



PHOTO: AFP

**WAIT CAFU, I'LL HANDLE IT!** Brazil coach Luis Filipe Scolari (L) makes a point holding captain Cafu's arm at a practice session in Jeju yesterday.

## BRAZIL VS CHINA China's samba test

REUTERS/AFP, Ulsan

Ronaldo, fresh from an impressive return to the World Cup in Brazil's win over Turkey, has the perfect opportunity to continue his goal-scoring revival against depleted China on Saturday (1130 GMT).

China, disappointed after losing their debut game in the finals 2-0 to Costa Rica, are likely to face the four times champions without two of their top players, Fan Zhiyi and Sun Jihai. Both picked up injuries in Tuesday's game.

Brazil, who came from behind to beat Turkey 2-1 thanks to a late and controversial penalty, can make sure of a second round place if they beat China and Turkey fail to defeat Costa Rica.

The high point of Brazil's win over Turkey was the performance of Ronaldo, who is determined to wipe out memories of his injury nightmare and the controversy over his illness-affected appearance in the 1998 final against France.

Against Turkey, the twice World Player of the Year scored Brazil's equaliser and was their most dangerous player until he was substituted in the 73rd minute.

"I was happy with my perfor-

mance against Turkey but I can improve a lot, I know I'm on the right path," he said.

"It's an easy game in theory, but we have to transform it into an easy game. We have to play well to win the game without difficulties."

"We will be more relaxed for this game and we will play better. It's a chance to boost our morale, gain in confidence and score goals."

Brazil named Anderson Polga in place of Edmilson on Thursday in an otherwise unchanged and fully fit team to play China in Seogwipo on Saturday.

Coach Luiz Felipe Scolari said the decision to replace defender Edmilson was a tactical move and had nothing to do with his mediocre performance against Turkey in their opening Group C match on Monday.

"The change has been made based on what's best for the team in the next match," he said at the squad hotel here.

"In the first match I thought Edmilson was best but to play against China I think Polga is better because he is used to playing as the last line of defence."

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PHOTO: AFP

**LOSERS STANDING SMALL:** Festus Onigbide (R), the Nigerian coach consoles crestfallen players Taribo West and Jay Jay Okocha after their defeat against Sweden at Kobe yesterday.

## Lively lightweights

REUTERS, Chonju

By upsetting the applecart, Senegal, South Korea and the United States have kindled interest in some of the less glamorous fixtures of the 2002 World Cup.

Their first round victories, allied to France's disappointing goalless draw with Uruguay on Thursday, suggest there will be a number of unexpected clashes in the second round.

Some fans, having bought tickets for the last 16 based on their expectations of how the first round will pan out, will be left watching teams they know nothing about and had little interest in before the tournament

started.

Denmark against Senegal is hardly a fixture which whets the footballing appetite in the way that, say, Friday's match between Argentina and England does.

But on Thursday it was a top-of-the-table clash between two sides whose 1-1 draw puts them both within sight of the knock-out stages of the competition.

In contrast, France and Uruguay, with three World Cup titles between them, were fighting for their survival in the day's other group A encounter. Their 0-0 draw left both teams on the brink of a first round exit.

Who would have thought South Korea's match against the United

States in Taegu next Monday would have been a battle for top spot in group D?

Or that Portugal will be on their way home later the same day if they lose their bottom-of-the-table tie against Poland in Chonju?

Only the most ardent soccer fans in Latin America and Europe will get up before dawn or interrupt their Sunday lunches to watch Japan's match against Russia in Yokohama at the end of this week.

But, nevertheless, Japan's spirited performance against Belgium

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## Life is still beautiful

AFP, Seogwipo

Under Luiz Felipe Scolari's guidance Brazil have tried their utmost to move away from the beautiful game, but there are still a few representatives from the old school.

Creative midfielder Juninho Paulista is one of them.

He might be the smallest player in the World Cup, but he's big on talent and has re-established himself as a mainstay in the Brazilian team after time in the wilderness.

Once dubbed the new Pele, his impish presence prompted superstar Rivaldo to remark that his gelling with Ronaldo and Ronaldinho had produced the best front line he had played with in his 63 international appearances.

The 29-year-old from Sao Paulo will be remembered by fans in England after two spells with Middlesbrough -- and he's keen on another crack at the Premiership.

"I hope I can go back to the Premier League," he said this week. "This is what my heart wants, but I still have a contract with Atletico Madrid."

"My contract finishes in July but I have the option of another year so I don't know."

He set Teesside alight in November 1995 when he completed a seven-million-dollar switch from his hometown club.

In 18 months in England he impressed with his skills and narrowly missed out on a player of the year award.

However, Middlesbrough's relegation to the First Division hastened his exit to Atletico Madrid.

