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WC, death in league

BUENOS AIRES, July 5: 43-year-old Argentine man died of a heart attack in the northern city of Resistencia after Romania scored their third goal against Argentina's World Cup soccer team...

Romania won Sunday's second-round match 3-2 and knocked the Argentines out of the World Cup finals.

The private DYN agency said Romanian midfielder Gheorghe Hagi's 58th-minute goal was too much for Julio Pelozo, who collapsed and died in his living room where he was watching the game on television.

Lions' stuck in San Francisco

YAOUNDE, July 5: As if an early exit from the World Cup weren't enough, financial wrangling has prevented Cameroon's 'Indomitable Lions' from returning home to lick their wounds...

The team were originally expected to arrive here on Saturday, but instead they were still in San Francisco, California, where players were holding delegation officials hostage in a bid to get the bonuses promised them...

Even so, the inquest into the Cameroon side's World Cup debacle has begun here, with battle lines drawn between those blaming the players and those who blame greedy, inept officials.

Financial problems dogged the team throughout their preparations. They lacked equipment, players were not paid, and government officials insisted on tempering with French manager Henri Michel's plans.

On Sunday, panelists on a state-run radio programme blasted government officials for meddling, and even accused them of diverting funds raised for the team by public donations.

While many argue that failure to pay promised bonuses led to the poor showing, president Paul Biya placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of the players.

"We must organise better, we must draft in younger players, and we must instill a sense of discipline in the team," he said.

GOAL SCORERS

UNDATED (Reuters): Following are the World Cup '94 goal scorers after Monday's matches:

6 goals — Oleg Salenko (Russia).

5 goals — Juergen Klinsmann (Germany).

4 goals — Martin Dahlin (Sweden), Gabriel Batistuta (Argentina).

3 goals — Kennet Andersson (Sweden), Romario (Brazil), Hristo Stochkov (Bulgaria), Gheorghe Hagi (Romania).

2 goals — Florin Raduciu (Romania), Jose Caminero (Spain), Juan Golkoetxea (Spain), Ilie Dumitrescu (Romania), Georges Bregy (Switzerland), Adolfo Valencia (Colombia), Luis Garcia (Mexico), Fuad Anwar Amin (Saudi Arabia), Claudio Caniggia (Argentina), Hong Myong-Do (South Korea), Daniel Amokachi (Nigeria), Rudi Voeller (Germany), Philippe Albert (Belgium), Wim Jonk (Netherlands), Dennis Bergkamp (Netherlands), Bebeto (Brazil).

1 goal — Julio Salinas (Spain), Kwang Sun-Hong (South Korea), Soe Jung-Won (South Korea), Eric Wynalda (United States), Ray Houghton (Ireland), Marc Degryse (Belgium), Kjetil Rekdal (Norway), Roger Ljung (Sweden), David Embe (Cameroon), Francois Omam-Biyik (Cameroon), Rai (Brazil), Gaston Taument (Netherlands), Diego Maradona (Argentina), Bryan Roy (Netherlands), Rashidi Yekini (Nigeria), Emmanuel Amunike (Nigeria), Alain Sutter (Switzerland), Stephane Chapuisat (Switzerland), Adrian Knup (Switzerland), Ernie Stewart (United States), Dino Baggio (Italy), John Aldridge (Ireland), Marcio Santos (Brazil), Dmitry Radchenko (Russia), Tomas Brodin (Sweden), Sami Al-Jaber (Saudi Arabia), Georges Grun (Belgium), Mohamed Chaouch (Morocco), Samson Siasia (Nigeria), Yordan Lechkov (Bulgaria), Daniel Borimirov (Bulgaria), Dan Petrescu (Romania), Harold Lozano (Colombia), Herman Gavrila (Colombia), Karlheinz Riedle (Germany), Erwin Sanchez (Bolivia), Josep Guardiola (Spain), Daniele Massaro (Italy), Marcelino Bernal (Mexico), Fahd Al-Ghshyan (Saudi Arabia), Roger Milla (Cameroon), Saeed Owairan (Saudi Arabia), Hassan Nader (Morocco), Nasko Sirakov (Bulgaria), Fernando Hierro (Spain), Luis Enrique (Spain), Aitor Beguiristain (Spain), Abel Balbo (Argentina).



