

**Fred, Neymar
sharpen teeth**

AFP, Teresópolis

Brazil strikers Fred and Neymar jokingly took a leaf out of Luis Suarez's book on Wednesday by pretending to bite team-mate Marcelo and Dani Alves in training.

The pair engaged in some light-hearted tomfoolery a day after Uruguay forward Suarez caused a storm by appearing to bite Italy's Giorgio Chiellini in the shoulder.

Suarez was Wednesday waiting to see what kind of punishment FIFA would slap on him for his misdemeanour.

But the Brazilians could afford to see the funny aside as they prepared for Saturday's second-round match against Chile.

FIFA has launched an investigation into the Liverpool star.

"I saw what happened -- everyone saw it," said Brazilian midfielder Willian.

"But it's not for me or the team to pass judgment. We have to stay concentrated on the job in hand and not get distracted by peripheral stuff."

**Manaus proved
critics wrong**

AP, Rio de Janeiro

British tabloids warned it was a jungle outpost where dangers ranged from rampant crime to snakes, but Manaus's mayor said Wednesday the World Cup host city had proved critics wrong.

Switzerland's 3-0 win over Honduras was the fourth and final game for the Brazilian city's new and stylish Amazonia Arena and Mayor Arthur Virgilio Neto said each had been a great occasion and a source of pride.

"I feel my soul washed," he said minutes after the game, proudly clutching regional tourist bureau figures showing 97 percent of foreign visitors rated reception and services as satisfactory.

"We have passed the test and we were the surprise element for the World Cup," said Neto, insisting that the city will remain firmly on the tourist map with new flight links upcoming.

Portuguese TAP is set to provide a direct flight between Manaus and Lisbon, while Spain's Iberia is due to link the Amazonian capital with Madrid.

City officials hope the Cup will also pave the way for charter routes to the United States.

Neto said the World Cup has transformed the city, despite many Brazilians questioning the wisdom of building a stadium in a city with no football tradition.

England coach Roy Hodgson said before the tournament he had wanted to avoid the humidity of the city where his side lost to Italy.

In addition, English tabloid media published dire warnings about what they dubbed a crime-ridden city in the jungle where dangers included poisonous snakes.



Announcing arrival ... Argentina's Lionel Messi, with four goals in three games, is already the joint top-scorer along with Brazil's Neymar.

PHOTO: GETTY

মানসম্পন্ন বাংলাদেশী প্যানের ব্যবহার
শিল্প বিকাশে সহায়ক

CROWN CEMENT
FOR SOLID FOUNDATION

Messi making his mark

REUTERS, Porto Alegre

Both men are short in stature, predominantly left-footed and blessed with incredible skills that can unlock the most stubborn defences.

Maradona emerged from the 1986 World Cup a hero in Argentina but a villain in the eyes of many after his infamous "hand of god" effort against England in the quarterfinals, when he

had scored 10 times in his last

eight games for his country and on Wednesday became the only Argentine apart from Maradona to score four World Cup goals in a row.

"Messi is one heck of a player," Nigeria coach Stephen Keshi, whose side joined the South Americans in the last 16 despite Wednesday's reverse, said at a news conference.

"We're doing OK," Messi told reporters when asked if he felt tired. "Now we have five or six rest days and I'm doing fine."

After lifting the trophy in 1978 and again in 1986, Sabella said it was about time Argentina won another title.

Messi could not agree more.

"I believe there's nothing more beautiful than being a world champion with the national team, seeing the joy of the whole country," he said.

Sabella was pleased with the way his Argentina side, who

will face the runners-up in Group E on Tuesday, played against Nigeria at the Beira Rio stadium in southern Brazil.

"In general the team improved," he said. "They had good control over the ball and were able to damage the opponent."

On their impending clash with Alejandro

Sabella's side on Tuesday, Shaqiri said his team would be unfancied against a tournament favourite but was not giving up on his plucky side who qualified out of Group E with two wins.

"It's a dream -- small Switzerland against Argentina. It will be a great match and we'll be ready for them," Shaqiri said.

Although we're underdogs, anything is possible. You never know in football."

'We needed Leo to rest'

REUTERS, Porto Alegre

also scored what is regarded as one of the greatest goals in soccer history to secure a 2-1 success.

He struck five times in the tournament and created another five of his team's 14 goals, including the pass that sent Jorge Burruchaga clear to score the winner in a 3-2 victory over West

Hammer.

The comparison with Maradona, whose brilliance almost single-handedly propelled Argentina to victory in Mexico in 1986, is the one inevitably made most often.

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Shaqiri thanks teammates

INTERNET

Switzerland winger Xherdan Shaqiri paid credit to his teammates, after his hat-trick in their 3-0 FIFA World Cup win over Honduras.

The Bayern Munich man scored in the sixth, 31st and 71st minutes in Manaus on Wednesday, to send Ottmar Hitzfeld's men into a last-16 date with Argentina.

Shaqiri opened the scoring at the Arena da Amazonia with a pearler from range, before Josip Drmic twice assisted his team-mates to nurture him to the 50th hat-trick at a World Cup final.

"It's a dream -- small Switzerland against Argentina. It will be a great match and we'll be ready for them," Shaqiri said.

And the 22-year-old, who also pointed to his teammates after goals two and three, said his feat was the result of a

team effort.

"I wanted us to play football and we did that. I wouldn't have scored three goals without them," Shaqiri said.

"I'm very proud of my hat-trick; I'm never going to forget this but that said I'm more proud of us as a team and that we've qualified for the round of 16."

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BRAZILIAN BAURU

AP, Rio de Janeiro

REUTERS, Rio de