



ON THE GREAT WALL: A Chinese boy pleases tourists with his ball-controlling prowess on the Jinshanling section of the Great Wall yesterday.

**Simeone relishing the prospect**

AFP, Iwako, Japan

Argentinean midfielder Diego Simeone revealed he is looking forward to another meeting with England skipper David Beckham this summer, the Daily Record reported.

Four years ago Beckham was sent off at France 98, with Simeone having admitted recently that he deliberately cheated on that night in St Etienne.

Speaking in Iwako where Argentina are training he said: "It can't just be called a first-round game - this match will tell us the truth about the entire World Cup."

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## Chinese tuned on



AFP, Beijing

Some 67.4 percent of women said they would watch China's first round matches against Costa Rica, Brazil and Turkey. China play their opening match against Costa Rica on June 4.

However despite the interest only 8.3 percent of those questioned believe that China would advance to the last 16.

According to another survey by the Zhongguo Shehui Diaochi Suo (SSIC) group, 93.7 percent believe that China will lose to former world champions Brazil, 58.7 percent that they will lose to Turkey and 50.3 percent that they will draw against Costa Rica.

The survey of 4,261 people from ten cities found that 76.7 percent would closely follow proceedings in Japan and South Korea from May 31 to June 30.

## No magic in mascots!



AFP, XTokyo

They are never seen on television, they do not sell well, and the Japanese find them "grotesque", even "disgusting": FIFA's official 2002 World Cup mascots have virtually disappeared from view in co-host country Japan even before the football festival begins.

The Spheriks as Nik, Kaz and Ato are collectively known, were unveiled to much fanfare by FIFA and the two organising committees from co-hosts South Korea and Japan in December 1999.

Said to represent energy, the Spheriks were created using computer-generated, 3D animation and represented a departure from previous mascot practice.

Ever since World Cup Willie the lion, wearing the Union Jack, was adopted as the icon of the 1966 World Cup in England, FIFA has delivered a one-cartoon mascot, until now.

The names of the "players" Nik and Kaz, and the "coach character" Ato, were chosen in a vote by football fans from all over the world, according to FIFA's official website, but it is unclear who - in Japan at least - identifies them.

"The first impression I had when I saw them, was: 'God those things are disgusting!'" said Takumi Hagiwara, a 21-year old student, who is going to watch six matches altogether in South Korea and Japan.

According to FIFA, the three characters are called the Spheriks because "their role is to create the unique and wonderful atmosphere found at the FIFA World Cup."

Their use was intended "to live up to everyone's expectations" of the first World Cup to be held in Asia and the first to be co-hosted as "Korea and Japan have long-established traditions of story telling, particularly of fantasies," FIFA explains on the website.

"These mascots don't reflect the atmosphere of the World Cup at all. Worst of all, their eyes are horrible. I don't want to buy anything featuring

them, I prefer the Pokemon characters," Takumi said.

Tatsuya Nakano, a 25-year-old baker from Tokyo agreed.

"I found out about those official mascots through magazines and shops. The characters and colours just don't fit the image of either Korea or Japan. And anyway the 2002 World Cup is co-hosted by Korea and Japan, so there should be two mascots, not three," Hiroko Abe, 25, a catering industry worker, said she could not find any connection between the mascots and football.

"Seeing these mascots, I don't really see any images of football. It's really hard to see the meaning of these mascots - they're not a not striking presence. What do they stand for?" she asked.

The 2002 tournament mascots also left 21-year-old university student Atsushi Fujimori cold, but he was equally unimpressed by those from previous World Cups.

"I really don't care about the mascots. I don't even remember what the mascot for France World Cup looked like. Still, I think these mascots are awful. And everyone around me feels the same," he said, pointing to fellow football fans gathered in the "nakata.net" World Cup web cafe set up by Japan and Parma midfielder, Hidetoshi Nakata in central Tokyo.