Fans cloning US player Alexi Lalas cheer their team prior to the start of the second round World Cup match between Brazil and USA at Stanford Stadium on Monday.

Soccer brings 'em together



LOS GATOS, Calif. July 5: Brazil and the United States were opponents on the soccer field, but fans of both teams celebrated as friends after a World Cup match, reports AP.

"This is wonderful, just wonderful," Jadir Araujo, a native of Rio de Janeiro living in Santa Cruz, said of the festivities following the second-round game Monday. "We are having a good time together."

More than 10,000 fans crowded the main street here after the favoured Brazilian team defeated the United States 1-0 at Stanford Stadium. The team and many of its fans have stayed here during the international soccer championship.

The gold, green and azure of the Brazilian flag blended with Independence Day red, white and blue as revelers waved flags and showed off faces painted in those national colors. They sang and danced to samba beats, shared each other's team chants and juggled soccer balls in friendly circles.

"Brazilian fans? I just love 'em," Toni Kwaliak said as she took part in a similar celebration near the stadium shortly after the match.

Kwaliak, of Santa Cruz, held a corner of an American flag-borne aloft as she danced at the edge of a crowd of several hundred joyous fans. She and other Americans wanted to see the U.S. team win — especially on the Fourth of July. But they didn't let the loss get them down.

"They played a really wonderful game, so we can't be too disappointed," she said. "If we're going to be beaten, we may as well be beaten by the best."

U.S. fans were still happy that their team had made it to the second round for the first time in 64 years — and relieved that Brazil weren't able to score until the 74th minute.

Brazilian fans, while still elated by the victory that put the team into the third round, praised the U.S. team's performance. "I think they played well. They played with a lot of courage," said Rolando Tamayo, a Bolivian living in San Francisco. "I feel sorry for the U.S. team losing on the Fourth of July, but they have to realize that Brazilian soccer is special."

More than 86,000 fans packed Stanford Stadium, and tens of thousands of them celebrated in the parking lot of a nearby shopping center after the game before taking the party to Los Gatos. Police said the problems were minor.

Both U.S. and Brazilian fans bemoaned professional soccer's relative lack of popularity in America. Some said it was because the United States already has many other sports with longtime claims on America's imagination and money.

But they were hopeful that America's hosting of the championship — and the U.S. team's better-than-expected performance would make the U.S. public hungry for more soccer.

"The World Cup is going to be very important for American soccer," Tamayo predicted. "I think soccer is going to pick up in a great way in America because of this."

It's all about patriotism



STANFORD, Calif. July 5: The message was clear from the bearded old man dressed as "Uncle Sam," from the chants of "U-S-A U-S-A" from the faces of fans painted red-white-and-blue.

On the field, Brazil, were beating the United States 1-0 in a World Cup game. But this wasn't only about soccer. It was about patriotism.

The startling campaign of the US team had captured the imagination of an American public that in general knew little about soccer and carelessly. Certainly there wasn't the same sense of "Go USA" as there was in, say, the Olympics.

But as the upstart Americans knocked off the favored Colombians and won a berth in the second round, people began to notice.

Even US President Bill Clinton — no big soccer fan, he phoned the team on Saturday, and said he and his family would "pull for you and cheer for you" against Brazil. "I think the whole country is just carried away by your success. And we're really, very, very proud of you," Clinton said.

And what better time to show it than on the US Independence Day, as the upstart Americans faced the three-time world champions and heavy favourites?

After the game, the Brazilians gathered near the middle of the field with an American flag to salute their hosts and the crowd of 84,177. The American fans joined with Brazilian fans in giving both teams a standing ovation.

"One-thing, 2-0 was not important, but how we were able to overcome Independence Day (and) the crowd," coach Carlos Alberto Parreira said.

Soccer patriotism is nothing new to Brazilians. They call their national soccer team "the fatherland in cleats."

Forward Bebeto tried to explain the importance of his game-winning goal that kept alive the Brazil's quest for a fourth World Cup title. The team hasn't won since 1970, and the anguish grows with each failure.

