



THE OUTLAWS: Dissident sympathisers of the Iranian National Resistance Council (CNRI), clad in T-shirts with portrait of the council's president Masoud Rajavi, sending their anti-establishment message at Gerland Stadium, Lyon on June 21.

## Gabriel aiming higher

PARIS, June 22 (AFP): Gabriel Batistuta was delighted after becoming the first player to score a hat-trick at the World Cup in France as his treble helped Argentina to blast Jamaica 5-0 at the Parc des Princes.

"The goals will help me in my ambition to be the tournament's leading scorer and that is the reason I came here," said Batistuta, whose goals earned the SOs Children's Village charity 25,000 dollars. "It wasn't easy but after the first goal they lost concentration totally and we found it very easy to run through their defence," said Batistuta, the leading tournament scorer with four.

Jamaica coach Rene Simoes was "while philosophical after his side came off very much second best."

"We played very well for the first 30 minutes. We knew if we could keep Veron under wraps, the Argentinians would have problems."

"The only time he wriggled free he set up Ortega for the first goal," Simoes said.

"When we were down to ten men, we found ourselves in the same position the Saudis were against France. It was very difficult against a very good team."

"At half-time I had a choice — either ask the players to close it down and we lose 1-0, or play it open. I chose the second option. I told the players to show their talent."

"If you look at the statistics, you'll see the Argentinians made a lot of faults. They weren't able to put more than three passes together."

"Overall the best team won but I am proud of my team," Simoes said.

## Injury worry for Yugoslavs

SAINT GALMIER, France, June 22 (AFP/Internet): Yugoslavia are facing a mounting injury crisis as they prepare for Thursday's final Group F clash against the United States in Nantes.

Defender Zeljko Petrovic and striker Darko Kovacevic are the latest additions to coach Slobodan Samtrac's injury list following the physical 2-2 draw against Germany on Sunday.

"Both players were substituted late in the second half of Sunday's clash in Lens in which Yugoslavia threw away a two-goal lead to draw 2-2."

## Spaniards in search of a way out

CHANTILLY, France, June 22: The Spanish squad ended a 24-hour break from a so-far disastrous World Cup to return to the drawing board in search of a survival strategy, reports AP.

But there was no disguising the mood of helplessness.

Following an unusually short and simple, 45-minute session Sunday at the Bourgnonnes sports complex at this chateau town north of Paris, the 22 players marched grim-faced past waiting press, a few apologising that they were under orders not to speak.

It was understandable; there's not a lot to say.

Spain, with one point from two games, are threatened with an embarrassing first-round elimination. Even if they defeat Bulgaria in their final game Wednesday, they will have to hope Paraguay doesn't defeat Nigeria to earn the second berth from Group D. Nigeria have already clinched first place in the group.

Bulgaria are in the same sinking boat as Spain, with one point and eager to grasp any tournament life-saver they can find.

Spanish news reports Sunday said FIFA would be on the lookout that no financial incentives come Nigeria's way to encourage a victory that would favour either Spain or Bulgaria.

During training Sunday, there were little of the joking and play-acting of previous sessions.

## Samurais seek to score

AIX-LES-BAINS, France, June 22 (AFP): Are we too small, too slow or too shy to face the goal?

Japan's J-League all-stars are wondering out loud why they have yet to score a goal, let alone a win, against South American and European giants after two games in their virgin World Cup voyage.

"I fear Asia's berths will be cut back if we go on this way," striker Shoji Jo said after Japan resumed training here following a 1-0 defeat to Croatia which denied them a spot in the second round.

"I don't want to hear them say, 'Ah, this is the level of Asian football,'" sighed the 23-year-old, who forced veteran Kazu Miura out of the national squad.

None of the 22 Samurais has ever played at an overseas club although playmaker Hidetoshi Nakata is under scrutiny from European scouts.

Miura, 31, Asia's best known footballer, played at Brazil's Santos and Italy's Genoa but failed to make the final squad.

Japan's surprisingly tough three-back defence helped limit two-time champions Argentina and the Balkan powerhouse to one goal each. But their for-

wards could not take their scoring chances.

Their opponents hit the winners with their star strikers Gabriel Batistuta and Davov Suker seizing on slight chances.

"Indeed, their bodies are different from ours," said Jo, whose 1m79 (6ft) and 72 kg (158lb) frame is about his team's average.

"While we give all we have, they use 50-60 per cent of their strength in dribbling, passing and finishing off," he said. "Their trapping is awesome. They are quick to shoot off one touch."

