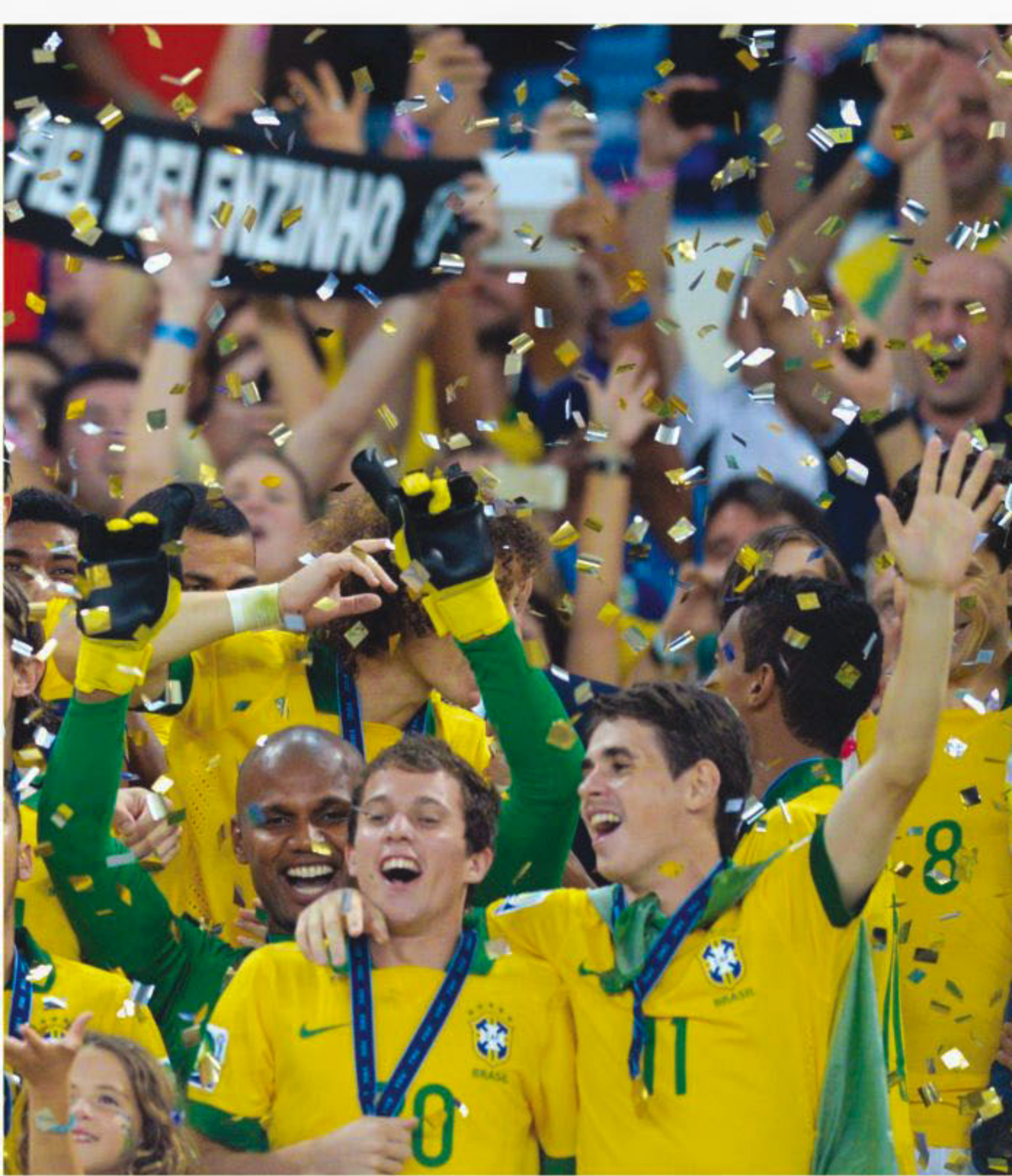


What to WATCH

ESPN
Wimbledon C'ships
Women's Singles Quarterfinals
Live from 6:00pm
TEN Cricket
India v Sri Lanka
Tri-Series, Third ODI
Live from 8:30pm



Golden Neymar

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Brazilian striker Neymar was named as the best player of the Confederations Cup after he helped Brazil seal a 3-0 win over world champions Spain in the final on Sunday, then said he would need minor throat surgery before his move to Barcelona.