"This is a great dream for Brazilians," Bebeto said. "For 24 years we haven't won the World Cup. We need to give some happiness to our suffer-

ing people." Brazil cling to their soccer prowess as one of the few things to be proud of amid rampant poverty, violence and corruption. The pressure on the team to perform is intense.

Midfielder Dunga was asked what it felt like to be named captain. Rai, the former captain, was benched against the United States.

"We are representing our country, so we all feel like captains out there," he replied.

A reporter asked if the players got nervous with the tight game and the obligation to win. Again, the fatherland was first.

"Because we are representing our country, we must be cool," he replied.

Even star forward Romario, not known as a team player, has joined the chorus. He has promised to "give my blood" for the national squad.

Brazilians will settle for a world championship.

WORLD CUP DIARY

LOS ANGELES, California, July 5 (Reuters): Monday's World Cup diary:

SOCCER PEP-UP

Diego Maradona went to the wrong man for his epinephrine pick-me-up. Dr Ben Tabachnik, a Soviet athletics coach in the 70s now in private practice in Monterey, California, has developed a super juice to tone up tired muscles.

Russian striker Oleg Salenko, who scored a World Cup record five goals against Cameroon, used the cocktail of Siberian ginseng, schizandra, maral root, golden root, Manchurian thorn tree, Chinese liquorice and rose.

Dr Tabachnik says his prime one potion performs many of the functions of anabolic steroids without the negative side-effects and has passed the drugs tests.

"Prime helps but so does hard work," said Tabachnik.

PERFECT PITCH

Tenor Placido Domingo was in the crowd in Washington on Saturday to see Sweden beat Saudi Arabia for a place in the World Cup quarter-finals.

He said US fans who haven't quite figured out the game's nuances shouldn't worry.

"What soccer and opera have in common is that they both unite people," he said. "You can enjoy either without understanding a word."

Domingo, who is joining up with Luciano Pavarotti and Jose Carreras to reprise their three tenors concert in honour of the World Cup, has put in a little time on the pitch himself.

"I used to be a goalie but now I play up front," he said. "Tenors are strikers, really always pushing forward."

VIP PARADE

Eight members of the Saudi Royal family attended Sunday's match against Sweden in Dallas.

Texas governor Ann Richards was also there, along with Dallas mayor Steve Bartlett and Jerry Jones, owner of the Super Bowl Champion Dallas Cowboys American football team.

HE'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE

Jack Charlton has labelled speculation that he will quit as Ireland coach after the World Cup "bloody nonsense."

With youngsters like Gary Kelly, Jason McAteer and Phil Babb proving themselves in the United States, Charlton is already refining his strategy for the 1996 European Championships qualifying campaign.

NOW THAT'S LOW

US commentators continue to put their own spin on football language.

Bob Ley of the sports cable channel ESPN called the shot that gave Swedish striker Kennet Andersson his second goal against Saudi Arabia a "worm-burner."

"Grass-cutter" football has heard of, but "worm-burner?"

Fanatic fan

BUCHAREST July 5: A farmer stabbed seven passers-by in a street dispute sparked by Romania's historic win over Argentina in the World Cup finals, police said today, reports Reuter.

They said loan Catalin Rubina, from the northeastern village of Mogosesti, was under the influence of alcohol when he knifed his victims, one of who is in a critical condition.

A police spokesman said Ruba, 24, had been sentenced to five months in prison and could face further charges.

Bucharest police said more than 500,000 people had joined noisy street celebrations until dawn on Monday, after their team beat Argentina 3-2 on Sunday and qualified for the World Cup quarter-finals for the first time.

Police are on standby for reactions next Sunday, when 23 million Romanians will be glued to their TV sets to watch their team play Sweden for a place in the semifinals.

Solari, the only proud Argentine

DALLAS, Texas, July 5: There was only one Argentinian leaving the World Cup with his head held high — the Saudi Arabian coach Jorge Solari, reports AP.

Compatriot Alfio Basile led the Argentinian exodus and will lose his job as national coach after their second-round elimination by Romania. Their exit came hours after Solari's Saudis had gone out to Sweden.

