

DHAKA TUESDAY JUNE 13, 2006

SOUTH KOREA V TOGO

Afro-Asian battle

AFP, Frankfurt

South Korea aim to show that their glory run to the 2002 World Cup semi-finals was neither a fluke nor FIFA-assisted with a repeat performance in Germany starting with a win over rudderless debutants Togo.

Conspiracy theorists and sceptics had a field day four years ago as legendary Dutch coach Guus Hiddink plotted the overthrow of European football nobility.

South Korea beat Portugal, Italy and Spain on the way to the semi-finals where they were dumped by a Michael Ballack goal for eventual runners-up Germany.

The European aristocrats were hit by sending offs and disallowed goals leading to accusations that dark forces were at work to ease the host nations passage to the latter stages.

South Korea are back for their sixth straight World Cup with another Dutch believer in the philosophy of total football at the helm - former Holland coach Dick Advocaat - and 10 Seoul survivors from four years ago, including will o' the wisp attacker Park Ji-sung

who has added a new dimension to his game since joining Manchester United.

Five of the squad - Park, Seol Ki-Hyeon, Ahn Jung-Hwan, Song Chung-Gug and Lee Eul-Yong - have scored in the World Cup finals, a fact that will not have gone unnoticed by group opponents Togo, 1998 winners France and Switzerland.

TEAMS

South Korea (4-3-3)

1-Lee Woon-jae (97-0); 22-Song Chong-gug (51-3), 4-Choi jin-cheul (62-4), 6-Kim jin-kyu (23-3), 12-Lee Young-pyo (85-5); 7-Park Ji-sung (60-5), 5-Kim Nam-il (66-1), 13-Lee Eul-yong (47-3); 14-Lee Chun-soo (62-7), 9-Ahn Jung-Hwan (61-16), 11-Seol Ki-hyeon (67-13)

Togo (4-4-2)

16-Kossi Agassa (49-0); 2-Dare Nibombe (16-0), 3-Jean-Paul Abalo Dosseh (65-1), 5-Massamasso Tchangaï (34-2), 19-Ludovic Assemoassa (5-0); 8-Kuami Agboh (4-0), 9-Thomas Dossevi (10-1), 10-Cherif Toure-Maman (39-7), 15-Alexys Romao (11-0), 4-Emmanuel Adebayor (29-12), 17-Mohamed Kader Coubadja (46-13)

A 3-1 loss to Ghana in their final warm-up match last Sunday had the vultures circling overhead but the Koreans are determined that there will be no early feast for the scavengers.

They have been boldened by news that everything was not well in the Togo camp, with the ongoing bonus dispute leading to a walkout by respected coach Otto Pfister, and sense the Sparrowhawks are ripe for the taking in the Group G opener in Frankfurt on Tuesday.

It is a must-win fixture for South Korea and Advocaat is planning an attacking line-up, with Song and Spurs Lee Young-Pyo deployed as wing backs, Park in the centre of a three man midfield and wingers Lee Chun-Soo and Seol providing the ammunition for striker Ahn, who made the whole of Italy cry with his golden goal winner in the second round four years ago.

"When you come to a World Cup you want to progress as far as possible and that is what we (South Korea) want to do," said Advocaat, who is acutely aware that Korea have never won a World Cup finals match outside of their own country. "First goal is to go to the last 16-

after that anything is possible."

His players share that view with the English Premiership duo of Park and Lee in upbeat mood.

"We have to show that 2002 was no fluke," said Park with Lee adding that "in every way, we are a better team than four years ago."

Park added that his fame could act as a magnet for Togo's defence leaving room for his team-mates to exploit.

"We expect the Togo defence to concentrate on me because they have seen me play (for Manchester United)," he said. "This will give us an opportunity."

The walkout by the 68-year-old Pfister on Friday was the latest episode in a shambolic build up for Togo's first ever finals and many of their supporters fear a World Cup of woe.

