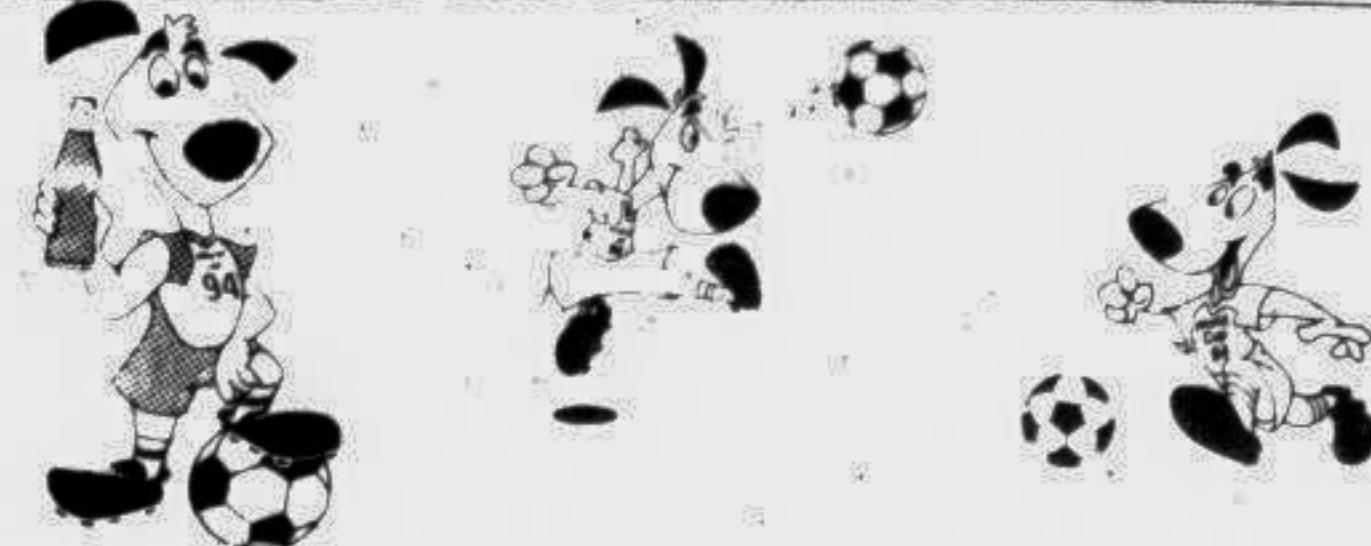




TABAN/2040(E)/94

Share The Passion



Dutch know the score well

ORLANDO, June 28: The Netherlands want to pull out a win against luckless Morocco on Wednesday to ensure a place in the last 16 of the World Cup, reports Reuter.

Fortunae to beat Saudi Arabia 2-1 in their Group F opener in Washington, the Dutch succumbed 1-0 to arch-rivals Belgium here on Saturday and now return to the stifling heat of the Citrus Bowl Stadium to decide their first round fate.

Morocco, who suffered a 1-0 reverse against Belgium here and then took a 2-1 beating from Saudi Arabia in New Jersey, have scant chance of reaching the knockout stage although they have not given up hope.

"If we win we have a chance of making the second round," coach Abdellah Ajri said after the second defeat.

But the odds are against them, and the Dutch assumed defeat against the lively Moroccans would mean the end for themselves too.

"We're used to this. In the qualifiers we had to win our last three matches to qualify for the finals. In view of that the prospects are good."

There are very few teams who win two matches in a row. I expect the Dutch team to win

against Morocco.

Left-back Frank de Boer voiced similar confidence. "We are under some pressure but it is not enormous. Mostly when we are under pressure we play our best matches," he said.

De Boer's twin brother Ronald, substituted at the interval in the Belgium game, may lose his place up front where Advocaat feels his four-man attack — two in the middle and two wingers — has produced too few dividends.

