



NO POINT ARGUING: Brazil custodian Taffarel (No 1) and defender Goncalves (L challenging the legitimacy of American referee Esfandiar Baharmast's (2nd from L) penalty decision at Marseille on June 23.

Yugoslavs won't be complacent

NANTES, France, June 24: (AFP): Yugoslavia have done all the hard work, but they still need a point from their final Group F match against the United states on Thursday to be certain of a place in the second

round of the World Cup. The Yugoslavs, playing in the World Cup for the ninth time and are two-time semifinalists, beat Iran 1-0 in their tournament opener and then drew 2-2 with European champions Germany after squander-

ing a two-goal lead... The United States, already eliminated after a pair of dismal losses, should, on paper, pose no threat to the impressive Yugoslavs, but coach Slobodan Santrac is taking nothing for granted.

"If we want to be a good team we have to be more consistent. and that is what I am trying to tell my players," said Santrac. The Yugoslavs have three injury worries as a hangover from their draw with the Germans. Striker Darko Kovacevic has a thigh injury, midfielder Zalkjo Petrovic has a corked leg muscle and defender Miroslav Djukic has an injured right calf.

The Yugoslav players are not expecting a walkover against the Americans, who have a point to prove after suffering ridicule at home following their 2-1 loss to Iran.

"The match will be difficult one," said goalkeeper Ivica Kralj. "Any team that qualifies for the World Cup finals deserves respect and we were surprised they lost to Iran. We were expecting a draw or an Ameri-

can victory.' Striker Predrag Mijatovic said the Yugoslavs were keeping their minds on the job in hand and not looking towards a possible second-round meeting

with Holland. "We are staying cool-

headed," said the real Madrid star "Our aim is to reach the second round and it will be a match like any other when we play the United States. There's no special emotion. We just want to play well.

The Yugoslav players have played down talk of the political implications of the match. The United States is a fierce critic of Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic, accusing the Yugoslavs of human rights abuses against ethnic Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosovo.

"Don't ask me if the match against the USA is of political interest," said midfilder Petrovic. "The World Cup is about football, not politics.

"It's all about sport to us." The Americans are making their third successive appearance in the finals but have failed to match their performance in reaching the second

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SONG SINGS RED: Rigobert Song (L), the Cameroon defender arguing with the referee after being shown the red card during the match against Chile on June 23. -AFP. photo

Boring Belgium better wear scoring boots

PARIS, June 24: Belgium, dubbed boring and over-the-hill by critics, need to find their scoring touch on Thursday against beleaguered South Korea to stand a chance of remaining in the World Cup.

The Belgians, slammed for their defensive approach in the 0-0 draw with Holland and taken apart by coach Georges Leekens for failing to hold on to a 2-0 lead against Mexico, trail those teams by two points in Group E and have an inferior goal difference.

South Korea are reeling after the 5-0 hammering by Holland and the subsequent sacking of coach Cha Bum Kun but they will go on a face-saving mission against Belgium to appease

their angry fans. The Korean are still looking for their first win in five World Cup finals and that failure is following the team like an alba-

tross. A change of coach, particularly one whose only previous experience is guiding a women's team, might prove a futile attempt to ward off the bad omens in their 14th World

Belgium beat South Korea 2-0 when they met in the 1990 finals and nothing less will do on Thursday but it's questionable if they have the personnel to make it a stroll in the Parc des

Playmaker Danny Boffin is out through injury and a lot will depend on the back-infavour Enzo Scifo and Marc Wilmots, scorer of both goals

against Mexico. Goalkeeper Filip de Wilde has a groin strain and Leekens may have to play Philippe Van de Walle who has only been

capped twice. Also struggling to be fit in time is defensive midfielder

Franky Van der Elst. The 37year-old ball winner is still feeling twinges from a thigh injury picked up last week in training.

If he fails to recover, his place will go to 24-year-old Philippe Clement, like Van de Walle a novice in international football.