But Solari, previously Basile's assistant, could be proud of his achievement after getting the dreaded call from the all-powerful Saudi royal family to take on the coaching job in February when Dutchman Leo Beenhakker was sacked.

Solari apparently hesitated before accepting, but performances in the United States should give a tremendous shot in the arm for football in Saudi Arabia, where the sport really took off after the country's qualification for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

King Fahd and his son Prince Faisal have spared nothing to ensure soccer takes off, with the construction of a 500-million dollar stadium, provision of grass pitches in a country with virtually no rainfall and introduction of European and South American coaches.

Nevertheless the Saudis came to their first finals as 500-1 bets with everyone expecting three first-round defeats and an early return home. Nobody took Solari seriously when, on arrival in the US, he said they would reach the second round.

Sure enough the Saudis became the first side from the Asian qualifying region to reach the second stage since North Korea in 1966.

"We are happy with our performance," said Solari whose contract expires after the finals. "We were pleased to reach the second round and we think our team made a strong impression at this level. We worked hard for the three months we trained, but we needed more time."

The Saudis were one of the youngest teams at the finals with an average age of only 23 and their inexperience told against the Swedes who had done their homework.

"We were the only team who analysed them beforehand," said Swedish coach Tommy Svensson.

It was a race against time for Solari, who speaks no more than 30 words of Arabic, to prepare his team for the finals. "The team was not in good shape physically. We worked on that but we did not have time to develop the side tactically to match those with more experience," said Solari.

'A vehicle for violence'

VATICAN CITY, July 5: The Vatican said on Monday the murder of Colombian World Cup defender Andres Escobar showed how soccer had become a vehicle for violence, reports Reuter.

Escobar, 27, was shot dead in the Colombian city of Medellin on Saturday by gunmen apparently angry at his own goal in Colombia's 2-1 defeat by the United States.

The Vatican newspaper Osservatore Romano pointed to this, and the death of a soccer fan in Mexico City a week ago when celebrations by thousands of fans turned sour, as evidence that the game was steeped in killing and violence.

An editorial said: "USA '94 will not be remembered for the Cup being joyously held up in victory, but for that player in the penalty area, horror written on his face after the own goal, a symbol of desperation and death."

Swedish spirits soaring



DALLAS, July 5: Sweden, eyeing their first World Cup semifinal appearance for 36 years, are relieved to be playing Romania and not Argentina in Sunday's quarter-final, report agencies.

Coach Tommy Svensson and captain Jonas Thern both believe their chances of making the semifinals for the first time since they were losing finalists in 1958 improved when Romania beat Argentina in Sunday's second round.

Tactically, it's easier for me to plan how to play against a European team than a South American one," Svensson said on Monday. "I think that our way and style of playing is better suited to playing Romania than Argentina."

There was a sign of relief in the Swedish camp on Monday after hospital X-rays revealed that midfielder general Thern had no serious damage to his right knee after being injured in the win over Saudi Arabia.

Thern was replaced in the second half of Sunday's World Cup second round game after he twisted his knee and strained his ligaments. There were fears he would miss the quarter-final against Romania.

The X-ray showed nothing serious but he will still have to be careful," said coach Tommy Svensson. "At the moment I am pretty certain he can play against Romania."

The injury-prone Thern is convinced he will be fit enough to play.

The knee is not sore and it is not getting any worse. It will be fine after three or four days' rest," said the 27-year-old Napoli star.

Also injured in the Saudi match are defender Joachim Bjorklund, who along with Patrik Andersson firmly subdued the Saudi front line, and striker Martin Dahlin.

The 23-year-old IFK Gothenburg left-back aggravated an old groin injury and Dahlin was clipped on the back

of his right ankle and limped through most of the second half.

"I am glad we do not have to play before Sunday. We need the rest," said Svensson.

Svensson, who took over as coach at the start of 1991,



JONAS THERN admits his team will have their work cut out to overcome a Romanian side that tore apart Argentina, who had been a firm favourite to reach the final.

"I watched their match against Argentina on video. I was very impressed with their performance, especially Gheorghe Hagi. He was a class above the rest of the team," said Svensson. "Hagi has split-second vision. He can see things most players can't."