Ronald de Boer was replaced against Belgium by midfielder Rob Witschge and the coach said the team played better in the second half.

Morocco will miss French-based defender Nourredine Naybet, who collected his second booking of the finals against Saudi Arabia.

There is also speculation that reserve goalkeeper Zakaria Alaoui may take over from Khalil Azmi. "I am ready to play but it's up to the coach to decide who will make the team," Alaoui said after practice on Monday.

PROBABLE TEAMS

NETHERLANDS: 1-Ed de Goey, 14-Stan Valckx, 4-Ronald Koeman, 2-Frank de Boer, 3-Frank Rijkaard, 8-Wim Jonk, 5-Rob Witschge, 6-Jan Wouters, 17-Gaston Taumant, 10-Dennis Bergkamp, 11-Bryan Roy.

MOROCCO: 1-Khalil Azmi or 22-Zakaria Alaoui, 2-Abdelhak Nacer, 5-Ismaïl Triki, 18-Rachid Nekrouz or 14-Ahmed Masbahi, 3-Abdelkarim Hadrioui, 7-Mustapha Hadji, 8-Rachid Azzouzi, 15-Larbi Hababi, 11-Rachid Daoudi, 9-Mohamed Chaouch, 13-Ahmed Bahja.

Referee: Alberto Tejada Noriega (Peru)

Kick-off: 1635 GMT.

Chaouch scored against

SAN JOSE, California, June 28: Brazilian soccer players, sharing their compatriots' distrust of the country's politicians, fear that World Cup victory could be used to divert public attention away from more serious problems, reports Reuter.

Some believe a triumph would lift pressure off the Brazilian government to solve urgent problems or that candidates for forthcoming elections could jump on the soccer bandwagon.

"The politicians will be hoping for us to win more than anyone else, there's no doubt about that, because it will lift a lot of the pressure on them," said full back Lenardo.

Goalkeeper Gilmar was also apprehensive that a Brazilian World Cup triumph could paradoxically be a bad thing for the country itself.

"I'm sure that if Brazil win the World Cup, there will be politicians who will try and take advantage of this and use it for their own benefit," he said. "How and in what way, I don't know, but I'm sure it will happen."

Presidential and congressional elections are to be held in Brazil in November.

Central defender Ricardo Rocha added: "We have to guard against something like this happening."

"Obviously, we very much want to win and make Brazil champions for the fourth time," said midfielder Mauro Silva.

"But if we win, it mustn't be used to hide the problems in Brazil such as hunger and the killing of children in the streets."

Despite pressing problems, including 40 per cent per month inflation, a massive disparity in income distribution between rich and poor, a crumbling infrastructure and a vast, inefficient bureaucracy politics in Brazil has already been out of the limelight for one month because of the World Cup.

Even before the competition began, urgent political issues were relegated to a poor second on major news programmes by questions such as what Brazil's players did during training or whether moody striker Romario would be able to sit in the window seat on the team's plane.

Some players admitted that the attention on them may have gone over the top.

"Brazilians mustn't forget about their problems just because of the World Cup," said Gilmar.

Leonardo added: "We know that Brazil has much more serious things to worry about than just winning the World Cup."

Veteran newspaper columnist Fernando Calazans said

credibility of Brazilian politicians has tumbled with a succession of corruption scandals allied to frequent reports of excessive perks for the political class.

The reason Brazil is in the situation it is today is entirely because of the politicians, said Orcha. "There are a few good ones but most of them can't be taken seriously."

Leonardo believes the players should use their prestige by speaking out against bad politicians.

"People listen to what we have to say. We have an opportunity to help change things and we should make the most of it," he said.

But other members of the Brazilian squad are far less interested.

One Brazilian reporter tried to conduct a poll on who each of the 22 players would vote for president but found that only one had decided.

When asked what he thought about his country's politicians, striker Viola said: "I don't want to talk about anything other than soccer during the World Cup."

