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DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 18, 2006

banglalink  
**Goal**

banglalink picture of the day



PORTUGUESE BRAZILLIANCE: Portugal's Brazilian-born midfielder Deco (L) is ecstatic after blasting home the first goal against Iran at Frankfurt's Waldstadion yesterday.

# Portugal break the jinx

Portugal 2 Iran 0

AFP, Frankfurt

Portugal qualified for the World Cup knockout stages for the first time in 40 years on Saturday with a 2-0 win over Iran.

Iran offered robust resistance for more than an hour before Brazilian-born Deco's unstoppable opener. Cristiano Ronaldo settled the matter with a penalty 10 minutes from the end.

The win guarantees Portugal's progress from Group D, while Mexico and Angola are both in contention for the other qualification spot.

It is the first time Portugal have made it past the first round since 1966, when Eusebio inspired them to third place in England.

After some bad-tempered exchanges, Portugal's class told in the 63rd minute.

Cutting in from the left, captain Luis Figo laid off to Deco whose first-time shot sailed into the right corner, giving Iran's goalkeeper no chance.

Iran were not done and Vahid

Hashemian's powerful header forced a smart stop from Ricardo. But it was all over when captain Yahya Golmohammadi sent his opposite number Figo tumbling in the box, allowing Ronaldo to step up and bury his penalty in the top right-hand corner.

Portugal were mostly on the attack throughout the game, enjoying the best of the action in an ill-tempered first period when some heavy challenges brought protests from coach Luiz Felipe Scolari.

Portugal went close near half-time when Miguel's run and shot from an acute angle squirmed under goalkeeper Ebrahim Mirzapour and bounced across the face of goal.

Early on, Figo picked out Deco in the box but his fierce shot was palmed away. Figo also floated a

freekick to Maniche but his volley from distance was headed over by the Iranian defence.

The trick-filled Ronaldo enjoyed a busy first half, juggling the ball on the edge of the area at one point.

He skimmed the outside of the post and blazed one over but cut a frustrated figure at half-time after a series of decisions went Iran's way.

Iran's action was mainly restricted to setpieces, although Javad Nekounam hit the post before being ruled offside.

Ronaldo continued to shine after the break, forcing a sharp save from Mirzapour at his near post.

Pauleta tried to meet a Nuno Valente cross with the outside of his right boot but the flick flew over.

At the other end, Iran came close when a long ball found Rasoul Khatibi in the area but his shot went across the face of the goal.

But Portugal's second goal broke Iranian resolve and, with centre-half Golmohammadi subbed off injured, they finished the match on the defensive.

Pauleta had a chance to increase his record goals tally in the final minutes but shot tamely, and

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**STANDINGS**

Group D	Portugal	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Mexico	2	1	1	0	3	1	4	
Angola	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	
Iran	2	0	0	2	1	5	0	

# Big boys reasserting

REUTERS, Berlin

A generational shift is under way among the players but it is increasingly clear there will be no big shake-up in football's world order as the major powers reassert their authority after the shocks of four years ago.

Over a third of the way into the 2006 World Cup and you have to scratch around pretty hard to find any real surprises.

Trinidad & Tobago held Sweden to a goalless draw and the Soca Warriors came close to another shut-out against England before late goals from Peter Crouch and Steven Gerrard gave the 1966 winners a 2-0 win.

Angola also managed a 0-0 draw against Group D seeds Mexico but such results are hardly the stuff of World Cup legend.

The five African teams have played seven matches at the tournament so far and managed two draws and five defeats, with Tunisia's draw with Saudi Arabia the only other plus point.

Meanwhile the traditional favourites have prospered.

Argentina saw off Ivory Coast 2-1 before clinching a place in the last 16 with a 6-0 win over Serbia & Montenegro that featured passing moves of an almost hypnotic beauty.

The Netherlands are safely through, as are hosts Germany and

Ecuador, who have comfortably lived up to their status as the third best team in South America.

Brazil, Italy, Spain and Czech Republic also won their opening games with varying degrees of ease against teams who had been expected to do well. Even France could be happy enough with a goalless draw against a dangerous Switzerland side in Group G.

It was not like this four years ago in South Korea and Japan, when France, then the defending champions, went down 1-0 to Senegal in an opening match that was to set the tone for the tournament.

Argentina and Portugal, like France, went out in the first round

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## BRAZIL V AUSTRALIA

# Another chance for Hiddink

AGENCIES, Konigsstein

Coach Guus Hiddink says the big-match occasion of facing champions Brazil demands the strongest Australian team he can field for Sunday's enthralling Group F World Cup game of contrasts here.

Hiddink indicated at his pre-match press conference Saturday that any thoughts of playing safety-first with four players on yellow cards will be put aside and instead venture into the Munich showpiece with his best team.

The Dutch strategist had admitted this week of his concern in playing any or all of his four carded players -- Craig Moore, Tim Cahill, Vince Grella and John Aloisi -- for fear of them receiving another yellow card against Brazil and missing the potential 'Cup final' confrontation with Croatia through suspension next week.