"The players know that they will need to give 200 per cent for this match. I don't want to have to pull somebody off after 30 minutes because they are injured," said Leekens.

Leekens will stand by Brazilian-born Luis Oliveira and Luc Nilis who are in the midst of goal famine. Their efforts against Mexico were ridiculed in some sections of the media but the coach is hoping Oliveira, nicknamed 'falcon man', and Nilis will swoop against South Korea.

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Iran plan Deutsch downfall

MONTPELLIER, France, June 24 (AFP): Iran are bidding to spark the mother of all parties with victory over Germany in the 'match that nearly never was' here in the crunch Group F clash at the Stade de la Mosson on Thursday.

Jalal Talebi's side sparked wild celebrations back home when they beat the United States 2-1 in Lyon on Sunday to put themselves in with a chance of reaching the last 16 of France

Hundreds of thousands of Iranian men and women poured into the streets of Tehran and partied long into the night after the dramatic victory in once unthinkable scenes of public festivity.

And now the Iranians have the chance to one better against a German side who were uncharacteristically sloppy in the 2-2 draw the Yugoslavia before veteran Lothar Matthaeus came on to inspire a fightback from two goals down.

Boosted by Iran's display against the states and encouraged by signs of Germany vulnerability, Talebi is confident that his team, written off as rank outsiders before the tournament, can pull off the shock of France '98.

"If we beat Germany there will be an even bigger party tream lie in third place in Group F on three points behind leader's Germany and Yugoslavia who both have four points.

Iran and Germany have been em broiled in off-pitch controver sy at France 98, prompting reports that both could pull out and plunge the tournament into

Fears that the Iran would with iraw were raised when the Irani an embassy in France lodge I an angry protest over the screening of controversial TV programme which supposedly depict s the country in a negative lig ht.

Ger many, meanwhile, reportedly offered to pull out following violence involving their fans in lens which has left a French policeman fighting for his life.

One of the two teams, though, will almost certainly be on their way home after Thursday's match with Yugoslavia tipped to progress by seeing off the pointle ss Americans.

The permutations of goal difference mean that a draw is unlikely to be enough for the Iranians e ven if the Yugoslavs lose, but Ti alebi says the victory over the Un ited States has given them the belief to beat the three-time vorld champions.

"I want to keep the players

on this high level. I don't want to bring them down," says Talebi.

But the Iranian coach says he does not want to put his players under too much pressure by raising expectations of victory.

"I want them to go out and enjoy themselves against Germany," he added. "It does not

matter whether we win or lose." The Iranians boast three German-based players in their squad - Ali Daei, Karim Bagheri (both Arminia Bielefeld) and Khodadad Azizi (FC Cologne) — and Talebi believes their knowledge of the Bundesliga could prove invaluable.

"They know the German players well, and are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and we will be using their experience to help us."

Germany, meanwhile, are reporting no major injury problems and veteran striker Juergen Klinsmann is expected to play despite being stretchered off unconscious after a heavy collision in the Yugoslav match.

"Steffen Freund still has problems with his stomach muscles but everyone else is OK," said a spokesman for the German team.

"Juergen has recovered and will be available for selection."

Santiago erupts

SANTIAGO, Jun 24: Police using water cannon and tear gas in Santiago and Valaparaiso battled with soccer fans, one of whom died falling from a truck. as celebrations for Chile reaching the second round of the World Cup turned sour Tuesday.

One flag-waving fan died as he fell from the back of a truck riding through Antofagasta 850 miles (1360 km) north of Santiago, police said

In Santiago, clashes broke out as fans wanted to prolong celebrations for Chile's 1-1 tie against Cameroon and police wanted to clear the streets so as not to cause traffic chaos when offices and businesses closed late in the afternoon.

Police said 44 people were detained in Santiago and 18 police officers were injured as fans threw stones at them.

In Valaparaiso 88 miles (140-km) west of Santiago, local media reported 60 detained and 20 injured as bands of stonethrowing youths clashes with riot police.

