

## Brazil maintain their prefect record

AGENCIES



Brazil continued their winning romp through the Copa America Wednesday, eking out a controversial 2-1 victory against Colombia after struggling most of the match to answer a magnificent bicycle-kick goal by Luis Diaz.

The 11th-hour win gave the "Selecao" a perfect nine points from three matches in the South American championships, and extended their current winning streak to 11 matches.

However, the victory was steeped in controversy: Brazil's second-half equalizer, a Roberto Firmino header, was preceded by a Neymar pass that glanced off Argentine referee Nestor Pitana.

Colombia heatedly argued afterward that play should have been stopped, but Pitana ruled neither side was hindered and allowed the match to continue.

Disgruntled Colombia fans on social media turned the referee's name into a viral hashtag, joking he had played as



Brazil had already qualified for the quarter-finals from Group B and with four points from four games, Colombia join them. Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela are vying for the last two spots from the group. In Sunday's final group games, Ecuador face Brazil on Monday (3am, Bangladesh Time) while Peru play Venezuela (Monday, 3am, Bangladesh Time).

"Brazil's 12th man."

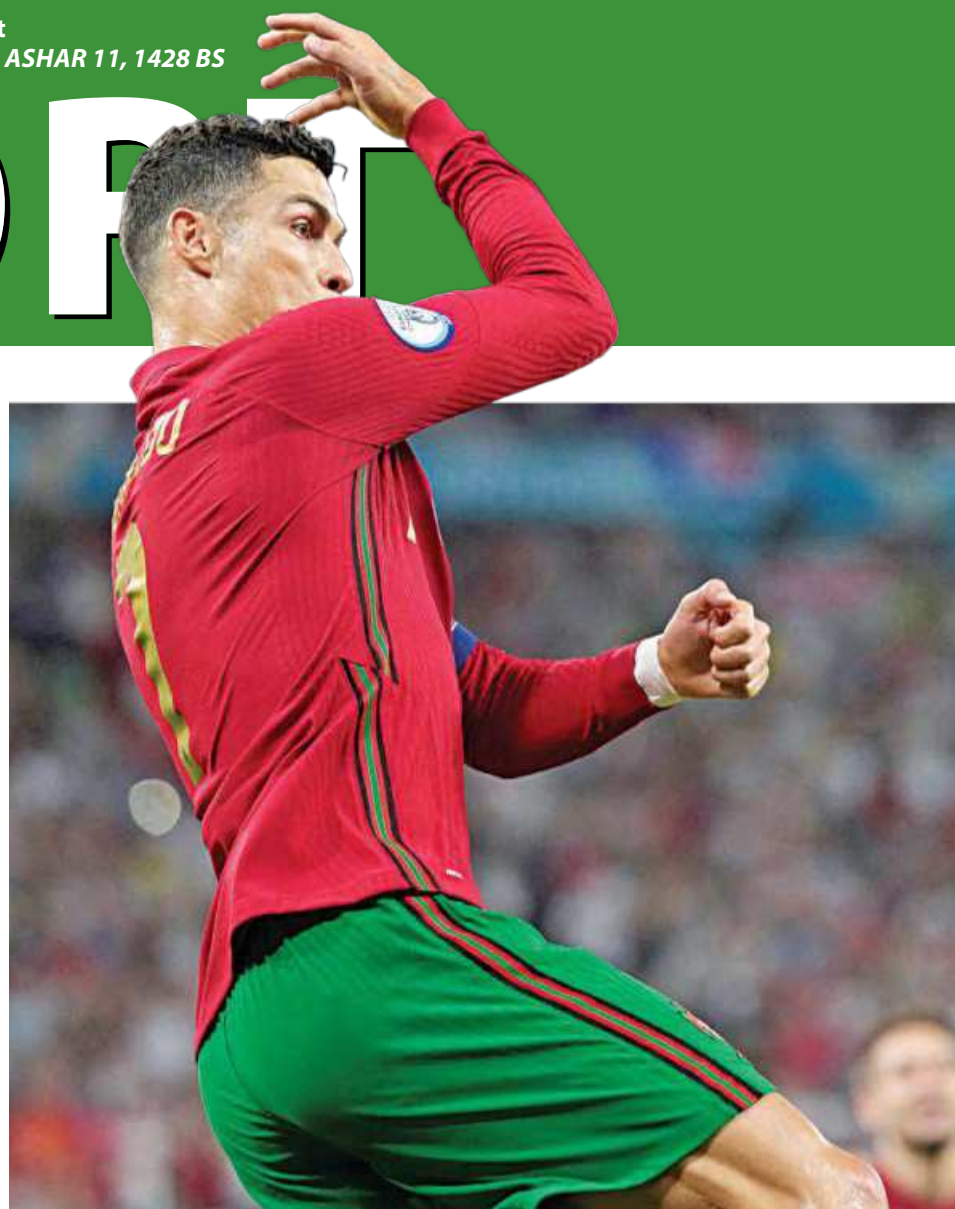
The resentment only grew when an unmarked Casemiro headed in the winner deep into stoppage time. However, Colombia, who are second in Group B with four points from four matches, still secured a spot in the quarter-finals.

