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Brazil's narrow win against Argentina

SPORTS REPORTER

It is official now. Brazil and Argentina are the most supported teams in Dhaka although Cafu's five-time winners narrowly edged out their equally stylish neighbouring archrivals.

According to a recent survey conducted by the world's leading market research and information company ACNielsen, it has been revealed that more than 80 per cent of the country's population are rooting for the two Latin American giants.

The survey, conducted over June 20-22 among men and women aged between 15 to 59 residing in Dhaka, mainly displays the liking for Latin flavour of football amongst the people of Bangladesh.

When asked about the potential champions of the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, there was an even split between Brazil and double-winners Argentina. As much as 41 per cent are sure that Brazil will win the Cup for the sixth time, while another large proportion -- 40 per cent -- are eagerly awaiting an Argentine triumph after the Diego Maradona inspired victory twenty years ago.

"Overall, Brazil is the possible (World) Cup winner with 41 per cent response, followed by Argentina (40 per cent). Other most associated countries were Germany, Italy, France and England," said Dr. Khalid Hasan, the managing director of ACNielsen Bangladesh.

Surveys held in Indonesia and China also had Brazil on top as well.

Latin football is also the most popular style of football in Bangladesh with half of the surveyed

folks answering in the affirmative when asked about their preference.

Even the popularity of their players reflects how much Dhakaites love Argentina and Brazil.

But there is little hope resting on Ronaldo winning the Golden Boot once more after his triumph in the 2002 tournament. Only eight per cent thought he would hold on to the award for the highest scorer.

Messi is believed to be the most likely winner of the Golden Boot as more than one-fifth of the respondents selected him.

Striker Miroslav Klose of hosts Germany, who is already the leading scorer of the tournament, followed the Argentine boy wonder with 23 per cent.

Young Argentine striker Lionel Messi was also the most popular World Cup player with one-third of the responses, while Brazilian playmaker Ronaldinho was second in line with 26 per cent and his superstar teammate Ronaldo coming in third with 17 per cent responses.

Refereeing and nepotism were also discussed in the research, with fifty per cent believing that the decisions have not been harsh.

More than two-thirds also said that, none of the refereeing judgments overly hurt or favoured any teams.

But interestingly, 14 per cent of the respondents thought refereeing has favoured Brazil while 12 per cent mentioned that Germany received favours.

Also, there was some sympathy for the United States as eight per cent of the respondents mentioned that refereeing decisions hurt the Americans.

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THIRD EYE

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

So, the mercurial French midfielder got his birthday wish. No, not the one who scored a smashing goal and set up another.

We are talking of the one who sat in the stands and watched and prayed to have another chance of gracing the world stage.

And he got it.

Courtesy of another who shared the same birthday.

So, it was in the end left to Juventus midfielder Patrick Vieira to send waves of relief flowing through France as he scored a goal and set up another for ex-clubmate Henry to propel France into the last sixteen where they will face Spain and give departing colleague Zinedine Zidane another chance to showcase his skills to the public who have supported him so adoringly all throughout his life.

Vieira's timely intervention saw France secure the 2-0 result that they required to progress and thus avert being the second big casualty of the World Cup.

And now Zidane will be thanking a friend who shares the same

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LEADING SCORERS

AFP, Berlin

World Cup leading scorers on Saturday after the Germany-Sweden match:

