



Spain star Raul Gonzalez Blanco arrives at their team camp in Ulsan, South Korea, for a press conference yesterday.

### Naughty boy Raul!



Barely a day in South Korea and the Spanish World Cup squad served up its first controversy with assistant coach Carlos Lorenzana refusing to comment on reports he had threatened to resign following a run-in with team star Raul Gonzalez.

"What's happened is in the past and I at least have forgotten about it," said Lorenzana, replying to a barrage of questions during the first news conference at the team's base in Ulsan - just a day after the squad's arrival.

### A month of losses?



Companies are searching for strategies to stop a fall in productivity during the World Cup as football-crazy Brazilians head to work with heavy eyelids after rising at dawn to watch their side play.

### Germans reach Japan



The 23-strong German World Cup squad arrived in Japan Thursday to stay at a luxury resort featuring a huge indoor beach and artificial erupting volcano until June 10.

### Ronaldo picks four

INTERNET, Kuala Lumpur

Brazilian star Ronaldo said he considers Brazil, Argentina, France and Italy to be the World Cup favorites, ANSA reported.

The Inter Milan striker who is presently in Kuala Lumpur, where the Brazilians will play with the Malaysian national side, said:

"There are those that think we have got a good draw with Turkey, China and Costa Rica, but it's not the moment to think about whether one opponent or another is an easy one. What we have to do now is get rid of who is in our way.

"The World Cup is a serious, very serious thing and we will have to make ourselves respected right from the start.

"It's been a difficult time for Brazilian football. But now we are closer to what we can really do and for me we are among the favourites along with Argentina, France and Italy."

The Phenomenon added: "As far as I'm concerned, I want to try and do better than in France, to play better and score more goals."

"The big lesson I learned from the last World Cup is that you need to have unity and trust in the squad. If one player doesn't help another, you don't get anywhere. Nobody can win on their own. In a team that wants to win, everyone has to react in the same way."

### Brazil's to go for fast goal

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Look for fireworks in the opening minutes of Brazil's World Cup games, technical director Antonio Lopez warned Thursday as he unveiled the side's "strike first and fast" plan.

"Brazil will try to score a goal immediately," Lopez said, setting a 15-minute guideline to be on the board.

The attacking play would not be at the expense of all defence, and Brazil will have to ensure it does not take a goal in the first 15 minutes as it tries to score during that period.

Lopez dismissed talk that Brazil had an inherent weakness in defence. "It was true in the 50s, 60s and 70s. It is no longer true now," he said.

Brazil arrived here Monday for the final leg of their pre-tournament build-up, a friendly against Malaysia Saturday.

They open their World Cup campaign against Turkey on June 3. China and Costa Rica are also in their first round group.

Lopez played down China as a threat, but said they had made considerable progress like other Asian sides in recent years.

"They have improved. They are in the same league with other strong Asian teams like South Korea, Japan, Iran and Kuwait," he said.

### Dogburgers anyone?



AFP, Seoul

Dogburgers will be on the menu for fans during the World Cup in South Korea as lovers of the controversial cuisine attempt to counter what they consider unfair prejudice against dog meat.

Dog meat campaigners will also show off cosmetics using fat from dog meat which they say is good for the skin.

"The more we try to hide it from foreigners, the more they will bark and maul us," Professor Ann Yong-Geun a food scientist at Chungchong University and a leading dog meat advocate told AFP on Thursday.

The South Korean tradition of eating dog meat has come in for renewed international attention because of the World Cup, to be held in South Korea and Japan from May 31.

French actress turned animal rights campaigner Brigitte Bardot has been particularly vocal in her condemnation of Koreans.

"I hope this event will help correct prejudice against dog meat and legalize the consumption of it," Ann told AFP.

Products to be on display during the tournament will include Korean and western dishes. Among them will be kimchi, Korea's national dish of spicy, fermented vegetable. But Ann's kimchi will be fermented by digestive enzyme from dogs.

Also on the menu are dogburgers, dog meat balls, canned dog meat, soup and even dog flavoured bread, mayonnaise and ketchup.

Cosmetics including skin care cream containing dog fat will also be

on display. Dog fat contains three times as much calcium as other kinds of fat and is easier to apply to human skin, the professor said.

Dog meat restaurant owners have said they will invite foreign visitors to try specially prepared dog meat juice outside World Cup stadiums on match days.

Dog restaurants were told to close or move into the backstreets when Seoul hosted the 1988 Olympics but no similar move is planned for the World Cup.

The authorities have said foreign activists should not interfere in Korean traditions and that the practice is slowly disappearing in Korea anyway.

But about one million dogs are sold every year for food in South Korea and an estimated 92 percent of men aged 20 and above and 68 percent of adult women have tasted dog meat, a recent survey showed.