Captain Casemiro however said Brazil fully deserved the three points.

"Brazil deserve congratulations for their mental strength, for being well on top, and getting our reward in the end because we had the coolness to keep plugging away in search of a goal," he added. "That's the mentality you have to have."

"They came forward once, scored a goal, sat back and it turned into a game of attack against defence."

In the early match, Ecuador and Peru failed to settle who advances to the quarter-finals, drawing 2-2 in Goiania.



## PROLIFIC RONALDO in line to break more records

AGENCIES

Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 109th goal for Portugal in Wednesday's Euro 2020 game against France to equal former Iran striker Ali Daei's all-time international record.

The 36-year-old Ronaldo, the leading scorer in European Championship history, converted his second penalty of the game in Budapest to match the record in his 178th international appearance.

Ronaldo has already broken a few records playing at the Euro 2020. He became the only player to have played

"Congratulations to @cristiano who is now one goal away from breaking the men's international goal scoring record. I am honoured that this remarkable achievement will belong to Ronaldo - great champion of football and caring humanist who inspires and impacts lives throughout the world."

ALI DAEI WROTE ON INSTAGRAM

"The true champions are champions forever. I'm very proud to read such kind words from a big idol like you. Thank you, Ali Daei."

RONALDO THANKED ALI DAEI ON INSTAGRAM

at five Euros and has also scored in every Euro he has taken part in, making him the only player to score in five different Euros. Ronaldo was tied with Michel Platini on nine Euro goals as the highest goalscorer in the tournament. He took that record for himself, having scored five goals already in three games. He now has 14 goals to his name and is well clear of Platini.

At 36 years, 130 days, Ronaldo also became the oldest player to score for Portugal at a major tournament, breaking the record set by Pepe at World Cup 2018 (35 years, 124 days), when he scored against Hungary.

But that's not the end. The superstar is in line to create a few more records during the course of the tournament, with Portugal expected to go deep into the competition.

It is highly probable that Ronaldo will surpass Iran's Ali Daei and become the player with most international goals. Having already equalled Daei's record of 109 international goals, Ronaldo could overtake him when Portugal face Belgium next in the last 16 of Euro on June 28.

The prolific scorer could also become the player with most assists in Euros. Currently, the record for the most assists made in Euros belongs to Karel Poborsky who is on eight assists. However, Ronaldo is only one away with seven assists.

In terms of caps, Sergio Ramos has 180 caps for Spain and is the highest-capped European international. Ronaldo has 178 caps after the France match and if Portugal progress to the semifinal, he will have broken Ramos' record.

## ROUND OF 16



EURO 2020 is down to the knockout stage, with the 24 qualifiers now 16 as they are whittled down to the side that lifts the trophy on July 11. All the fixtures have now been confirmed after Wednesday night's thrilling conclusion to Group F as a late goal in Munich saw Germany go through after a dramatic 2-2 draw with Hungary, while Portugal qualified as one of the best third-placed teams thanks to their 2-2 draw with France. England will play old rivals Germany in the Round of 16 at Wembley Stadium. Cristiano Ronaldo and Co will take on Belgium in the other stand-out Round of 16 tie in Bilbao.

### GROUP WINNERS:

Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, England, Sweden and France.

