



DAYS TO GO



Did U Know?

Japan's Miyagi Stadium has 104 permanent and 92 temporary seats for people who use wheelchairs. It also has about 3,500 seats specially designed for those who use hearing aids, and the meeting room in the stadium is equipped this way as well. There are 60 toilets that have handrails for the disabled, and there are two elevators designed to help them move about the stadium with ease.



ESPN
West Indies vs India
Third ODI
Live at 8:05 pm

STAR Sports
Asia Sport show
Int'l Sports News
Repeat at 8:30 am
Trans World Sport
Int'l sports News
Repeat at 10:00 pm
Soccer World Cup Heroes
Kempes
Repeat at 3:00 pm
Sportsline Tonight

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Alan Shearer
(Former England football captain)
"When people talk about me playing again for England the answer is NO."

On whether he will return to international duty.



Tick the correct answers, post to
The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes

Competition closes at 8 pm
June 7, 2002 and draw
shortly afterwards

- Serena Williams lifted the Rome Masters Series title defeating:
Venus Hingis Henin
- What was the result of the World Cup warm-up match between England and South Korea:
1-0 2-1 1-1
- West Indies won the fifth and final Test against India by:
140 runs 150 runs 155 runs
- Name the Irish football captain who was sent home from the World Cup:
Harte Jones Keane
- BKSP won the CityCell national youth cricket title

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (If any)