Neymar, who has joined Barcelona from Santos for 57 million euros (\$74.09 million) won the Golden Ball, awarded to the best player in the competition after a vote among the media.

Andres Iniesta of Spain and Paulinho from Brazil were second and third respectively.

The 21-year-old Neymar, who scored four goals during the tournament, said he would have the surgery on Friday before he goes to Spain.

"It's a problem that I have, my throat always bothers me, so we're going to operate to resolve it once and for all," he said in adding that it was not a serious issue.

He also urged a word of caution to his

patriots among the celebrations following Brazil's demolition of the world and European champions at the Maracana.

"Let's keep calm, let's keep our feet on the ground," he said as Brazil emerged a serious contender to win the World Cup on home soil in a year's time. "We did very well and we are on the right track."

"We needed this time to train, we get to know each other and to work together and we are much better than we were. We won the title and that was a great end to a great tournament."

Neymar began the tournament with a brilliant strike against Japan, added goals against Mexico and Italy then ended it with another superb goal against Spain when he lashed the ball past keeper Iker Casillas just before halftime.

Spain's Fernando Torres, who scored five goals and was joint top scorer along with Fred of Brazil, won the Golden Boot for having an assist in his four matches, while Fred had one assist but played one more match.

Brazil's Julio Cesar collected the Golden Glove for the best goalkeeper while Spain took the FIFA Fair Play Trophy.



(Clockwise from L) The Selecao celebrate with the Confederations Cup after their astounding 3-0 victory over Spain at the famous Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro on Sunday night. Brazil centre back David Luiz makes an astonishing goalline save, which was one of the key moments of the final. A grim-faced Colombian singer Shakira, who painfully watched her boyfriend and Spanish defender Gerard Pique receiving a straight red in the second half of the match. (R) The heroes of Brazil - Fred (L) and Neymar.

PHOTOS: AFP/REUTERS

KEY FACTS

- Brazil won the Confederations Cup for the third successive time following their previous wins over Argentina in 2005 and the United States in 2009. They also won it in 1997 and their four wins in the competition is a record.
- Brazil stretched their unbeaten run in competitive matches at the Maracana Stadium to 23 games since

- losing the 1950 World Cup decider 2-1 to Uruguay.
- Spain's record unbeaten run of 29 competitive matches ended. Their previous loss was to Switzerland, who beat them 1-0 in their opening match at the 2010 World Cup.
- It was Spain's heaviest defeat in a competitive match since Wales beat them 3-0 in a World Cup qualifier in April 1985.
- Fred's second minute goal was the fastest Spain had conceded since Joe Jordan of Scotland scored against them in the first minute of a European quali-

Daily Star into last 8

SPORTS REPORTER

The Daily Star came from behind to play out a 1-1 draw against The Independent to confirm a place in the quarterfinals of the Kool-BSJA Media Cup football tournament at the artificial turf adjacent to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday.

Despite only needing a draw to secure a place in the last eight, The Daily Star went all out to create several scoring chances in the seven-a-side football tournament. They however conceded the lead when a goal kick from the opposition was allowed to go into the net by keeper Ziaur Rahman, who mistakenly thought that the goal would be disallowed.

With the deficit The Daily Star looked momentarily worried against the opponents who needed a win to take a last-eight spot at the expense of The Daily Star. Soon however, The Daily Star were back on the horse and pressing for the equaliser, which they eventually scored when substitute Rakib fired the ball into the opposition net. There were several chances thereafter but the former champions could not capitalise.

