

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JUNE 21, 2006

**Pray for snow, you'll get at least rain**

AFP, Hamburg

Ukraine coach Oleg Blokhin had prayed for snow before the World Cup match against Saudi Arabia, but in the end had to do with rain.

A storm broke stifling temperatures of 32 degrees celsius just before Monday's game in Hamburg and although the initial heavy rainstorm did subside, showers continued throughout the 4-0 drubbing Ukraine handed the "sons of the desert".

"I did ask for snow, it's true," said Blokhin when asked if the weather conditions had played into the east Europeans' hands at the expense of their Gulf Arab rivals.

Saudi Arabia is a desert kingdom where summer temperatures can top 50 degrees celsius, often combined with all-encompassing humidity, and while there is substantial rainfall in the southwestern mountainous region, it is a scarcity in much of the rest of the country.

But coach Marcos Paqueta was not prepared to let the rain be an excuse for the shoddy display his side turned in.

"We knew it could rain and it did rain. The pitch was very wet and the ball travelled very fast," said Paqueta.

"There's not much rain in Saudi Arabia and the players are not used to playing on wet grass but that said, it's not an excuse."

Sami al-Jaber, who would have seen plenty of rain in the English Midlands during his loan spell at Wolverhampton Wanderers in 2000, said, "We have no excuse."

"We have trained in such conditions and it is not acceptable to talk about the rain as a factor."

Blokhin, meanwhile, hailed his players for bouncing back from their 4-0 hammering suffered at the hands of Spain to deliver their own footballing masterclass against the Saudis.

Ukraine are now firmly back in the running to qualify for the last 16 from Group H, with their third pool game against Tunisia on Friday.

"I would like to thank my team who bounced back from the bad defeat to Spain," Blokhin said.

"The players today carried out the coaches' advice, which was not to give the Saudi players any space or any ball," the former Dynamo Kiev and Soviet Union star said.

Saudi Arabia found our dead ball situations difficult and also the short passing game in midfield.

"The objective was to prevent the Saudis getting any ball in the midfield, and our team was able to counter-attack very quickly."

Blokhin, however, was typically reserved when talking about his team's chances of qualifying for the knockout phase.

He said that the win over Saudi Arabia, combined with the morale-draining loss to Spain, would take some time to recover from.



Spanish forward Raul celebrates after his equaliser against Tunisia at Stuttgart's Gottlieb-Daimler Stadium on Monday.

**The King is back**

AFP, Stuttgart

Spanish football icon Raul shook off a dose of the substitutes' blues to help relaunch Spain's World Cup campaign in a pulsating 3-1 win over Tunisia in Group H here on Monday.

Raul came off the bench at the start of the second half to equalise Javier Minari's shock eighth-minute opener for Roger Lemerre's former African champions to settle the nerves of Luis Aragones and his players.

Atletico Madrid's Fernando Torres then struck the first of two goals after beating the Tunisian defence to a through ball from second-half substitute Cesc Fabregas.

Torres, who also scored in Spain's

4-0 thrashing of Ukraine, finished Spain's top scorer on the night after he beat Tunisia keeper Ali Boumnijel from the penalty spot to take his World Cup tally to three goals.

However it was Raul's revival, after what has been an uncertain start to his third World Cup, that stole the show as Spain booked their second round ticket with a match to spare.

Torres admitted it was Raul's goal that was the catalyst for their fightback.

"For a long time nothing was going right for us up front but we were persistent," he said.

"I'm really happy I scored two goals, but Raul's goal was really important for our team. It kept us

going."

Coming off a desperate season with Real Madrid due to a three-month injury layoff, Raul has looked down in the dumps ever since realising that his lack of match form would keep him down the Spain pecking order.

When he came on for the start of the second half he took some time to find his rhythm.

But when he did he looked back to his old self, roaming the area looking for space and waiting to pounce on any loose balls.

In the 71st minute Raul found an opening when he held off his marker to pounce on a rebound in the area and beat keeper Ali

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

**WC BRIEFS**

AFP, Berlin

The French supporter who brought a cockerel, symbol of Les Bleus, to the match against South Korea in Leipzig, may continue doing so, according to organisers.