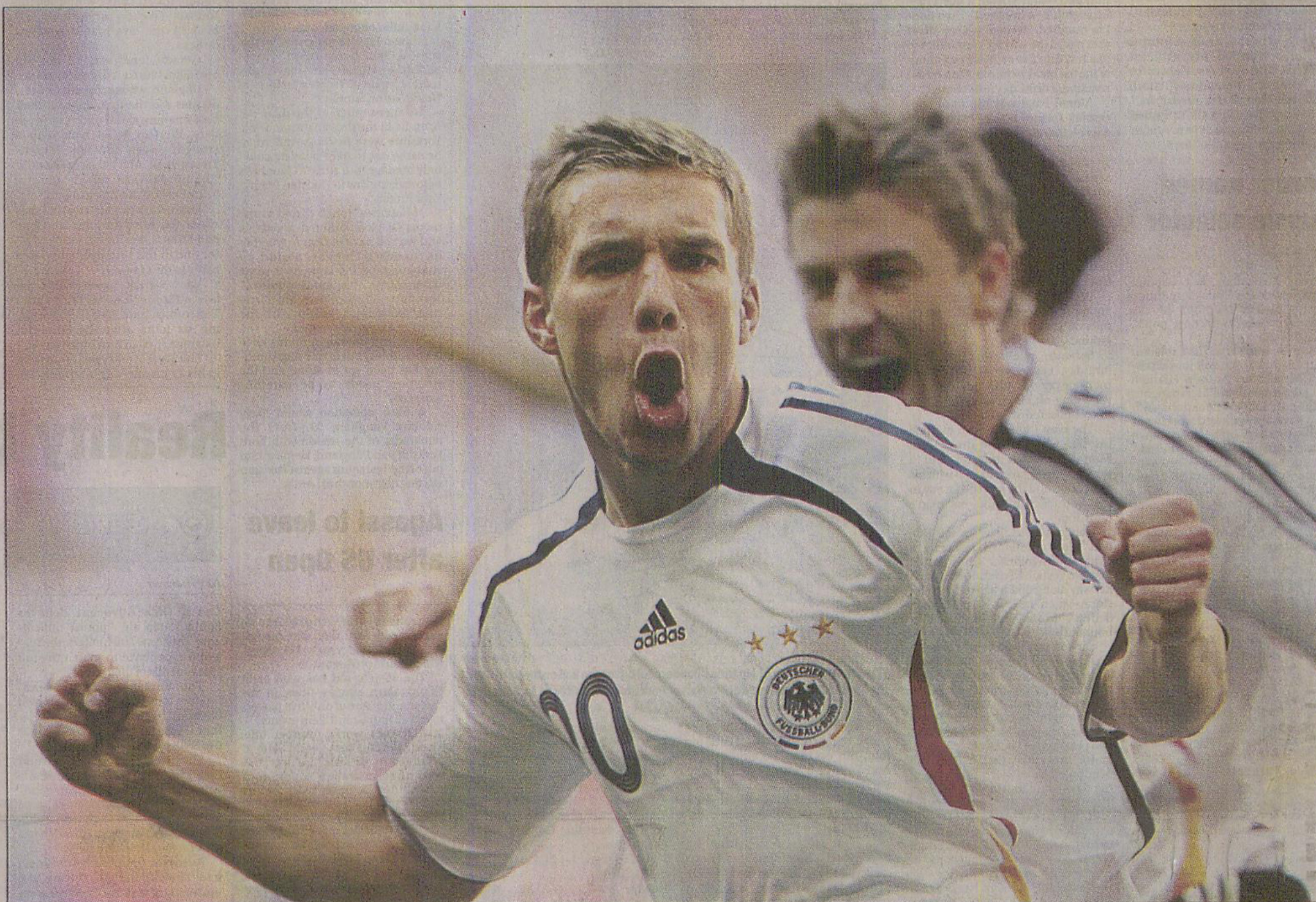
4: Klose (Germany)
 3: Torres (Spain), Podolski (Germany)
 2: Bosacki (Poland), Bravo (Mexico), Cahill (Australia), Crespo (Argentina), Delgado (Ecuador), Dindane (Ivory Coast), Frei (Switzerland), Gerrard (England), Henry (France), Maxi Rodriguez (Argentina), Ronaldo (Brazil), Rosicky (Czech Republic), Shevchenko (Ukraine), C Tenorio (Ecuador), Villa (Spain), Wanchoppe (Costa Rica)

1: Adriano (Brazil), Ahn Jung-hwan (South Korea), Al Jaber (Saudi Arabia), Al Kahtani (Saudi Arabia), Allback (Sweden), Aloisi (Australia), Appiah (Ghana), Bakhtiarzadeh (Iran), Barnetta (Switzerland), Cambiasso (Argentina), J Cole (England), Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal), Crouch (England), Cuevas (Paraguay), Deco (Portugal), Dempsey (USA), Dramani (Ghana), Drogba (Ivory Coast), Flavio (Angola), Fonseca (Mexico), Fred (Brazil), Frings (Germany), Gilardino (Italy), Gilberto (Brazil), Golmohammadi (Iran), R Gomez (Costa Rica), Gyan (Ghana), Iaquineta (Italy), Illic (Serbia-Montenegro), F Inzaghi (Italy), Jaidi (Tunisia), Jaziri (Tunisia), Juanito (Spain), Juninho (Brazil), Kaka (Brazil), Kalou (Ivory Coast), Kalynychenko (Ukraine), Kaviedes (Ecuador), Kewell (Australia), Koller (Czech Republic), B Kone (Ivory Coast), N Kovac (Croatia), Lahm (Germany), Larsson (Sweden),

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banglalink
goal

banglalink picture of the day



ROCKING SWEDEN LIKE A HURRICANE: German striker Lukas Podolski roars for joy after scoring the first of his two goals against Sweden at Munich's Allianz Arena in the opening World Cup round of 16 match yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Podolski shoots Germany into qtrs

Germany 2 Sweden 0

AGENCIES, Munich

Germany took one step closer to their dream of lifting a fourth World Cup crown after the hosts defeated ten-man Sweden 2-0 here on Saturday to book their place in the quarterfinal.

Germany got off to the perfect start with Lukas Podolski scoring twice in the first 12 minutes -- making it three goals in his last two outings -- as Sweden's defence fell apart.

