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DAYS TO GO

' Don't worry about goals'

"I've added quite a lot to my all-round game in the last four years. I've probably added more goals and I'm probably more creative in my play. I've scored quite a lot of goals since the last World Cup and that makes a big difference from midfield. I hope my peak is to come. It would be a great time to peak in a World Cup."

-- England midfielder Frank Lampard

AFP, Manchester



Klinsmann wants to secure lasting legacy



REUTERS, Geneva

Juergen Klinsmann wants to leave a legacy for the German game and he knows failure at his home World Cup would destroy that chance.

While other coaches at the June 9-July 9 tournament will be fighting to keep their jobs, the 41-year-old Klinsmann seems ambivalent about his future.

What he really wants is to see his ideas on playing, coaching and preparation fully accepted and for that to happen he will have to get the team at least close to a fourth World Cup triumph.

"If Klinsmann is not there, there must be someone else who really continues this philosophy," the former striker told a small group of reporters at Germany's training camp in Switzerland.

"The German Football Federation

cannot just say OK, after Klinsmann this guy, or this guy comes. There should be a line that can be followed.

"But all the things that we've introduced will be measured by our success in the World Cup.

"Even if we lose a game in the knock-out stage, we'll still believe it was the right way to do it but in order to have more credibility and convince more people you need to have the results in your back pocket.

"We're the home country and our goal must be to stay in the tournament until the end."

Klinsmann's eagerness to change German football has been clear ever since he took over from Rudi Voeller in the wake of the country's limp exit from Euro 2004.

The 1990 World Cup winning forward stripped Oliver Kahn of the captaincy and eventually promoted Jens Lehmann to number one keeper in his place.

In have come young players few Germans had ever even heard of, from Robert Huth and Thomas Hitzlsperger to the lightning fast winger David

Odonkor.

He has also appointed a team of fitness specialists, led by the American Mark Verstegen, and a sports psychologist.

The style of play has changed, too. Gone are the safety first tactics of Voeller and previous coaches. Instead, Germany play with a fearless attacking style, even though Klinsmann must realise Michael Ballack is his only player of genuine world class.

"I think there have been two main changes in the past two years," Klinsmann said.

"We brought in a new generation of players so it's a completely different German team now, with a lot of talent. These are young players who realise they can keep up on an international level, as they saw against Argentina and Brazil.

"Secondly, we introduced a philosophy that was defined by this team. We sat down with the players in many meetings and said, 'What kind of football would we like to play? What is our identity? What do
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PHOTO: AFP

ONLY CARS CAN GET PAST HIM: A huge advertisement figure of German goalkeeper Oliver Kahn bridges a main route leading to the Munich airport on Monday.

Parreira defends preparations

AFP, Weggis

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira has defended his team's World Cup preparations, dismissing concerns that the reigning champions could be found out when the tournament starts.

The tournament favourites have enjoyed a relaxed build-up to next month's finals in Germany, scheduling only one friendly, against New Zealand, in the build-up and spending most time training in this idyllic Swiss retreat.

But the South Americans' decision to play just one warm-up has alarmed critics in Brazil, who fear that the lack of match practice could count against Parreira's men when their campaign gets underway against Croatia on June 13.

But Parreira is unfazed by the concerns.

"It doesn't worry me that we may not start the tournament playing at 100 percent of our ability," said Parreira, whose team's last match was a March 1 friendly against Russia.

"If you start off at 100 percent then you've got no room for improvement." "My objective is to improve game by game so that by the end of the tournament we are at our peak," said Parreira, who led Brazil to victory in the 1994 World Cup.

The experienced coach cited the example of the highly rated Colombia team which qualified for the finals in the United States 12 years ago with high hopes of going far only to be knocked out in the first round.

"Colombia had a great team and everyone was talking about them because they'd beaten Argentina 5-0 in Buenos Aires during the qualifiers," said Parreira.

"But by the time the World Cup came they were eliminated. A similar thing happened to
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War no longer a taboo



AFP, Berlin

Germans are being encouraged to loosen up and even discuss World War II in a bid to change their image when a million foreign visitors pour into the country for the football World Cup finals which kick off next week.

The biggest country in the European Union is today an overwhelmingly peaceful land which agonizes even before committing troops to a peacekeeping mission abroad.

Yet the image of Germany in many countries seems barely to have changed more than 60 years since the fall of Adolf Hitler's regime.

