

# SPORT

## C'Ron out of German tie?

AFP, Foxborough



Cristiano Ronaldo's chances of being fit for Portugal's opening World Cup clash with Germany were thrown into further doubt Thursday when coach Paulo Bento refused to put a timeframe on his return.

Ronaldo, 29, failed once more to train with the rest of his teammates, as they went through their paces ahead of Friday's friendly with fellow World Cup qualifiers Mexico in the United States.

Portugal play the strongly fancied Germans on June 16 but, at this rate, they could be without their star player and talisman, who was already ruled out of the Mexico game because of persistent leg injuries.

The Real Madrid forward has a left thigh injury and tendinitis in the knee of the same leg, and has been struggling for fitness for several weeks in the crucial build-up to the Brazil showpiece.

Even if Ronaldo is free of injury, it looks increasingly unlikely that he will be match-fit.

"The situation is evolving and our expectations are evolving constantly," Bento told reporters at the Foxborough stadium of the

New England Patriots, asked repeatedly when Ronaldo would be fit.

"When he's ready to play is a decision that will be made just like any other player, regardless of who it is.

"I'm not at liberty to discuss at full length the situation. As soon as he is ready to train, we will make that announcement."

Growing visibly frustrated by persistent questions about Ronaldo, Bento added: "We have to prepare for Germany regardless."

"The decision of if he will play and when is up to me, the player and the doctors. Ronaldo is not the only good player we have."

Ronaldo, who has scored 49 goals in 110 matches for Portugal, also missed the goalless draw with Greece on Saturday in Lisbon.

Portugal, who squeezed into the World Cup via a playoff with Sweden, face a mounting injury crisis -- key defender Pepe and experienced midfielder Raul Meireles are also out of the Mexico encounter.

Real Madrid's Pepe has a left leg injury, although indications are that he will be fit for the World Cup.

"He had a lot of games this season and he had a good season," said Bento. "It's a question of evaluating the situation and seeing how he is, then we will decide."



Portugal wingers Nani (L) and Eder run during a practice session in Foxborough, Massachusetts on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Fighting draw after Imrul ton

SPORTS REPORTER

A fighting century from Imrul Kayes and a 23-minute last-wicket stand between Nurul Hasan and Robiul Islam helped Bangladesh A crawl towards a draw against the West Indies High Performance Squad on Friday at Barbados.

Despite the draw the hosts took the four-day series one-nil courtesy of their thumping 351-run win in the previous game.

With the visitors starting the fourth day on 32 for three, the match headed towards another one-sided win. However, while wickets fell at one end, Kayes held the other up with 112 and struck 15 fours and two sixes in his 334-minute long innings.

He received support from Shuvagata Hom who scored 39.

SCORES IN BRIEF

WEST INDIES HP: 354 and 354 for 5 dec  
 BANGLADESH A: 219 and 242 for 9 (Kayes 112; Cottrell 4-51)

Result: Match drawn

## Bolt to miss Ostrava & Paris meets

AFP, Paris

Jamaica's Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt, currently recovering from a foot injury, said Friday he is not ready to race at meets in Ostrava or Paris.

World record holder Bolt had been expected to make his return on the track at Ostrava in the Czech Republic on June 17 with the Diamond League meet in Paris on July 5.

The six-time Olympic champion said however that he was not ready to return after missing several weeks of training in March and April.

## De Kruij to arrive later this month

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national football team's Dutch coach Lodewijk de Kruij is likely to return to Bangladesh later this month while assistant coach Rene Koster, who is already in Dhaka, will watch the performance of the 30 selected players for September's Asian Games in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League matches.

Both the coaches have remained idle since Bangladesh U-19 national team's engagement in the AFC Qualifiers last October and they were vacationing in Netherlands for eight weeks before Koster returned here a few days ago.

"De Kruij will return in the latter part of this month while Koster will be watching the performance of the selected players in the ongoing league and he will also visit different clubs to watch their training," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag, also informing that BFF president Kazi Salahuddin and BFF vice president Tabith Awal had a meeting with Koster yesterday.

Both De Kruij and Koster have four months of wages due and Shohag informed that they would disburse a big chunk of the unpaid wages this month.

## Farashganj confirm promotion

SPORTS REPORTER

Farashganj Sporting Club qualified for next season's Bangladesh Premier League after confirming the second position in the Bangladesh Championship League with a 2-0 win over Victoria SC in their penultimate game at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Farashganj, who were relegated to the second-tier league two seasons ago, needed just a single point against Victoria for an unassailable lead from the nearest rivals and third-placed team Agrani Bank. However, the Old Dhaka outfit secured full three points to raise their tally to 32 points from 17 matches. Khokon Das and Ripon scored one goal each for Farashganj.

