



## A let down

ANKARA, June 16: Turkey's 0-0 Euro 2000 draw with Sweden has deepened the depression in this football-mad country over the team's chances of reaching the quarter-finals, reports AFP.

"We cannot play football and we cannot win matches. Now we need what would be a miraculous win over Belgium" on Monday, the mass-circulation daily Milliyet wrote Friday.

"We played really bad, even worse than against Italy," it added. Italy defeated Turkey 2-1 Sunday in the opening Group B match.

Turkey's poor performance was due to "inadequate preparations" and coach Mustafa Denizli's inability to get the team working as a unit, the liberal daily Radikal wrote.

"In the previous match we scored our first goal at this championship and against Sweden we won our first point. If there is some progress it is at the speed of a turtle," Radikal said.

Turkey lost all three group matches at Euro 96, its first appearance in the Euro finals. Turkish expectations for Euro 2000 were boosted with the victory of Galatasaray in the UEFA Cup last month.

It was all doom and gloom also in the Swedish press. "No goals, no winner, no loser," the DagensNyheter daily said.

"It's not hard to see what is wrong with the team: it has no attack and midfield creativity: it has got what it deserves - one point from two games," the paper added.

"Goodnight Sweden," the Aftonbladet tabloid said. "It was the worst match in the Euro finals. Boo! Boo! like the usual porters at the end of the match that is what we feel like shouting," editorialist Lasse Sandlin said.

## TOURNEY TREATS

BRUSSELS, June 16: Euro 2000 diary for Friday, the sixth day of Euro 2000:

### KEEPING OPTIONS OPEN

BRUSSELS: Raymond Brul, and his car, are in two minds over who to support in the Euro 2000 finals. Born in Rotterdam of a Belgian father and a Dutch mother, the 30-year-old Brul now lives in Belgium. To get the best of both worlds, the left half of his car chassis is painted orange in the colours of Holland and the right half in the black-yellow-red of the Belgian national flag. "If Belgium is knocked out I will paint my Fiesta completely orange," said Brul, whose vehicle has become instantly recognizable in both host countries.

### HOSTS SANS HOME ADVANTAGE!

BRUSSELS: Hosts Belgium are facing the unprecedented prospect of playing their match in another country if they reach the quarter-finals. The best Robert Wasieleski's men can do is finish second behind Italy in their group. That would mean a quarter-final and eventual semi-final and final in the Dutch cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Holland is co-hosting the Euro 2000 finals. No love is lost between the Dutch and Belgians in football terms so the Red Devils could expect a hostile reception.

### TARGET KOLLER

KNOCKE-HEIST, Belgium: The biggest player in the tournament, giant Czech striker Jan Koller is attracting interest from top clubs in England and Italy. Koller who stands at 2.02 metres and weighs in at 103 kilograms was outstanding in the Czechs opening match against Holland when he gave Manchester United stalwart Japp Stam a hard time and a bust eye. Koller as a reserve team player until he 1990s and Belgium football in 1996. His transformation took him to Anderlecht last season and the Brussels side promptly won the Belgian title.

### MERCKX'S ANOTHER YELLOW

ARNHEM, Netherlands: Belgian cycling legend Eddy Merckx has yet another yellow jersey to go with the many he won during his glory days in the Tour de France in the 1960s and 1970s. Merckx visited the Romanian team at their training camp for Euro 2000 and came away with one of their yellow shirts, signed by all 22 squad members as a sign of their admiration and respect for him.

## EURO 2000 GOAL SCORERS

BRUSSELS, June 16: Euro 2000 finals scorers after Thursday's match:-

2 - Zlatko Zahovic (Slo), Savo Milosevic (Yug)

1 - Bart Goor (Bel), Emile Mpenza (Bel), Johan Mjallby (Swe), Filippo Inzaghi (Ita), Antonio Conte (Ita), Okan Buruk (Tur), Laurent Blanc (Fra), Thierry Henry (Fra), Sylvain Wilford (Fra), Frank de Boer (Ned), Viorel Moldovan (Rom), Mehmet Scholl (Ger), Paul Scholes (Eng), Steve McManaman (Eng), Luis Figo (Por), Joao Pinto (Por), Nuno Gomes (Por), Steffen Iversen (Nor), Miran Pavlin (Slo), Ljubinko Drulovic (Yug), Francesco Totti (Ita), Stefano Fiore (Ita)

A team who had lost four of their seven matches before Euro 2000 and who qualified with a wretched 0-0 draw against Belarus have been transformed into a well-organised machine - with a lethal touch.

