



PHOTO: AFP

NO BETTER TIME TO DELIVER: Prolific Swedish striker Henrik Larsson in practice at Oita yesterday.

## SWEDEN VS SENEGAL Clash of surprise-setters

REUTERS, Oita

Sweden and Senegal are wary that new-found reputations will count for nothing when they meet in their World Cup second round clash on Sunday.

Sweden helped eliminate pre-tournament favourites Argentina on their way to the top of group F, while Senegal's debut finals adventure has so far accounted for defending champions France and cast the African game in a positive light.

But caution was the watchword from both camps on the eve of the last 16 meeting, fearful that complacency would suddenly undermine their hitherto magnificent efforts.

"We're happy we won the group but at the same time we can't think we're the best team in the world or anything like that," Sweden midfielder Fredrik Ljungberg, who is battling against a hip injury, told reporters.

"The past is the past. It doesn't matter any more because we have to overcome what we know will be a huge challenge from Senegal."

Bruno Metsu, coach of the African side said that the Lions will be missing four of their first team for Sunday's match.

Defender and skipper Aliou Cisse is out because of a calf injury while Ferdinand Coly is still suffering from a knee injury sustained in the 3-3 draw against Uruguay.

Coly came off midway through the second half in that game. He trained both separately and together with the squad on Saturday but his knee is unlikely to heal on time.

Salif Dialo and the influential

Khalilou Fadiga are both suspended. Forward Souleymane Camara, who has not yet played and was unlikely to make the starting line-up, is also out.

"If one or two players don't play because of injury, you can be sure that the others who are coming from the bench will give 100 per cent. We'll have a good team," Metsu said.

"Expectations have risen after the group stage," said Metsu. "We know that, but we also know we

have some problems trying to replace the absent players."

Senegal, on their first finals appearance, are aiming to match Cameroon's 1990 achievement of making the quarter-finals, while Sweden have two previous watermarks to reach -- they lost in the 1958 final to a Pele-inspired Brazil and succumbed to the Brazilians again in 1994 on their way to third place.

Brazil could await in this year's last four, and coach Lars Lagerback,

### PLUS-MINUS

Following is an analysis of the comparative strengths and weaknesses of Sweden and Senegal:

**SWEDISH STRENGTHS:** Sweden showed against both England and Argentina they have talent in depth and a tough fighting spirit. The defence works well as a unit with Teddy Lucic commanding and inspiring. Up front Henrik Larsson has looked sharp and dangerous.

**SWEDISH WEAKNESSES:** The main worry going into this game is the fitness of Fredrik Ljungberg, so often the midfield and attacking inspiration. He missed the Argentina match with a hip injury and is still doubtful.

**SENEGAL STRENGTHS:** The sheer physical power and speed of the

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PHOTO: AFP

GODS MUST BE CRAZY! Senegal's charismatic coach Bruno Metsu (Top) gives instructions during a training session at Oita yesterday.

## Uneasy Germany

REUTERS, Berlin

Millions of Germans let out a collective roar of relief on Saturday as Oliver Neuville scored the winner two minutes from time in their World Cup clash with Paraguay.

The deafening cheer that erupted from living rooms, pubs and public screenings around the country shortly after 1000 local time (0800 GMT) ended a nerve-racking experience for fans of the three-times World Cup champions who had feared an upset.

"This is just insane," said Klaus Schieffer, a 55-year-old baker who watched the match from Sogwipo, South Korea, with 3,000 other delirious fans on a giant screen in the centre of Berlin.

"I didn't think we would pull this one off," said Schieffer, who jumped into the arms of celebrating strangers after the goal.

"We weren't better. The match was even. I thought it would end up with penalty kicks and you never know how that will end."

An estimated television audience of 25 million households tuned into the game in Germany, which has a population of 82 million. The market share was nearly 80 per cent.

Streets in Berlin on a warm summer morning were virtually empty, the central Tiergarten park was devoid of the usual early-morning joggers.

Even the tourist stops at the Reichstag and Brandenburg Gate were abandoned.

The eerie silence that descended upon the capital city was occasionally broken by cheers, groans or gasps from the open windows of apartment buildings and pubs, or the large gathering at the Potsdamer Platz square.

"Our goal was great but the rest of the game was lousy," said Robert General, 38, whose face was painted in Germany's red, gold and black colours.

Like many watching in Berlin he had stayed up all night in a disco and stood for the full match.

"We won't get much further if we keep playing like that."

Other fans turned to beer, the national beverage, instead of orange juice for breakfast, hoping to keep up their enthusiasm and avoid a dry throat during their early-morning workout.

"Business has been great this morning," said Kai-Uwe Faust, 23, selling ice-cold bottles of beer from an ice cream stand.

"No one wants ice cream today. Everyone wants beer."

Many of the fans were draped in Germany flags. They spent 90 minutes singing and cheering at the top of their voices, and praying for the one goal that eventually came late and unexpectedly.

"We were lucky to win," said Erik Fuhr-Meissner, a 16-year-old student.

