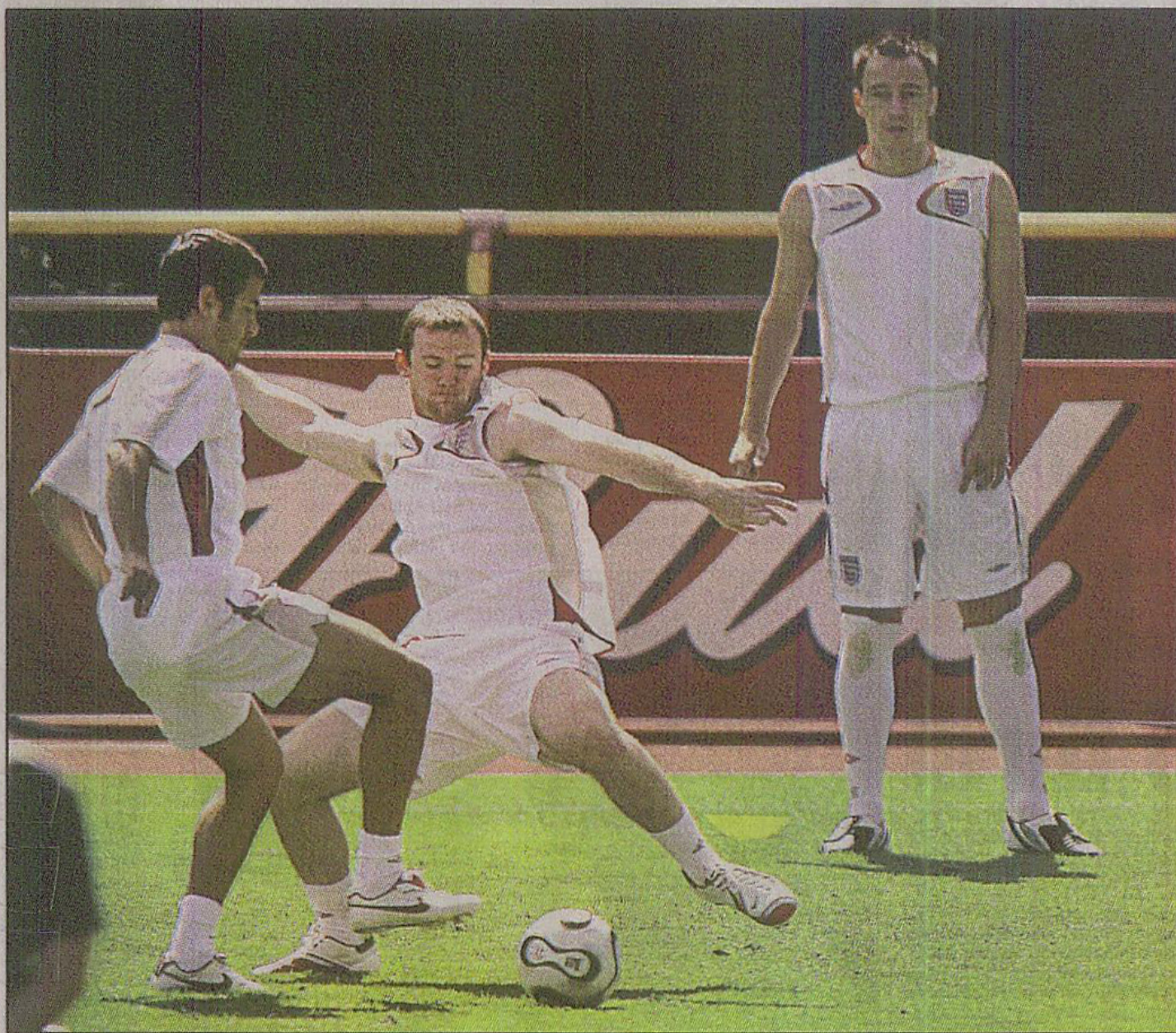




sports@thedailystar.net



Striker Owen Rooney (C), who is expected to start in England's lineup in today's match against Sweden, attempts to tackle Joe Cole (L) as John Terry watches during a training session in Buhlertal on Saturday.