Dutch fans are planning to wear replica Nazi helmets in their country's orange at World Cup matches, while England supporters have been urged by the British government not to resort to songs which make reference to the war, such as the 'Dambusters' theme, from a film about the Allies' bouncing bomb.

Even Ecuador has got in on the act. Its football association issued a poster for the World Cup showing a mocked-up picture of its players running through a war-scarred Berlin, dodging

parachutes and tanks. In the background, the word 'Invasion' is emblazoned across the horizon.

Confronted by such reminders of their country's most shameful chapter, how are Germans to react during the June 9-July 9 sporting spectacular?

The online version of the normally strait-laced Der Spiegel magazine this month dared to offer light-hearted tips on how to handle awkward questions.

"Don't fall silent about it, but we don't have to talk about it constantly either. As enlightened patriots, we are looking to the future," Der Spiegel advised.

If asked about Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels, "answer calmly, but firmly, 'He is dead... And so is Hitler.'"

With that out of the way, the host nation can get down to giving its visitors a traditional German welcome. But will it?

"We are unfortunately not perceived as a particularly friendly people. We have to improve on that," admitted Franz Beckenbauer, the head of the World Cup organising committee.

The official World Cup slogan, "A Time to Make Friends", urges a new start.

But a spate of apparently racist

attacks in the weeks before the World Cup have threatened to cast a shadow over the host nation's efforts to prove it is a tolerant country, although Interior Minister Wolfgang Schauble said everything was being done to guarantee the safety of foreign fans.

Sebastian Turner, of the Berlin-based communications agency Scholz and Friends, said the World Cup was a fantastic opportunity to present Germany in a new light.

"The World Cup can help rejuvenate a country's image. The visiting media are the key. But the way Germans get on with their guests will shape the opinion of the media," Turner told AFP.

To coincide with the tournament, Scholz and Friends developed "Land of Ideas", a campaign of events and publicity designed to "reflect the innovative products that are 'Made in Germany', but also the idea that Germany is a land of thinkers and poets", as Turner put it.

He said Germans would be able to tell if foreign fans were having a joke at their expense, or trying to provoke them.

"The question is, what is the intention, and what kind of symbol is intended.

"When Prince Harry wore the
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Comilla maul poor Tangail

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Comilla outclassed Tangail with a massive 101-run victory in the final round of the Dhaka Bank Under-19 Cricket Championship at the Jagannath Hall ground yesterday.

Tangail experienced a stunning batting collapse to be bundled out for 41 runs in 11.1 overs in reply to Comilla's 142-6 in allotted 20 overs.

Manik was the wrecker-in-chief picking up four wickets for 16 runs while Pintu took three for 13.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, BKSP thrived on Sumon Saha's 73 to beat Chittagong by 56 runs.

BKSP scored 188 for 7 in stipulated 50 overs and then dismissed the port city side for 132 in 43.4 overs.

Bagerhat managed an exciting two-wicket victory over Rajshahi in the other curtailed-over match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Taher made 46 and Gobinda 34 as Bagerhat scored 154-8 in 25.1 overs in reply to Rajshahi's 150-3 in 26 overs.

The day's other match between Sylhet and Chandpur didn't take place at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium due to rain.



PHOTO: AFP

Iran football fans voice support for their team during the World Cup warm-up match against Croatia in Osijek on Sunday.

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School soccer

SPORTS REPORTER

Salampur Dakhil Madrasa of Natore, Yunus Ali High School and Faridpur High School moved into the semifinal of the banglalink tiger trophy National School Football Championship beating their respective rivals at different venues across the country yesterday.

At the Pabna Stadium in Group A encounters, Salampur Dakhil Madrasa of Natore handed 4-2 defeat on Bhurungamari Pilot High School of Kurigram while Yunus Ali High School of Pabna edged past Kaberpara Senior Madrasa 2-1.

Faridpur High School blanked Ramu Khijari Ideal High School of Cox's Bazar 2-0 in a Group B match at the Comilla Stadium while the other match between Laxminarayan Cotton Mills High School of Narayanganj and Chhagalnaiya Pilot High School of Feni was postponed due to rain.

Boost cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi region's Government Madrasa High School became champions in the Boost Doubles Cricket competition with a five-run victory over Sylhet region's Police Line High School in an exciting final at the Dhanmondi Club ground on last Friday.

Alamgir Faruque and Ezharul Islam pair helped Rajshahi region to beat Sylhet's Abdur Rashid and Sohail Ahmed.

Health drink Boost sponsored the competition across the country.

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