### Injuries worry Blatter



AFP, Seoul

FIFA president Sepp Blatter made a new plea for top players to get fewer matches and protection from fouls Thursday as England and other top nations nursed a growing World Cup injury list.

England's injury jinx struck again when Danny Murphy became the fourth midfielder to be sidelined, France is agonising over Thierry Henry while Germany have lost four key players in recent weeks and former world player of the year Luis Figo is struggling to be fit for Portugal.

"There have been so many injuries in preparing for the World Cup that one has to say that the teams of these players have played too many matches," Blatter said as he arrived in Seoul.

"The national and international problem is overloading. There are players who have played 60-70 matches and now they are tired. They try to do their best for the World Cup and then they are injured."

He added: "In the future the leagues must look into this so that they have less matches and players in better condition then they will come to the World Cup with their best sides."

Blatter, whose rule has been wounded by allegations of mismanagement and corruption, also said top players were a growing target of fouls from opposing players.

"You will see that most of the big teams are especially missing their creative players because they are the targets of some other players."

"I can never understand why a footballer is denying the qualities of another player by using foul play."

Without saying what measures FIFA would take, Blatter said "Now it is time to remind players to please play fair because now it is so important that the World Cup in Korea and Japan produces the best of football, not only emotion and passion and the wonderful organisation, but also in entertainment."

Former World Cup winners England and Germany have been some of the worst hit by injuries.

England's Murphy was to undergo a bone scan on Thursday to determine the severity of a foot injury suffered in training in the South Korean island of Jeju on Wednesday.

Murphy had only been in the squad as a replacement for Liverpool colleague Steven Gerrard, who has been ruled out of the World Cup with a groin problem.

England captain David Beckham (fractured foot) and Kerron Dyer and Nicky Butt, who have knee ligament problems,



FIFA president Sepp Blatter addresses the press after his arrival at the Incheon International Airport yesterday.

are already battling to be fit for England's opening Group F match with Sweden on June 2.

England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson now has only three free fit midfielders, Paul Scholes, Owen Hargreaves and Joe Cole and may have to consider bringing in replacements for his 23 man squad.

Germany arrived in Japan on Thursday with injuries further depleting low national expectations of World Cup success.

Key midfielder Sebastian Deisler and Jorg Heinrich became the latest players to pull out of the squad on Monday, prompting the call-up of Lars Ricken and Jorg Bohme.

Coach Rudi Voller is also missing several other key players, including midfielder Mehmet Scholl and defensive lynchpin Jens Nowotny. But he said before leaving: "We're still capable of creating a surprise or two."

Already in Japan, reigning champions France have moved to quash doubts over Thierry Henry's fitness even though he has not shaken off a knee injury since the end of the English season and missed France's matches against Belgium last weekend and Japanese side Urawa Red Diamonds on Wednesday.

Coach Roger Lemerre said earlier Wednesday Henry faced a fitness test on Sunday and that his status would be reviewed after.

But France later issued a statement saying "For the moment, the presence of Thierry

Henry in France's World Cup squad is not in doubt."

Figo, 29, who had a disappointing match for Spanish club Real Madrid in their Champions League final victory over Bayer Leverkusen last week, is now a doubt for Portugal's friendly against China in Macau on Saturday.

He has been suffering from an injury to his right ankle since mid-February which has severely hampered his performances.

### USA full of confidence



AFP, New York

United States coach Bruce Arena was confident on the eve of his football team's departure for the World Cup despite having settled almost nothing about his lineup.

Improvement upon 1998's last-place finish in the 32-nation event is almost certain after the US team won the North American qualifying crown and made a decent showing in tuneup matches for the June 5 opener against Portugal.

"We go with a lot of optimism," Arena said Wednesday. "We will be fully prepared and confident we can win. We're not going to Korea to take a vacation. We're going to play three-plus games."

"We have prepared well for this tremendous challenge. The players will be ready come June 5. I'm confident they will give us a good showing. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel and we are excited."

But about all Arena knows for certain is he will have 11 men in the red, white and blue on the field. The final two weeks of training will decide several starting jobs.

"That's good news I think," Arena said. "A number of players have positioned themselves to be in the 11."

"It's going to be based on who we think is in form over the next two weeks. If some players are particularly moving forward, I think they will have an edge to get into the starting lineup."

The biggest uncertainty is at goalkeeper, where both Kasey Keller and Brad Friedel have performed well.

Arena said he does not believe there will be a rift on the team when the choice of a starter is made, but he knows how both men handle the decision will be critical to chemistry.

"They've both done an excellent job the past six months," Arena said. "They both realize they are in great

form. They both realize we can win with either of them in the goal. It's a question of the guy standing up and impressing. They are both outstanding. Our team is confident in both of them."

"They realize the way they deal with the decision is important to the success of the team. They understand what we have been through and they understand the importance of putting the team first."