However, since then, the



Henrik Larsson, the smiling Swedish striker with deadlocks, tucks up at the Pontiac Silverdome Stadium on June 27. Larsson will replace the in-form Dahl in against Brazil in their last Group match with the latter rendered unfit by two successive yellow cards.

Blatter admits it at last

DALLAS, Texas, June 27: The stifling heat is posing problems for players at the World Cup, FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter admitted today, reports AFP.

With temperatures on the field reaching up to 120 F (45 C) several coaches have said it is causing major difficulties for their players.

"We know it is a problem," said Blatter.

But he insisted the high temperatures were exceptional. When FIFA studied the host cities before the United States won the right to host the World Cup the average temperatures were much lower.

"This heat is exceptional," said Blatter. "We can change everything but not the weather."

Romanians enjoy a break

PASADENA, Calif., June 28: The Romanian players, top guns in Group A after first round of World Cup competition, got a well-earned day off, reports AP.

Since so few Romanians get the chance to play tourist in the United States — particularly in attraction-rich southern California — the players took advantage Monday.

Some team members, accompanied by relatives and friends in the Romanian community, ventured into the heat for some sightseeing and fun.

Midfielder Gheorghe Popescu, on his first trip to the United States, headed for Beverly Hills and Santa Monica Beach.

"The sand is just like in Romania," Popescu said. "But that's all that's the same."

BU, Muktijoddha in Fed Cup semis

Sports Reporter

Defending champions Brothers Union and Muktijoddha Sangsads KC moved into the semi-final of BEXIMCO 12th Federation Cup football tournament after winning their last round robin league matches of Group A at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Defender Jewel Rana converted two spot kicks in the last half of the play to ensure his side Muktijoddha Sangsads a berth in the last four with a 3-1 win over spirited Bangladesh Boys.

The Gopibagh side held their awesome opponents Muktijoddha to 1-1 till 78th minute before referee Sheikh Badruddin awarded a penalty to Muktijoddha when defender Pappa unintentionally handled the ball in the danger zone to thwart a cross from Mamun Joarder.

Jewel Rana coolly converted the spot-kick in the 78th minute relieving a frustrated Muktijoddha who dearly needed a victory to qualify for the semifinal. Jewel Rana then converted the second spot-kick of the match five minutes before the final whistle to give his side a convincing 3-1 victory.

In the other match of the day played under floodlights, Brothers Union edged past Fakirerpool YMC by a lone goal to move into the semi-final as Group A champions.

Midfielder Sadequl Islam scored the all important goal by a fierce right-footer from inside the box for Brothers Union who played under constant pressure from Fakirerpool throughout the match.

The Fakirerpool boys who had several scoring opportunities in the match spoilt those due to poor marksmanship and on one occasion Brothers defender Ruhul Amin cleared the ball from goalline during the second half.

MEET SUSPENDED

Meanwhile, in a press release issued yesterday Bangladeshi Football Federation suspended the tournament till June 30 due to unavoidable circumstances. The meet will resume on July one.



Italy's Paolo Maldini (5) is tackled by Mexico's Luis Garcia (10) during their World Cup match at the Robert F Kennedy Stadium in Washington yesterday.

— AFP photo

Asprilla will learn to live with it

SAN FRANCISCO, June 28: Faustino Asprilla found World Cup elimination a tough prospect for gutless Colombia, but admitted: "It's not the end of the world."

Colombia had been one of the pre-tournament favourites and even though they beat Switzerland 2-0 on Sunday, they still finished bottom of Group A, reports AFP.

Asprilla, 24, known for his somersault following a goal, was expected to be one of the stars of a competition in a team almost certain to qualify for the second round.

Instead, Colombia flew to Los Angeles on Sunday evening, before their scheduled flight back to Bogota on Tuesday, nearly three weeks before the July 17 final.