WC BRIEFS

AFP, Berlin

Japanese Princess Hisako watched her home side, the Asian champions, battle Croatia in their second World Cup match here Sunday for survival in the first round.

The widow of the late sports-loving princess Takamado, a cousin of Emperor Akihito, was escorted by German football legend and World Cup organizing committee chief Franz Beckenbauer in the VIP box at the Franken Stadium.

Hisako, a graduate of Cambridge's Girton College, is honorary patron of the Japan Football Association.

Her husband died in 2002 at the age of 47 after he suffered a heart attack while playing squash at the Canadian embassy in Tokyo. At that time, he served as honorary president of several national sports associations including the football body.

Diego fine reduced

Former Argentina star Diego Maradona saw his fine for speeding on the way to watch his nation thrash Serbia and Montenegro in the World Cup reduced from 200 euros (250 dollars) to just 95.

The 1986 champion's people carrier was stopped for travelling at 120 kilometres an hour (74 miles per hour) on a stretch of road limited to 80 km/h near Gelsenkirchen on Thursday, according to Bild newspaper.

Maradona, 45, who has battled against drugs and his ballooning weight in recent years, has been an enthusiastic supporter at both of Argentina's matches.

Orangeball

Germany have borrowed the orange ball used in England's 1966 final win over this year's hosts.

The ball's usual home is the National Football Museum in the northern English town of Preston but from Monday it will be a prime attraction at the German Sports and Olympic Museum ahead of the England-Sweden match in Cologne.

The National Football Museum's director Kevin Moore escorted the ball from Waterloo and explained: "The Germans were keen to put the ball on display and we thought it was a nice gesture to take it over."

"The ball is one of our most popular objects and we don't like to take it out too often."

The ball is now owned jointly by the Daily Mirror newspaper, Eurostar and the Virgin Group, but spent 30 years in the hands of Helmut Haller, who scored West Germany's first goal in the 1966 final.

Sub forever!

Brazilian star Robinho says he doesn't mind being patient for a place in the Brazil starting lineup as long as he can achieve the aim by the final, assuming the champions get that far.

"It's better to end a World Cup than to start one," said the Real Madrid youngster, who Carlos Alberto Parreira plans to use as his grand alternative if Ronaldo's firepower does not spark in time.

Robinho has appeared as sub in both of Brazil's games so far, with Ronaldo twice taken off, and has edged ahead of Juninho as Parreira's "12th man."

Punishment

A man who stole a ticket for a woman's bag for Brazil's win over Australia had his come-uppance when he sat down to watch. Next to him was the husband of the woman whose ticket was taken and the police were duly called.

The great escape

A ten-year-old boy caused a stir and had to be hauled home by the police when he eluded his father to go and watch a match on giant screens at the Fan-Mile in Hamburg. The youngster took the metro into the city and ended up in the "entertainment quarter" of Sankt Pauli, the port city's notorious red light district.

Iceman

A Dutch fan has won a 14-carat ball worth 75,000 euros (90,000 dollars) after correctly estimating how long it would take for a 22-tonne block of ice to melt in Berlin's Treptow park.

Aided by the hot weather the block melted in precisely seven days, 16 hours, 19 minutes and six seconds.

The Dutchman saw off competition from 40,000 internet entrants to claim his booty.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

The best yet to come

AFP, Berlin

Two wins out of two, a maximum six points and early qualification for the last 16 would be enough for most teams. Brazil are different though.

Fans and media are not convinced by the performances of the reigning champions - a 1-0 win over Croatia in their opener followed by a laboured 2-0 win over plucky Australia.