Skipper Paolo Maldini marshalled a defensive wall with Alessandro Nesta and Fabio Cannavaro which Belgium found impossible to breach and even Italy's much-criticised midfield did a solid job.

Zoff's attack had few clear scoring chances at the other end as the Blues spent much of the game under pressure. But with two well-taken goals from Man-of-the-Match Francesco Totti and Stefano Fiore, Italy had all they needed.

# EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2000



Niclas Alexandersson (R) of Sweden is under pressure from Turkey's Ozal Alpan during their Euro 2000 Group B encounter at Eindhoven on June 15. —AFP photo

## Turkey, Sweden cancel each other out

EINDHOVEN, Netherlands. June 16: Sweden and Turkey played out an uneventful 0-0 draw here Thursday with the Swedes unlucky not to earn a penalty in this Euro 2000 clash, reports AFP.

Turkey at least claim their first ever point at this level - they lost all three group matches at Euro 96 - having been unlucky not to share the spoils with Italy in their opener, losing to a disputed penalty.

But the only real winners after Thursday's dull draw are the Italians who are now guaranteed a place in the last eight as Group B winners without kicking a ball.

Neither team really deserved to win but Sweden should have got a penalty however late in the first half.

Fredrik Ljungberg collected a Teddy Lucic pass with only Turkish goalkeeper Rustu Recber to beat but had his heel clipped by Suat Kaya as he pulled his foot back to shoot.

Suat was doubly lucky not to be penalised by Dutch referee Dick Jol. Not only did the incident clearly deserve a penalty but the Turkish player was already on a yellow card.

Ljungberg, named the official man-of-the-match, said on the incident: "He blocked my leg with his leg. If he did not touch the ball it was a penalty but I cannot say if he touched the ball first."

Sweden, who also lost their first match to Belgium, might have hoped for more but were also hampered when star striker Kennet Andersson did not reappear after the interval with a right ankle injury.

Sweden joint coach Lars Lagerback said afterwards: "With all respect to Jorgen (Pettersson), to lose Kennet Andersson was important to us. With Kennet we have more power in the penalty area."

Lagerback continued that he did not know how serious the injury was or whether Kennet Andersson would be able to play their last group game against Italy.

"In total, the match was even, and we did not quite have the power in the last third of the

field with our completely new forward line," said Lagerback. "Of course we are disappointed we did not manage to win. We know we still have a chance to go through if the results go well for us and we will do all we can against Italy."

Turkey and Sweden both made four changes for this group B match where defeat for either side would have almost certainly spelled elimination.

Sweden brought in Magnus Larsson, Gary Sundgren, Hakan Mild and Teddy Lucic for Jorgen Pettersson, suspended Patrik Andersson, Daniel Andersson and Roland Nilsson, who had concussion and an ankle injury.

Patrik Andersson, captain for Sweden's 2-1 defeat against Belgium where he was sent off, passed the skipper's armband to Johan Mjallby.

Turkey called up Leicester City's Muzzy Izzet, Suat Kaya, Arif Erdem and Hakan Unsal in place of Tayfur Havutcu, Tayfun Korkut, Sergen Yalcin and Abdullah Ercan.

The first real chance fell to the Swedes after three minutes. Kennet Andersson, teed up by Hakan Mild, forced Turkey keeper Recber to palm the ball away from his left hand post from a freekick.

On the half-hour, a Henrik Larsson backheel earned Andersson another opportunity on the left but Recber, up to the task, blocked the ball at the near post in the best move of the half.

Turkey threatened rarely. Umit Davala failed to connect a shot for Turkey, striker Arif Erdem hit a bicycle kick high over the bar with his left foot and Okan Buruk, who scored against Italy, shot lamely left of goal.

Apart from those efforts it was all Sweden.

In the 18th minute Kennet Andersson caused concern when he limped off with a problem to his right ankle, but fortunately he was back on the pitch within a minute - he did not return after the break, however.