Access to the stadium is normally blocked for animals but in this case it appears there is an exception which proves the rule.

"I don't know how he managed to get through the controls - the cockerel must have been considered some kind of toy," said Horst Schmidt, co-chairman of the organising committee.

**In Pirlo's eyes**  
 Italian star Andrea Pirlo says Czech rival Pavel Nedved of Juventus is "an excellent footballer" but also "a good actor."

Says Pirlo: "He goes down a lot and exaggerates fouls against him."

Nedved will get the chance to defend -- or enhance -- his standing in Pirlo's eyes when the two meet Thursday in a match both sides need to win to assure qualification from Group E.

**No friend of journos**

Mexico coach Ricardo Lavolpe has on occasion had strained relations with the media -- as well as with the organisers for initially smoking on the bench.

As if to douse the flames he brought relations with the press to a low point on Tuesday after throwing a water bottle towards reporters hoping to squeeze a few words out of players following a closed-doors training session.

**Gassed**

Eight drunken fans, most of them English, but also one German and one Swiss, were arrested in Cologne for throwing gas bottles off the top of a monument. Fourteen policemen were slightly hurt as they moved in to arrest them. Police are meanwhile telling fans to watch out for theft with 420 bag snatches in Berlin in the past week, compared with 250 normally.

**Awards**  
 Social Democratic and Liberal politicians in Germany are proposing to make special civic awards to police and emergency services workers involved in making the World Cup go with a swing. "They will receive a medal for their commitment and friendliness," said Peter Danckert, chairman of the German parliament's sports affairs commission.

**Father's Day special**

Brazil striker Adriano, whose wife Daniele gave birth to Adriano junior on Friday, marked Father's Day on Sunday by shelling out on a new computer for himself so he could see e-mailed pictures of the infant as his old computer had given up the ghost. An additional gift to himself as well as the team was the forward's opening goal in the 2-0 win against Australia.

**No rainbow for Zico**

The rainbow may be a universal symbol of hope. But Japan coach Zico is too focused on their next must-win match against five-time champions Brazil on Thursday to wish upon a colourful arc.

Zico's substitute players resumed training in Bonn in pouring rain on Monday after a goalless draw against Croatia left them winless in Group F.

As the rain stopped, a rainbow appeared over the training ground but Zico said: "I do love to see rainbows. But I didn't notice one today because I was so concentrated on training."

**Pitch repairs**

Parts of the turf at the Hamburg World Cup stadium requires patching up after hosting three matches but will not need to be totally replaced, the organisers said on Wednesday.

"There are some points which are being looked at, such as in the goalmouths," organising committee spokesman Gerd Graus said at the daily press briefing in Berlin.

Two more matches in the tournament are being played in Hamburg - Italy's final Group E match against the Czech Republic on Thursday and a quarterfinal match on June 30.

The pitches at all 12 of the World Cup stadiums were laid in May, weeks before the World Cup kicked off on June 9.

**A chance for the reserves**

AFP, Freiburg

Netherlands coach Marco van Basten could rest six players who are walking a disciplinary tightrope for the final Group C table top decider with Argentina in Frankfurt on Wednesday.

Giovanni van Bronckhorst, John Heitinga, Arjen Robben, Joris Mathijsen, Mark van Bommel and Khalid Boulahrouz all have one yellow card each and another caution could rule them out of the second round.

"We don't want to take any risks for the next round," said van Basten. Midfielder Phillip Cocu (ankle) and defender John Heitinga (thigh) are both carrying injuries from Friday's 2-1 win over Ivory Coast and are doubtful starters.

Argentina's Javier Saviola, Gabriel Heinze, Luis Gonzales and Hernan Crespo are also on a yellow card and will sit out Tuesday's game.

Both teams have already qualified for the next round and Wednesday's match will decide who tops the group.

Either Portugal or Mexico are likely to be waiting in the second round but van Basten insists he will not let his team be distracted by the next stage until they have completed their tricky assignment with Argentina.

The Dutch have only lost once to the South Americans -- in the 1978 World Cup final in Buenos Aires.