"Though to the last 16 - but with some difficult moments," noted Brazilian sports web portal Lance after a much-criticised Ronaldo, still a goal shy of beating Pele's tournament goal-scoring mark, turned provider for Adriano before substitute Fred bagged a second.

Fred's clincher reminded the first team the reserves will seize any chance to make a claim in a team which appears to fear failure - that concept very clearly defined in their homeland as not winning the tournament.

Coach Carlos Alberto Parreira admits his charges are only just getting to grips with the demands of the event.

"It's normal that we are not in top form. We only played three friendlies before the finals and we are getting better and better, little by little," said the man who took the auriverde to their 1994 title.

On that occasion, Italy were dispatched on penalties in a disappointing final and Parreira makes no apologies for a pragmatic approach.

"We played better than we did

against Croatia and we will play even better in the next one," Parreira said of the match against a Japanese side on the brink of elimination.

"We were better than we were against Croatia. The chances are starting to come," said Ronaldo, who Parreira hailed off, as in the first game against Croatia, with 20 minutes remaining.

Parreira at least does not shrink from removing Brazil's 2002 talisman from the side with the likes of Fred and Robinho champing at the bit, and conceded that the Real Madrid player is not yet sharp enough after an injury-plagued season "to play the 90 minutes."

Even Ronaldinho, coming off league and Champions League triumphs with Barcelona, has not yet found his feet and warned that "there's no doubt we have to improve."

But, saluting Brazil's patient approach, Parreira promised that "from the second round we'll be on another level, physically as well as technically."

"The expectations of the first game have passed and we're on an upward curve," Kaka told radio Lance.

Yet under Parreira, there is the suspicion that Brazil are caught on the horns of a cultural dilemma.

"Yes, they will likely make it a record ten straight wins in the finals by beating Japan and yes, their (ageing) defence is not conceding goals."

But while the group format allows for a period of grace to iron

out the cracks the Brazilians have yet to show they can unleash the fluidity of rivals Argentina, who flattened Serbia and Montenegro as the likes of Javier Saviola, Juan Riquelme and Lionel Messi riot.

So have Brazil started to go a little minimalist, in the fashion of Italy, one side they could meet in the last 16?

In March, Ronaldo scored the only goal in a friendly win in Russia. Then a Swiss select and New Zealand were seen off 8-0 and 4-0 respectively.

Add clean sheets against the Saudis in a friendly mauling and a 3-0 win over Venezuela to wrap up qualifying and you have to go back to the previous qualifier against Bolivia at high altitude in La Paz for the last time Brazil conceded a goal -- eight games ago.

The last man to score against Brazil in the World Cup was England's Michael Owen in the 2002 quarterfinals.

That's a pretty good case for the defence.

In Brazil, however, that's not what they want to see and the case for the offence looks less convincing.

"After two discreet performances the Brazilian attack is the worst at a World Cup since 1990, in Italy -- when they were eliminated in the quarterfinals by their rivals Argentina," observed Folha correspondent Andre Luis Nery.

Midfielder Ze Roberto insists there is no need to worry.

"Brazil are coming along nicely and we will get better with each succeeding match," he insisted.

Miracle on mind

AFP, Bonn

Japan may have only the slimmest of chances of beating Brazil for survival in the World Cup, but the Asian champions have not ruled out a "miracle win" over the five-time holders.

"Football throws up some unexpected results," Japan coach Zico said after the 0-0 draw against Croatia kept alive both sides' hopes to reaching the second round. "We know how good Brazil are, but we intend to give them a real battle."

"We are hanging on by the skin of our teeth," said goalkeeper Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi whose masterful save of a Croatian penalty kept a clean sheet for Japan in Nuremberg on Sunday.

"I will give all I have. Never mind if I'd get cramps and collapse," added the former Portsmouth keeper.