Just seconds before half-time, injured Umit also had to depart when he was taken off on a stretcher and replaced by Tay-

fun Korkut for a straight swap in right midfield.

Kennet Andersson could not continue the second half and Jorgen Pettersson, who started against Belgium, came on up front.

Gary Sundgren hit a freekick straight into Rustu's arms after Suat had fouled Pettersson. Larsson put Niclas Alexandersson through moments later but he was offside.

Turkey coach Mustafa Denizli and Sweden's joint coaches Tommy Soderberg and Lagerback decided to make some changes as they looked to make a breakthrough.

Sergen Yalcin came on for Izzet, who may miss the final match with a right ankle injury, and Tugay Kerimoglu came on to take Ogun Temizkenoglu's sweeper role as well as his skipper's armband.

Sweden's Anders Andersson came on for Niclas Alexandersson in right midfield and Magnus Svensson, on for Larsson, went into midfield with Ljungberg joining Pettersson up front. In between the substitutions, Mjallby earned a yellow card.

With 20 minutes to go Turkey should have gone ahead. Swedish keeper Magnus Hedman did well to parry a Sergen Yalcin shot, swerving away from his right hand, and Okan held his head in his hands after shooting the rebound over the bar.

In the 86th minute, Hakan Unsal fired straight across goal in a scare for Sweden.

Suat brought down Ljungberg but Pettersson fired the resulting freekick high over the bar and, at the other end, Hakan Sukur did not quite connect with a header in the dying seconds.

Turkish coach Mustafa Denizli said afterwards he was unhappy with certain sections of the crowd. "They were an insult to my players and it's not good for the sport," he said.

"It was a tough match played at a high tempo. We did not manage to win this game but my players tried everything and gave their best. We still have some hope in the last match (against Belgium) and we will do everything we can to win."

## Italy getting there

BRUSSELS, June 16(APF): Rubbished by their national press and dismissed by the bookies before Euro 2000, Italy have transformed their chances here with the team's clinical 2-0 victory over Belgium.

Like so many World Cup sides before them, Dino Zoff's men tip-toed into their opener against Turkey after a bitterly disappointing run of results and a pasting in the national press.

But after taming Robert Wasieleski's fearsome Red Devils, Italy can now swagger into their final Group B tie against Sweden.

A team who had lost four of their seven matches before Euro 2000 and who qualified with a wretched 0-0 draw against Belarus have been transformed into a well-organised machine - with a lethal touch.

Skipper Paolo Maldini marshalled a defensive wall with Alessandro Nesta and Fabio Cannavaro which Belgium found impossible to breach and even Italy's much-criticised midfield did a solid job.

Zoff's attack had few clear scoring chances at the other end as the Blues spent much of the game under pressure. But with two well-taken goals from Man-of-the-Match Francesco Totti and Stefano Fiore, Italy had all they needed.

The 2-1 victory over Turkey

valuable for team spirit. Totti, the new idol of the fans, insisted: "Don't say that it's my national team. I'm just happy with the way things are. This is the victory of a great group of players who have great character."

Totti, who has so far kept Alessandro Del Piero out of the starting line-up, dismissed any rivalry with the Juventus star who replaced him tactically for the last half-hour on Wednesday night.

"I'd be happy to play the same number of minutes again," Totti said. "If we have to swap places, there definitely won't be any controversy or any dualism."

Del Piero was equally diplomatic, saying: "Francesco had a great game and I've no intention of whipping up any talk of replacing him. I can only repeat what I've been saying for days, that I think we can play together."

With the win over Belgium, Italy look to have put their problems firmly behind them. Cannavaro said: "People were right to criticise us, because before the European championships the way we were playing was just obscene. In our heads, we could only think about one thing - the Serie A."

"But now things have changed," he said. "And you can see the result."

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## Unenviable Job for Collina

BRUSSELS, June 16: Italian referee Pierluigi Collina will officiate at the crunch Euro 2000 Group A match between England and Germany on Saturday at Charleroi, Belgium, reports AFP.

Collina will be assisted by compatriot Sergio Zuccolini and Spain's Carlos Martin Nieto while the fourth official will be Gamal El Ghandour of Egypt.

"I am very happy and very proud to have been chosen for this match," Collina told AFP. "I hope it will be a great match and I am delighted to be there."

