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Journo receives death threat

AFP, Zagreb

A local journalist has received death threats due to his report on a World Cup ticketing fraud in which he said some 1,000 Croatians living in Germany were cheated, his daily said Saturday.

"Sipe Pudja, editor of the Vecernji List daily foreign edition who lives in Frankfurt, has received text messages in which he is threatened with death," the paper said in a statement. His family in Croatia was also threatened, it added.

Pudja's report, published earlier this week, was on a World Cup ticketing fraud affair in which it claimed at least 1,000 Croatians living in Germany are believed to have been cheated, the statement said.

The fraud was carried out by people who were presenting themselves as officials of Croatia's national football association and were taking money for World Cup tickets which they never delivered, the Vecernji List reported.

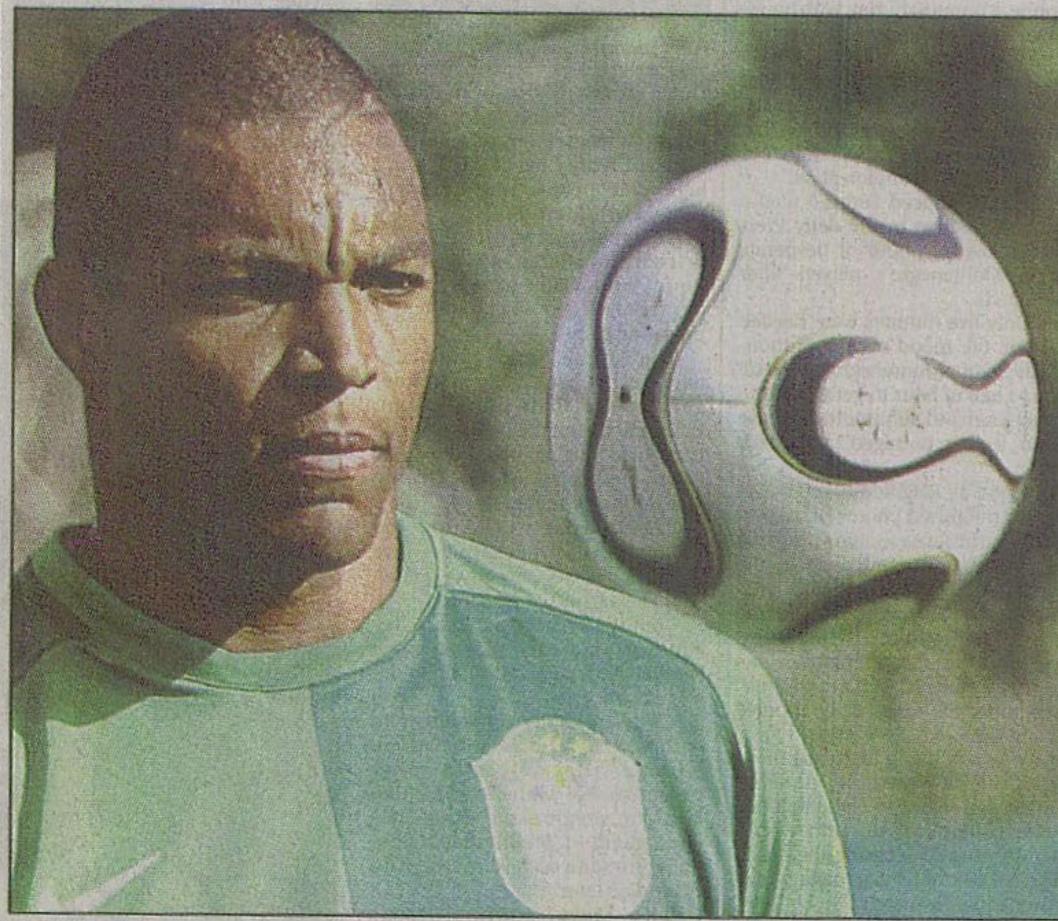
In the article, the journalists mentioned notably Kresimir Kraljevic from Zagreb, who allegedly took money from at least 200 people, and from whose mobile phone the threatening text messages were sent.

Pudja informed both Croatian and German police about the threats and filed a complaint against Kraljevic.

Zagreb police said they had launched an investigation.

World Cup tickets were allocated

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COME TO ME: Brazilian goalkeeper Dida eyes the ball during a training session on Friday at the Zagallo Arena in Konigstein ahead of their today's match against Australia.

PHOTO: AFP

Angola stay alive

AFP, Hanover

Angola's coach called for more ambition from his team after a battling draw with Mexico gave the World Cup make-weights a shot at an unlikely place in the last 16, second round.