Kawaguchi repelled a barrage of shots -- including a Roberto Carlos freekick -- when Japan upset Brazil 1-0 in Miami in the first round of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

The victory, albeit at an under-age level, is fondly remembered at home as the "miracle of Miami."

Japan also take pride in a 2-2 draw against Brazil in the first round of the Confederations Cup in Germany a year ago.

"We should not be afraid just because our opponents are Brazil. We have experience of playing them before," Zico said.

In World Cup Group F, Brazil reached the second round on Sunday by defeating Australia 2-0. The Australians beat Japan 3-1 in their opener.

Both Japan and Croatia trail two points behind Australia and they need to at least win their last group games on Thursday to stay in contention.

Then, goal difference will decide who gets the second of the group's two tickets for the knock-out stages.

As for Japan, they must beat Brazil by a margin of two goals, provided that Croatia defeat Australia by no more than one goal.

"I think Japan will lose against Brazil, so I believe we still have a real chance of qualifying for the next round," said Croatia striker Dado Prso.

"In both games against Brazil

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

1958 inspiration for Eriksson

AFP, Berlin

Sven Goran Eriksson is a keen student of history and England will be hoping he can have the same impact on their football team in his swansong here at the World Cup as an Englishman had on the Swedish team in 1958 -- the sole difference being that they win it.

George Raynor, a typically nonsensical Yorkshireman, guided Sweden to the World Cup final on home turf having been recommended to the Swedes very kindly

by the English Football Association! Despite the plethora of countries willing to hire foreign coaches to secure success they have a remarkably poor record with just Raynor and Austrian Ernst Happel, in charge of the Netherlands at the 1978 edition, guiding their teams to the finals -- both losing to Brazil and Argentina respectively.

Dutch master Guus Hiddink has been the closest since, taking South Korea to the semi-finals in 2002.

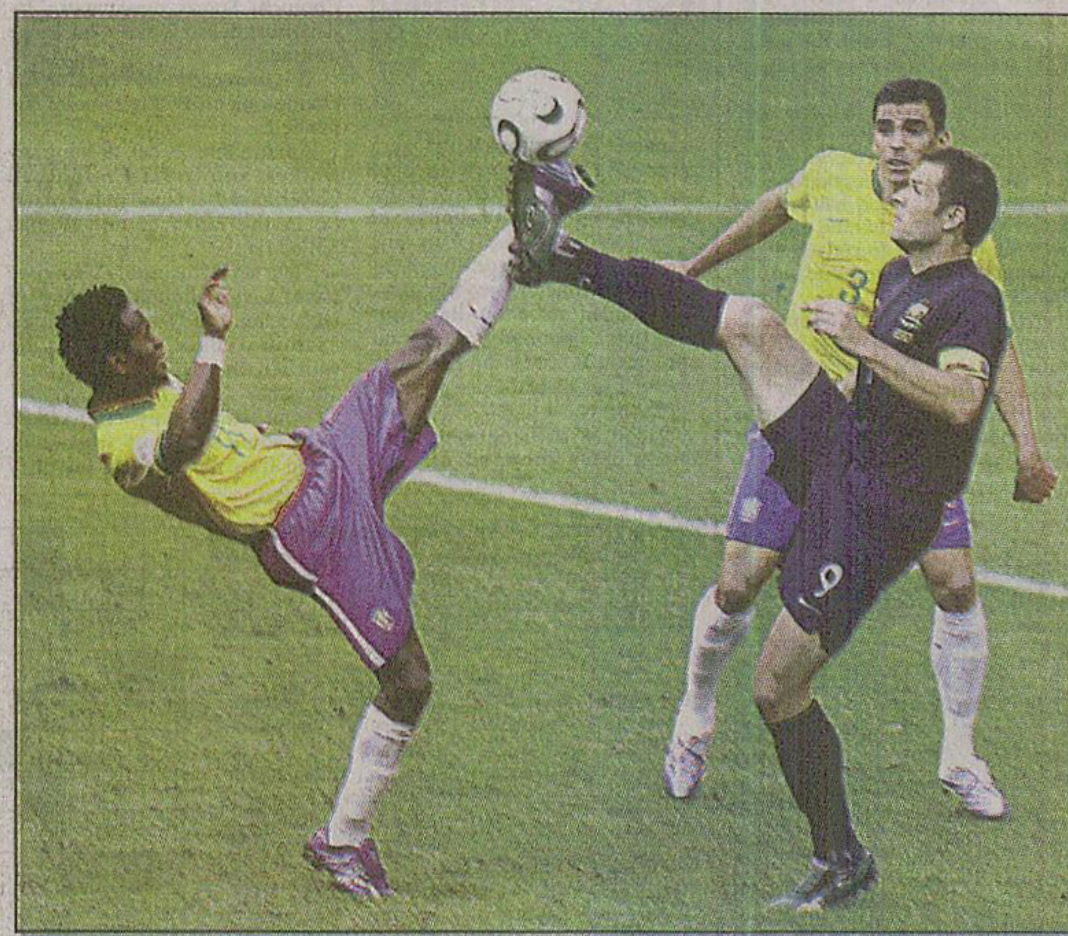
If Eriksson is looking for a good omen both he and Raynor share

