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Right recipe for ROK

DALLAS, June 10: South Korean preparations for the World Cup finals starting next week were given a hot start when Korean community in Dallas presented the team with Kimchi and other spicy Asian delicacies on Thursday, reports Reuters.

The World Cup outsiders flew in on Wednesday to the Texan city where they play their first match in Group D against Spain on June 17.

In past finals, the Koreans made special arrangements so that the players could stick to their customary diet but this time they decided not to bring any food from home.

"They are eating rice and so on in the hotel restaurant," said Korean Television journalist Dong Kang, who is following the team. "They are very happy too because the local Korean community brought them Kimchi and other ethnic dishes."

Some 40,000 Koreans live in the Dallas area and many have bought tickets for their team's two matches in Texas.

Hotel staff said no particular security measures had been introduced to protect the delegation despite the rising tension between North Korea and the United States over inspection of nuclear facilities.

But access to the team has been restricted by delegation leaders.

The South Koreans, who have yet to win a match in three previous appearances at World Cup finals, are in a group with world champions Germany, Spain and Bolivia.

Eusebio, an engaged enchanter

LISBON, June 10: Nearly 20 years after Eusebio retired as a player, he still works as an assistant coach for his old club Benfica and is still recognised wherever he goes, reports Reuters.

The "Black Panther" thrilled crowds with some 1,000 goals during his professional career from 1960 to 1975 as a striker with Benfica and the Portuguese national side.

Eusebio is now 52, but foreign teams still ask him to appear in friendly matches between veteran players.

The Mozambican-born player says football has changed since he retired as a professional.

"In my time, football was more of a spectacle - now it's more tactical. But I don't think the game has lost any of its glamour."

Eusebio says Brazil and Germany look like the favourites for the World Cup finals in the United States.

"But this year Colombia could be the surprise of the championship," he said in an interview.

He disagrees with critics who complain there are not enough strikers in today's teams.

"I think there are a lot of strikers, but they need to train a lot to score more goals — just as I did, staying behind to practise in the stadium every day after the normal team training session ended," he said.

Eusebio's goal tally bears

witness to his pedigree. He scored 41 goals in 64 appearances with the national side during the 1960s and 1970s and twice won Europe's golden boot award as the top European scorer.

"After so many years I wasn't expecting it. This could only happen once in a lifetime," Eusebio said. "This gesture by FIFA shows that all those years of football were worth it."

A statue of the soccer hero, erected to celebrate his 50th birthday, graces the entrance to Benfica's Luz Stadium.

After retiring as a player in 1975, Eusebio returned to Benfica in 1979 as a coach for young players selected by talent spotters. In 1983, he was promoted to assistant coach for the club's First Division side under Swede Sven Goran Eriksson.

Eusebio's enduring popularity, often compared with that of Brazil's Pele, allows him to play role of Benfica's Pele, allows him to play the role of Benfica's "roving ambassador."

"I feel proud when I go into the streets and see a kid, only five or six years old, who's never seen me play, tugging at my parents' sleeves and saying 'Look at Eusebio, look at Eusebio,'" he said in an interview.

Perhaps Eusebio is best remembered for hauling Portugal to victory in a World Cup match against North Korea in 1966 against dire odds.

Portugal, 3-0 down after 20 minutes, managed to win 5-3, thanks to four spectacular goals by Eusebio.

"I never thought about losing," he recalls. "Every time I scored, I didn't celebrate so as not to lose time. I went to get the ball from the back of the net so we could kick off as quickly as possible."

Judged the greatest name in Portuguese football, Eusebio helped put Portugal on the map at a time when the country was shunned by the rest of the world because of its right-wing dictatorship, overthrown by the 1974 revolution.

Dictator Antonio Oliveira Salazar once blocked a bid for the powerfully built striker by Italy's Inter Milan declaring: "Eusebio is part of the state's heritage."

The world soccer body FIFA finally rewarded the striker's long service to football this year by awarding him its Order of Merit. The honour will be formally bestowed on Eusebio in Chicago on June 15, just before the World Cup finals start.

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