Immediately after the match, celebrations were festive with tens of thousands of Chileans converging on key points of the capital blowing ear-piercing trumpets, waving flags and dancing.

Traffic was brought to a standstill on main roads as Chilean fans ignored government orders not to turn the day into a public holiday.

Strangers hugged and kissed under the pale winter sun. Plaza

Italy, Santiago 's equivalent to times square, was a sea of ecstatic fans shot iting: "Chilenos. Chilenos, Chile 108"

"It was a si veet point we earned against C'ameroon compared to the bitt er disappoint-

Eagles hit back at Bulgaria slur

TOULOUSE, France, June 24 (AFP/ Internet): N igeria have hit back at suggestions by Bulgaria coach Hristo Bonev that they will deliberate ly ease up against Paraguay in 1 Wednesday's Group D clash h ere.

The Africans have already qualified for the seco nd round as group winners as id coach Boro Milutinovic has admitted he will ring the change's against Paraguay in order to av oid sustaining any injuries or yellow

On Monday Bonev had called for FIFA to "be vigila nt" at Wednesday's match. "I sp excially hope that Nigeria will give their all. The match must take place under honest conditi ons,"

Boney said

Nigeria reacted by issuir ig a statement in which they described Bonev's remarks as being "laced with innuendores", adding: "The Nigeria Foot ball Association has always believed in the laws of the game and will do everything possible to respect the FIFA Fair Play

campaign, both in word and

Austria," said Ivan Badillo, a factory worker fan draped in a red, white and blue flag. Chileans despaired when a controversial late penalty gave

ments after we were robbed of

victory against both Italy and

Italy a 2-2 tie in their first match of the tournament. Against Austria a last-gasp equaliser rubbed salt in stillhealing wounds. When Chileans realised that

their one point - given Italy's 2l defeat of Austria — was enough to give the country a second round berth against Brazil, the country stopped watching and celebrated. Almost all work ceased as fans watched the decisive game.

Buses ran virtually empty. Businesses sold few items. President Eduardo Frei also watched the game. Bank workers tossed a bliz-

zard of ticker-tape from the tops of buildings in the financial district, their cheers rousing pigeons from the roof of the Santiago stock exchange.

President Frei congratulated the team on reaching the last 16 but recognised the strengths of upcoming opponents Brazil.

"We suffered up to the last minute like in previous games. The most important is that we played with force up to the last minute, not committing the errors (of previous games)," Frei said. "It is also important that Chile play a dignified game against Brazil."



-AFP photo with Norway.

World Cup wedding

MARSEILLE, France, Jun 24 (AP): Oivind Ekeland, a tall handsome Norwegian, was playing football on the beach in Rio de Janerio when he caught the eye of Rosangela de Souza, a breathtaking girl from Ipanema, straight out of the song. Something flashed.

Eight years later, on Tuesday night, Oivind and Rosangela were married in the Stade Velodrome, moments before Brazil and Norway played a World Cup match with an audience of millions of people.

"The second I saw that woman I knew I wasn't leaving Rio without her," Oivind remembers.

"I knew immediately this was my Prince Charming, who had come to take me away," Rosanglea recalls.

He was 20, and she was 21. They stayed together for a few weeks in Brazil, and then she went home to Stavanger, Norway, with him for a few months. They went back to Rio together. She quit her job as a dentist's receptionist. They've

been together ever since. Now they run the Beverly, a sports bar and restaurant in Stavanger, with a 5-year-old daughter, Kristine. Last year, they decided to tie the knot formally.

I love football," Oivind explained, "and when we saw the draw, that Brazil and Norway were playing in the World Cup. we knew that was a sign."

Besides, he added, June 23 is the Norwegians' beloved Midsummer Night, when there is only an hour of darkness. It is the happiest day of the year. Marseille, on the French coast, was a holiday town. Everything was perfect.