another similarity on their CV's as they both coached Lazio -- though in Raynor's days they were not the rich force they were when the Swede took them to the Italian title.

However that is from where Raynor arose to take charge of the Swedish side, coming off a moderate record of played 19, won six, lost eight and drawn five -- a club record that would have seen most managers sacked rather than handed the managerial post at a national side.

But Raynor proved to be a

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



Brazilian midfielder Ze Roberto (L) vies for ball with Australia striker Mark Viduka during their Group F match at the Allianz Arena in Munich on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

The Daily Star

RANGS TOSHIBA

WORLD CUP QUIZ 2006

.....THIS CAN BE YOURS

F L A T
BOBA
DYNAMIC BOMBA SOUND SYSTEM

Colour TV

2006

Round 4, Draw in Chittagong

(See June 8 issue of the Star Sport for competition information, prizes and rules)

The Daily Star RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz Round 4, Ends June 29, 2006

Tick (✓) the correct answers

1. Who scored the first goal in the 2006 World Cup?	Klose	Lahti	Wanchopie
2. The smallest nation to have played in the World Cup finals is:	Trinidad & Tobago	Cameroon	Jamaica
3. Which Asian player scored in three World Cup finals?	Nakata	Sami Al-Jaber	Ali Daei
4. Which World Cup final match ended goalless during the regulation time?	Italy '90	Argentina '78	USA '94
5. Who is this player?	Totti	Kaka	Messi

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms) Age

Father's name Occupation

Address

Telephone (if any) Signature Date

Write with a ballpoint pen in clear BLOCK letters.
Cut along the dotted lines and mail to OR drop in the Quiz Box at The Daily Star
You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz 4."

READ The Daily Star TO CATCH THE WORLD CUP FEVER

banglalink

Goal

pick & win contest

how to pick your team?

Tel: 82
Write Message
pw ger
Select Back
go to message option

Tel: 82
pw ger
Options Clear
type pw<space> 1st 3 letters of country
NOKIA 7360

Tel: 82
Phone Number
2006
OK Clear
send to 2006

how to participate :

In case of a draw?

Tel: 82
Write Message
pw ger draw
Select Back
go to message option

Tel: 82
pw ger draw
Options Clear
type pw<space> 1st 3 letters of country<space> draw
send to 2006

Tel: 82
Phone Number
2006
OK Clear
send to 2006

to know your accumulated points type 'pt' and send to 2006

today's matches

match1 : Ecuador (ecu) vs Germany (ger)

match2 : Costa Rica (cos) vs Poland (pol)

match3 : Paraguay (par) vs Trinidad & Tobago (tri)

banglalink you, first!