Jo, who has scored five goals in 26 internationals, failed to make an impact on Croatia, being limited to a tame header goalkeeper Drazen Ladic easily saved and an off-target overhead kick inside the box.

"Although we lost by one goal, their speed and power are very different," said right winger Akira Nishikubo.

"We may play in a collective style but Argentina and Croatia have many players with superb individual skills," said the 1m69 defender, who is coached by Brazilian great Zico at the J-League Kashima Antlers.

"Hide (Nakata) and Jo need

experience from playing abroad and we also need to play more away international matches," Nishikubo added.

Muscle-bound stopper Yutaka Akita warned about the dangers if Japan failed beat Jamaica in their last group match.

"The whole of Asia will be ignored," he said.

"Our opponents have options. They are an experienced team," said Akita.

Japan Football Association president Ken Naganuma urged the Asians to buck up and boost the case for their six regional spots at the 2002 World Cup finals to be co-hosted by Japan and South Korea.

The 67-year-old, who as a young coach led his country to the bronze at the 1968 Mexico Olympics, also said the Japanese should build up their body strength.

Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger, a former J-League coach who led the Gunners to the FA Cup and Premiership double this year, said the Japanese were too predictable in the last 20 metres.

"And, they lack a little precision and maybe a strong striker," he added.

## Dutch take it easy

MONACO, June 22 (AP): After a 5-0 victory at the World Cup, an easy day at work is certainly in order.

That was the reward Sunday for the Dutch players who took part in the rout of South Korea. While the rest of the squad went through a full practice session, the stars of Saturday's victory had little more than a light-hearted kick around in the late afternoon sun.

Four players including three goal scorers, sat out even the light training with what team officials described as "minor knocks" suffered during the biggest margin-of-victory win of the World Cup so far.

Among them was Dennis Bergkamp, who was feeling the effects of playing 78 minutes in his first start since injuring a hamstring in April. Also resting were Phillip Cocu, Jaap Stam and Pierre van Hooijdonk.

Looking relaxed, Guus Hiddink denied he had taken a risk by putting Cocu, normally a defensive midfielder, up front next to Bergkamp. Both Cocu and Bergkamp scored memorable goals Saturday in Marseille.

"I did not for a moment think it was a gamble," Hiddink said.

## Sampson to stay

LYON, France, June 22: US coach Steve Sampson has ruled out quitting in the wake of a humiliating defeat by Iran that ended his side's interest in the World Cup and could do untold damage to the sport's future in America, reports AP.

"Although Americans love to win I think they will appreciate the effort and the way that we played here," Sampson said after watching his side hit the woodwork three times without reward on a frustrating night in the Stade Gerland.

Asked if he would step down voluntarily, Sampson said: "You're kidding. Come on, give me a break."

"The team was prepared well and they played well. It just a question of finishing the chances. If I had it all to do over again, there is not one thing that I would have done differently."

Whether the directors of US soccer will take the same relaxed view about Sampson's performance in France remains to be seen. In USA '94 America made the second round, finally being knocked out by Brazil 1-0. In particular there must be question marks over Sampson's decision to make no less than five changes from the

starting line-up that lost 2-0 to Germany in the United States opening match. His Iranian line-up included only two recognised defenders.

"From the start of the tournament I'd planned to play a more attacking line-up against Iran," he said in defence of the move.

Veteran striker Roy Wegerle said the US squad had only been short of a little luck.

"Some things are just not meant to be and it seems like it was one of those nights for us."

The former Queen's Park Rangers forward insisted: "US soccer can survive this. It's not a tragedy. No one has died. It is a lesson in a learning curve."

There are going to be 16 countries leaving here in the next week and we are going to be one of them. That is no disaster. We just keep moving upwards and hope for better results in the future."

But Kasey Keller, the English-based goalkeeper who is the Americans only truly world class player, acknowledged over that a lack of top-level experience had ultimately cost the Americans dear.

In both the game against Germany last week and against Iran on Sunday, the US defence conceded goals to headers from unmarked opponents.

## WC TIDBITS

PARIS, June 22 (AFP/Internet): World Cup diary:

After their defeat by Iran, most of the US squad will be heading home straight after their final match against Yugoslavia in Nantes.

But Leicester city goalkeeper Kasey Keller will be staying on in France.

Keller revealed: "I've got tickets for the semi-finals and the final so I'll be hanging around for a while."