Arena joined the majority of experts in naming defending champion France and South American powerhouse Argentina as the teams to beat. But he also likes Brazil to bounce back from qualifying struggles.

"Clearly I'm aware the team from France is pretty good and so is Argentina," Arena said. "France and Argentina appear to be the teams going in. Also, the traditional powers will be heard, Italy, Germany, Brazil."

"But honestly, if you ask me to name two groups, I couldn't. I'm pretty ignorant. I haven't paid attention to much else than what we have."

"I'm just going to look at Portugal from now until June 5. They enter our group as the most outstanding attacking team. They have experienced a lot of success at a lot of various levels."

Arena cheated a bit and watched a half of South Korea's friendly with England. The host Koreans are second on the US schedule, June 10, and Arena knows the home heroes will be tough to tame.

"Korea showed us the same thing they showed last year. They have set their lineup," Arena said. "They are going to be hard to beat. They are a very difficult team. They have got 7, 8, 9 players behind the ball real quick. They're still not a team dynamic going forward. They are going to try to get one win and probably two draws."

"We have been on the field against their system and we're going to change a few things since the last time they have seen us. We'll make some adjustments, but we know who we are and we won't be radically different come June 5."

### 'Homesick' Roddick



REUTERS, Duesseldorf

Andy Roddick won a tune-up match for the French Open and the 19-year-old American said homesickness was as big a problem as any he had tackled in Europe's major tournaments.

"Obviously I'm still learning to adjust and keep up with the travel and whatnot, the more I do it the better I'll become accustomed to it, I think," world number 14 Roddick said.

It's more just being homesick. I'm very close to a lot of people at home and I miss them a lot. But I guess that comes with the territory and I'm handling it much better than I did last year when I was over here."

Roddick beat Argentine Jose Acasuso 6-3 6-2 at the World Team Cup tournament, a good sign for the former junior world number one before the claycourt French Open, which starts next Monday in Paris.

Last Sunday Roddick was beaten by France's Arnaud Clement but he said he was now serving with greater accuracy and hitting the ball better from the baseline. The road, however, was still uphill.



Italy World Cuppers practise at the Sendai Stadium in Japan yesterday.

### Monica sails, Arantxa fails

INTERNET, Madrid

Top seed Monica Seles of the United States moved on, but two more seeds fell Wednesday in the second round of the 170,000 dollars Madrid Open claycourt tennis tournament.

Seles, who had a bye in the first round, moved into the quarterfinals with a 7-5, 6-2 victory over Spain's Marta Marrero. American Chanda Rubin had the biggest upset of the day, posting a 6-3, 7-6 victory over Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario.

Four seeded players lost in the first round on Tuesday.

Fifth seed Anna Smashnova of Israel avoided an upset Wednesday as she defeated Australian Alicia Molik, 7-5, 6-2. But No. 8 Rita Grande of Italy was ousted by Columbian Fabiola Zuluaga, 7-5, 7-5.

Argentina's Paola Suarez eliminated highly touted Russian Dinara Safina, 7-5, 6-1. The 16-year-old Safina, a qualifier and the younger sister of ATP star Marat Safin, reached the semifinals at Estoril last month.

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 37 Pizzeria offering 40 U2 lead vocalist 41 Burnt worker 42 Greek underworld 46 MP's quarry 47 Birthright barterer 14 Desire 15 North Carolinians' tool 17 Leprechauns' land 50 Probes land 18 Metropolis 19 Dogpatch denizen 20 Plumber's tool 22 Inform 24 Hors d'oeuvre spread 25 Fezlike hat 29 Juan's year 30 Puzo subject 31 Carnival locale 32 Molieres character 34 Tranquil 35 Lawyer (Abb.) 36 Starbuck's order 4 Labyrinth locale 5 One of Donal's nephews 6 The whole enchilada 7 judicata 8 Adobe structure 9 See 17-Across 10 Shrek, for one 11 -- do- 1 Make well 16 Raisin 2 Oklahoma city 18 Jessica of "Dark Angel" 3 Noted cartographer 20 Lovers' quarrel 21 "Peter Pan" pooch 22 Chewy treat 23 -- Canal 25 "Mr. Republican" 26 Religious opus 27 Delta deposit 28 Baseball runner's goal 30 Silent 33 Grab the ball-carrier 34 First miracle site 36 Yoga position 37 Foundry refuse 38 Actor Rob 39 PC symbol 40 Boast 42 Lange of "The Love Boat" 43 "Just -- thought!" 44 Odist's inspiration? 45 Witness

Cryptogram grid with numbers 1-45 and letters VDCPSYPFVPCO, VKPHYZQ, ODMHA-OFKKNK, ODYHAO? YGFKYKKNKYZ, ADKHQDAAMGPHKPHSO.

Today's Cryptogram Clue: O equals S. The Cryptogram is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.