The Daily Star will take on Radio Today in one of four quarterfinals today.

Four sports journalists to be honoured

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Sports Press Association (BSPA) will felicitate four veteran sports journalists today to mark World Sports Journalists' Day, which will be observed in 167 countries.

The journalists are Biman Bhattacharjee, Manjurul Haque, Mohammad Selim and Mostafa Kamal.

State minister for youth and sports Ahad Ali Sarker will be present as chief guest on the occasion at the Bangladesh Olympic Association auditorium.

'We will return'

AFP, Madrid

Spain looked forward to a chance for World Cup revenge Monday after Brazil hammered the world champions 3-0 in a humiliating Confederations Cup final at the Maracana Stadium.

Spain were swept away by the more powerful Brazilians and must now learn the lessons of their defeat if they are to stop Brazil running away with the World Cup they will host in 2014, the Spanish press said.

"We will be back," vowed the front page headline in Spain's biggest sports daily Marca.

"Spain sink in the Maracana and make a date for Brazil in the 2014 World Cup," said Marca, over a photograph of Neymar celebrating his spectacular goal.

"Everything went wrong for Spain," the paper said, from an attempt to equalise when 1-0 down that was blocked on the line by Brazil's David Luiz, to a missed penalty by Sergio Ramos in the second half.

Marca praised Brazil's superiority in concentration, speed, intensity, physical strength and football. But the paper also criticised the referee's lax attitude to Brazil's "continual fouls".

"Brazil will be the favourites in the next World Cup," said the paper's football analyst Santiago Seguro.

"But it will be hard to improve on yesterday's level," he added.

Spain had come back from a Confederations Cup defeat to win the last World Cup, he warned, predicting that the return of Xabi Alonso to Spain will fix many of the side's problems.

Rival sports daily AS ran the same defiant front page headline: "We will be back."



Spain star Andres Iniesta spits water out of his mouth after losing their Confederations Cup final to Brazil.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Spain were made up of midfielder Andres Iniesta "and 10 others", said an opinion piece by AS's Alfredo Relano.

He criticised Spain's defence, bemoaned a lack of "miracles" from keeper Iker Casillas and added that the competition had not gone well for Xavi Hernandez.

Brazil's Neymar, who joins Barcelona from next season, emerged as a "world class figure", however, he said.

"We have a year to find out if this team has further to go or if it already needs a shake-up," Relano said, noting that a World Cup gives teams more time to prepare.

"It just remains to congratulate Brazil and start to prepare right now, calmly, for the World Cup within a year."

Barcelona's two main sporting papers, Sport and Mundo Deportivo, highlighted the dazzling performance of Neymar, the new star signing for Barca.

WI escape own trap

AFP, Kingston

West Indies scrambled to a one-wicket victory with 14 balls to spare over India in the second match of the Calkon Mobile Cup Tri-Nation One-Day International Series at Sabina Park on Sunday.

Birthday boy Kemar Roach and last man Tino Best ensured the West Indies did not complete their own destruction, turning in match saving performances.

The home side had to reply to the World Cup and Champions Trophy holders' total of 229 for seven.

They tottered from the comfort of 142 for three in the 28th over via a rash of irresponsible shots, even with Johnson Charles battling to hold the innings together.

However the opening batsman joined the apparent suicide pact: he was eighth out for 97 and when Sunil Narine also gifted his wicket at 220 for nine.

It was left to the Barbadian fast bowling pair of Roach -- on his 25th birthday -- and Best to see the West Indies home in a nail-biting finish.

India was deprived of the calming influence of Mahendra Singh Dhoni in the field after the captain was hobbled while batting by a suspected right hamstring strain.

But, under the supervision of Virat Kohli, the visitors refused to give up, even when Charles and Darren Bravo (55) appeared to be tilting the balance decisively the home team's way.

