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An AFP undated file photo shows the American national team. The hosts will face a stiff test as they are pitted against the likes of Colombia, Switzerland and Romania during next month's World Cup finals.

Romario on Brazil's nerves?

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 25: With the World Cup less than one month away, one question has been dominating the sports pages of Brazilian newspapers — who will sit in the window seat on the team's plane?

Brazil leave for the United States on Wednesday night on a Varig Brazilian Airlines DC-10 plane which has been chartered by the Brazilian Football Confederation, reports Reuter.

The plane has been revamped by Varig, with a green and yellow stripe painted across the fuselage and the seats labelled with the players' names.

Moody star Romario was placed between fellow strikers Bebeto and Muller — much to his dissatisfaction.

"I like to travel by the window," he said in a television interview. "Also, there are players I am friendlier with and I would prefer to travel with them. I like to travel in the seat I choose," he said.

Newspapers, already talking of alleged badfeeling between Romario and his two striking partners, seized on the comments, turning them into front page stories.

Earlier this year, the Barcelona player openly criticised Muller, saying he only

played well in club soccer.

He also made a reference last week to the penalty miss which cost Deportivo La Coruna, Bebeto's club side, the Spanish league title. Brazilian press reports have made much of the fact that Bebeto did not take the penalty and Romario

was quoted as saying: "I would have taken it, no problem."

They also used the seat incident as an example of the player's immaturity.

The Journal do Brasil carried a cartoon depicting a baby chair, labelled with Romario's name and with a furry dummy dangling in front, next to the

window. The same newspaper even published an editorial on the matter.

"Not even Pele, nor Garrincha, nor Zico made such a fuss about themselves before the Cup had even begun," it said. "Why follow the example of Diego Maradona if our football is rich with lessons of modesty," it added referring to past Brazilian heroes such as Pele and Milton Santos.

CBF president Ricardo Teixeira, however, backed his outspoken striker. "I was lucky because they put me in an aisle seat. Otherwise, I would have complained as well because I hate travelling by the window," he said.

Newspaper columnist Fernando Calazans was also sympathetic: "There's no point in treating these stars as if they were kindergarten children with their own places on the school bus. Romario has the right to choose who he wants to travel with."

His colleague Roberto Benevides said: "There's nothing more daft than this argument about who sits next to the window on the plane. The delegation of 41 people will travel on a DC-10 big enough for 232. If they all want to sit by the window, there won't be a problem."

And, in a separate announcement, he said pop star Whitney Houston would sing at the final on July 17.

Rothenberg said he feared the local media, many of whom routinely associate soccer with violence, would see any isolated incident as an outbreak of hooliganism.

One Boston Globe newspaper columnist wrote only two years ago that the World Cup should be moved to a country "where they love soccer and live for the World Cup and crush elderly fans to death during the really exciting

Security fences will remain in place at San Francisco's Stanford Stadium but Rothenberg was optimistic that they would be removed from Dallas and Washington venues.

"The police are basically willing to consider removing the fence and want to have us agree to augment (security) with more officers present which we are willing to do," he said of the discussions in Washington's RFK Stadium.

"I am confident we will have no fences in DC and no fences in Dallas," he added. "The only one of nine venues with a fence will be standford and of course they always have a fence. They are just not going to remove it."

In other remarks, Rothenberg applauded FIFA for increasing the 1998 World Cup finals to 32 teams, said the planned American professional soccer league was on course and retreated on the subject of media security waivers.

The forms, asking reporters to agree to having criminal records released to World Cup authorities, had caused an uproar in the United States but Rothenberg effectively said journalists would not be forced to fill them in.

"If some one does not want to sign them then the background checks will be triggered by one of two things — the US social security number or the passport number will be used. We hope that this will do the trick," he said.

Norwegian WC squad named

OSLO, May 25: Coach Egil Olsen, naming the first 18 of Norway's squad for the World Cup on Tuesday, surprisingly included Nottingham Forest defender Alf Inge Haaland but omitted Chelsea's hard-tackling Erlend Johnsen, reports Reuter.

However, Johnsen, 27, may still make the squad when Olsen unveils the remaining six players on May 30.

After Sunday's 0-0 draw with England at Wembley, Norway face more warm-ups against Denmark on June 1 and Sweden on June 5.