## MIXED TRAINING FOR NORWAY

Norway's relaxed training session at Saint-Andre-des-Eaux not far from the Atlantic coast near Nantes was unusual in that a women took part in the warm up with the players. However it turned out she was the baby sitter of coach Egil Olsen's children.

## WEIGHT OFF HIS MIND

Belgium's Marc Wilmots, who scored twice in Belgium's 2-2 draw with Mexico on Saturday in Bordeaux, surely won't be having weight problems during the World Cup. Wilmots worked up a such a sweat in the high temperatures he lost 4kg during the match.

## RIGHT ON TIME

Yugoslav playmaker Dragan Stokjovic has revealed why he pointed at his wrists after scoring his side's second goal against Germany on Sunday.

"It's a private joke amongst us in the team," Stokjovic said. "If you've seen the Yugoslav film 'We're no angels' you will understand."

The film features a worker who is always late for his job and constantly taps his watch to remind himself to be on time.

Stokjovic said he made the gesture in answer to critics of the team back home who criticised the team's slow start at the competition when they only beat Iran 1-0 in their opening match.

## IT'S MY GOAL

Dejan Stankovic was credited with Yugoslavia's first goal against Germany in Sunday but his teammate Predrag Mijatovic insists the goal was his. "Dejan helped a little bit but it was my goal," the Real Madrid striker insisted.

Mijatovic hit a low cross in-field that both Stankovic and German keeper Andreas Kopke rushed for.

Both appeared to miss the ball completely. The bar hit the far post and bounced over the line before defender Jens Jeremies could hook it clear.

The 19-year-old Stankovic put his arm in the air, claiming he had got a touch to the ball before it went in.

## UNLUCKY TWIST FOR ICHIKAWA

Teenager Daisuke Ichikawa, the "23rd" player of Japan's World Cup squad, has sprained his leg in training and will be sent home before their final group match against Jamaica on Friday.

The Shimizu S-Pulse defender became Japan's youngest player to make an international debut on April Fool's Day against South Korea in Seoul when he was one month old.

He didn't make the final 22-strong squad but he has kept training with the team as Japan's long-term future hope.

But Ichikawa twisted his left ankle in a friendly match against a French third-division club in Aix-les-Bains on Sunday and will be out of action for three weeks.

## Nigeria must be joking!

ELINCOURT-STE-MAR-GUERITE, France, June 22 (Reuters): Nigeria's World Cup players, two wins under their belts and big ideas in their heads, are already dreaming of winning the final on July 12. Coach Bora Milutinovic said on Sunday: "The boys are dreaming of going all the way to the final and winning the World Cup."

Nigeria have already qualified for the last 16 thanks to an upset 3-2 win over Spain and a 1-0 victory against Bulgaria and have impressed with the fluent, attacking style which won them countless admirers at their World Cup debut four years ago.

Milutinovic said the players were oozing confidence and not afraid of any other team at the finals.

"We're very hale and hearty," he said. "Everyone's looking forward to the game in Paris. We're very glad we've qualified for the second round and we're ready to play anybody."

Nigeria will top Group D whatever the outcome of Wednesday's game with Paraguay and will go on to play the runners up of Group C in Paris on June 28.

The chances are that their rivals will be Denmark — unless the Danes beat the hosts in their final match and leave the French to face the Nigerians.

Striker Daniel Amokachi said he would prefer to avoid France, but not because he was afraid of them.

"We don't want to play France now we'd rather meet Denmark," he said with a big grin.

There are no injury worries in the Nigerian camp though skipper and central defender Uche Okechukwu will miss the Paraguay game through suspension.

Milutinovic, who has given no hint as to whether he plans to rest key players for the match, said either Uche Okafur or Austin Eguavoen, two experienced internationals, were in line to replace Okechukwu.

## Denilson D-Day

OZOIR-LA-FERRIERE, France, June 22 (AP/Internet):

Crowds shout his name from the grandstands. Fans turn out just to see him practice. Sportswriters compare him to the great Garrincha.

Now, Denilson at last may get a chance to start in the World Cup.

He still isn't certain. Brazilian coach Mario Zagallo refused to confirm the lineup change for Tuesday's game with Norway, saying he wanted to "confuse the head of our adversary's coach." But this week, Denilson trained on the starting team for the first time after weeks practising with the scrubs.

"That's a good sign, isn't it?" he said, flashing an enormous grin.

His chance came when midfielder Cesar Sampaio got his second yellow card in Brazil's last game against Morocco and

drew an automatic one-game suspension. The logical substitute was Emerson, Sampaio's backup. But with Brazil already qualified in first place in Group A, Zagallo had a chance to experiment with a bolder, more offensive formation.