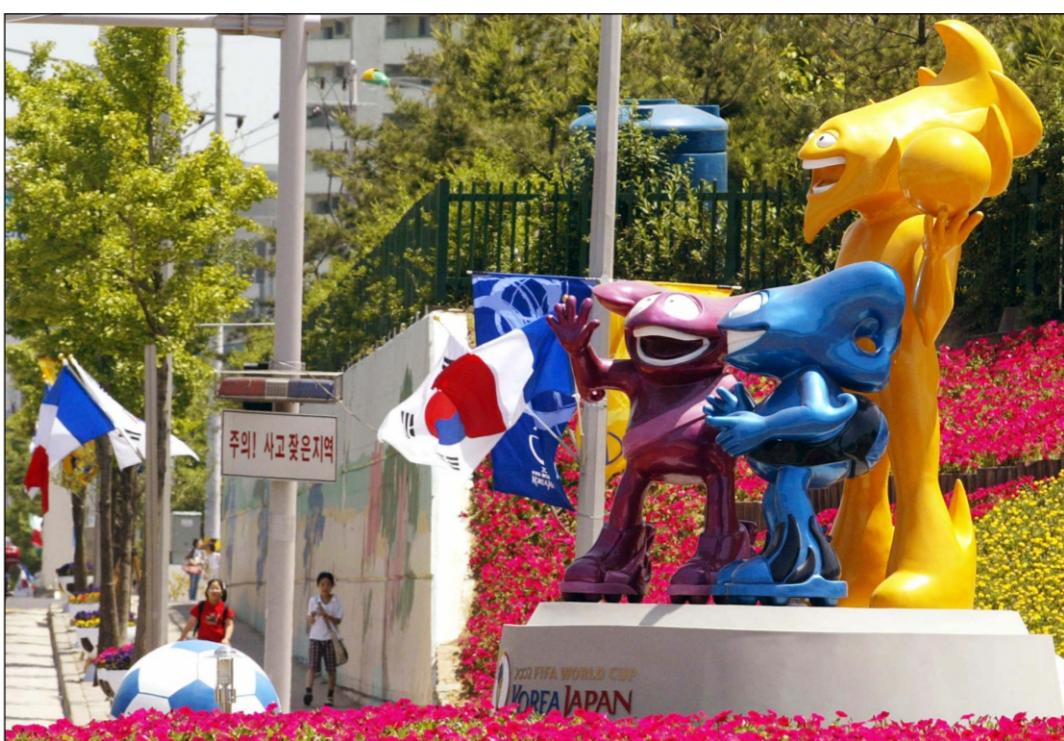
The reaction was much the same in one of FIFA's official World Cup shops, where the mascots are on sale.

"I think the mascots are grotesque... If I had them in my living room, I am sure I wouldn't be able to relax, and they just don't fit the images of Korea and Japan," said Takaji Kimura, a 46-year-old university lecturer.

But every frog has its princess and Emiko Hirai, 42, who works for a property company, said she liked the mascots, even if they signified nothing to her.

"I don't know their names and history. I can hardly can tell what they represent... but I saw them and I thought they were pretty," she said.

"I am thinking of buying some of them. They look cute and on top of that they're very commemorative. I will carefully choose one, maybe that purple one."



FRIGHTENING! The entrance of the Suwon Stadium in Korea has been decorated with huge mascots of the World Cup and flags of the participating nations.



Star Italy striker Alessandro Del Piero sparing some time with her Japanese lady admirers on the platform of Sendai Railway station yesterday.

## Del Piero all alone



Reuters, Sendai

Alessandro Del Piero may be one of the biggest names in world football but the Italy striker also looks one of the unhappiest as he faces the prospect of starting the World Cup on the bench.

The Juventus striker was left out of Italy's starting line-up for the second time inside a week as coach Giovanni Trapattoni looked to fine-tune his side with a friendly against Japanese champions Kashima Antlers on Sunday.

Del Piero had asked Del Piero if he would stand in for Totti, who was injured for the game in Prague, given that the other alternative for that role, Atalanta's Cristiano Doni was also short of fitness.

Del Piero rejected the request saying he did not want to confuse his role and pointed out that he was the most successful support striker in Serie A last season.

Although Del Piero did concede that he was willing to fill in for Totti in an "emergency" those first signs of discord within the Italy camp will not have impressed Trapattoni.

But the 63-year-old Italy coach is a canny operator and as several players pointed out on Saturday it is by no means certain that his choices for Sunday's friendly will remain in place for the June 3 group G opener against Ecuador.

While a weakened Kashima Antlers may not provide much of a real test for Italy if Del Piero enters play he will know that he must make an impression if he is not to endure another World Cup disappointment.

Italy also face Mexico and Croatia in group G.

"We have spoken to the coach and he wants to try it (with Inzaghi

## Trap sets his pattern



Reuters, Sendai

Italy coach Giovanni Trapattoni will pair Filippo Inzaghi and Christian Vieri in attack for Sunday's friendly against Japanese champions Kashima Antlers, with Alessandro Del Piero left on the bench again.

For Italy's final warm-up game before their opening game of the World Cup against Group G opponents Ecuador on June 3, Trapattoni has also opted for Roma defender Christian Panucci ahead of Barcelona's Francesco Coco on the left flank.

Roma midfielder Damiano Tommasi plays in the centre of midfield ahead of Inter Milan's Cristiano Zanetti.

As expected key playmaker Francesco Totti, who missed the recent friendlies with Uruguay and last week's 1-0 defeat to the Czech

Republic, will start the game in Tokyo having recovered from his niggling thigh strain.

"We have Totti back and I want to check how this front line is going to work with him," Trapattoni told reporters after training.