It is not the first time that the bald Collina has handled a major Anglo-German encounter.

He refereed the memorable Manchester United v Bayern Munich 1999 Champions League Final at Barcelona won 2-1 by the English club who snatched victory from the jaws of defeat with two injury-time goals.

England midfielder Paul Ince said he was unconcerned about renewing acquaintances with Collina, who sent him off in the 2-1 Euro 2000 qualifying defeat by Sweden.

"It doesn't affect me at all, he's a fantastic ref," Ince told ITV TV station.

"A few people have reminded me about it, but if he wasn't a great ref, then he wouldn't be here."

The Italian made headlines earlier in Euro 2000 when he took charge of a match at the Amsterdam Arena.

Collina gave a bizarre performance in the Euro 2000 encounter between Holland and the Czech Republic, won 1-0 by the co-hosts.

Although UEFA later vindicated him over his award of the crucial penalty he brandished a red card at a player who had already been sent off while in a separate punishment he pushed his forehead into the face of a complaining Czech player - an incident that would have been punishable by a red card had a player done the same.

**REFEREES FOR NEXT FOUR GAMES:**  
June 18, Group C: Slovenia v Spain: Markus Merk (Germany)  
June 18, Group C: Norway v Yugoslavia: Hugh Dallas (Scotland)  
June 19, Group B: Italy v Sweden: Vitor Manuel Melo Pereira (Portugal)  
June 19, Group B: Turkey v Belgium: Kim Milton Nielsen (Denmark)

## Figo up for grabs?

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands. June 16: Barcelona's Portuguese star Luis Figo said Friday that he was happy with the Spanish club but was open to offers from other clubs, reports AFP.

The 27-year-old winger admitted that he had already been approached by Italian champions Lazio and AC Milan but his main priority at the moment was the Euro 2000 tournament currently underway here.

According to the player's agent Jose Veiga, Lazio are ready to pay the 10 billion pesetas (57 million dollars) necessary to release the player from his current contract with the Spanish giants.

AC Milan have offered the lesser sum of 8,000 million pesetas (45.7 million dollars) for the midfielder together with other advantages which have yet to be negotiated such as the player's annual salary.

"My agent is negotiating all that. I've already said and I repeat: my desire is to remain at Barcelona where I feel good, where my family is happy. These are important things for me. But there are elections at Barca (July 23), things are sort of uncertain and the offers that I have received are firm," the player told AFP.

"Apart from something extraordinary happening, there is nothing more to say for the moment. Portugal is my priority," added Figo.

According to Veiga the deal is more or less sewn up. "There is an 80 percent chance that he (Figo) will leave Barca. There are some people who are saying we are committing blackmail, but there comes a time when you can't wait. He could be signing the contract of his life," said Veiga.

The possible transfer could be held up by the recent resignation of Barcelona president Josep Lluís Nunez who has yet to be replaced.

Nunez said on May 31 that neither Figo nor Brazilian superstar Rivaldo were for sale as no-one could afford them with their buy-out clauses, but Lazio seem determined to get their man.

Nunez had spent 22 years at the head of Barcelona and his successor will be elected at the end of July.

Veiga is expected to travel to Spain in the coming days to conclude negotiations.

Portugal, who came from an early 0-2 deficit against England to win 3-2, with Figo scoring the opening goal for his country, take sole position top of their Group A before taking on Romania in Arnhem Saturday.



George Hagi, the Romanian legend stretching during a practice session at Arnhem yesterday. —AFP photo

## PREVIEW

# Portugal v Romania: Class acts lock horn

ARNHEM, Netherlands. June 16: With all eyes on the Germany-England collision in Charleroi, both Portugal and Romania will be looking to quietly get on with their own Euro 2000 campaign when they meet here Saturday, reports AFP.

Germany and England may be the historic giants of world football on Group A but at the moment Romania and especially Portugal can feel confident that they are the favourites to go through to the quarter-finals.

With the exception of world champions France, no-one was more impressive than the Portuguese in the first round of matches.

Humberto Coelho's men were magnificent in coming back

from an early 0-2 deficit against England to win 3-2 and take sole position of top spot in the group.

And there was another boost for Coelho with the news that injured pair Ricardo Sa Pinto and Paulo Sousa were again available for selection against Romania after being deprived of their services against England.