"Denilson alters the way we play," Zagallo said. "He is an important component because he can change our movement by his very characteristics."

Movement is what Denilson does best. His tight, sinuous dribbles and wizardly ball control are a match even for Ronaldo. Brazilians compare him to Garrincha, a star of Brazil's World Cup champions in 1958 and 1962.

One of his biggest admirers is Zagallo. A world champion with Pele and Garrincha, Zagallo has said that Denilson would have started in his place had he played back then.

It's been a meteoric rise for

the 20-year-old midfielder. As a boy, he honed his skills playing against older kids on an empty lot in Sao Bernardo do Campo, a gritty industrial suburb of Sao Paulo.

A scout saw him darting and weaving through the field and urged Denilson to try out for Sao Paulo, where he caught the eye of veteran coach Te Santana. In 1994, barely 16, he was on a luxury second-string squad dubbed "the little express" that won the Conmebol Cup.

In 1996, Zagallo named him to the national team. A year later, summoned for the Tournoi de France and the Copa America, he played brilliantly and won a starting berth. More glory followed. He helped his club to the Sao Paulo state championship and signed a transfer reportedly worth near \$30 million to Spain's Betis.

But just when he seemed a sure starter at the World Cup, Denilson was back on the bench. Zagallo chose to start FC Barcelona teammates Rivaldo and Giovanni in the midfield, using Denilson as a 12th man.

Still, he made the most of his playing time. His entrance in the second half against Scotland changed the pace of the game, and Brazil got the winning goal in a 2-1 victory. Against Morocco, fans chanted his name from the stands, although he played only a few minutes. His boyish enthusiasm and good humour make him popular on the team. And his skill is recognised by all.

"Brazil has some great attackers, and Denilson is one," said Ronaldo.

"This is good for us," Bebeto added. "On the attack, the more the better."

Some question whether Denilson can adapt to Zagallo's game plan, which requires him to play defence and restricts his freedom, unlike on Sao Paulo.

But Denilson isn't worried. "I will correspond" to expectations, he said. "I want to make those dribbles that drive the 'gringos' crazy."

And even in his first World Cup, Denilson hasn't lost sight of priorities. He spoke of his pride in buying a house for his family back in Sao Bernardo.

"We were very poor," he said. "We faced necessity. Now, that's in the past. Soccer has given me that."



Midfielder Denilson (C) looks behind to feel the imposing presence of Junior Bianco (L) while Cafu plans to intervene during Brazil's practice at Ozoir-la-Ferriere on June 21.

## Saudis split over Parreira sacking

PARIS, June 22: The sudden sacking of Saudi Arabia coach Carlos Alberto Parreira has caused a rift amongst players and officials.

The decision to get rid of Parreira was taken by Prince Faisal at a hastily called meeting in the French capital after two crushing defeats in their opening group matches.

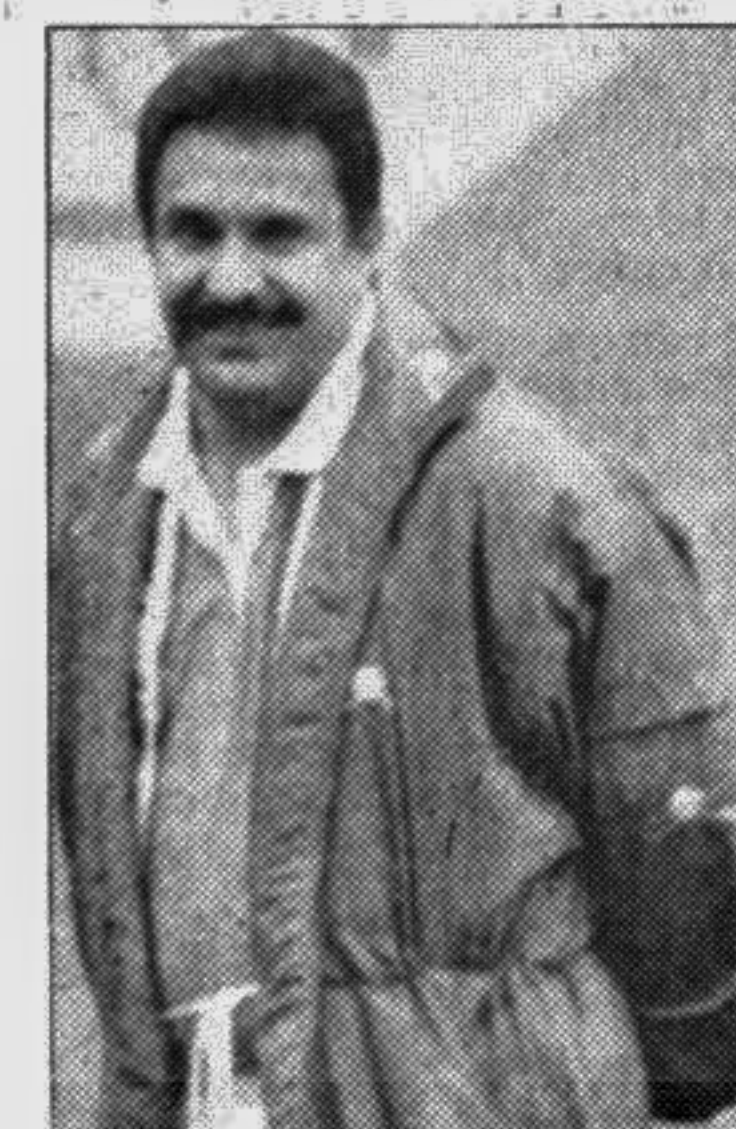
But despite claims by some Saudi officials that his ouster has lifted team morale for their final group match against South Africa, there is growing criticism within the Saudi camp.

