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DHAKA TUESDAY JUNE 13, 2006

banglalink
Goal

banglalink picture of the day



PHOTO: AFP

OZ ON THE MOVE: Australia midfielder Tim Cahill (L) is being chased by his jubilant teammates after he has just scored his second goal against Japan in their World Cup Group F opener at Kaiserslautern's Fritz-Walter Stadium on Monday.

Comeback Aussie style

Australia 3 Japan 1

AFP, Kaiserslautern

Australia stormed home with three goals in the final eight minutes for a stunning 3-1 come-from-behind victory over Japan in their Group F World Cup match in scorching temperatures here Monday.

It was Australia's first World Cup win and their first ever goals in only their second finals' appearance in 32 years.

The Australians looked headed for a deflating opening defeat in snapping heat when a controversial 26th-minute goal from playmaker Shunsuke Nakamura rocked them.

But a double from Everton midfielder Tim Cahill, who came

on eight minutes after halftime, and another goal from substitute striker John Aloisi turned the game around sensationally as the Australians were rewarded for their all-out attack.

Cahill fired home in a goalmouth scramble in the 84th minute after goalkeeper Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi fired to clear and he was on the spot again four minutes to lash home a volley that rebounded off the left post into the goal.

The Japanese were reeling and Aloisi provided the icing with his team's third goal nearing full-time, evading defender Yuichi Komano to rifle home a left-foot volley to send the gold-clad Australian fans into uproar.

It all looked to be going sour for Guus Hiddink's Aussies after Nakamura's controversial goal.

The Celtic midfielder lobbed in a cross from the right and Australian goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer appeared to be knocked off balance by Naohiro Takahara in going for the ball which bounced into the unguarded goal.

Egyptian referee Essam Abdullh el Fatah enraged the Australian players when he awarded the goal and was confronted by a couple of players remonstrating with his decision.

Australia were always up against it before Hiddink risked everything to throw on Aloisi and striker Josh Kennedy along with attacking midfielder Cahill to save the match.

The well-marshalled Japanese looked to have repulsed the incessant Australian attacks before

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Pfister is back

AFP, Frankfurt

German coach Otto Pfister is to return to coach the Togo team just three days after he walked out over a dispute concerning player's bonuses.

The 68-year-old German told sports press agency SID that he was returning to his old post and would be on the bench for Tuesday's Group G opener against 2002 World Cup semifinalists South Korea.

"I am coming back and I will take my place on the bench for the match against South Korea," said Pfister.

Pfister's return was confirmed by the spokesman for the Togolese delegation Messan Attalou.

"He (Pfister) will be on the bench on Tuesday against South Korea and will be our coach for the whole tournament."

THIRD EYE

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

Colour was what dominated the headlines in Day 3 of the World Cup as the Dutch painted Leipzig a sea of orange while the green and red of Mexico and Iran respectively provided a perfect contrast. Not to be left behind, Portugal's maroon kit also made an appearance against their former colony Angola who were a trifle out of keeping with the days events as they came out outfitted in plain white.

'Oranje' was the theme of the day not just on the stands as Arjen Robben kitted in orange from tip to toe lighted up a sometimes dull encounter at Leipzig against a Czech Republic side which looked strangely subdued. The Dutch didn't look too inspired themselves and it took Robben to get the ball to lift their spirits. The fleet-footed Chelsea winger delivered too as he sparked almost every Dutch attack and also got the only goal of the game a wonderfully placed finish after being set through behind the Serbia and Montenegro looked rock solid but

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LEADING SCORERS

AFP, Berlin

World Cup leading scorers after the Japan-Australia match on Monday:

2 - Bravo (Mexico), Klose (Germany), T Cahill (Australia), Wanchope (Costa Rica)

1 - Aloisi (Australia), C. Tenorio (Ecuador), Crespo (Argentina), Delgado (Ecuador), Drogba (Ivory Coast), Frings (Germany), Golmohammadi (Iran), Lahm (Germany), Nakamura (Japan), Pauleta (Portugal), Robben (Netherlands), Saviola (Argentina), Zinha (Mexico)

BRAZIL V CROATIA

Quest for Hexa starts

AFP, Berlin

Brazil launch their bid for a record sixth World Cup title when they face Croatia on Tuesday in the Berlin stadium where they aim to return in four weeks' time to lift the trophy.

The nucleus of the side which triumphed in Japan in 2002 is back, while Kaka has replaced Rivaldo alongside Ronaldo and Ronaldinho in the most potent attacking trio in world football.

But Kaka cautioned that the other contenders for the crown were trying to put pressure on the Brazilians by hanging the favourites' label around their necks.

"It is always the same. Brazil will win it. Brazil are the favourites," the AC Milan midfielder said.

"But this talk of us being clear favourites is a bit exaggerated. There is a strategy behind it. The other teams want to take the attention and the pressure off themselves."

With World Player of the Year Ronaldinho supplying the ammunition for Ronaldo and the bullish Adriano, everyone is saying Brazil will steamroller opponents, but Kaka is cautious.

"The system we play is very offensive and that means we have a special responsibility not to get caught out with goals on the counter-attack."

"It is a risky formation as we are open to conceding goals. We need to make sure we get the right balance," he said.

A relaxed buildup to the tournament was disturbed when Ronaldo -- who has fought a battle with his weight for much of his career -- took offence when he was questioned about his waistline by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Lula swiftly reaffirmed his "affection" for the player, but the question would not go away.

"I only want respect," Ronaldo said, whose training has been hampered by blisters.

Even former Brazil great Tostao opined that the great man is currently "an unknown quantity".

"I only want respect," Ronaldo said Saturday -- and a goal against Croatia would doubtless mean all would be well with his world again, blisters or no blisters.

Ronaldo aside, another man who cannot be overlooked in a side bursting with creativity is world player of the year Ronaldinho, who has fulfilled in spades the potential

he showed back in Asia when he played his part in the road to victory in Yokohama.

The 26-year-old from Porto Alegre has turned football into the highest art with his showings this season which carried Barcelona to the Champions League title as well as the Spanish championship for a second straight season.

But the Real Madrid striker who was mysteriously below-par in the 1998 final but bounced back with both goals in the 2002 climax against Germany has his eyes on a record.

Just three goals in this tournament would see him overtake West Germany's Gerd Muller, who notched 14, as the all-time leading scorer in the World Cup.

If Ronaldo's influence has faded, Ronaldinho has become the undisputed king of the side.

The 26-year-old from Porto Alegre carried Barcelona to the Champions League title as well as

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TEAMS

Brazil (4-4-2)
 1-Dida; 2-Cafu; 3-Lucio; 4-Juan; 6-Roberto Carlos; 5-Emerson; 11-Ze Roberto; 8-Kaka; 10-Ronaldinho; 9-Ronaldo; 7-Adriano

Croatia (3-4-1-2)
 1-Stipe Pletikosa; 7-Dario Simic; 4-Robert Kovac; 3-Josep Simunic; 2-Darjko Srna; 5-Igor Tudor; 10-Niko Kovac; 8-Marko Babic; 19-Niko Kranjcar; 17-Ivan Klasnic; 9-Dado Prso.

TODAY'S MATCHES
 ALL MATCHES LIVE ON ESPN * LIVE ON STV TOO

TEAM	TIME	VENUE
Korea Rep v Togo	6:50 pm	Frankfurt
France v Switzerland*	9:50 pm	Stuttgart
Brazil v Croatia*	12:50 am (Wednesday)	Berlin

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 match2: France (fra) VS Switzerland (swi)
 match3: Brazil (bra) VS Croatia (cro)

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