They lost all three games and failed to score a single goal in the African Nations Cup in Egypt earlier this year and the campaign was further soured by bitter squabbling between star striker Emmanuel Adebayor, who plays his club football for Arsenal, and coach Stephen Keshi.

The much-admired Keshi was

SEE PAGE 20 COL 6

Follow the leader

REUTERS, Leverkusen

The much-travelled Dick Advocaat said he found the perfect job when he became coach of South Korea because the players never question his decisions.

The Dutchman, who led Netherlands to the quarter-finals of the 1994 World Cup and semi-finals of Euro 2004, told reporters on Sunday he liked the fact Koreans did as they were told.

"The difference is players in Europe like to talk to coaches about decisions they make," said Advocaat ahead of Tuesday's Group G opener against Togo.

"In Korea they always follow the leader, so I think I'm in the right job."

Advocaat, who replaced the unpopular Jo Bonfrere in September, said the common element with Korean and European players was their desire to achieve the highest goals.

Under fellow Dutchman Guus Hiddink's leadership in 2002, South Korea became the first Asian side to reach the last four of the World Cup.

The feat earned Hiddink eternal fame in Korea, as well as honorary citizenship and his own special Korean name.

Advocaat, who has also coached top club sides like PSV Eindhoven and Rangers, joked he would choose "President" if Korea wanted to give him a special name.

He also displayed the depth of preparation he and his staff had planned ahead of the match against Togo in Frankfurt.

One Korean reporter was wor

SEE PAGE 20 COL 8

Ji-Sung supremely confident

AFP, Bensberg

South Korean midfielder Park Ji-Sung believes that his fame will act as a magnet for Togo's defence leaving room for his team-mates to exploit in their opening Group G match on Tuesday.

The Manchester United star is expecting to be tightly marked by Togo and said on Sunday that if unloaded the ball quickly the Korean attack could capitalise on the open spaces.

"We expect the Togo defence to concentrate on me because they have seen me play (for Manchester United)," said Park during a meet-the-media session at the team hotel here.

"This will give us a good opportunity. If I can draw players and pass, quickly maybe I can find (striker) Ahn Jung-Hwan and (winger) Seol Ki-Hyeon in space."

Park was just 21 and an unknown quantity when he starred for South Korea in their glorious run to the 2002 World Cup semi-finals on home soil.

He said that the pressure would be greater this time around now that players like himself and Lee Young-Pyo were playing in the English Premiership.

"Of course, the pressure is very



PHOTO: AFP

Togo striker Emmanuel Adebayor (C) speaks with supporters in front of the Allgäustadion in Wangen ahead of their maiden World Cup match against South Korea today.

Adebayor: Turmoil is normal

AFP, Germany

Togo's star player Emmanuel Adebayor dismissed claims on Sunday the chaos surrounding his team's preparations for their opening match in their first World Cup finals would affect them.

Instead the 22-year-old Arsenal striker said that the abrupt departure of coach Otto Pfister on Friday because of ongoing disputes between the players and the federation over bonuses was par for the course as regards Togolese football.

"It has always been like that in Togo," said Adebayor, who scored 10 goals in the Sparrowhawks qualifying campaign.

"One cannot change things from one day to the next. Tomorrow the president of the federation could be fired, or I could be sacked," added Adebayor, who came perilously close to that end at the African Nations Cup when he and then coach Stephen Keshi had a catastrophic row resulting in both of them having to be pulled apart from coming to blows.

Adebayor, who was to win his personal battle with Keshi as the Nigerian was sacked following the first round exit in the African Nations Cup, said he wanted to put the Pfister episode behind him.

"I want to forget all that now," said Adebayor.

"I want to give my best."

Adebayor also said that he wasn't too concerned about the row over bonuses, though, he can afford to as

he is far better paid than the majority of his team-mates.

"Over the bonus question, I say to myself that this money, if I don't earn it today, I can earn it tomorrow."

"Is the hotel a good one? We will address this issue after our first match (against South Korea in Frankfurt on Tuesday)."