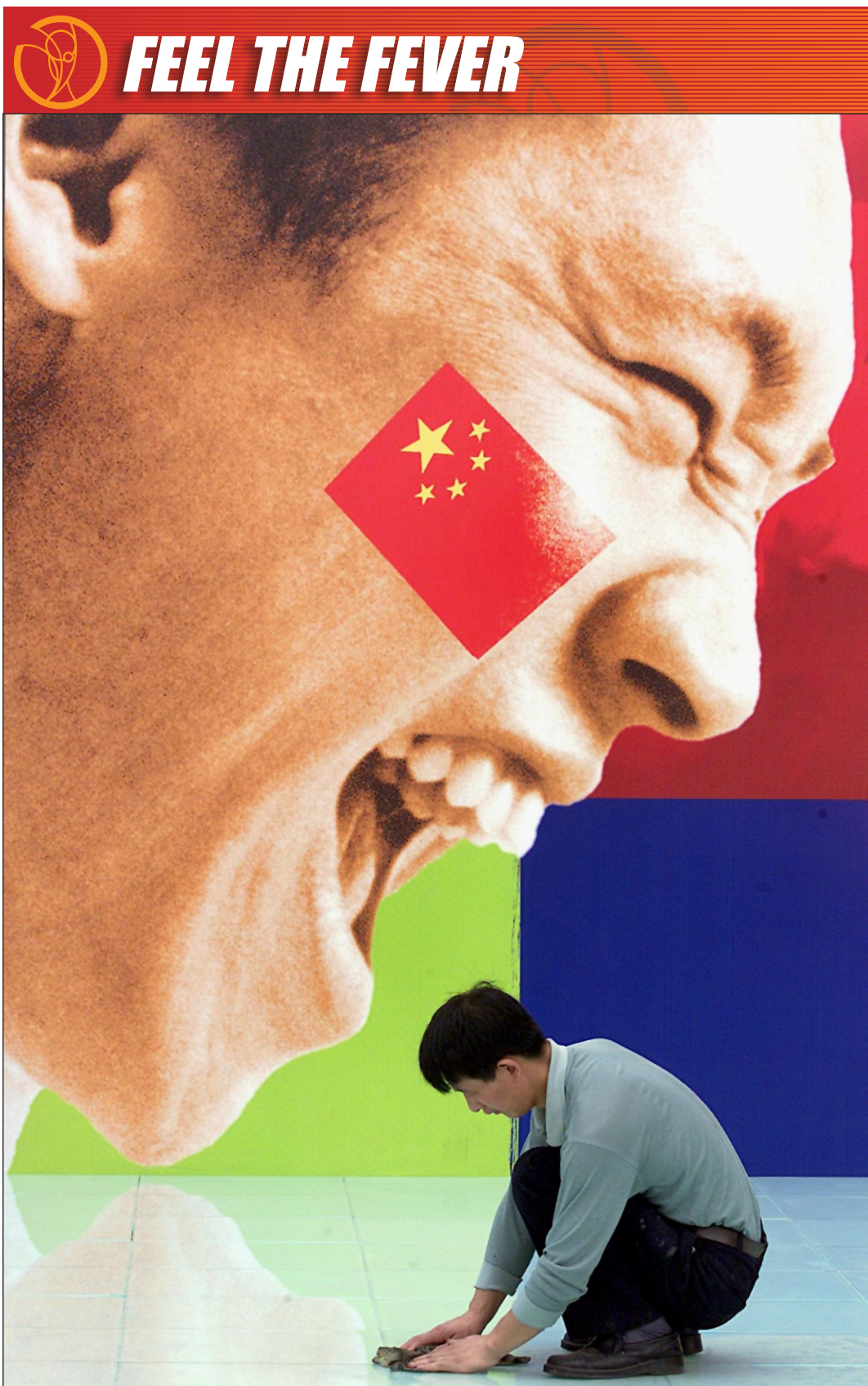


PHOTO: AFP

WORLD CUP GULLIVER! A worker mops the floor near a giant poster of a Chinese national team fan at Shanghai yesterday.

Cops' first catch!



AP, Tokyo

A special detail of Japanese World Cup police made its first arrests Tuesday, nabbing three alleged pickpockets trying to swipe a wallet at a Tokyo restaurant.

Officers involved were part of a 102-member task force marshaled to clamp down on pickpocketing, purse snatching and robbery during the World Cup soccer finals, which begin Friday in Japan and South Korea.

Tuesday's bust was made during one of the routine patrols the team inaugurated Monday, a Tokyo police spokesman said on condition of anonymity.

Mexican Hugo Becerril, 39, was arrested along with two alleged accomplices -- Jose Ortega, 35, also from Mexico, and Ramon Palacios, 34, from Peru.

Police moved in just as Becerril allegedly stuck his hand into an unattended pocketbook and began groping around inside at a restaurant near Akihabara, Tokyo's huge electronics shop district, the police spokesman said.

The pocketbook belonged to a 66-year-old Japanese man, who

was reading a newspaper at the time and was unaware of the pickpocketing attempt.

Police could not immediately confirm whether the three suspects entered Japan to watch the World Cup finals.

Meanwhile in Seoul, a South Korean was arrested on Tuesday for allegedly buying credentials and smuggling fans into a stadium during a World Cup warmup match between South Korea and France.

Kim Maeng-ki, 40, was accused of receiving 30,000 won (dlsr 23) each from two fans and taking them into the stadium with the credentials, said a police official in Suwon.

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Zinedine: From bad to worse?



AFP, Seoul

Zinedine Zidane could miss all of France's first round matches in their defence of the World Cup and has been put under intensive treatment in a bid to limit the damage, the team doctor said Tuesday.

Zidane and France confirmed that he will miss at least the World Cup gala opening match between the defending champions and Senegal in Seoul on Friday because of the thigh muscle injury suffered in France's 3-2 defeat of South Korea on Sunday.

The world's most expensive player said he is hopeful of getting back for the second Group A match against Uruguay on June 6. Doctors indicated however that there is no guarantee that Zidane will even be able to play the third group match against Denmark on June 11.

"What is sure is that he will not play in the match against Senegal," French team doctor Jean-Marcel Ferret told a press conference. "Afterwards, anything is possible

between this match and, say, the second round."

Ferret added though that Zidane could make a speedy recovery.