## Old pro takes on young tyke

### Sharapova to face Halep in final today

AFP, Paris



The French Open final on Saturday between Russian superstar Maria Sharapova and Romanian upstart Simona Halep sees a stark contrast in styles and status.

The 27-year-old Russian is the biggest name in women's sport, a global icon, and the holder of four Grand Slam titles, the last coming in Paris two years ago when she became just the sixth woman in the Open era to complete a career sweep of the major titles.

Halep, an unassuming 22-year-old from the Black Sea port city of Constanta, will be playing in her first Grand Slam final, having struggled, like many before her, to make the transition from junior to senior level.

Sharapova will tower over her opponent at 1.88 metres (6 feet 2 inches) compared to Halep's 1.68 metres (5 feet six inches).

But all the signs are there for one of the most intriguing French Open women's finals in years and, many hope, the first to go to three sets since Jennifer Capriati defeated Kim Clijsters 12-10 in the third in 2001.

Halep, who has broken into the top bracket of women's tennis in the last 18 months, has by far the most impressive figures of the two in this year's tournament.

## Siddikur stays strong

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's premier golfer Siddikur Rahman finished the second round of the Queen's Cup at joint-fourth position after racking up four-under-par (138) over the two days.

The 29-year-old golfer traded two birdies for one bogey but also missed quite a few birdie putts on the second day at the Santiburi Samui Country Club.

"I missed some easy birdie putts but made some tough up and downs. Overall, it was equal. I wasn't too disappointed missing those short putts," said the two-time Asian Tour winner to Asiantour.com after day's play.

Siddikur's compatriot Jamal Hossain Mollah, who started the day at eighth position slipped to 18 th after returning a card of two-over-par (73) for an aggregate of 142.

## Rafa crushes Andy

### Djokovic brushes aside Gulbis

AFP, Paris



Eight-time champion Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic, who needs a Roland Garros title to complete a career Grand Slam, will clash in Sunday's French Open final after racking up convincing semi-final wins on Friday.

World number one Nadal cruised to a 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 win against Wimbledon champion and seventh seed Andy Murray to register his 65th win on the red clay of Paris against just one defeat as he moved one victory away from becoming the first man to win five successive French Opens.

Sunday will be the 28-year-old Spaniard's 20th Grand Slam final.

Djokovic, the world number two and runner-up to Nadal in the 2012 championship match, went through to his 13th major final thanks to a 6-3, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 win over Latvian giantkiller Ernests Gulbis of Latvia.

Nadal could wrap up a 14th Grand Slam title which would put him level at second best on the all-time list with Pete Sampras and three behind Roger Federer while Djokovic will be chasing his seventh major.

Murray failed in his bid to become the first British player to contest the French Open final since Bunny Austin 77 years ago and will now turn his attention to defending his Wimbledon crown.

It was his worst loss to Nadal in nine Grand Slam match-ups between the two, surpassing the nine games he managed in the 2008 Wimbledon quarter-finals.

Ahead of his 42nd meeting with Djokovic, Nadal added: "He is an unbelievable opponent. He is always a big challenge and I need to play at my very best."

Djokovic, 27, defeated Nadal in the Rome final and has won their last four encounters. However, Nadal leads 13-4 overall on clay as well as 22-19 on all surfaces.

Playing in his 22nd semi-final at a major compared to a debut appearance for Gulbis, the Serb was hardly troubled in the first two sets.

But Gulbis, the 18th seed who defeated 17-time major winner Roger Federer and sixth seed Tomas Berdych to get to his first Grand Slam semi-final, rallied in the third to briefly breathe life into the contest.

In the end, however, Gulbis's 44 unforced errors to Djokovic's 25, as well as his ability to convert just two of his seven break points proved crucial.

## GERMANY 2006 The Sky is Azzurri

Outside of Italy at least, there is one image that springs to mind when people recall the 2006 World Cup in Germany -- and it isn't Azzurri captain Fabio Cannavaro lifting the famous trophy.

Sadly for France legend Zinedine Zidane, one of the greatest footballers of his and any generation, the crazed head-but that sent Marco Materazzi flying -- and saw Zidane sent off -- near the end of extra-time in the final is what that game, this tournament, and ultimately his career is best remembered for.