Striker Pauleta has also purged his one-match suspension and provides another additional weapon in the offensive armoury of Portugal, who ran England ragged.

Italian giants Lazio and AC Milan have been linked with Luis Figo, currently with deposed Spanish champions Barcelona - Figo refused to comment on those reports Thursday.

The other star of the England

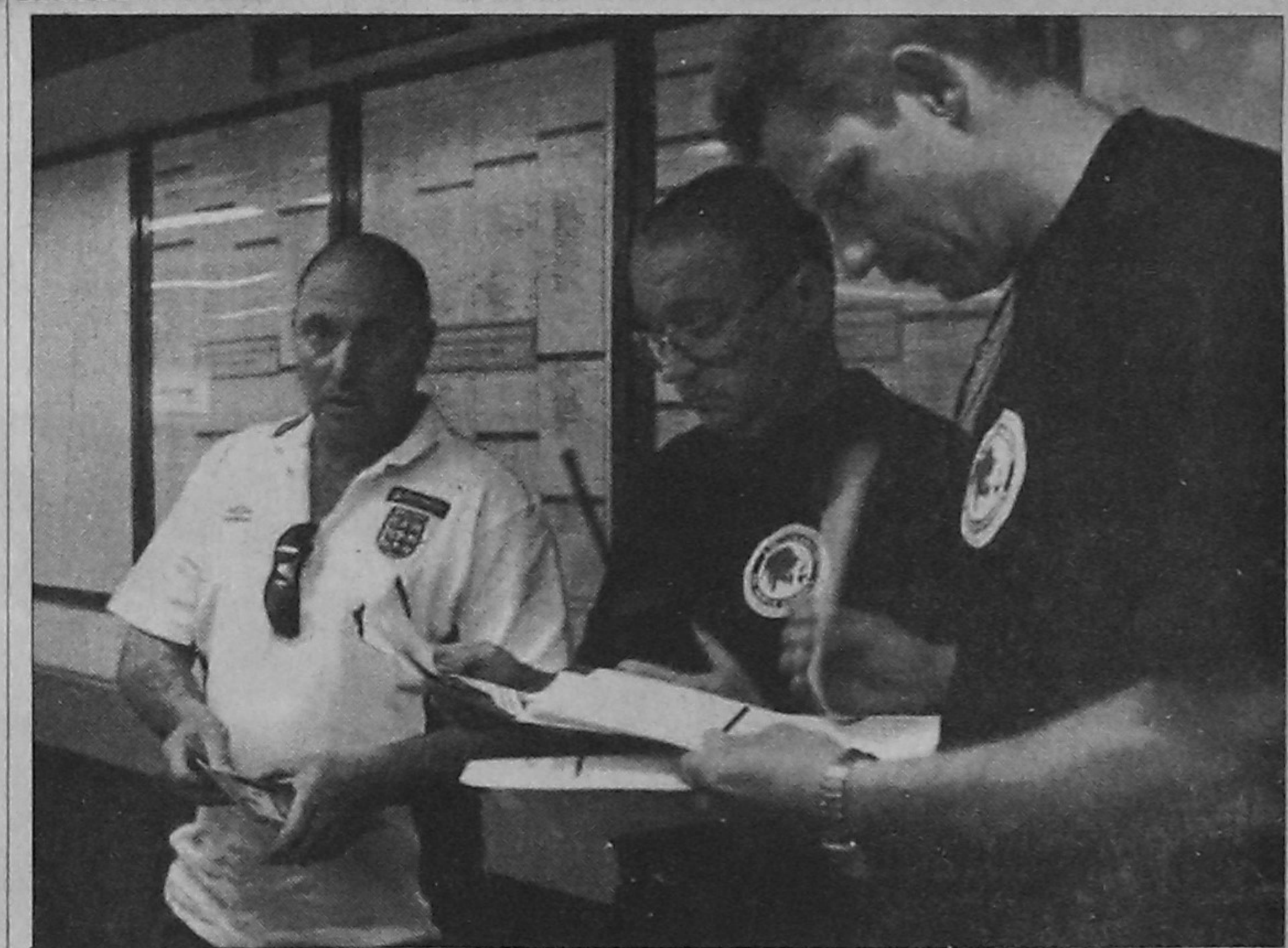
match Manuel Rui Costa announced Thursday that he wanted to leave his club side, Fiorentina of Italy.

