

Sports news

England, Argentina fans involved in running battle

MEXICO CITY, June 23: had begun after some 50 Argentina supporters, many clad in stone-throwing England fans, armed with bottles, wooden clubs and bricks, ambushed their national flag, converged on a smaller band of Union Jack waving England fans huddled behind the south stand goal.

Good natured Argentina supporters defused a possibly explosive situation by returning a Union Jack which they had wrestled from an England supporter.

Fears that national grievances from the 1982 Falklands war would spill over into violence on the terraces were largely dispelled.

Before and after the brief half-time alaray, the atmosphere was relaxed and happy as Argentina and England supporters stood shoulder to shoulder in the 114,500 crowd.

Some 5,000 England support-

ers, scattered in small groups throughout the vast stadium were outnumbered two to one by Argentina fans, many of whom had made the journey from home and the rest who live and work in Mexico City.

Medical services at the ground treated 51 spectators, most suffering from the effects of heat and dehydration, and only two needed hospital treatment.

One Argentinian banner carried the discrete and barely legible slogan, "Malvenos for ever Argentina's", but there was no provocative chanting nor a repetition of Union Jack-burning incidents reported at previous Argentina matches.

The England fans, for their part, were generally subdued with no whisper of the taunting chant, "what's it like to lose a war."

A British Embassy spokesman said later that three English fans were being held in police cells after being arrested when police broke scuffles outside the ground.

"The police intervened very quickly to stop any trouble and no-one has been badly hurt, we are hoping that the three who have been arrested will not face charges," the spokesman added.

IN BUENOS AIRES

In Buenos Aires thousands of Argentines were out in the rainy streets of Buenos Aires

last night honking horns, waving flags and throwing confetti

to celebrate Argentina's victory.

President Raul Alfonsin, who

watched the match at his home-

town in Chascomus 125-km from

Buenos Aires, sent a telegram of congratulation to the Argen-

tin team.

"I join all Argentina in sending

you congratulations for a

sport's victory that is the fruit

of effort, enthusiasm and crea-

tivity," he said. "I share the

have rehewed the confidence of

joy of the squad who today

all. A cordial abrazo."

An Argentine diplomatic

source, in a telephone call to

Reuters Buenos Aires from

Paris, pointed out that Foreign

Minister Dante Caputo on Fri-

day had predicted the final

score of the match as 2-1.

During the game, Buenos

Aires streets and sidewalks

were empty of cars and people,

the silence, was broken only

when Argentina scored, the

cheers of jubilant Argentines

echoing through the city.

Brazil's Samba drums silent

RIO DE JANEIRO, June 23: Brazil's Samba drums fell silent last night as the country absorbed the shock of its soccer team's defeat by France in the World Cup quarter-finals in Mexico, reports Reuter.

Street vendors who had set up stalls in anticipated of a night-long bonanza quietly packed up their wares and police drafted into city centres to control crowds were sent home early.

Despondent fans turned off 40,000 watts of sound amplification on Rio's Copacabana beach front, the venue for live-night-long parties to celebrate Brazil's earlier victories in the tournament.

"It's all over," wailed one fan, tears streaming down her cheeks. "Even the flags seem sad," she said, pointing to the yellow, blue and green banners strung across the streets.

President Jose Sarney sent a telegram to the team, praising its efforts and saying "the strength of sport is its spirit of competition."

"The moving support of the Brazilian fans is a demonstration of the unity of the country's patriotic spirit," the message concluded.

"TILL CRY ALL THE WAY HOME"

In Guadalajara, Mexico, Bra-

zilian fans reacted to their team's World Cup defeat by France in traditional fashion

last night by seeking consolation in the bars and restaurants of Guadalajara.

World Cup's best match, says Pele

GUADALAJARA (Mexico), June 23: After France's dramatic penalty shoot-out win, former Brazilian star Pele said the match was the World Cup's best so far and one of the greatest in history, reports AFP.

"We have just watched a great match which should easily have been the final," he said.

"France proved they are a great team. They play the ball beautifully with a pure and delicate touch. For five years they have been able to prepare for this moment with a nucleus of fine players."

"Tele Santana has only had

four months to find the ideal

formula with Brazil and it just

has not been enough. Taking

into account Brazil's lack of

preparation I think they have

a great future, especially with

players coming through of the

calibre of Julio Cesar."

Former French star Raymond Kopa said it was unfortunate either Brazil or France had to be eliminated.

"It is a pity that either side

had to go out. We have seen a

match of high quality and re-

markable intensity and the

winners should go all the way

to the final."

"My only fear for the French

is that they are going to find it

very difficult to recover. Alain

Giresse and Michel Platini in

particular looked totally ex-

hausted."

CAREERS OVER

Brazil tried to put a brave

face on World Cup elimination

Saturday night as their ageing

stars came to terms with the

fact that their illustrious inter-

national careers were over.

Men like Junior, their Italian-

based midfielder whose 32nd

birthday celebrations are cer-

tain to be muted as they fall

on World Cup final day next

Sunday, know all that is left

now is to seek glory at club

level.

He said, "For a whole gene-

ration the last hope of winning

the World Cup has gone out

of the window."

"It's so cruel. This was the

crunch match, the real final.

France must win the trophy

now."

Zico, an idol who passed the

700 goal mark in his career

under four months ago, will

face the music back home

after his missed penalty in the

74th minute, a couple of minutes

after coming on as a sub-

stitute, proved the turning

point in the match.

The 33-year-old, who then

converted his penalty in the

shoot-out just to add to his

frustration sought no excuses

but said simply, "France must

know just how we feel. They

went through it in Seville four

years ago. These penalty shoot-

outs are just like Russian rou-

lette."

Defender Branco, who, at

22, still has more World Cup

chances to come, added a warn-

ing for France as he said, "The

avourites like the Soviet Union,

Denmark and now us have

all gone out one after the other.

So why shouldn't the French

go the same way?"

Joel Bats, the man guarded

the French fort with guts, skill

and determination against Brazil

in the world cup and saved a

number of sure goals, including

two penalty shots is a winner

against cancer. He is, according

to team-mates is the most poli-

tical personality in the French

squad and lives within himself

for most of the time.

Talking about himself the sti-

mulant of the French World

Cup squad (as he proved him-

self on Saturday night) says

that he looks for the meaning

of life and puts effort to ad-

just with life.

Bats plays for St. Garmen

Club of Paris. He made it

into the national side in 1982.

Keeping harmony with his

rations and his will-powers

is made him victorious against the

killer disease. He made his

place back under the French

Crosspiece after recovery.

Bats started a duel with him-

self after reaching Mexico as

he said, "if the team loses for

me, if I become responsible

for our elimination from the

finals, I won't be able to for-

give me. The whole of the

world will become meaningless

to me and I will be lost to wi-

lliness."

The great keeper did act

according to his words against

Brazil and who knows the good

within Br's might earn French

the 1986 World Cup and tho

poet keeper will be shelved in

every house of the world where