"It was a dull match until the goal"

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PHOTO: AFP

SEA OF KOREA: Proud South Koreans fill every inch of the square around Seoul's City Hall on June 14 after their country made it to round two of the World Cup.



PHOTO: AFP

NEVER SAY NEVER: Germany striker Oliver Neuville (C) goes for a celebration jig after scoring in the dying minutes while Paraguay skipper Jose Luis Chilavert retrieves the ball at Jeju yesterday.

## So far too good

AFP, Seoul

Asian football was celebrating its best ever World Cup here Friday after tournament co-hosts South Korea and Japan stormed into the last 16.

South Korea's 1-0 victory over Portugal and Japan's comfortable 2-0 win over Tunisia left Asia with two teams in the second phase for the first time in World Cup history.

More impressively, both teams qualified at the top of their groups, with the Koreans helping to eliminate the powerful Portuguese and Japan emerging clear of Belgium and Russia.

Only two Asian teams have ever reached the later stages of the World Cup before, North Korea in 1966 and Saudi Arabia in 1994.

Peter Velappan, secretary general of the Asian Football Confederation, hailed Korean and Japanese successes as the start of

a new era for the continent.

"I'm on top of the world. It's the start of something special. To have two teams in the second round, and playing so well, is fantastic news for Asian football," Velappan said. "The performances have been magnificent."

"To see Portugal, one of the world's strongest teams with stars like Luis Figo, be completely outplayed by Korea was just wonderful," said Velappan, the World Cup co-ordination director who was at Incheon for Korea's match.

Velappan paid tribute to the work of the two countries' foreign coaches - Dutchman Guus Hiddink with Korea and Frenchman Philippe Troussier with Japan.

He said Korea and Japan's decision to make long-term appointments for both men had paid off. Several countries in Asian football are notorious for hiring and firing national coaches if results don't

come quickly.

"The work that Hiddink and Troussier have done has been fantastic. This just shows that top European coaches can teach our players a lot and bring about improvements," Velappan said.

South Korean football chief and influential FIFA official Chung Mong-Joon was delighted with results.

"This is good for Asian football, good for the tournament and good for soccer," Chung said.

"I hope that Japan and Korea continue so that they can play each other in the final in Yokohama."

Ironically the heroics of Japan and Korea came after a dreadful start for Asian teams. Saudi Arabia, one of the continent's traditional powers, had been thrashed 8-0 by Germany in Group E.

Velappan, who had described that result as a disaster, said Korea

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## Bankrupt millionaires

AFP, Yokohama

As the bulldozers continue to knock down millionaires' row at the World Cup the new kids on the block are ready to move in.

Money isn't everything as the world's three most expensive footballers can attest exiting the finals at the first hurdle and leaving the world stage to several who barely cost a bean in the transfer market.

Instead of fans around the world feasting on the talents of Zinedine Zidane, Luis Figo and Hernan Crespo in the knockout rounds they have been treated to outstanding displays by Senegal's Pape Malick Diop, USA striker Brian McBride and Swedish midfielder Anders Svensson.

The trio would be hard pressed to fetch five million dollars as a job lot which makes it all the more remarkable that they can remain in the hunt of lifting the greatest prize in world football while three players whose transfer fees amount to 173.5 million dollars are already gone.

Had Italy not scraped through there would have been no representative of the world's most expensive top-10 players in the second round.

Portugal's Rui Costa and Argentine Gabriel Batistuta joined the celebrated trio on the trash heap - the Czech Republic's Pavel Nedved and France's Nicolas Anelka didn't even make the finals.

Their pain was another's joy and for McBride it was a wonderful exit from a nightmare.

The striker, who scored a great goal for USA as they stunned Portugal 3-2, saw his career with English First Division Preston North End finish when he suffered a blood clot in his right arm.

"That gave me an insight into how thin the line is between a healthy life enjoying yourself playing football and losing it all in a second," McBride said.

"Now the wheel has turned full circle, I am healthy, I scored a goal against one of the European powers with several players whose wages would buy the whole of the MLS (Major Soccer League in the US) and I am in the second round and they are not."

"I am not gloating, but it is a wonderful feeling. Sport shows good honest triers can live the dream of succeeding on the greatest stage," added McBride, who turns 30 on Wednesday.

While Zidane and Figo were celebrating lifting the Champions League trophy there was no such joy for Malick Diop as even his out

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### CUP CORNER

INTERNET, Montevideo

The Uruguayan national team arrived at Montevideo's Carrasco International Airport with 16 mini-refrigerators, which were seized at the customs, EFE News reported.

The boxes containing the mini-refrigerators, designed for use in hotel rooms and offices, were listed as belonging to the sport director of the Uruguayan Soccer Association, Osvaldo Gimenez.

Gimenez said Thursday night that the 16 refrigerators were a gift from the Korean appliance manufacturer Samsung, in whose sports complex

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### TODAY'S MATCHES

<b>Sweden vs Senegal</b> Venue: Oita Time: 12:30 pm	<b>Spain vs Rep of Ireland</b> Venue: Suwon Time: 5:30 pm
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