed to lose his marker, collect Sebastian Larsson's cross and pass inside to Ibrahimovic, who coolly slotted it into the net and embarked on a typical flamboyant celebration, arm raised straight in the air.

The goal had been coming after the Swedes had come out pumped-up after the half-time break with Markus Rosenberg going close.

However, their lead last just three minutes as Yarmolenko delivered a superb cross into the area and Shevchenko like days of old got ahead of his marker, veteran Olof Mellberg, to head powerfully into the net.

The crowd, the scorer and his team went berserk and they were to even outdo that noise seven minutes later as an Oleg Gusev corner Shevchenko nipped in ahead of Ibrahimovic, this time to head in at the near post.

Sweden kept pressing for the equaliser with Kallstrom going the closest with a fierce effort from outside the area which the not always convincing Andrei Pyatov fumbled away and was fortunate that Ibrahimovic was unable to put the rebound past him.

Racist chanting in Euros

REUTERS, Warsaw

UEFA is to investigate alleged racist chanting during the Euro 2012 matches between Spain and Italy and Russia v Czech Republic, the governing body said on Tuesday.

"Following the provision of new independent information today, regarding the two cases of alleged racist chanting in the Spain-Italy and Russia-Czech Republic matches, UEFA is now conducting further investigations," UEFA said in a statement.

"There are, however, no disciplinary proceedings opened at this moment in time."

Media reports said Italy striker Mario Balotelli was the victim of racist chanting during the Group C match against Spain in Gdansk on Sunday.

Czech Republic defender Theodor Gebre Selassie told reporters he had "noticed" racist chants directed at him in his side's opening Group A game with Russia in Wroclaw.

No official complaints have been made to UEFA by Italy or Czech Republic.

UEFA is on high alert for incidents of racism during the June 8-July 1 tournament.

The governing body wrote on Monday to the mayors of Polish and Ukrainian cities hosting Euro 2012 training sessions to ask for an increased police presence to avoid racist behaviour from fans.

Some members of the Netherlands squad complained of hearing monkey noises at an open training session at Wisla Krakow's stadium last week when tens of thousands of Poles turned up to watch.

The issue of racism dominated the build-up to the co-hosted tournament with a BBC documentary suggesting bigotry was widespread among fan groups.

Both Poland and Ukraine denied the allegations. Before the tournament, the hot-headed Balotelli had warned he would "kill" anyone who threw a banana at him in the street during the European Championship.

In a separate case, UEFA has opened disciplinary proceedings against the Croatian Football Association for incidents during their opening Group C match against Ireland in Poznan on Sunday.

Croatian fans celebrated their second goal by letting off firecrackers and flares and a supporter dressed in his country's national team shirt came out of the stands and gave Croatia coach Slaven Bilic a kiss on the lips in front of the team bench.

UEFA said the Croatians have been charged with the setting off and throwing of fireworks and missiles, and invasion of the pitch.

Do-or-die for Dutch



GERMANY
14 WINS

HEAD TO HEAD

Played: 38

Draws 14

NETHERLANDS
10 WINS



REUTERS, Kharkiv

Clashes between Netherlands and neighbours Germany always have extra spice but Wednesday's Euro 2012 Group B encounter is about much more than regional rivalry after the Dutch began with a surprise defeat by Denmark.

A win in that game would have given Bert Van Marwijk's team a little breathing space against the highly-fancied Germans but now three points are a must.

"It is going to be a battle but we have to show that we can become champions," said Netherlands defender John Heitinga.

"We have to win now, there's no excuse, and we are aware of that. We know we have to win against the Germans."

In the loss to the Danes Van Marwijk left Schalke 04 forward Klaas-Jan Huntelaar, the continent's top scorer in qualifying with 12 goals in eight games, on the bench until 19 minutes from time but he could now start

the prolific striker.

If he does, Ibrahim Affelay, who was not impressive against the Denmark, would likely be dropped to allow Robin Van Persie to move to the left flank.

Regardless of the formation, the Dutch can ill afford a repeat of the poor finishing they produced against the Danes with Van Persie and Arjen Robben guilty of some bad decision-making and poor execution.

At the back, first choice central defender Joris Mathijsen could return to the starting lineup after resuming full training. If he is deemed match fit then stand-in Ron Vlaar would miss out.

Germany did not look convincing in their 1-0 win over Portugal and coach Joachim Loew knows they must be sharper against the Dutch and is demanding improvement in all areas.

"We have taken the first little step but the game against Netherlands will be very different," Loew said.

Reds galore in Brazilian brawl

INTERNET, Undated

Votuporanguense beat Fernandopolis 2-1 in a Campeonato Paulista second division match that ended with a brawl and 12 red cards. The unrest began when the winning side's striker was taken down by Fernandopolis' goalkeeper on a one on one. The keeper was shown the first red, then everyone got angry.

There were punches and flying kicks that mostly didn't connect, but enough did to cause a few injuries and one Fernandopolis player threatened to file a police report against his opponents/attackers. Once things calmed down, the referee handed out 11 more red cards before ending the match and ruling Fotuporanguense the winners.

Danes stay upbeat



PORTUGAL
8 WINS

HEAD TO HEAD

Played: 13

Draws 2

DENMARK
3 WINS



REUTERS, Lviv

Denmark are confident they can continue a good run of results against Portugal and shut down dangerman Cristiano Ronaldo when the sides meet on Wednesday in their second Euro 2012 game.

Denmark, surprise joint leaders of Group B, won their qualifying section ahead of Portugal, largely due to a 2-1 home victory over them.

"We have closed down Cristiano Ronaldo before and we firmly believe we can do it again," said defender Simon Kjaer, one of the Danes' best performers in a surprise 1-0 win over Netherlands in their opening game at the finals.

"He has got unique individual skills but we have shown before that we can cope with him as a team and we believe that we can defeat Portugal again," Kjaer told reporters.

Midfielder Michael Silberbauer man-marked Ronaldo in Copenhagen and is set to start in place of Simon Poulsen.

Denmark had lost the Euro qualifying away game 3-1 in Lisbon. They were also in the same qualifying group as Portugal for the 2010 World Cup, winning one game and drawing the other.

The Danes, the ninth-ranked team in the world, were initially tipped to go out in the first round of Euro 2012 but 10th-ranked Portugal have lost their way recently and now look vulnerable.

Although Kjaer bullishly said the Danes had "blown the group right open", coach Morten Olsen sounded more cautious in the wake of the 1-0 win over an unusually wasteful Dutch side.

"A bit of euphoria is great but we will keep both feet on the ground. We have to do better against Portugal because they are under a lot of pressure now," he said.

Portugal, who lost 1-0 to Germany, have won just one of their last seven games and scored once in the last four.



Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo receives the ball during a training session in Opalenica on Monday. Portugal take on Denmark in a Euro 2012 Group B match tonight.

PHOTO: AFP

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

Is Shakib Al Hasan rightly given a break?

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DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Premier League
Brothers Union v Farshganj

Time: 5:30pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Walton Club Cup Hockey Final

Abahani v Usha
Time: 3:00pm

Venue: Maulana Bhasani Hockey

What to WATCH

Maaranga TV & NEO Sports
Euro 2012
Denmark v Portugal
Live from 10:00pm
Holland v Germany
Live from 12:45am (Thursday)

TEN Cricket
Sri Lanka v Pakistan
Third ODI
Live from 3:00pm

ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News