The squad is anchored around defender and captain Rune Bratseth of Werder Bremen and Tottenham goalkeeper Erik Thorstvedt. Oldham defender Gunnar Halle is back after a cartilage operation.

Olsen said: "The surprise was Alf Inge Haaland... he has attacking abilities, he's very fast and perhaps the strongest of all when it's a question of defensive abilities."

Haaland moved to Nottingham Forest last December, hoping that regular first team football would help him gain a World Cup place.

Olsen said: "Many might have expected to see Erlend Johnsen there. He put up a good performance at Wembley... we still have to choose six more, and he's made a good case to be among them."

Haaland came on as substitute in the second half against England, while Johnsen played the whole game.

Norway play their first World Cup match against Mexico in Washington on June 19.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers — Erik Thorstvedt (Tottenham), Frode Grodås (Lillestrom).

Defenders — Gunnar Halle (Oldham), Rune Bratseth (Werder Bremen), Stig Inge Bjørnebye (Rosenborg), Roger Nilsen (Sheffild United), Alf Inge Haaland (Nottingham Forest), Hening Berg (Blackburn).

Midfielders — Josten Flo (Sheffild United), Erik Mykland (Start), Oevind Leonardsen (Rosenborg), Kjetil Rekdal (Lierse), Jahn Ivanr Jakobsen (Young Boys), Lars Bohinen (Nottingham Forest).

Forwards — Jan Aage Fjortoft (Swindon), Goeran Soerloth (Bursaspor).

Lewis has other ideas

LONDON, May 25: Once it was a fight both men wanted. Now World Boxing Council heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis has told Riddick Bowe he has no interest in fighting him.

"I have a different agenda to you," said Lewis, who defended his title against Phil Jackson last Friday with an eighth round TKO in Atlantic City.

"I'm after becoming undisputed world champion. (Michel) Moorer has the two belts I want. You have nothing."

"You need me right now, but I don't need you," Lewis said. "Maybe later. You have to wait your turn."

Bowe, once the undisputed title holder, effectively handed Lewis his title when he dumped the WBC belt in a garbage can 18 months ago.

He then lost the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation titles to Evander Holyfield who then lost them to Moorer.

Maturana: An artistic coach



BOGOTA, May 25: While most of his professional colleagues speak of strategies, tactics and determination, Colombia coach Francisco Maturana prefers words such as aesthetics and fantasy when he talks about soccer, reports Reuter.

To Maturana, the game is an art form where winning comes a poor second, to putting on a show.

"Winning and playing badly doesn't interest me," said Maturana. "Football has to be good to watch, it has to have aesthetics."

"Of course, I give my players a basic plan to follow but once they have carried that out each player is free to live out his own fantasy."

Despite this apparent indifference to success, the softly spoken Maturana has produced impressive results.

Maturana, 45, is widely acclaimed in his native country as being the man who turned Colombia from one of South America's also-rans, and a team which played negative, ugly soccer, into one of the continent's best and most entertaining sides.

"Before Maturana came along Colombian soccer was full of coaches who tried to make us play like Europeans," said international midfielder Freddy Rincon.

But Colombians say the quick, short-passing game introduced by Maturana is far more suited to their players than the more physical European approach.

Maturana is also credited with introducing a new defensive concept, the goalkeeper-sweeper, which involves the keeper rushing upfield to clear opposing attacks.

Madcap goalkeeper Rene Higuita was the most extreme exponent of this ploy but there are several other "keepers in the Colombian championship who play with a similar, though less eccentric, style."

Maturana, who made six



F MATURANA, Colombian coach

international appearances for Colombia as a defender in 1981, took over as national team coach in 1987, in his first year Colombia finished third in the Copa America in Argentina.

They have qualified for two successive World Cups under him, compared to one in the previous 13, and in reaching the 1994 finals thrashed Argentina 5-0 in their own Buenos Aires den.

Maturana, who also coaches Cali Club America, has still found time to earn a degree in dentistry and was about to set up his own practice before Atletico Nacional persuaded him to train their youth side in 1983, his first coaching job.

Maturana admits that this is one of the reasons for his laid-back attitude to results.

"If people don't like what I'm doing I can always fall back on dentistry. My suitcase is ready," he said.

Colombia crush Eintracht

MEDELLIN (Colombia), May 25: Colombia beat German league side Eintracht Frankfurt 4-0 here Sunday in a World Cup warm-up match, reports AFP.