Coach Luis de Oliveira Goncalves said his team must look to win their final group game after a goalless draw he hailed as the "best result in Angolan football history".

"We have to have a little bit of ambition because after we win this point here tonight we have to believe we can win three points," Goncalves said.

"Our president said we are special and I agree with him, and we're going to try to be special in the game against Iran."

Angola were down to 10 men for the last 11 minutes but held on to save a famous draw against the world's number four team, throwing Group D wide open.

It was the first World Cup point ever won by Angola, one of the world's poorest countries ravaged by a three-decade civil war.

Angola, quoted at 1,500-1 for the title, were greatly indebted to man of the match Joao Ricardo, their clubless goalkeeper who pulled off a string of vital saves.

With Angola sitting back in the second half, Joao Ricardo came off his line twice to deny Omar Bravo and saved academically from Rafael Marquez in the dying minutes.

Joao Ricardo, who has been unattached all season, said he was not thinking about impressing any potential employers.

"What I think about my future is to win the next game against Iran, and that's it," he said.

Mexico's coach Ricardo Lavolpe was nonplussed by the result, but refused to criticise his players.

"There was just one team in the game, and that was Mexico," he said. "Unfortunately the ball didn't want to go in the net and we just couldn't finish."

"I can't tell my players how to improve things because we played very well over 90 minutes."

Mexico, backed by overwhelming support in the 43,000 stadium, started brightly enough, hitting the

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post from a free-kick but failing to open up the defence.

Angola soon began to push forward and created some chances of their own, with Figueiredo fizzing one close from long range and Akwah heading over.

But their attacks faded in the second half and it was all Mexico, who despite introducing Jose Fonseca and Ramon Morales could not find a way past Joao Ricardo.

Andres' red card for a handball was the cue for some frantic final minutes with the frustrated Bravo hitting the post.

As the fans in red celebrated, Goncalves said the result would lift his embattled country whose very appearance here is little short of a miracle.

"When we played against Portugal we lost, but Angolans celebrated because we had a good performance. Now they're going to celebrate even more because we won a point," he said.

"We've finished with the war and some budget lines are now being channelled into sport and

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Janas facing the sack?

INTERNET, undated

Poland coach Pawel Janas may be fired after his side's early elimination from the World Cup finals.

The Poles are out of the competition after defeat to Ecuador and Germany, with their third match against Costa Rica almost meaningless.

"We have given Janas two weeks to report back," said Polish FA chief executive Michal Listkiewicz.

"I expect the decision will be taken sometime between July 15-20."

"And I would underline our assessment will be of the whole of his three years in charge."

He added: "Personally I will wait to come to an opinion until after the Costa Rica game. In general I view his work is excellent."

"We have to show we can win against Costa Rica. We have to score goals, which we have not done so far."



Mexican captain Rafael Marquez (L) is locked in an aerial battle with Angolan midfielder Mateus during their Group D match in Hanover on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

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Champs relishing challenge

AFP, Konigstein

Ronaldinho is braced for a clash of styles when Brazil face Australia in their World Cup Group F clash in Munich on Sunday.

Both sides started their campaigns with wins but it's Australia who stand on top of the table after their 3-1 defeat of Japan while the defending champions squeezed past Croatia 1-0.

"They are a good side," said Barcelona superstar Ronaldinho.

"We expect a tough match, they defend well and are good when it gets physical."

"We will have to pay attention to all of their players so that there are no surprises."

"It will be a tough physical match -- that's their style."

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira has been plotting hard to see off the Aussies, who came from behind to see off Japan for their first ever finals victory on Monday.

The session saw Emerson take a

linchpin role as he sought to spread passes out to Ronaldinho and Kaka.

On Friday, Parreira put his squad through their tactical paces, the session concentrating on turning defence into attack and urging a constant flow of passes to feed Adriano and Kaka.

Ronaldinho's ineffectiveness saw him withdrawn and Real Madrid clubmate Robinho introduced.

"We've been concentrating hard on improving this transition of the marking system," according to Cafu, who expects the Australians to pose a different kind of challenge.

"They have a very fast and dangerous player in Mark Viduka and Marco Bresciano is very mobile. Also, they play three at the back unlike four as with the Croatians."

Midfielder Ze Roberto dubbed Australia "very strong in the air as they have tall players who know how to put themselves about. We will have to treat them carefully. We know it will be a tough game."

unable to improve on Kaka's first half strike -- one cross almost provided a goal for Ronaldinho -- he left spaces at the back as a result and that forced a reorganisation as Adriano dropped back.

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