Bruguera, Sanchez bow out

WIMBLEDON, England, June 28: Wimbledon lost the two French Open singles champions when Spaniards Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Sergi Bruguera were both beaten in the fourth round on Monday, reports Reuter.

Sanchez-Vicario, the second seed and favourite to take the women's title following the demise of top-seeded Steffi Graf last week, was shocked 7-5, 4-6, 6-3 by American 13th seed Zina Garrison-Jackson in a 2 1/2 hour Centre Court battle.

Bruguera, seeded eighth went out earlier 6-4, 7-6, 6-0 to 10th-seeded American Michael Chang on a day which also saw the departure of 1992 men's champion Andre Agassi, who fought back from two sets down but then succumbed to a fifth-set blitz by fellow American Todd Martin.

Martin won 6-3, 7-5, 6-7, 4-6, 6-1.

Martina Navratilova, the nine-times champion, dreaming of a 10th triumph in her last appearance at the age of 37, cantered through a test that was expected to be much tougher than it was.

The Czech-born American, seeded fourth, beat 17th-seeded Czech Helena Sukova 6-1, 6-2 and played well to do it although she was helped enormously by a sadly inept performance from her tall rival, who had beaten her five times in the past.

The elimination of Sanchez-Vicario left her compatriot, third-seeded Conchita Martinez as the highest remaining seed at number three.

But the fourth-seeded Navratilova and fifth-seeded Jana Novotna, another Czech who reached last year's final, are both still alive and will clash in a quarter-final.

The championship credentials of American ninth seed Lindsay Davenport were underlined in a 6-1, 6-3 destruction of Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina, who was shrugging her shoulders in futility near the end. Davenport faces Martinez next.

WORLD CUP DIARY

LOS ANGELES, California, June 28 (AFP): World Cup diary:

FANS FAKING IT

While much dreaded football hooligans have failed to make a mark on the World Cup, fans are giving security officers some headaches by sneaking banned objects into the grounds.

"People are faking injuries, coming through the gates on crutches then pulling their flags from their underwear and flying them from a crutch," said New Jersey police spokesman John Hartley. "And we can't do anything. You can't take a guy's crutches away from him."

SOCER FEVER SPREADS

Tennis great John McEnroe, immersed in the Wimbledon championships was nonetheless keeping an eye on the World Cup in his homeland.

The American tennis star, who once played on the left-wing for his New York school, says that if soccer takes off in a big way in the United States after the World Cup, he would consider buying a club.

PLAY ON

American soccer fans are seeing more football than fans in Italy saw four years ago according to latest FIFA statistics. The average amount of play in the US World Cup is 61 minutes compared to 52 minutes in Italy.

"We are getting nine more minutes of football per match," said FIFA secretary general Sepp Blatter.

He said one key reason for the increase was better refereeing.

DELUXE DEUTSCH

The mansion on turtle creek is no stranger to celebrities. Elton John stays there. Oliver Stone and Kevin Costner stayed there while filming "JFK". President Bill Clinton and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher have stayed there, now, the German football team.

While the hotel offers suites at prices of up to 1,350 dollars a night, the Germans got a deal. They're staying one to a room at 188 dollars per night, a bargain for rooms that normally cost 355 dollars.

GERMANS WADE IN

A group of German fans caused a sensation in Chicago when they took a post-game dip in the city's Buckingham Fountain.

Stripped to their underwear, the fans were happily splashing while friends took photos.

Chicago police dispersed the fans, who had apparently recognised the fountain from the opening credits of the television show "married ... with children," which is shown in Germany.

We've heard of swapping shirts, but...

Desperate for a World Cup souvenir, an Orlando lawyer went to the extremes of pulling off her knickers, waving them in the air and offering them in exchange for an Argentinian fans' blue and white striped replica jersey.

This all happened in one of the city's busiest streets and the Argentinian was so embarrassed he immediately took flight, reports the Orlando sentinel. The woman, 29, seems to have gone shy as well as she refused to give her name.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	37	Farm animals?	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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