But Hiddink, whose Dutch team lost to Brazil in the semifinals of the 1998 World Cup on penalties, spoke of making the best possible challenge Australia can muster against the five-time World Cup champions.

A famous victory against the odds Sunday will virtually ensure Australia, memorable 3-1 winners over Japan last weekend, passage into the knockout round in their first finals in 32 years.

"There are some conditions on this game and the last against Croatia because we have some yellow cards and I have told the guys to be aware of the consequences of further cards," Hiddink said Saturday.

"We have to consider whether to bring players in who are on the fringe of the team.

"This game deserves a team which is good enough to make an opposition to Brazil and not just considering leaving out all the players on yellow cards.

"We would like to make a result and make a good impression world wide and I don't think we have to think too much about the third game (Croatia) and what will happen then."

### 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
- AUSTRALIA: (4-5-1)**  
 1-Mark Schwarzer; 7-Brett Emerton; 2-Lucas Neill; 6-Tony Popovic; 14-Scott Chipperfield; 8-Joejoe Skoko; 5-Jason Culina; 20-Luke Wilkshire; 23-Marco Bresciano; 10-Harry Kewell; 9-Mark Viduka.

It's a risky option Hiddink is contemplating considering the pressure the flamboyant Brazilians impose on their opponents with their incessant attacks, but the strong-willed Dutchman has instilled a great self-belief into his players in just 11 months in charge.

"One of the things that pleases me about this team is the way they adapt themselves easily to new situations and this is new for everyone," he said.

"They don't have a lot of fear going into their matches because it's their mentality to be open and to go for it.

"It doesn't mean they are cocky or arrogant, there is no reason to, but they are very open when they go into games, whether it's a small one or whether it's a big one like tomorrow."

The Socceroos may rest four players who received yellow cards, Tim Cahill, John Aloisi, Craig Moore and Vince Grella, to make sure they are available for the final group match against Croatia.

Brazil have a better head-to-head record Australia, winning three out of their previous five meetings including a 6-0 demolition of the Socceroos in the 1997 Confederations Cup in Riyadh. In that same tournament, the two settled for a goalless draw in the group stages. The only time

Australia beat Brazil (1-0) was in the 1997 Confederations Cup third-place play-off in Ulsan, South Korea in 2001 in their last meeting.

Brazil, however, are determined not to get dragged into a physical colliette with Australia.

Coach Carlos Alberto Parreira, who is bidding to become only the second coach to win the World Cup twice after his 1994 triumph, warns his team of all-stars will be better and that spells trouble for Australia.

"It is important to start by winning. It means we will be more relaxed and the performance will be as well (against Australia) and technically we will be better," Parreira said.

"Favourites or not favourites, the great virtue of Brazilian football is to grow in adversity."

Parreira, while showing respect for his opposite number Guus Hiddink, is wary of what he sees as Australia's bruising style and has told his players not to get into a fight. "Australia are a very physical team but we are not going to fight with them," Parreira told reporters. "Our business is to play football, put the ball on the ground and impose our style and technique."

"It's a decisive match because whoever wins will almost certainly qualify."

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## THIRD EYE

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

With the way the world is nowadays, too often terms like 'perfection' are used to describe even half-way decent performances by teams. The thing is whenever you get a victory without conceding a goal and playing better than the opposition you are lauded for putting in a 'perfect' performance. June 16th however, was just that bit different as the term perfection was pushed to its limits by a rampant Argentina team that truly played "joga bonito" (the beautiful game).

The fact that a Brazilian coined the term is one we can disregard for now because Argentina turned in a performance that is worthy of comparison with the best showings in the World Cup and one which

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## LEADING SCORERS

AFP, Berlin

World Cup leading scorers after the Iran-Portugal match on Saturday:  
 2 - Bravo (Mexico), T. Cahill (Australia), Crespo (Argentina), Delgado (Ecuador), Klose (Germany), Maxi Rodriguez (Argentina), Rosicky (Czech Republic), C. Tenorio (Ecuador), Villa (Spain), Wanchopo (Costa Rica)

1 - Ahn Jung-hwan (South Korea), Al Jaber (Saudi Arabia), Al Kahtani (Saudi Arabia), Aloisi (Australia), Cambiasso (Argentina), Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal), Crouch (England), Deco (Portugal), Drogba (Ivory Coast), Fernando Torres (Spain), Frings (Germany), S. Gerrard (England), Golmohammadi (Iran), Iaquinia (Italy), Jaidi (Tunisia), Jaziri (Tunisia), Kaka (Brazil), Kaviedes (Ecuador), Koller (Czech Republic), B. Kone (Ivory Coast), Lahm (Germany), Lee Chun-soo (South Korea), Ljungberg

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## TODAY'S MATCHES

ALL MATCHES LIVE ON ESPN. \*ALSO LIVE ON BTV

TEAM	TIME	VENUE
Japan v Croatia	6:50 pm	Nuremberg
Brazil v Australia*	9:50 pm	Munich
France v South Korea*	12:50 am (Monday)	Leipzig

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