Thern said: "I would always prefer to play Romania before Argentina. We know how hard it is to play against South Americans."

"They are very fast and run a lot, like when we played Brazil in the first round. It's more difficult for us to play that kind of game," said the midfielder, who will play for Roma next season.

"Against Romania we will have a lot more of the ball than we did against Brazil, so we will be able to create a lot more."

Thern said the key to beating Romania was to close down

their options in midfield.

"All teams we have played against, we have closed down in midfield. Brazil had a lot of problems getting close to our goal. If we play well in midfield and defence we know we are going to score one or two goals," the captain said.

"Dahlin and Kennet Andersson are in great shape and we are always confident of scoring goals."

Svensson is convinced his defence can shut down Hagi, the 29-year-old Romanian, who helped Brescia to promotion to Italy's first division last season, but refused to say how.

But Svensson is still not happy with his team's overall performance so far in the tournament.

"We have a lot of work to do yet. We need everyone to give 100 per cent and at the moment they are not. It is no good just six or seven players a game giving their all. Against Romania it must be everyone," said the former Swedish international midfielder.

Confidence is growing in the Swedish camp that they can recapture at least some of the glory days of the 1958 World Cup when they lost to Brazil in the final.

With the strike duo of Dahlin and the French-based Andersson, who scored twice against Saudi Arabia, Svensson is convinced his side poses a threat to anyone.

"When you have two strikers like that, defences have to be scared," he said.

Star striker Dahlin, who has scored four goals in three games in the finals, is also pleased to be facing Romania, but is so confident he believes he can score against anyone.

"I feel I can score goals every time I go out. That's an important feeling to have because it gives me self confidence."

"And the further we go in the tournament, the more our confidence grows. Right now we feel we can beat anyone," Dahlin said.

Stultification in crown



DALLAS, July 5: They were young and 500-1 shots to do anything at the World Cup. But Saudi Arabia's inexperience may have been more at the top than on the field, reports AP.

With an average age of under 23, Saudi Arabia was one of the youngest teams at the World Cup. Yet it may have been four coaches in less than a year that was their undoing.

"We are happy with our performance here," said Saudi Arabia's Argentine coach Jorge Solari. "We were happy to reach the second round and we think our team made a strong beginning in professional play."

"We worked hard for the three months we trained, but we needed more time."

Solari was only the latest in a line of coaches. Brazilian Jose Candido began with the team but was replaced in the middle of the final round of Asian qualifying because he refused to follow a Saudi prince's orders to change goalkeepers.

His interim replacement, Mohammed Al Kharrashi lasted until Dutchman Leo Beenhakker took over last November. But he couldn't get along with the royals either, and Solari was hired in March.

Against the Dutch and Belgians in the first round, Saudi Arabia seemed to take their opponents by surprise. Dutch striker Ronald De Boer shyly admitting as much.

But by the time Saudi Arabia got to the second round, the

surprise factor had worn off. And Solari had nothing new to try.

"When we began in France months ago, the team was not in good physical condition," Solari said.

"We worked on that, but we had not time to develop tactically like the other teams which have more experience. There was no time to learn anything else. It was necessary for us to play the same way tactically in the qualifying rounds and in the finals. We had a counterattack style."

Many were shocked to see Saudi Arabia lead the Netherlands for 31 minutes, and come within four minutes for a draw. It was even more shocking to see them upset the Belgians.

"The World Cup has been a good experience since our team is semi-professional," Solari said. "We are comfortable with what we have done, but they could have used another strategy."

Saudi Arabia's emergence as one of the top 16 soccer-playing nations comes only three decades after its official introduction into the kingdom. Never having been colonized, it lacked the early arrival of the game that the French and British brought to places like Morocco, Algeria and Egypt.