His decision to leave reflected his desire to re-establish himself in Mario Zagalo's 1998 Brazilian national side, but a broken leg three months before the World Cup in France shattered his dreams.

"It was the first serious injury I'd had in my life," he told reporters. "I was devastated."

He drifted at Atletico but the Teesside fans never lost their affection for the little Brazilian and he returned on loan in September 1999.

But his form was poorer than it

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## Lemerre's last straw

AFP, Seoul

Embattled holders France were on Friday clinging to the hope that they can beat Denmark by two goals

next week to limp into the second round of the World Cup.

A bruising goalless draw against Uruguay on Thursday left Roger Lemerre's side with a solitary point

from two matches in a group they had been expected to dominate.

The French had a host of chances to win the match in Busan but in the end only goalkeeper Fabien Barthez's stoppage-time save with his legs from a Federico Magallanes shot kept them in the hunt.

But with Denmark and Senegal having only four points each and the Uruguayans also with one point, the French can still snatch qualification with a two-goal winning margin in Incheon on Tuesday. Coach Roger Lemerre was convinced his men could do it.

"The quality of this French team is not in question," he said. "With a two-goal margin we can qualify and we have to think like that."

Midfielder Emmanuel Petit, who will miss the showdown after picking up his second yellow card of the tournament, said: "We know what we have to do. We've got to win 2-0 against Denmark in our next game. It's make or break."

France played for more than an hour against Uruguay with ten men after striker Thierry Henry was sent off after only half an hour for a reckless challenge.

But nothing can hide the fact that despite lining up the top scorers in the English, Italian and French leagues this season, France have failed to record a goal in the tournament so far.

And the Danish defence they must penetrate is well policed by AC Milan stars Thomas Helveg and Martin Laursen.

"It's true that we didn't score against Senegal or Uruguay and two goals is a lot," said Lemerre. "But I hope that we are going to pull together and defend our chances."

The frustration at the lack of goals against Uruguay was clear to see.

David Trezeguet, in free-scoring form for Juventus last season, was repeatedly denied by Uruguayan

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PHOTO: AFP

**HIS TIME IS RUNNING OUT:** Zinedine Zidane, with his injured thigh firmly wrapped, trains at Busan yesterday.

## CUP CORNER

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Die-hard Brazil fans can now show their support when they are scoring between the sheets by using condoms designed in the colours of the national team.

Condom makers Prudence have produced the limited edition yellow and green contraceptives to allow supporters to practise safe sex as the Samba stars bid for a record fifth World Cup title.

The mint-scented condom, aimed at 15 to 35-year-olds, follows on from the manufacturer's previous soccer-related gimmick in February - condoms in the colours of all 18 top national clubs.

The condoms are packaged with the club's emblem and 12 per cent of the sales profits goes towards the team's coffers.

### CHEERLEADER CHIRAC

AFP, Paris

President Jacques Chirac on Thursday sent a message of encouragement to captain Marcel Desailly after France's 0-0 draw with Uruguay left the champions' World Cup defence hanging by a thread.

France need a convincing win over Denmark next Tuesday to stand

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## Too slow Eto'o!

REUTERS, Saitama

Cameroon goalscorer Samuel Eto'o remained stuck in the doping room more than two-and-a-half hours after the end of his side's 1-0 World Cup win over Saudi Arabia on Thursday.

Cameroon staff were visibly frustrated at the delay, caused by Eto'o's apparent failure to deliver a urine sample, which kept the team bus waiting outside.

Many of Eto'o's fellow players and colleagues took the unusual step of joining waiting journalists to watch the France v Uruguay game to pass the time.

But despite encouraging "wooshing" noises from impatient reporters, the striker had still not appeared by the end of the following game.

It is routine for FIFA to randomly test at least one player from each team after every game.

## Thumbs down for Polish diva

REUTERS, Warsaw

Poland may have been disappointed by their 2-0 defeat at the hands of World Cup co-hosts South Korea.

But what really outraged many in the East European nation was the rendition of their national anthem at Tuesday's match by pop diva Edyta Gorniak.

Gorniak, who came second for Poland in the 1994 Eurovision Song Contest and has appeared on the cover of the Polish edition of Playboy magazine, gave a slow and



PHOTO: INTERNET

**THAT'S THE SPIRIT:** Six year old John Doyle from Norwich sporting a No 7 shirt like England captain David Beckham, stands with four year old Santiago Burzago from Buenos Aires, who has put on an Argentina jersey at Sapporo yesterday.

## TODAY'S MATCHES

<b>South Africa vs Slovenia</b> Venue: Daegu Time: 12:30 pm	<b>Italy vs Croatia</b> Venue: Ibaraki Time: 3:00 pm	<b>Brazil vs China</b> Venue: Seogwipo Time: 5:30 pm
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