### GROUP RUNNERS-UP:

Wales, Denmark, Austria, Croatia, Spain and Germany.

### BEST THIRD-PLACED TEAMS:

Switzerland, Czech Republic, Ukraine and Portugal.

### ROUND OF 16 TIES

June 26: Wales vs Denmark (10pm, Amsterdam)

June 27: Italy vs Austria (1am, London)

June 27: Netherlands vs Czech Republic (10pm, Budapest)

June 28: Belgium vs Portugal (1am, Seville)

June 28: Croatia vs Spain (10pm, Copenhagen)

June 29: France vs Switzerland (1am, Bucharest)

June 29: England vs Germany (10pm, London)

June 30: Sweden vs Ukraine (1am, Glasgow)

\*\*\*ALL TIMES ARE IN BANGLADESH STANDARD TIMES



Germany coach Joachim Loew and Leon Goretzka are all smiles after the match as a late Goretzka goal salvaged a 2-2 draw for Germany against Hungary on Wednesday night, in a whip-saw contest that sets the Germans up for Round-16 match against England at Wembley. PHOTO: REUTERS



Sheikh Jamal batsman Mohammad Ashraful celebrates after his unbeaten 72-run knock helped his side to secure a six-wicket victory against Abahani in the Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier Division T20 Super League match in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Mohammedan lose again

SPORTS REPORTER

With the Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier Division T20 Cricket League coming close to its conclusion, few of the national team players found morale-boosting runs ahead of the series against Zimbabwe.

Gazi Group condemned Mohammedan Sporting to their fourth successive defeat in the Super League phase as Mahedi Hasan relished an opportunity to bat in the opening slot, blazing a 58-ball 92 before capsizing in the final over. Gazi seized victory with three wickets and as many deliveries in

hand. Liton Das, struggling for from and also missing much of the premier league through injury, showed deft touches mixed with powerful strokes during a 51-ball 70 for Abahani but the title contenders' 173 for 7 was upstaged by Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi's Mohammad Ashraful, who hit an unbeaten 48-ball 72. Nurul Hasan also continued his good vein with the bat during a 22-ball 36 as Sheikh Jamal won by six wickets.

Table toppers Prime Bank were bundled out for 126 against Prime Dolshwar and their match against Abahani on the final match day will decide the title.

AGENCIES



New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and its greatest cricketer Richard Hadlee led the tributes on

Thursday after the Black Caps claimed the inaugural World Test Championship (WTC) by beating India.

Kane Williamson's team became Test cricket's first official world champions after prevailing by eight wickets in Southampton on Wednesday, the reserve day of a match plagued by bad weather.

"The Black Caps have made New Zealand proud. This was a masterful performance from a team at the top of their game and on top of the world," Ardern said in a statement.

New Zealand have been to the semi-final of the 50-over World Cup eight times and lost the last two finals, in heartbreaking fashion to England on the boundary countback rule after the 2019 decider was tied.

Throughout those setbacks, New Zealand have continued to play in a spirit sometimes derided as "nice guy" cricket.

More importantly, they have won all but one match, a draw,

in four Test series since a 3-0 drubbing in Australia around the turn of 2020.

"Over the past two years, the Black Caps performances in the Test arena have been outstanding with Test match and series wins at home and abroad," the 69-year-old Hadlee said in a statement.

"The whole team has shown a high degree of professionalism. Their skill sets have complemented each other to make them a complete playing unit. "It's fair to say that this current group of players is the best in our history."

Kiwis dominated global headlines and Indian media

outlets also praised the Black Caps as worthy champions.

Former England international Mike Atherton described them as a "humble, hardworking and outstanding Test team - worthy champions", while former Kiwi cricketer Scott Styris tweeted it was a "sensational performance".

The Telegraph commended New Zealand's discipline and dominance and it also pointed out the rise of Kyle Jamieson.

Indian cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar said New Zealand deserved their victory. "Congrats @BLACKCAPS on winning the #WTC21. You were the superior team," Tendulkar wrote on Twitter.

## 'The worthy champions'



New Zealand's pace quartet-- Kyle Jamieson, Tim Southee, Trent Boult, and Neil Wagner-- was relentless and never let the Indian batsmen settle down in both the innings of the WTC final. PHOTO: TWITTER