

World Cup mania hits Bangladesh

SOHEL RANA

Many of us do not know that renowned film director-actor-producer Sohel Rana used to be a footballer when he was a student at Dhaka University. The Brazil supporter watches most of the World Cup matches. Rana said, "Though five/six teams are major contenders for the trophy, I expect Brazil to win the Cup. Brazil has an outstanding team, including strikers like Kaka, Adriano, Ronaldo and Ronaldinho."

On his World Cup preparation Rana said, "I'll watch all the matches of Brazil. However, I think matches of other giants will be enjoyable as well. I'll invite my friends over to watch the matches and share the excitement."

HUMAYUN FARIDEE

Renowned actor Humayun Faridee is a die-hard Argentina supporter. He said, "Argentina has quality players like Lionel Messi, Hernan Crespo and others, but I think Brazil, England, Portugal and host Germany are major contenders for the Cup."

On the impact of World Cup '06 on Bangladesh, Faridee said, "The World Cup brings festivity to Bangladesh. The frenzied fans are busy discussing the tournament and -- for a while -- prefer watching the football matches rather than other programmes on TV. Interestingly I've observed that even the incidence of 'crime' declines during the World Cup, as everyone remains immersed in the sport."

As in previous years, Faridee has plans to watch most of the matches of the World Cup. And he places his bets on striker Kiri Ronaldo.

KERAMAT MOULA

Keramat Moulana, a recognised figure in Bangladesh theatre (vice president of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation) is also a football organiser. He is the vice president of the first division football team Wari Club. An ardent Brazilian fan, Moulana said, "I enjoy artistic football displayed by the Brazilian team. I think the current Brazilian squad is the best in the world and logically this team should win the World Cup '06. The team has a wonderful forward, which can break any defense. I admit, Brazilian defense is comparatively



With the FIFA World Cup '06 kicking off tonight, the whole world has been taken over by football fever. Bangladesh is no exception. Most of us have plans to be glued to the TV screen throughout the month. Ershad Kamol and Khalid-Bin-Habib talked to six renowned cultural personalities on their favourite teams and more. Here's a run up of what they had to say:

weak. But, Adriano, Kaka, Ronaldo and Ronaldinho should overcome the limitations."

Moula adds, "World Cup is held once every four years and so I have plans to watch most of the games with friends at my house."

RIAZ

Asked about the upcoming FIFA World Cup '06, the popular filmstar Riaz said, "I regard football as a symbol of world peace. With Bangladesh gearing up for the World Cup matches, I am giving in to the football mania as well. I am touched by the global festivity that goes with the match. In truth, it is a visual treat for me. Due to late night games, I will watch the matches at my home."

"Brazil is my favourite team as they have an impressive style, elegance and commitment. I hope my favourite team will ignite a fierce competition."

SHAHIDUZZAMAN SELIM

A die-hard fan of Brazilian soccer team, popular director and actor Selim said, "The World Cup has held me in thrall since 1982. Actually, all the matches are at night, from 10:00 pm to 3:45 am. So, I have to charge up to stay awake the whole night. I believe my favourite team will display enormous levels of skills by the newcomers in every match. I want to see the World Cup full of classic encounters and jaw-dropping goals. Also love to watch the heroes of world football like Ronaldo or Ronaldinho weave their magic. When the matches start, I want to hoist flags and wear my jersey to show my support for the Brazilian team. Overall it should be a nice World Cup with lots of upsets. The Brazilian team truly deserves to be champion! Because the team can show what determination, talent and faith can achieve."

SHAMIM ARA NIPA

"I'm all charged up about the upcoming FIFA World Cup '06. I don't who is going to score the highest number of goals because it's such an unpredictable game. But I am hoping that Argentina wins the World Cup '06. Posters and sketches of football stars and flags of different countries are on display near the roadside which really makes me feel the spirit of soccer extravaganza," says the popular dancer Nipa.