The Romanians have doubts over goalkeeper Bogdan Stelea and defender Cosmin Contra.

Stelea, blamed by some for allowing Germany's Mehmet Scholl to score an equaliser in the 1-1 opening draw, hurt himself in training by striking his foot into the ground when attempting to kick the ball.

He has been treated for an Achilles tendon problem at Romania's Grinbergen base. Contra is suffering with muscle problems.

Coach Emerich Jenei has not ruled out changes although veteran playmaker George Hagi will play despite renewed problems with his adductor muscles.



CHARLEROI ON RED ALERT: Two security personnel check the papers of an England fan (L) at a subway station in Charleroi yesterday. —Internet photo

## Charleroi prepared for the worst

CHARLEROI, Belgium, June 16: The Charleroi police said Friday they were ready to deal with any hooliganism linked to Saturday's Euro 2000 crunch game between England and Germany, reports AFP.

The high risk match, touted by many as a potential tinderbox, has up to 3,000 police on standby in this biggest security operation for a sporting event in Belgium.

"Everything is ready and in place," police spokeswoman Francine Biot told AFP, adding that there had been no arrests or any incidents during the night of Thursday to Friday.

Seven medical teams, two helicopters circling above the Stade Charleroi du Pays and 60 fire engines will also be on hand to deal with any problems. There will be 120 police officers within the stadium and 13 watercannon at their disposal.

A carefully worked out system to segregate fans will also be in place. A perimeter around the stadium, from between 600m to 1km behind each stand, will seal off the area.

An alcohol ban will be enforced within the perimeter and nobody will be able to get through unless they live there or have a ticket or accreditation to see the match, which kicks off at 1845 GMT on Saturday.

"We are now just waiting for all the German and English supporters to arrive," added Biot.

Four car parks, blue for England, yellow for Germany, green for neutrals and red for VIPs will have buses running to and from them to the stadium in an

attempt to keep the different factions apart.

The buses will arrive at each of the four stands which also correspond to the same sets of people who will watch the game.

Many believe the 30,000 capacity stadium will be unable to cope with this high risk game. The steep slopes of the stands has also led to concerns that it would be impossible to evacuate potential victims of disorder.

The town itself is small with just a handful of bars and there are fears that the close proximity of opposition fans could lead to an explosion of trouble in the build-up and aftermath of the match between two of the most bitter rivals in world football.

Police are hoping for a repeat of the wild, yet good-natured scenes on Tuesday night when Slovenians and Yugoslavians, not known to be the best of friends, drank and celebrated together into the small hours of the morning.

Raymond Hens, responsible for security within the Stade du Pays de Charleroi, has 420 stewards on hand to deal with problems.

They would also be on duty at the perimeters to help police keep order. They would check the name on tickets matched their owner's. They would be empowered to frisk anyone in an attempt to keep out any object which could pose a danger.

Adding to the problems, memories of the Heysel Stadium disaster in Brussels in 1985 have not totally faded when 39 people died as a result of English fans behaviour at the

European Cup final between Liverpool and Juventus.

Around 5,000 tickets were allocated to each country, but thousands of ticketless fans are expected to arrive to try their luck.

Metro trains will not be operating for the game and fans will be ferried in on special buses from nearby car parks.

Police will have special powers to arrest anyone who looks like making trouble for up to 12 hours and hooligans will be brought to trial quickly.

A system of 'accelerated' justice will be in force with magistrates on duty 24 hours a day to impose immediate sanctions on offenders which include imprisonment and deportation.

The city's hotel rooms were sold out months ago although there are 1,000 prison cells which the police and public hope will not be used.

The Town Hall is also planning the Carolo Music Rally, which normally takes place in April, on Saturday with numerous music bands performing all around the town, helping to create a party atmosphere.

England and German fans, who have a long history of violence, were involved in the only serious outbreaks of trouble at the 1998 World Cup. In Marseille, England fans clashed with riot police, Tunisian fans and local youths during three days of rioting.

In northern town Lens rampaging German fans attacked a policeman and left him in a coma after hitting his head with a road sign.