"We will play to win," said the 41-year-old, who took over from Dick Advocaat following their semi-final exit at Euro 2004.

"We will be proud to finish top of the group by beating Argentina. They are one of the big favourites for the title."

"But even if I knew I would be playing this or that team in Group D, I am not going to alter my tactics at all in the hours before a match. There would be no sense."

"We play to win."

Van Basten also paid tribute to his team claiming there is a new spirit in the squad.

"Without the spirit, we could have been beaten by Ivory Coast, but we defended well."

"But we need to improve our possession of the ball when we are being put under pressure by our opponents."

**HEAD TO HEAD**

**Netherlands v Argentina**

Netherlands lead 3-1; one draw

1974: Netherlands 4 Argentina 0 (Gelsenkirchen)

1978: Argentina 3 Netherlands 1 aet (Buenos Aires)

1998: Netherlands 2 Argentina 1 (Marseille)

1999: Netherlands 1 Argentina 1 (Amsterdam)

2003: Netherlands 1 Argentina 0 (Amsterdam)

**Cambiasso full of humility**

REUTERS, Herzogenaurach

It is easier to score a goal involving 25 touches by the team than dribble past several defenders like Diego Maradona's great World Cup strike against England in 1986, Argentina's Esteban Cambiasso said.

"It may be hard to imagine but it's probably more likely to score a goal with 25 touches... than to dribble past two or three players because they can bring you down after the first or second dribble," he said.

"To imagine a goal nowadays with half the dribbles that Diego made seems impossible to me but with one or two touches (per player) it's something more feasible," the midfielder told reporters at Argentina's World Cup base.

Cambiasso was the scorer when, half an hour into the match, Argentina strung together a brilliant move of 24 passes for their second goal in the 6-0 rout of Serbia and Montenegro in Group C on Friday. Argentina gradually worked their way into the Serb box where Hernan Crespo backheeled Javier Saviola's pass to Cambiasso who struck a rising left-footed shot into the roof of the net.

Cambiasso's goal, his second in 24 matches for Argentina, has been acclaimed as one of the best ever in World Cups and potentially the best of this tournament with less than half the 64 matches played.

Former Argentina captain Maradona's goal, his second in a 2-1 win over England in the 1986 quarterfinals in Mexico, was voted the best in World Cup history.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 7

**TV remains in Dhaka**

The Daily Star-Rangs Toshiba World Cup Quiz Round 3

SPORTS REPORTER

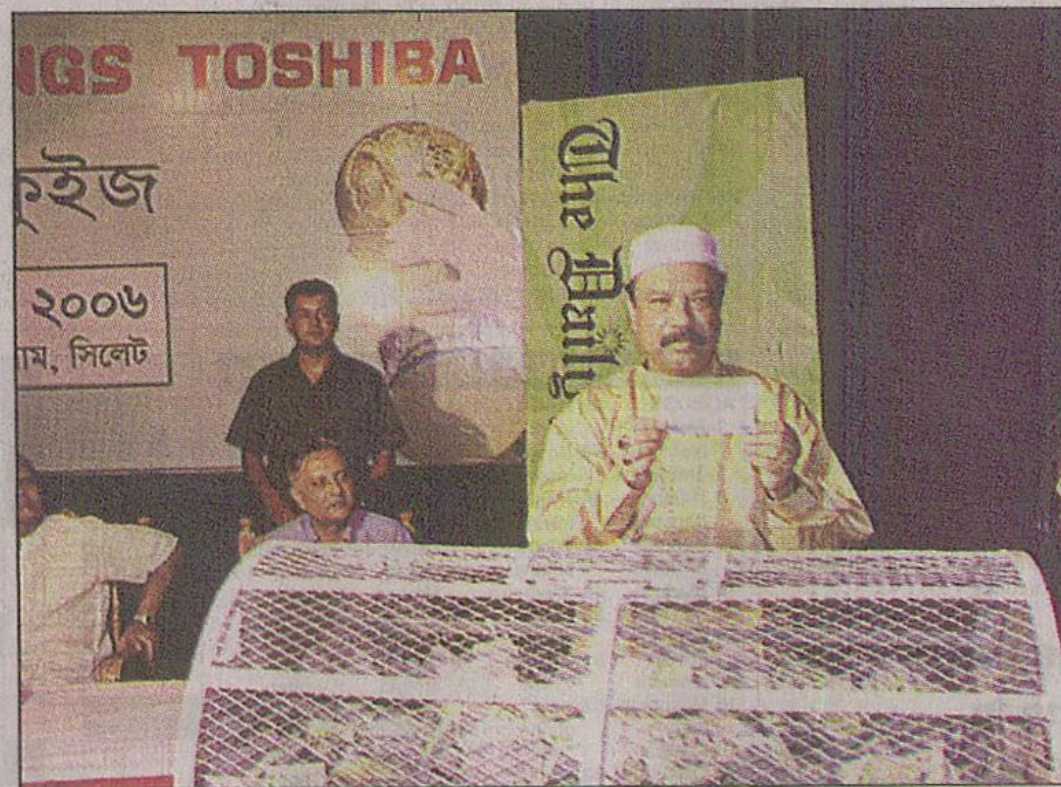
The Dhaka readers continued their domination in The Daily Star-Rangs Toshiba World Cup Quiz competition with 22-year-old Afsana Islam winning the first prize of Round 3 -- a 21 inch Toshiba Bomba Flat TV, in Sylhet on Tuesday.