Celebrating the game of life

The culture of World Cup Football

KARIM WAHEED

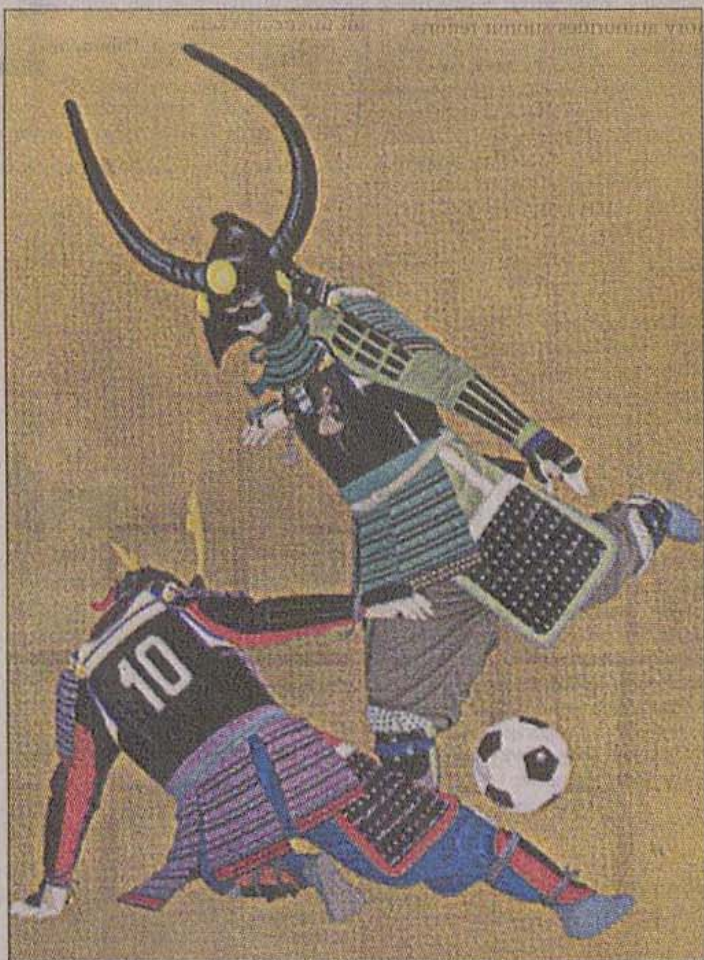
"A football team represents a way of being, a culture..."

--- Michel Platini

FIFA World Cup Germany 2006, simply known to football (that's soccer to North Americans) fans as the "World Cup", begins today in Munich with the host country facing off Costa Rica. Is it just an international tournament? Any die-hard football fan thinks otherwise. This is the football version of "Olympics" to us and football is still the closest thing to the world's universal language.

Football has often made its fanatics do bizarre things. Take Saddam Hussein for example. While he was still in power and the national team lost, players reportedly were forced to kick a concrete ball around in practice, had their heads shaved, or were even tortured. However, more importantly than off the wall behaviour, football brings nations together. Even the North Koreans venture out occasionally for games, as they did several years ago to play South Korea in Seoul in a contest billed as "the reunification match."

There's more to it than that, however. National teams are reflections of their cultural heritage, which is what makes the World Cup so fascinating. The Italians put



by a logo and a mascot but by a very special song as well.

The first major official World Cup song, *World Cup Willie*, was about the first official mascot (a lion) of the 1966 FIFA World Cup held in England. Since then, the official music programme has become a major component of the event. This has provided an opportunity for all music lovers around the world and not just devoted football fans to identify with the biggest sporting event ever. These songs incorporating renowned musicians and sounds from all over the world attained immense popularity. The whole world hummed and swayed with *Un'estate italiana* (1990) by Edoardo Bennato and Gianna Nannini, *Gloryland* (1994) by Daryl Hall with Sounds of Blackness and *La Copa de la Vida* (1998) by Ricky Martin. In 2002, the official song was *Boom* by Anastacia, while Vangelis' vocal official anthem featured typical Korean and Japanese sonic elements.

The Official Song of the 2006 FIFA World Cup is *Time of Our Lives* by the vocal group, Il Divo and R&B diva Toni Braxton. The Official Song reverberates with the theme of the football event, *A time to make friends*. The song was written by Jörgen Elofsson.

The Official Album, *Voices*, is a collection of international hit songs including *Hips Don't Lie* by

Film screening in Dhaka to mark World Cup '06

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The country takes on a festive look during the FIFA World Cup Football Tournament. On the occasion of the FIFA World Cup Football Tournament '06, the Goethe Institut, the German Club and the German Embassy have jointly undertaken a month-long programme to add colour to the event.

In addition to the live broadcast of selected football matches, movie screening and 'Video Art Talent Search' are the highlights of the function. The special programme begins this evening at the Goethe Institut. The main attraction of the opening programme is a feature film titled *The Miracle of Berne*. The movie deals with the championship-winning German football team of 1954. The German victory over Hungary in the final match on July 4, 1954, is the turning point in Germany's history. From then onwards the image of the country gradually changed. Featuring the story of a young boy's war-weary father, the movie basically portrays the rebirth of a nation. Director Sönke Wortmann made the comedy in 2003. Louis Klamroth, Peter Lohmeyer, Johanna Gastdorf and others are the major cast of *The Miracle of Berne*.

An official of the Goethe Institut said, "We are screening 11 movies on football in the movie screening session. Moreover, documentaries on the German cities in which World Cup '06 matches are taking place will also be screened."



A scene from the film *The Miracle of Berne*

Another attraction of the arrangement is 'Video Art Talent Search Programme'. Enthusiastic filmmakers of the country are invited to make short films (five minutes or less duration) on the World Cup as part of the fun video-mania project. Those interested can pick up the

secret clue on June 13 from Goethe Institut, on which topic she or he has to make a short film either in DVD or VHS format. In addition to screening the short films at the Goethe Institut, these will be screened at the FIFA World Cup '06 closing ceremony at German Club on July 9.