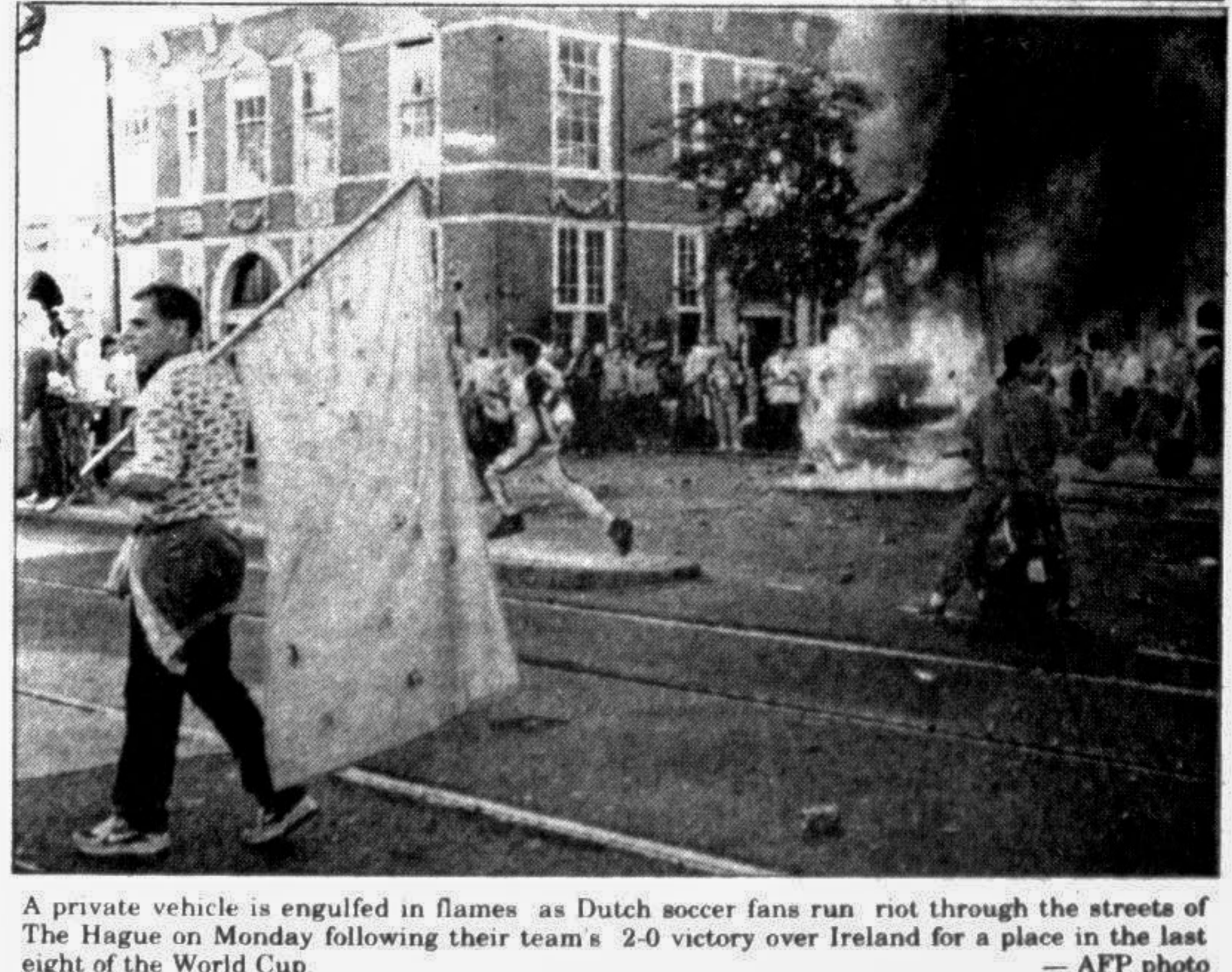
But its recent rise has come through a three-tiered league system, which has kept up a constant flow of players to the national level.

Soccer is a passion in the kingdom, the world's largest oil producer.

Soccer picked up in a big way in the kingdom after the Saudi team qualified for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

Since then, expectations and interest in the national team's performance has been high.

Besides a 32-team league, the federation has also built and refurbished existing stadiums in every part of the kingdom, allowing for more participation by the youths.



A private vehicle is engulfed in flames as Dutch soccer fans run riot through the streets of The Hague on Monday following their team's 2-0 victory over Ireland for a place in the last eight of the World Cup.