Zidane's meltdown, and Italy's victory in the penalty shoot-out that followed shortly afterwards, ensured a dramatic end to a World Cup that had begun with a bang exactly a month earlier when, six minutes into the opening game, Philipp Lahm found the top corner of the net with a stunning long-range shot that sent the hosts on their way to a 4-2 win over Costa Rica.

That Lahm strike was the first of many crackers in an entertaining group stage that saw only five goalless draws in 48 matches as teams, for the most part, went on the attack. Bakari Kone's solo effort for the Ivory Coast against the Netherlands and Esteban Cambiasso's fine finish for Argentina against Serbia and Montenegro were of the top drawer.



PHOTO: DAILY STAR ARCHIVE

Each individual player of the squad played a part as Italy shrugged off the match-fixing scandal to win their fourth World Cup title.

Sadly, the goals dried up once it was down to the last 16 teams. Argentina and Mexico fought out a classic, settled by Maxi Rodriguez's thunderbolt, and hosts Germany kept up their dynamic approach on their way as they beat Sweden to reach the last eight.

There was far less verve surrounding England, whose progress ended in the quarterfinals, by Portugal amid controversy, as Wayne Rooney was dismissed for a stamp on Ricardo Carvalho, with Cristiano Ronaldo encouraging the referee to send off his then Manchester United club-

mate. At the end of a tense 0-0 draw, came another England defeat in a penalty shoot-out, with Portugal winning 3-1.

Elsewhere, holders Brazil also under-achieved, crashing out to France, while Argentina's defeat to Germany -- again on penalties -- ensured the semifinals would be all-European affairs.

Marcello Lippi's Italy were far more acclaimed for their defensive play -- conceding just two goals during the whole tournament -- but they showed how much quality they had going forward too with brilliant late goals from Fabio Grosso and

Alessandro del Piero that took them into a showdown with France, who edged past Portugal thanks to Zidane's penalty.

Apart from the Zidane-Materazzi moment, the final was an open and entertaining game that saw goals from both of its most famous protagonists. France held on to force only the second shoot-out in a World Cup final but Italy, who had lost the first one to Brazil in 1994, were not to be denied and all five of their penalties were successful, with Grosso's proving decisive.

As his players celebrated, an emotional Lippi, the former Juventus coach who had been questioned as part of the match-fixing scandal that had rocked his country weeks before the tournament began, said: "The players have showed unlimited heart, character and personality. Winning the World Cup is the greatest satisfaction that any coach or footballer can ever feel, and this is the most satisfying moment of my life."

### FACTS & FIGURES

Winners: Italy  
 Runners-up: France  
 Leading Scorer: Miroslav Klose (GER)--5  
 Teams: 32  
 Matches: 64  
 Goals: 147  
 Attendance: 3,359,439

## ICC zeroes in on suspect actions

CRICINFO, Bangalore



The ICC's cricket committee has stated that the methods currently in use to detect illegal bowling actions are imperfect. The committee, which discussed the issue during a two-day meeting in Bangalore on June 3 and 4, said that numerous international bowlers with "suspect" actions were continuing to bowl undetected, and hence it was important that match officials get support from biomechanists to identify the illegal actions with "more confidence".

"The committee discussed the issue of illegal bowling actions, and believed that there are a number of bowlers currently employing suspect actions in international cricket, and that the ICC's reporting and testing procedures are not adequately scrutinising these bowlers," the ICC said in a release.

"It recommended that changes be considered to encourage umpires and referees to identify suspect bowlers with greater confidence, to use the expertise of the biomechanists working in this area to assume a greater role during the assessment process, and to allow for ongoing scrutiny of bowlers once they have been identified under the ICC procedures."

To make the process more robust, the ICC has decided to open illegal-action testing centres in more countries. Until now, bowlers had to travel to the laboratories at the University of Western Australia in Perth to undergo testing, but the committee was informed of additional centres being accredited by the ICC.

Also in focus was the Officiating Replay System (ORS), which the cricket committee recommended be implemented more widely. The ORS is a system that has been trialled over the past year, whereby the third umpire has control over the replays he sees, instead of depending on the broadcaster to provide him with the appropriate footage.

"The committee unanimously supported the expanded use of this system in international cricket, and this recommendation will be considered by the chief executives later in June," the cricket committee stated on the ICC's website, following its meeting in Bangalore.

"The committee was very positive about the ORS used during the latter stages of the World T20 in Bangladesh, which consists of a dedicated screen and an operator who sits in the TV umpire's room and provides the TV umpire with instant replays from any camera angle," the statement said.