France already has striker Thierry Henry battling knee problems though he is expected to play in the opening match and the loss of Zidane is a major blow to the preparations of coach Roger Lemerre. The team trained behind closed doors on Tuesday and Ferret insisted there was "no atmosphere of depression."

Zidane was the architect of France's 3-0 win over Brazil in the 1998 final in Paris and has continued to be one of the major players on the world stage. He scored a brilliant winning goal in Real Madrid's 2-1 win over Bayer Leverkusen in the European Champions League final this month.

"The French group is obviously stronger with him. Zidane is an exceptional player and when he is in the team he always gives it life," Lemerre said Monday. Other players in the squad admitted the injury had been a major fright.

But French soccer legend Michel Platini said the injury was a chance

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PHOTO: AFP

IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD: Superstar Zinedine Zidane in a somber mood as he heads for the team bus after lunch at Seoul Sheraton yesterday.

Oops! Fadiga

AP, Seoul

Senegal midfielder Khalilou Fadiga is under investigation for stealing a gold necklace, police said Tuesday.

Fadiga, of France's Auxerre, was accused of stealing a necklace worth 300,000 won (dlsr 230) while shopping with an unidentified teammate Sunday in Daegu, a provincial city where Senegal is training for the World Cup, police spokesman Yoo Sang-yul said.

The Senegalese players were denying the allegation, said Koh Young-sung, a spokesman at the security office of South Korea's World Cup Organizing Committee in Seoul.

Police were still investigating the case and will soon file charges against Fadiga, Yoo said. Fadiga was not arrested, pending investigation, he said.

Fadiga, 27, is one of Senegal's key players.

"I'm not aware of any member of the team having had any problem with authorities," Senegalese team spokesman Cheikh Tidiane Fall said.

Senegal plays defending champion France in the tournament's opening match Friday. It also faces two-time champion Uruguay and Denmark.

Italians won't sing!

AP, Sendai

Italian players are fed up with accusations that they don't know their own country's national anthem, and have decided to strike back by keeping mum when the band strikes up at the World Cup, midfielder Gennaro Gattuso said Tuesday. The team has been taken to task for

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Blank Argentina



REUTERS, Naraha

Rival marksmen Gabriel Batistuta and Hernan Crespo failed to find the net as Argentina were surprisingly kept goalless in two hours of World Cup warm-up action by Japanese

clubs on Tuesday.

A second string side spearheaded by Batistuta and including four members of their under-20 team lost 1-0 to Vegalta Sendai in the first of two one-hour games ahead of their World Cup group F opener against Nigeria on Sunday.

Then the line-up coach Marcelo Bielsa could well pick to meet Nigeria in Ibaraki, with Crespo as the central striker, were held 0-0 by

Tokyo FC.

Neither Bielsa nor any of the players spoke afterwards to reporters anxious to know their feelings about the goal-shy performance.

Tokyo almost went in front just before the interval when Walter Samuel made a back pass to goalkeeper Pablo Cavallero in a tight situation on the edge of the penalty area. Striker Satoru Asari blocked

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PHOTO: AFP

Hernan Crespo (C), the Argentina striker, prepares to receive the ball between two Tokyo FC players at J-Village Naraha stadium yesterday.

Blatter still favourite



REUTERS, Seoul

Sepp Blatter looks set to secure a second term as FIFA president despite increasingly antagonistic and vociferous opposition to his style of leadership.

Blatter, facing a court case and critics who accuse him of leading soccer's governing body into financial crisis, is running against Cameroonian Issa Hayatou, 55-year-old president of the Confederation of African Soccer (CAF).

Hayatou believes his support is still growing, even at this late stage, but it may be too little, too late.

"I am very confident that I will be given a second mandate tomorrow because more than 100 associations asked me to stand for re-election," Blatter told reporters after a stormy special congress on FIFA's finances on Tuesday.

The 66-year-old Swiss veteran can bank on the support of many of FIFA's smaller national federations, who believe he will deliver solid financial support for them and who dismiss his critics as jealous rivals.