Defender Teddy Lucic was sent off for a second bookable offence in the 34th minute giving Sweden a mountain to climb.

Henrik Larsson had the best chance to get his team back in the match but missed a penalty at the beginning of the second half, blazing over.

It was a fourth straight World Cup win for Germany who are now just two games away from matching manager Juergen Klinsmann's target of reaching the final in Berlin on July 9.

Klinsmann said his players were singing and dancing after knocking out Sweden.

"The mood in the dressing room was brilliant. They were singing and dancing -- I am so proud of them," Klinsmann beamed after the win.

"It is incredible what they achieved today. We played at a high tempo and decisively in every

phase.

"It could not be better," said Klinsmann.

"We went in highly concentrated but strangely enough the red card took our rhythm away. The penalty could also have been a turning point but we are excited by the team and how they played."

"It was a top operation. We were very prepared and we respected them, especially the attacking trio. We did not want to concede a goal. We did not want to give them any breathing space."

"Everything is working fantastically with the team from a medical and physical point of view."

"After six weeks' work, we have 23 players fit. We are really happy as a group," he added, saying team spirit was a major factor behind the strong showings which suggest Germany have a realistic chance of a fourth title after 1954, 1974 and 1990 -- when he himself was in the team.

Sweden coach Lars Lagerback said he was still proud of his team but they had never really recovered from losing Lucic.

"It is difficult to beat anyone with 10 men, especially a team like Germany but my players showed a lot of character," Lagerback told reporters.

"I'm very proud of the way they played in the second half but we let in two easy goals at the beginning. After that it was very difficult for us."

Podolski said: "My goals were nice to get but it is the team that is winning, not me alone."

"In preparing for this game we grew as a team. Everything is possible now, every game is a knockout situation."

Germany will face the winner of the Argentina v Mexico tie taking place later Saturday in next Friday's quarterfinal in Berlin.

Germany captain Michael Ballack said his side was ready for anything.

"With such performances we don't need to hide from anyone."

"We started well and found our game quickly and it was a sensational performance. In the first half we could hardly have played better."

As millions of Germans celebrated across the country, it was more second-round disappointment for Sweden who crashed out of the 2002 World Cup to Senegal at the same stage.

Sweden captain Olof Mellberg said: "The start of the match was just too bad, and that's what

decided it."

"We didn't manage to really get forward, to put the pressure on."

Lagerback started with three strikers, including the returning Zlatan Ibrahimovic, but the bold move backfired as Germany struck early.

With just four minutes gone Miroslav Klose surged through on goal. Sweden goalkeeper Andreas Isaksson stopped him in his tracks but the ball fell kindly to Podolski and his shot went in off the hapless Lucic.

It was Podolski's second goal in a row and the third was not long in coming.

In the 12th minute Podolski, who will play on this ground for Bayern Munich next season, accepted a pass from Klose and curled a left-footed shot in for 2-0.

German goalkeeper Jens Lehmann had hardly made a save in his first three matches but was

called into action to stop a smart turn and shot by Ibrahimovic.

Eight minutes into the second half Sweden were then handed a lifeline when Larsson was felled by Christoph Metzelder in the penalty area.

But Larsson, winning his 93rd cap, hammered his spot-kick over the crossbar to the dismay of the Sweden fans.

Ballack then saw a fantastic drive tipped onto the post.

The new Chelsea man was shooting at will and could have had a hat-trick but he was left still searching for his first goal at these finals.

Sweden created chances but with their numerical disadvantage they never looked like overturning a buoyant Germany.

The home fans left the turnstiles in high spirits as their team continue to ride the World Cup wave.

TEAMS

GERMANY: Jens Lehmann; Arne Friedrich, Per Mertesacker, Christoph Metzelder, Philipp Lahm; Bernd Schneider, Torsten Frings (Sebastian Kehl 85), Michael Ballack (captain), Bastian Schweinsteiger (Tim Borowski 72); Miroslav Klose, Lukas Podolski (Oliver Neuville 74).

Yellow card: Torsten Frings (27). SWEDEN: Andreas Isaksson; Niclas Alexandersson, Olof Mellberg (captain), Teddy Lucic, Erik Edman; Tobias Linderoth; Mattias Jonson (Christian Wilhelmsson 53), Kim Kallstrom (Petter Hansson 39), Fredrik Ljungberg; Henrik Larsson, Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Marcus Allback 72).

Yellow card: Teddy Lucic (28), Mattias Jonson (48), Marcus Allback (78).

Red card: Teddy Lucic (35). Referee: C. Simon (Brazil). Attendance: 66,000.

FIFA WORLD CUP GERMANY 2006

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TEAM	TIME	VENUE
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Portugal v Netherlands	12:50 am (Monday)	Nuremberg

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