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# Japan steal the show

AFP, Singapore



Japan trounced hapless Tajikistan 8-0 in World Cup qualifying on Tuesday as Asia's big guns fired and Iran launched a security crackdown

before their clash with Bahrain.

Australia looked sure to progress after a 3-0 win over Oman kept them on maximum points in Group D, and South Korea moved towards the last stage with a 2-1 win against UAE.

Thailand held Saudi Arabia to a 0-0 draw, but North Korea's hopes of reaching a second World Cup in a row suffered a setback with a 1-0 home loss to Uzbekistan.

Iraq edged a tense clash with China 1-0 and there were also wins for Jordan and Qatar as 10 games swung into action across the region.

Rampant Japan were the big winners as they totted up four goals in each half against Tajikistan in Osaka, led by Mike Havenaar and Shinji

Okazaki who both bagged a brace.

South Korea had a second-half own goal to thank as UAE defender Ismail Hamdan's inadvertent strike helped them to a 2-1 win in Suwon. Arsenal's Park Chu-Young had opened the scoring and UAE pulled one back in injury time.

In Sydney, Brett Holman, Josh Kennedy and Mile Jedinak were all on the scoresheet as Australia registered their third win out of three and looked certain to progress from Group D.

In Pyongyang, Alexander Geynrikh's first-half strike was enough to secure a 1-0 win for Uzbekistan, who are level on seven points with Japan at the top of Group

North Korea, who lashed out against their low FIFA ranking after being drawn in a tough group for the third round, would have targeted the Uzbek clash in Pyongyang as a mustwin as they scrap for the second qualifying spot.

The North Koreans competed at their first World Cup since 1966 last

year, but they disappointed at the Asian Cup in January after being bracketed with holders Iraq and unkind draw.

three-time winners Iran in another Jordan took a big step towards their first berth in the final qualifying stage with a 3-0 away win over Singapore, while Qatar came out on top of a

Jakarta. Meanwhile in Tehran, security was raised at Iran's Azadi Stadium following political tensions with Group E rivals and Gulf neighbours Bahrain over Manama's tough clampdown on Shiite dissidents.

3-2 thriller against Indonesia in

Lebanon host Kuwait in Beirut later on Tuesday in Group B.

The winners and runners-up of the five groups will be drawn into two pools for the round-robin fourth stage, with the eventual top two in each section earning a ticket to Brazil.

The two third-placed teams will then face each other for the right to contest an intercontinental play-off.



South Korea striker Park Chu Young celebrates his opening goal against the United Arab Emirates during a 2014 World Cup qualifier in Suwon yesterday.

## Anzhi aiming high

Football

AFP, Paris

Anzhi Makhachkala joint coach Roberto Carlos told French television that the ambitious Russian club are considering moves for Neymar, Nicolas Anelka and Robin Van Persie.

"We want to make a club of the calibre of Real Madrid or Barcelona," Carlos told Canal Football Club on Canal Plus as he outlined Anzhi's plans to add to a squad that already includes Samuel Eto'o, former Russia wing-back Yuri Zhirkov and ex-PSV Eindhovenwinger Balazs Dzsudzsak.

Brazilian World Cup winner Carlos, now 38, was the first big arrival at the club based in the republic of Dagestan, in the Caucasus, in February, and was made joint caretaker boss in the wake of Gadzhi Gadzhiyev's dismissal last month.

With the funds of billionaire owner Suleyman Kerimov being pumped into

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the club, the former Real Madrid man believes the likes of Anelka, van Persie and Neymar are now realistic targets.

"Anelka is not the only player," Carlos said when asked about possible moves.

"Nene from PSG and Van Persie from Arsenal are players we are following. And Neymar? talked to him.

"If Real, Barca or Manchester United cannot pay the transfer fee, we will pay it. Suleyman Kerimov can offer what he wants."

Neymar, of Santos, has been heavily linked to

a move to Madrid in particular, but no deal has been finalised despite endless speculation, while Anelka's contract at Chelsea is due to expire at the end of this season. Van Persie, who recently scored his 100th

Arsenal goal, has yet to open talks on an extension to his current contract at the Emirates Stadium which expires in June 2013.

Anzhi, whose players live and train in Moscow for security reasons and travel 1,250 miles to Makhachkala for home games, lie eighth in the Russian Premier League.

# Romario against

**WC law** 

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro



FIFA must not be allowed to ride roughshod over Brazilian law when it stages the 2014 World Cup, former Brazil striker Romario, now a federal Congressman, said on Monday.

Romario told reporters that Brazilian laws which guarantee half-price entry to football matches for the elderly and ban on alcohol in

stadiums should not be swept away for FIFA's benefit. "If FIFA is not put in its rightful place, FIFA will soon have more power than our president and the World Cup will be the way FIFA wants it and not the way we should do it," Romario

told reporters. "They have to respect the laws for old age pensioners, supporters and students. FIFA has to understand that things

have changed. "According to FIFA's calculations, they would lose 180 million real (\$101 million) with the half-price entry.

"We don't have to pay this. FIFA could earn a little bit less

so that the Brazilians can take part." World Cup host nations must agree a series of conditions imposed by FIFA before staging the event.

These cover, among others, ticket sales and pricing, protection of trademarks and a ban on vendors not licensed by

FIFA in and around stadiums. FIFA argues that profits are reinvested in football.

The Brazilian Congress is currently debating a so-called World Cup law which needs to be passed for FIFA's conditions to come into effect.

## fly faster REUTERS, Moscow

New ball will

A new Adidas ball, to be used at the Euro 2012 finals, will fly faster than its predecessor and will be just as unpredictable for goalkeepers, the chief executive of the German sporting goods company said on Monday.

"We will certainly make the ball (fly) faster and hopefully, we'll see a lot of goals being scored at next year's tournament in Poland and Ukraine," Herbert Hainer told Reuters at a media briefing in Moscow.

The new Euro 2012 ball will undergo a "revolutionary development" compared to the famous Jabulani ball, which gave goalkeepers so much trouble at last year's World Cup.

"As for Jabulani, we certainly underestimated high altitude, at which the tournament in South Africa was played," Hainer said.

"As for the complaints from goalkeepers, as soon as the tournament started everyone was quiet because people were just enjoying watching the games. And in the Champions League we've seen no complaints at all."

Hainer declined to unveil the name of the Euro 2012 ball, which will be officially presented at the draw ceremony for the finals in Kiev on Dec. 3, saying only that the ball will have a theme associated with both Poland and Ukraine.

Hainer then tried to play the role of famous German octopus Paul, who correctly predicted each of Germany's 2010 World Cup matches, by giving his own predictions ahead of Euro 2012.

"Certainly, Spain and Germany should be considered the favourites and could very well meet in the final, although I wouldn't mind having a Germany-

Russia final," he said.

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