



PHOTO: INTERNET

ABREATH OF BRAZILIAN AIR: A Brazilian supporter holds her national flag at the stands in Suwon yesterday.

POLAND VS USA

Americans stay focused

AFP/REUTERS, Daejeon

The United States, a far cry from the rabble of France '98, are leaving nothing to chance against eliminated Poland on Friday as they bid for only their second appearance in the knockout rounds of the World Cup. The Stars and Stripes didn't win a match at the last World Cup amid bitter internal recriminations, but under coach Bruce Arena, they are proving a well-organised and tenacious team here. They stunned Euro 2000 semi-

finalists Portugal 3-2 and then held on for a fighting draw against co-hosts South Korea before a parochial home crowd. A point might be enough to get them into the last 16 as Korea attempt to fend off Portugal's last-ditch attempt to stay in the tournament in the other simultaneous Group D game in Incheon. "Any team that qualifies from Europe is one you have to respect, it's the hardest continent to qualify from," US skipper Claudio Reyna told a press conference Thursday.

"They won their qualifying group and we have to go in with the same approach as we had for our first two games. "Poland is a strong physical team and their players will be playing for pride. "We saw it yesterday, Nigeria (against England) and Slovenia (against Paraguay) both went out to win even though they were both eliminated, so we've seen it already. "Just because you're out it does

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PHOTO: AFP

WINGS FLAPPING! Poland striker Emanuel Olisadebe (Front) leads teammates during warm-up at Daejeon yesterday.

Ronaldo's goal?

AFP, Suwon

Brazilian striker Ronaldo says an own goal credited to Costa Rica's Luis Marin was his and he has approached FIFA to have it changed. "I have no doubt that I scored the first goal but I don't want to say too much about it because FIFA are going to study the video," he said after Brazil's 5-2 victory. "The norm is that when a striker kicks a ball, even if it comes off a defender, it is given to the striker because the striker has the intention to score." Ronaldo nipped in ahead of two defenders in the 10th minute to poke home Brazil's opening goal. Video replays showed it was deflected off Marin and it was credited as an own goal on the official scoresheet. A FIFA spokesman confirmed the video evidence would be viewed and a final decision made on Friday. The Inter Milan sharpshooter, who played the full 90 minutes for the first time in the tournament, scored again to make it 2-0 when he shook off his marker to whip the ball through the legs of a hapless defender.

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JAPAN VS TUNISIA

Target top spot

REUTERS, Osaka

World Cup co-hosts Japan, already one of the biggest stories of the finals, have set their sights on finishing top of group H by beating Tunisia in their final first round match on Friday. Japan made national history by drawing 2-2 with Belgium and then beating Russia 1-0 to head the group and erase the memory of losing all three games on their World Cup finals debut four years ago. But the Asian champions, who only need a point to progress to the knockout stage, are in no mood to suffer a let-down against a Tunisian side who will advance at their expense if they win by a two-goal margin. "We can't be satisfied with just one win. We want three points to finish top of the group. Tunisia are an unpredictable side, so we can't

afford to get careless," said Japan defender Tsuneyasu Miyamoto. Japan coach Philippe Troussier says the World Cup co-hosts will be in attack mode. With Tunisia needing to beat Japan by two clear goals in Osaka to advance at the expense of the Asian champions, there would be no question of playing for a draw, Troussier told reporters on Thursday. "Goals will be more important than points tomorrow because if we score once, Tunisia will need three goals. If we score twice, they will need four," Troussier said. "We know we are 80 per cent certain of reaching the second round but we want to go through on our terms, playing our style of football." Troussier, whose first match in charge of Japan was a 1-0 win over

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Prisoners' WC!

AFP, Bangkok

Thai and foreign inmates swapped prison stripes for football kits Thursday as they kicked off the inaugural prisoners World Cup staged to coincide with the tournament in South Korea and Japan. Over 400 inmates and 100 journalists - as well as 200 guards, many of them armed with machine guns - gathered at Klongprem Central Prison in Bangkok to witness seven-a-side teams Nigeria and Japan lace up for the opening match. With pomp and pageantry rarely witnessed at a Thai jail, 100 prisoners paraded onto the half-size pitch hoisting flags and placards of country teams Japan, Nigeria, England,

Italy, France, Germany, the United States and Thailand. "The main objective for our first World Cup was to decrease tension among prisoners, to teach them about unity, and to decrease conflict," the director general of the corrections department, Siva Saengmanee, said at a 'pre-match' press conference. "We chose Japan for the opening match because they represent Asia." Nigeria, the country with the largest number of foreign prisoners at Klongprem, then promptly defeated a largely Thai Japanese squad 6-1 in a match whose goals

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PHOTO: AFP

DEPRESSING RETURN HOME: Distraught Argentines Claudio Lopez (L) and Juan Sebastian Veron on board a train from Hirono to Tokyo yesterday.

Picking up the pieces

AFP, Iwaki

Argentina were struggling to cope Thursday with their elimination from a World Cup into which they had come as joint favourites with fellow flops France. A day after their draw with Sweden proved insufficient to advance from the Group of Death, where only the Swedes and England survived, the squad were reluctantly holding a post-mortem into their first opening-round exit from the event since 1962. Coach Marcelo Bielsa told journalists it was too early to make snap decisions - but indicated it was possible he would step down in the coming weeks. "At the end of June my contract runs out with the national side. Only then will I reveal my decision on my future - if necessary." The final "if necessary" appeared to imply that he might throw in the towel by then - or be pushed through

the exit door. However, Julio Grondona, the president of the Argentine Football Association (AFA), said Wednesday he hoped Bielsa would stay "as he has shown ... he is a capable steward of the team." But whoever is in charge next season, when Argentina will look to re-establish themselves by winning the Copa America next summer - a potential crumb of comfort compared with the World Cup - doubts surround the long-term future of senior players such as a distraught Juan Sebastian Veron. "Last night I cried a lot," admitted Veron, who was dropped for the Sweden match after an almost invisible 45 minutes against England. "I wanted to lift the Cup, playing or not. It was for the glory of the group, not on a personal level. I just can't explain why it's come to this. We came here to don the national

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PHOTO: AFP


WILL TOMORROW'S RISING SUN SHOW THE DAY? Hidetoshi Nakata, the Japanese star practises at Osaka's Nagai Stadium yesterday.

Round 5, Draw in Chittagong on June 21

(Competition information, prizes and rules on June 7 issue)

The Daily Star RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz, Round 5 Ends June 20, 2002

Tick (Ö) the correct answers

- 1. Record of most World Cup finals appearances goes to Joff Matthaus Milla
- 2. Only country to play in every World Cup Argentina Brazil Germany
- 3. Middle name of Diego Maradona is Alberto Armando Admundo
- 4. Which WC final was decided in penalty shoot-out 1998 1994 1990
- 5. Who is this?  Figo Raul Batistuta

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms).....Age.....
 Father's nameOccupation
 Address
 Telephone (if any)Signature Date.....

Write with a ballpoint pen in clear BLOCK letters. Cut along the dotted lines and mail to OR drop in the Quiz Box at The Daily Star. You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz 5."

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