Football on the small screen

Bishwacup Roundup on Channel-i

The show currently running on Channel-i everyday at 6:15pm, features stories on the most surprising and shocking results in the World Cups, 'Golden Boot' winners of the previous tournaments, dramatic penalty shoot outs, promising youngsters of the sport and rise to top of some of the underdogs. From tonight Motiur Rahman Chowdhury, editor of *Manab Jamin* who is now in Germany to watch the FIFA World Cup '06 will provide the latest updates of the event for the viewers. The programme is directed by Aminul Islam Razu.

Bishwacup Protidin on ATN Bangla

The FIFA World Cup '06 is going to be one of the most watched sporting spectacles across the globe. ATN Bangla unveiled a comprehensive programme titled *Bishwacup Protidin* to give the viewers an experience to build their interest in the World Cup. Bangladeshi football experts analyse the matches and teams for the FIFA World Cup '06 in each episode. The programme will also feature exciting blend of originally shot footage from qualifiers and other innovative feature based content. Anwar Hossain will host the programme. Directed by Biplob Rahman the programme will be telecast everyday at 4:45pm starting from today.



Bishwacup Protidin will be aired on ATN Bangla

Football Carnival on Rtv

Football Carnival, a 42-episode programme will start today and will continue till July 9. Each episode of the programme will rediscover the magical moments from previous World Cups. It also features an SMS quiz contest. The programme will be telecast everyday at 5:30pm.



A scene from *Brazil-Argentina*

Special play *Brazil-Argentina*

Brazil-Argentina is not the most awaited match between the two football playing giants, rather a TV play which will be aired on the eve of the opening day of the FIFA World Cup '06 on Channel-i.

Mostafa Mamun's comedy *Brazil-Argentina* depicts the popularity of the FIFA World Cup. Promising director Tareq Khan directs the play. Tareq said, "Most of the football fans in Bangladesh are either supporters of Brazil or Argentina. During and before the World Cup, the masses keep on cheering for the two teams. To me this can be an avant garde theme for a TV play. Sports journalist Mostafa Mamun has written the play."

On the storyline of the play, Tareq said, "Two tenants are fanatic supporters of Brazil and Argentina, that's why each considers the other as rival. However, when the landlord asserts that he will not allow any of the tenants to watch World Cup matches, the two rivals jointly protest the landlord's decision."

ATM Shamsuzzaman, Mamunur Rashid, Abul Hayat, Dolly Zahur, Tushar Khan and others form the major cast members of the play. *Brazil-Argentina* will be aired today at 7:25 pm on Channel-i.



their emphasis on artistry (sometimes to the exclusion of scoring goals), and one begins to understand some of the attributes that gave birth to the Renaissance. The English forge ahead offensively, ignoring defense, and one sees what gave rise to the once thriving "empire where the sun never set". To Brazilians, "real football" rocks in Samba rhythm. Argentines do the Tango passionately with the ball and Germans are known for their impeccable demonstration of discipline and precision.

Not just the players and the matches, ardent fans dressed in colourful costumes rooting for their teams through spirited songs

and dances, spectacular cultural programmes and more, make the World Cup an unforgettable experience.

The cultural programmes leading to the month-long 2006 World Cup tournament certainly did not lack scope or diversity. Some 48 projects featuring exhibits, theatrical performances, concerts, films and parties took place to entertain the locals and foreigners coming to Germany for the games.

The German capital, the setting for the World Cup final, held the *Rundlederwelten* (Round Leather World) exhibition. Videos, installations, photos and sculptures depicting every aspect of soccer

from around the world was on display at various locations around the city.

With some of the world's most famous party people in town, almost every street is expected to get some kind of soundtrack, be it samba or African beats.

Brazil is taking advantage of the popularity of its national football team to promote the country's culture in Germany. The *Copa da Cultura* programme is comprised of more than 200 Brazilian cultural events held in Germany mostly during the World Cup.

Music has always been an integral part of the World Cup identity, which is now not only identifiable

Shakira and Wyclef Jean, *Hero* by Mariah Carey, *Earth Song* by Michael Jackson, *Always On My Mind* by Elvis Presley, *7 Seconds* by Youssou N'Dour and Neneh Cherry, *Maria Maria* by Santana, *Celebrate the Day* by Herbert Grönemeyer and more.

Many around the world are disappointed at FIFA's decision to call off the World Cup Gala, which apparently would have been a colossal cultural event unlike any other. But during the month-long tournament when a horde of England fans with painted faces sing to boost their team's morale or when the dazzling Samba dancers "shake it like its 2006", how far will football be from culture?