Their fourth-wicket partnership of 116 lifted the Caribbean side from the early discomfort of 26 for three.

Umesh Yadav, who removed the dangerous Chris Gayle and Devon Smith in his opening burst, added the important wicket of Charles to keep his team's hopes alive in the match. He finished with the best figures of three for 43.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: 229 for 7 in 50 overs (R Sharma 60, Karthik 23, Raina 44, Dhoni 27, Jadeja 15; Roach 2-41, Best 2-54, Sammy 2-41)

WEST INDIES: 230 for 9 in 47.4 overs (Charles 97, Bravo 55, Sammy 29; Yadav 3-42, I Sharma 2-51)

Result: West Indies won by one wicket. Player-of-the-match: Johnson Charles.

Fitness in focus

SPORTS REPORTER

Fitness coach Muhammet Yamali started work on the national football players yesterday with the promise that they will be more fit by the time of the SAFF Championship in September in Nepal. He however warned the players that they must work hard to stay in the squad.

After arriving yesterday morning, both Yamali and assistant Rene Koster got into their roles in the afternoon. Rene had his first session with the preliminary squad after a brief theory class at the BFF conference room where he focused on the Dutch style of play that the team are going to adopt.

Rene said, "I told them (players) what I expect from them, how to play, what you want to do and how to reach our goal which is very important and everybody have to believe in it."

Fitness coach Yamali said, "My goal is to get the players as fit as possible for the SAFF Championship so that we can reach our target of winning the title. The Dutch-born Turkish therapist said that he was informed that the Bangladesh players did not have good fitness awareness.

"Controlling the body is very important. So I will begin with that to make them faster and better. For the first two days I will test the players and make a profile of every player. Then, I will see who needs extra attention to get fit before September. If the players want to stay in the squad, they have to work hard," was the clear message for the players.

A work in PROGRESS

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari insisted his side were still a work in progress despite their Confederations Cup masterclass against world champions Spain here Sunday.

Scolari, the architect of Brazil's last World Cup victory in 2002, was the proudest man in the Maracana on Sunday as his remodelled team overwhelmed the fabled Spaniards 3-0 courtesy of two goals from Fred and a sublime effort from Neymar.

With the World Cup on Brazilian soil less than 12 months away, it was a result which will infuse Scolari's team with belief that a record sixth World Cup crown is there for the taking if all goes to plan next year.

A delighted Scolari however was more circumspect when asked to discuss the significance of his team's mesmerising display.

"We are still not a team that is complete, we know that we have a good group but we still have to prove a lot. But today, we embarked on the path to 2014," said Scolari, reappointed seven months ago for a second stint in charge.

"It was fantastic to hear the crowd singing 'the champions are back' but a long path stretches ahead of us. Yet I am sure people will now respect Brazil a little more."

"In the past 30 days we have beaten four former world champions in France (in a pre-event tune-up), Italy, Uruguay and now Spain," he remarked matter of factly.

Brazil began the tournament with the words of Pele ringing in their ears, with the legendary No.10 questioning whether Scolari's team were good enough to prevail.

Almost as important as the level of performance on the pitch was the re-bonding of Brazil's team with their fans, Scolari said.

"My team pay from the bottom of their hearts. We will now be working with a little bit more trust knowing we have the capacity and maybe rise above the level even of today's match," he told reporters, explaining he just wants "to set up a competitive team which can go for the title at the World Cup."

"I think we are improving, there is more trust and the supporters give it back and that is very nice. When we come together we become strong."

"Apart from the quality of all of our players we had the crowd behind us and I believe that is very important, that unity, that spirit."

The extent to which Brazil now can use the intervening 12 months to oil an even leaner machine in time for their first World Cup hosting since 1950 will be of fascination to students of the international game.



Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari celebrates their victory over Spain in the Confederations Cup final.

PHOTO: REUTERS