Faustino Asprilla, with two, Victor Aristizabal and Freddy Rincon scored for Colombia who have now won 10, drawn six and lost one of their matches in preparation for USA 94.

ROK beat Leverkusen

SEOUL, May 25: South Korea's World Cup soccer squad beat Germany's Leverkusen 2-0 (halftime 1-0) in a friendly match in Seoul on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Scores: South Korea — Cho Jin-Ho (41st); Kim Pan-Keun (84th, penalty kick). Attendance: 40,000.

Aussie bid for 2002 WC put on hold

SYDNEY, May 25: The Victorian state government on Wednesday abandoned its bid to hold the 2002 World Cup soccer finals in Melbourne, reports AP.

The decision was reached after a meeting between Australian Soccer Federation officials and Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett, who announced the bid earlier this month without consulting with the ASF.

Australia instead will bid to stage the World Cup in 2006, leaving Japan, South Korea and Colombia to compete for Cup host honours four years earlier.

Kennett, whose go-alone plan attracted scorn across Australia, said it was important that Australia maintained good sporting relations with Japan.

Japan supported Australia's bid to stage the 2000 Olympics in Sydney and the ASF supports Japan's 2002 World Cup candidacy.

ASF president Neville Wran said the meeting had come up with a positive result.

"We are totally united in our bid for 2006," Wran said.

He said part of the deal included Melbourne staging the final and Sydney being the site of the opening ceremony and first match.

ASF chief executive Ian Holmes said the fact that the Asian region was almost certain to be host to the 2002 finals would not be a hindrance to Australia.

"Why? Why can't we get the next one? There's no reason," Holmes said.



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Police tactics bother hosts

DALLAS, May 25: World Cup chairman Alan Rothenberg said on Monday he was more worried about the risk of heavy-handed policing during the month-long soccer tournament than the dangers of hooliganism or terrorism, reports Reuter.

Rothenberg told reporters in a nationwide telephone conference call that, with 3.6 million spectators attending 52 matches, "It is inevitable that we will have some fisticuffs. I hope to God the police do not over-react."

He added that, on a security level, he was delighted England — whose fans have suffered a reputation for hooliganism and were involved in various incidents in Italy in 1990 — had failed to qualify for the finals.

Asian-Afro Club tourney deferred

KUALA LUMPUR, May 25: The Asian Football Confederation has been forced to postpone the annual two-leg Afro-Asian Club Championships scheduled for later this month after a dispute with football authorities in Egypt, reports AFP.

The tournament features the champion club sides of both continents in a two-leg series dubbed "The Developing World Cup."

The first leg of the 1994 Afro-Asian Club Championships, featuring African champion sides Zamalek from Egypt and Asian champs Thai Farmers from Bangkok, was due to be played in Cairo on May 27 with the deciding leg in Bangkok June 11.

"Unfortunately the Egyptian football authorities refused to allow the dates, even though both the Zamalek Club and the Confederation Africaine de Football were agreed," said AFC general-secretary Peter Velappan from Zurich, where he is on FIFA business.

"The championships will happen later this year for sure, but I don't know the dates as yet," said Velappan, who suggested August was the most likely date.



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Rothenberg said his "great concern" was that the police might "confuse the natural enthusiasm and celebrations of fans and take drastic action against harmless people."

"There's going to be a lot of excitement and a lot of enthusiasm and I just hope people keep it in perspective," he said. "There are going to be incidents. I just hope everybody doesn't over-react and the media is responsible."

He said an average of 10 fans were ejected at every "good old baseball" game but nobody wrote about it.

Advertisement for Philips World Cup USA 94 Quiz Competition. Includes Philips logo, 'The Daily Star' logo, and prizes: Powervision CTV 21 (1st Prize), Philips B/W TV 17 (2nd Prize), Turbo Stereo Recorder (3rd Prize), 4 Dozens of Philips Bulbs (4th Prize).

All prizes courtesy: Transcom Electronics Ltd. Licensed manufacturer of PHILIPS Lighting products, Radio and TV Sets.

COMPETITION RULES section with numbered rules 1-8 regarding quiz participation, prizes, and deadlines.

Quiz 5. Entries close on 31-5-94. Read the instructions carefully. Then tick (v) the answer which you think is correct. Includes a list of 10 quiz questions with multiple choice options.