"But for sure there will be changes in the second half because

### ITALY TEAM FOR FRIENDLY AGAINST KASHIMA ANTHERS:

1-Gianluigi Buffon; 5-Fabio Cannavaro, 13-Alessandro Nesta, 3-Paolo Maldini; 19-Gianluca Zambrotta, 14-Luigi Di Biagio, 17-Damiano Tommasi, 2-Christian Panucci; 10-Francesco Totti; 9-Filippo Inzaghi, 21-Christian Vieri.

I want to check the other players we have here and to ensure they are in good condition.

"In this match we have to show a little more than we did in Prague, at least in terms of our physical condition," added the Italy coach.

While the game itself will be little

more than a training match, Trapattoni's choices give some indication of his thinking ahead of the start of Italy's campaign to win their fourth World Cup title.

The Italy coach said that he would introduce Vincenzo Montella at the break to try the Roma striker alongside Vieri in attack for half a game, but he made no mention of what role Del Piero would be given.

But although clearly disappointed, Juve striker Del Piero, left out against the Czechs, said he was unconcerned about the choice.

"We have spoken to coach and he wants to try it, it's all right like that," said Del Piero as he mounted the team bus.

Milan striker Inzaghi, who had a strained relationship with Del Piero during their time together at Juventus, said that it was likely that with an abundance of choices in attack Trapattoni would call on all his strikers at some stage during the Cup.

"We need to see what the gaffer decides but there are some great players and a lot of alternatives. It is a long tournament and we will need everybody," said Inzaghi.

Tommasi was also reluctant to read too much into his selection ahead of the more defence-minded Zanetti.

"There are 23 of us here and I am happy that Trap has faith in everybody," said the midfielder.

Totti, though, was keen to play down expectations that the 'real Italy' would be on show on Sunday.

"I am not yet at a full level of fitness so you shouldn't expect to see neither me nor Italy at their peak. But we will be there for June 3," said the playmaker.

J-League champions Kashima will be without six of their first-team regulars who are on World Cup duty with Japan.

Mexico and Croatia are Italy's other opponents in group G.



Italy midfielder Francesco Totti practises taking free-kicks during a training session at the Sendai Stadium yesterday.

## Jeju welcome England

AFP, Kobe

England's World Cup squad arrived here from camp training on the South Korean resort island of Jeju Saturday, on the eve of their warm-up match against African and Olympic champions Cameroon.

Hundreds of Japanese football fans greeted the English squad, including skipper David Beckham and star striker Michael Owen, who responded by waving their hands as they appeared in the arrival lobby at Kansai International Airport in nearby Osaka.

The England coach made no mention of Del Piero during his press conference and the player himself made the briefest of comments as he entered the team bus.

"We have spoken to the coach and he wants to try it (with Inzaghi

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## Round 4, Draw in Sylhet

### Competition Information, Prizes and Rules

#### Information

A. The Daily Star Rangs Toshiba World Cup Quiz 2002 is a series of competitions on World Cup Soccer being held in Japan & South Korea from May 31 to June 30.

B. There will be SIX rounds of competition.

C. Each round will have a separate draw with attractive prizes from the house of RANGS TOSHIBA as per announcement.

D. Participants of all the SIX rounds will automatically qualify for the Bumper Draw, which will have even bigger prizes.

E. For each round, a set of questions including a photographic Quiz will be published in The Daily Star.

F. Names and addresses of all prize winners will be published in The Daily Star.

G. Winners will have to collect their prizes from The Daily Star office after satisfactory authentication of their identity.

H. Any taxes or levies, as per law, for all the above prizes will have to be borne by the prize winners

#### PRIZES UP FOR GRABS

Prize Item Model Winner

1st One 21" Toshiba Flat TV CT 21D3XE YOU

2nd One 8.5 CFT Toshiba Refrigerator GR R18BPT YOU

3rd One Toshiba Semi Auto Washing Machine VH 7000B1 YOU

4th One Toshiba Rice Cooker 1.8Ltr. RC 186KE YOU

5th One Toshiba Dry Iron TA 20C and YOU

6th A SPECIAL PRIZE WILL BE UP FOR GRABS FOR THE LOCALS WHO ATTEND A QUIZ DRAW. SPECIAL PRIZE WILL BE GIVEN IN EVERY ROUND. SO, WATCH OUT FOR THE DRAW IN YOUR AREA.

#### QUIZ SCHEDULE

Round & Draw Starts Answers must reach by noon Lucky Draw for prizes

1 Barisal 12 April 25 April 26 April

2 Khulna 26 April 9 May 10 May

3 Rajshahi 10 May 23 May 24 May

4 Sylhet 24 May 6 June 7 June

5 Chittagong 7 June 20 June 21 June

6 Dhaka 21 June 28 June 29 June

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