"We will see tomorrow whether my path will lead me to fulfil my work of the last 27 years with FIFA, not just the last four years as president."

In Tuesday's extraordinary congress, Blatter refused to let many of his opponents speak. He was booed and jeered when he closed the meeting and Hayatou angrily gestured in his face.

But overall, there were more cheers than jeers for Blatter and this bodes well for his chances when the 204 member associations vote on

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PHOTO: AFP

FIFA President Sepp Blatter listens to Secretary General Michel Jan-Ruffinen at Seoul yesterday.



REUTERS, Seoul

Hosts South Korea can expect warm and cloudy weather for the opening day of the World Cup finals on Friday, weather forecasters said.

But with the opening match between world champions France and Senegal kicking off in the South Korean capital Seoul in the evening, the higher-than-usual temperatures are not expected to have much impact on the teams or fans.

Yoon Seog-hwan, spokesman at Korea Meteorological Administration, said the temperature was expected to move in a range of 17 to 27 degrees Celsius (62.6 to 80.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

He forecast light rain for Thursday, the day before the opening of the tournament, which is co-hosted by Japan.

He said the seasonal monsoon, which hits South Korea every year in late June and July, would start a few days earlier than last year.

Cloud would thicken up to mid-June, with heavy rain starting in late June, he added.

BABAYARO BEATS DEADLINE

AFP, Lagos

Injury-hit Chelsea defender Celestine Babayaro trained with the Nigeria World Cup squad Tuesday after he arrived in Japan to beat an arrival deadline.

"Celestine has joined the team. He even trained with them today (Tuesday)," said Sani Lulu, an official with the Nigeria Football Association (NFA).

Nigeria coach Adegboye Onigbinde had given Babayaro a Monday deadline to join the team or lose his place in the World Cup squad.

The 23-year-old player, who featured at the 1998 World Cup in France, has been battling to be fit after sustaining a thigh injury which sidelined him towards the end of the English Premiership season.

Officials told AFP that Nigeria will leave for Ibaraki, Japan where they play their opening Group F match against Argentina, on Friday. The team have been training in Hiratsuka.

BECKHAM ODDS

REUTERS, London

English bookmakers William Hill are confident David Beckham will

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Brazil divided over Zidane



AP, Ulsan

Ronaldo says it's a shame that French ace Zinedine Zidane is hurt. Denilson isn't so sure.

Brazil's training camp on Tuesday was abuzz with talk about Zidane, who tore a muscle in his left thigh in a World Cup warmup against South Korea last Sunday. The team's doctor said Zidane will miss France's opening match against Senegal on Friday and maybe the next two games as well.

"I'm really sorry that he is out," said Ronaldo. He said Zidane's absence "is a problem not only for France, but for the whole World Cup."

Ronaldo, who is slowly returning to form after an absence of nearly two years with a torn knee ligament and other injuries, said he had personal reasons to wish Zidane well.

"He was one of the people who visited me when I had surgery," Ronaldo said. "I hope he comes back to the Cup soon."

Denilson, however, took a more pragmatic view.

"These are the most important

games, which determine whether a team can reach the final, and losing a player like is Zidane is complicated," the Betis striker said.

Denilson recalled how Zidane scored two goals in the final of the 1998 Cup to lead France 3-0 over Brazil, a shock that many Brazilians still haven't overcome.

"I hope they feel his absence and don't play the way they did in '98," he said with a smile.

British thugs deported

REUTERS, Tokyo

Two British men were deported from Japan on Tuesday, the first time that foreign fans who came to the country for the World Cup were sent back amid fears that they may cause trouble at the upcoming tournament.

The two, whose names have been withheld, were detained at Tokyo's Narita International Airport on Sunday shortly after arriving on a flight from Istanbul.

One of the two was among soccer fans whose profiles were provided by foreign authorities.

The men were put on a Turkish

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