Nevertheless even without the problems over Pfister - who was replaced by assistant and former national handler Kodjovi Mawuena, though veteran German Winfried Schafer is being linked with the post - and the bonuses Adebayor had harsh words for some of his team-mates.

"We have been in Germany for two weeks and several of our players haven't woken up to the fact that we are at the World Cup finals," said Adebayor, who was criticised by some of the squad following his

burst-up with Keshi.

"But we are okay. We have players and coaches with experience in order to bring the others into line and to show them how important this is."

"We have to be professional. However we are hungry, and want to have a good tournament."

Adebayor admitted that the Koreans - semi-finalists in 2002 - would be a tough first opponent.

"We know we are going to play a good team, and that it will be difficult. As for our strategy, I cannot tell you, we shall see."

Togo move on from the Koreans to play Switzerland in Dortmund on June 19 and round off their first round campaign against 1998 champions France in Cologne on June 23.

Togo in disarray

REUTERS, Wangen

Togo, with one day to go before their World Cup debut against South Korea in Frankfurt on Tuesday, were left to sort out a pay row and a mess over who would coach the side.

The west Africans need to decide whether to stick with assistant Kodjovi Mawuena or accept German Winfried Schafer's conditions.

Togo's players have boycotted training sessions after pay demands were not met, prompting coach Otto Pfister to walk out on Friday night.

Since then Togo have called on former Cameroon coach Schafer to help out.

"I will take the job if they accept what I have said ... (I need) order," Schafer told reporters as he left a meeting with officials that lasted for more than four hours on Sunday.

"If they accept that, it is okay, if not, it is over. I am going to Frankfurt now and they can call me there tomorrow."

For now, Mawuena is in a famil

SEE PAGE 20 COL 1



PHOTO: AFP

South Korean midfielder Ji Sung Park (C) stretches with defender Chong Gug Song (L) during a training session at the Bay-Arena in Leverkusen ahead of the Asian giants World Cup opener against debutant Togo today.

Unhealthy World Cup

AFP, Seoul

Football fever gripping South Korea ahead of the team's World Cup debut against Togo on Tuesday has taken an unhealthy turn, according to some critics here.

Big business and media organizations are the main culprits, says Culture Action, the anti-World Cup coalition of some 100 grass roots groups.

"The whole of Korean society, under the spell of the World Cup commercialism, has gone mad," Kim Wan, a leader of the coalition, told AFP.

He blames TV networks for feeding the country with a diet of "World Cup trivia" while business conglomerates have been jumping on the bandwagon hoping to turn a profit.

Four years ago, millions of red-

shirted fans of South Korea -- known as the Red Devils -- took to the streets to cheer on their team in largely spontaneous celebrations.

In 2002, the square in front of City Hall became a rallying point where more than a million fans gathered there on match days. South Korea stunned the world by reaching the semi-finals.

But this time round, the square has been rented out to a consortium of media and business groups during the World Cup.

"The square belongs to the public. It is an example of extreme commercialism that seeks to exploit the World Cup for commercial purposes," said Kim.

Even the Red Devils supporters group representing over 300,000 fans, has been "contaminated" because it received large donations from Hyundai Motor and KTF, a

mobile phone carrier, according to Culture Action, an alliance of civic groups.

Dissident stickers have begun appearing in downtown locations where World Cup posters and banners have been erected by business corporations.

"Oppose the abuse of supporters' passions," read one sticker. Seoul is awash with World Cup merchandise, with fans snapping up Red Devil supporters shirts and little horns worn on headbands that light up at night.

Fashion magazines give tips to female fans on how to look good in Red Devil off-the-shoulder teeshirts, gathered at the waist and cut short to show plenty of flesh.

Giant models of players have been erected in the streets and massive World Cup banners with

SEE PAGE 20 COL 8



PHOTO: AFP

Pedestrians sit under or stand near giant models of South Korean soccer players in the streets of central Seoul on Monday.