Oivind wanted to ask FIFA, the World Cup organiser, for permission to be married at the

"We waited until May because we were nervous that they might say no," he said. "But when I called to explain, the woman laughed and talked to the right people. A week later, we got a letter saying it was pastor friend, Tore

Stavanger with 30 of Oivind's pals, and his parents, to perform the marriage. Rosangela's mother has died,

Thomassen, flew down from

and her father is sick, but her sister came from Rio. The wedding party started at the Sofitel Hotel, over looking

the white yachts and ancient stone walls of the Old Port. A white Cadillac convertible took them through the streets to the stadium. Champagne and a fancy

canapes were laid out in the VIP compound. This would be a World Cup wedding to remem-Rosangela wore a white dress with a train. Until he changed

to a tuxedo. Oivind was barefoot

in Norwegian soccer shorts, a yellow Brazil number 9 jersey with "Ronaldo" across the back, and a black top hat. "The attraction was so strong on that beach in Rio that you could feel it, like a bolt of magic;" said Geir Ekeland,

"Everything suddenly stopped when they looked at each other. It was unbelievable." Rosangela's reaction was clearly the same, he added. "Just watching her, I knew they'd be together the rest of

Oivind's cousin and best man.

"She now likes football as much as he does," Geir said. "They'll probably eat and sleep football."

their lives.

But not before the honeymoon. Their wedding trip will be to Paris for the World Cup final on July 12.

Norway's finest hour OSLO, June 24 (Reuters): Nor-

wegians danced in the streets early today after their soccer team pulled off an upset 2-1 win against Brazil in the World Cup.

Tuesday's last-gasp victory was hailed by prime minister Khell Magne Bondevik as one of Norway's greatest sporting

Thousands of flag-waving soccer fans thronged the centre of Oslo, chanting "heia Norge (Norway), heia Norge, ole, ole, ole," in a carnival atmosphere more reminiscent of Rio de Janeiro than a Scandinavian capital. Cars honked horns, trams

rang bells and one man climbed on top of a traffic light outside Parliament to fete the upset that put Norway through to the second round of the World Cup for the first time.

It was Norway's second win in a row over Brazil after a 4-2 victory in a friendly in Oslo last

year. Dozens of youths boarded a truck used for towing away illegally parked cars, dancing to make it bounce as the driver struggled through crowds in Oslo's main street.

Others threw streamers of toilet rolls or hung out of car windows to shout support for their team. The victory in France coincided with Norway's annual

midsummer celebrations.

"This was absolutely fantastic, in my opinion it was one of the greatest Norwegian sports feats in history," Bondevik said on public NRK radio. Norway's other great sporting moments have been mostly in winter

"I would like on behalf o: f all Norway to congratulate the boys," he said, "I must admit my faith was a almost down to a zero 10 minutes from the end. B oth goals were great. Bebeto gave Brazil the lead

in the 78th minute, heading in a cross from Denilson, but Norway equalised through lariky striker Tore Andre Flo in the 83rd. Norway's Kjetil Rek dal scored from a controversial penalty one minute from time.

sweeter for Norwegians after their team had been blasted for an unimaginative kick-andchase style following draws against Morocco and Scotland. One Swedish newspaper last week branded the team a

gion." The team had been terrible and suddenly they were great," said Daniel Larsen, 22, celebrating the win with his Bra zilian girlfriend Mariela da Si lva who carried a Brazilian flag in a sea of red, white and blue Norwegian flags.

"This is the best thing to happen in Norway since Bjoe n Daehlie," he added. Daehlie, who won eight Olympic gold medals is the most successful cross-country skier in history. Other sports fans said Tues-

day's win eclipsed a 2-0 soccer

victory over Germany at the

1936 Berlin Olympics when Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler was sitting in the stadium. Norway's soccer team has not been beaten since January



TYING THE KNOT WORLD CUP STYLE: Norwegian Oyvind Ekland (R) gets a kiss from his Brazilian wife Rose Angela de Souza whom he wed at the Stade Velodrome in Marseille -AFP photo on June 23 prior to the start of their respective nations' Group A clash.