For Afsana, a student living in West Rampura of the capital, the success ensured that lady luck smiled on a lady for the second successive occasion after Azimpur's Sumi Akhter bagged the laurel in the second round draw at Khulna.

A near-capacity audience at the Saifur Rahman Auditorium in the holy city was urging on for a local winner from the very beginning of the colourful ceremony, but unfortunately their cry went in vain.

Chief guest Sylhet Mayor Badoruddin Ahmed Kamran, however, consoled them before picking up the first prize smilingly

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6



HERE IS THE LUCKY WINNER: Mayor of Sylhet Badoruddin Ahmed Kamran shows the coupon of the first prize winner of The Daily Star-Rangs Toshiba World Cup Quiz Round 3 during the draw ceremony at the Saifur Rahman Auditorium in Sylhet yesterday.

**The Daily Star RANGS TOSHIBA WORLD CUP QUIZ 2006**

**Plasma Fridge**

.....THIS CAN BE YOURS

**2006 Round 4, Draw in Chittagong**  
 (See June 8 issue of the Star Sport for competition information, prizes and rules)

**The Daily Star RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz Round 4, Ends June 29, 2006**

Tick (✓) the correct answers

- Who scored the first goal in the 2006 World Cup? Klose  Lahm  Wanchop
- The smallest nation to have played in the World Cup finals is: Trinidad & Tobago  Cameroon  Jamaica
- Which Asian player scored in three World Cup finals? Nakata  Sami Al Jaber  Ali Daei
- Which World Cup final match ended goalless during the regulation time? Italia '90  Argentina '78  USA '94
- Who is this player? Totti  Kaka  Messi

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms) ..... Age .....

Father's name ..... Occupation .....

Address .....

Telephone (if any) ..... Signature ..... Date .....

Write with a ballpoint pen in clear BLOCK letters.  
 Cut along the dotted lines and mail to OR drop in the Quiz Box at The Daily Star  
 You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz 4."

**READ The Daily Star TO CATCH THE WORLD CUP FEVER**

**banglalink goal pick & win contest**

how to participate :

how to pick your team?  
 Write Message: pw ira  
 Phone Number: 2006  
 Select Back: go to message option

in case of a draw?  
 Write Message: pw ira draw  
 Phone Number: 2006  
 Select Back: go to message option

to know your accumulated points type 'pt' and send to 2006 today's matches

match1 : Iran (ira) vs Angola (ang)  
 match2 : Portugal (por) vs Mexico (mex)  
 match3 : Ivory Coast (ivo) vs Serbia & Montenegro (ser)  
 match4 : Netherlands (net) vs Argentina (arg)

banglalink you, first!