National coach Mohammed Al-Kharashi, who has been put in charge of the team's final match, admitted the firing had upset him.

"I was not happy to hear about Parreira's dismissal. We will miss him. He's not only a great coach, but also a great person. He did his best for the team," said Al-Kharashi.

Saudi Sami al-Jaber was also full of praise for the man who took Brazil to victory in the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

"He meant a lot to me. He was just like a big brother. He had a big hand in bringing me in the opening line-up and he paid equal attention to all the play-



AL-KHARASHI

ers. "We will miss him and I hope he will return as our coach in the future," said the striker.

Midfielder Saeed al-Owairan also lauded the Brazilian, despite being pulled off twice.

"Even though I was not happy about being substituted I respected his decision. He is a great coach who knows what to do in a given situation," said Al-

## Refs Scare Bravehearts

ST ETIENNE, France, June 22 (AFP/Internet): Scotland manager Craig Brown fears a red card blitz in his side's showdown with Morocco here on Tuesday.

Scotland must win if they want to stand a chance of marching into the second round for the first time in their history.

But Brown has been warned by Scottish FA officials that outgoing FIFA president Joao Havelange has told the referees not to ease up on punishing foul play.

SFA president George Cumming told Brown that Havelange instructed the referees that if they had a doubt whether to bring out a yellow card or a red card to plump for the red.

"This is something we will be stressing to our players," said Brown.

"We're without Darren Jackson for the Moroccan game because of two cautions and, should we proceed in the competition, we don't want to be without anyone else."

"We conceded only 13 fouls against Brazil and seven against Norway. Nonetheless we had

Darren Jackson booked against Brazil and Jackson and Gordon Durie against Norway so we will have to be very careful against Morocco," he added.

Brown is poised to give Leicester defender Matt Elliott the nod over David Weir of Hearts for the do-or-die clash.

Weir laid on the equaliser for Craig Burley in the 1-1 draw against Norway last week after replacing the injured Colin

Calderwood.

It was widely thought that Weir would retain his place as Calderwood will be unable to play at least by the weekend, should Scotland progress to the second phase.

But Brown now appears to be having second thoughts about the Tynecastle star's role.

"I chose David Weir to do a particular job in that match," said the Scotland boss.

"But I am not ruling out Matt Elliott for the game against Morocco."

Elliott has had a very good season for his club and has looked bright in training.

"It is a straight toss-up between the two players as to who will face Morocco and replace Calderwood."

"There is keen anticipation among all the squad to get on with this game."

"They know this is the biggest game of their lives with so much resting on it."

Elliott, in fact, won the first of his three caps last November when Scotland lost 2-1 to France in a friendly.

The Scottish squad have been boosted by the return of Calderwood from his training camp in St Remy de Provence after having surgery to repair two broken bones in his right hand.

"I was really down when I was taken to hospital but I cheered up when a security guard told me we had equalised against Norway."

"There is a real feeling of togetherness in the squad and the fact that there is stiff competition for places boosts well for the team," said Calderwood.



MORE THAN JUST A GOAL: Mehdi Mahdavia, the Iranian dynamo (C), becomes the toast of his team-mates after scoring the second goal against USA at Lyon.