



PHOTO: INTERNET

**JUST WENT FOR A RIDE!** Superstar Ronaldo gets down from a car at his Saitama hotel after going through some medical tests at a nearby clinic on June 22.

## Ronaldo recovering

AFP, Saitama

Brazilian star striker Ronaldo could be in line to face Turkey in Wednesday's World Cup semi-final as he is making good progress with a thigh strain, team doctor Jose Luis Runco said Sunday.

Ronco had Saturday rated the Inter Milan star, who has netted five goals in five games in the tournament to date, as highly doubtful for the match after he went off in Friday's 2-1 quarter-final win over England with what the player said felt like "muscular fatigue" in his left thigh.

Brazil are already without emerging midfielder star Ronaldinho, who is suspended for the Turkish match and so are keeping their fingers crossed that Ronaldo does not suffer the kind of injury nightmare he did four years ago at France 98, when he had a fit before the final.

He has spent much of the intervening period battling a succession of knee injuries.

Doctor Runco said the 25-year-old "has responded well to treatment".

He added: "Things are all going well. He should be able to return to training tomorrow and, in theory, he will play."

## Row-blowing referees

AFP, Seoul

He may have been generally wrong about 1984 - then again there was no World Cup that year - but otherwise George Orwell was as spot on as your average penalty taker when the author said sport "is war minus the shooting."

The hooligan count may be down - and on the terraces it has been the friendly World Cup.

But for all the fraternisation, plenty of fire and brimstone is still raining down at the tournament and the conspiracy theorists have long decided who is to blame.

It's all the referees' fault.

Everything started with South Korea's win over Portugal on June 14, when the Portuguese had Joao Pinto and Beto dismissed in a 1-0 defeat.

Then, in Korea's second-round win over Italy, the Italians had Francesco Totti red-carded for an alleged dive after an earlier yellow card.

Throw in a couple of controversially disallowed goals for Spain in

Saturday's quarter-final, with the Koreans once more the benefactors, and you have the conspiracy theorists rubbing their hands.

You also have an almighty diplomatic row.

The anguished cries from both Italy and Spain have only stoked up the atmosphere.

Ecuadorian referee Byron Moreno became a hate figure overnight throughout Italy for sending off Totti - and the headlines afterwards ensured he'll not be taking many holidays there in the near future.

"Ecuadorian referee swept up in accusations: Anger of the Azzurri against Moreno," roared Gazzetta dello Sport.

"Italy feels cheated," the sports daily added.

Some reactions were even stronger.

"An indecent and scandalous referee! It seemed like they got around a table and decided in advance to throw us out." That view came from the Italian government, no less.

Italian broadcaster RAI even

threatened to take legal action for financial damages against world football body FIFA.

Italians fired off more than 400,000 e-mails to berate FIFA, whose spokesman Keith Cooper insisted that refereeing "inaccuracies have been kept to a minimum," despite renewed fury from the Spanish.

"We've had quite a large number of e-mails from Spain - but not so severe as in the case of Italy," Cooper said Sunday.

Maybe the Spaniards were simply in too great a state of shock to switch on their computers.

Cooper conceded on Sunday that the furor would take time to die down.

"Emotions have bubbled over a bit," he said in one of the understated statements of the tournament.

"The game whips up passions. Passions run deep and excesses c a n

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



PHOTO: AFP

**HATS OFF TO THE REAL MAGICIAN:** Senegal coach Bruno Metsu (L) being patted by his Turkey counterpart Senol Gunes after the quarterfinal at Osaka on June 22.

## Lions never die

AFP, Osaka

Senegal's squad begun the journey home on Sunday with their heads held high after matching the best ever performance by an African side.

The Senegalese can expect a joyous welcome when they get back to Dakar, the capital of the West African state, but first came a long-planned friendly match in Taiwan.

With highly-rated Cameroon and Nigeria, as well as South Africa and Tunisia all crashing out at the group stage, Bruno Metsu's largely French-based players were left alone to defend the continent's honour in the knockout stage - a task of no little importance given the

continent's aspirations to host the tournament in 2010.

A campaign that started with a bang in the form of a victory over the defending champions France, ended on Saturday night at the hands of a well-organised and talented Turkish side.

The dream of becoming the first African side to reach the last four of the World Cup was shattered by Ihan Mansiz's golden goal four minutes into extra time.

But there were few regrets, either among the Senegal squad or back home.

Metsu, who looks set for a big-money move to Turkish club Gaziantep, said he was proud of the

way his players acquitted themselves in Senegal's first World Cup appearance.

"They performed heroically but we came up against a very good Turkish side and perhaps we did run out of steam a little," Metsu said.

"But we can be proud of what we have achieved. We have come here and shown that we were capable of upsetting the hierarchy of world football. It gives us a lot of hope for the future and the development of football in our country and in Africa."

For Senegal, the next goal is to win the next African Nations Cup in Tunisia in 2004. Metsu took the

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

## One-match off

AFP, Yokohama

Brazil's new midfielder star Ronaldinho got the news he wanted on Sunday when FIFA confirmed a one-match ban only for his red card against England meaning he could play in the World Cup final.

The red card he received for crunching his studs into England's Danny Mills shin in the 2-1 quarter-final win on Friday brought an automatic ban for the semi-final against Turkey in Saitama, Japan, on Wednesday.

But the 22-year-old Paris St Germain player had an agonising

wait to see if the FIFA Disciplinary Committee would exercise its right to upgrade it to two matches which would have sidelined him for the final should Brazil go through.

But FIFA announced early in the day that the sanction would remain at just one match.

The 22-year-old Paris Saint Germain attacker turned the quarter-final against England on its head with two pieces of pure magic either side of half-time.

The first involved a Maradona-

SEE PAGE 14 COL 6

## Terrific, is not it?

AFP/AP, Istanbul, Ankara

Turkish football fans exploded in riotous celebrations - with fireworks, music and even gunfire, which caused a number of casualties - as they poured into the streets of their country's main cities to celebrate their team's victory in the World Cup quarter-final on Saturday.

"It's simply wonderful!" screamed one fan, a 40-year-old taxi driver named Omer who had stopped his cab in the middle of a busy Istanbul street to listen to the match on the radio.

"We're in the semi-finals!" he shouted, still apparently finding it hard to believe the good news.

Turkey beat Senegal 1-0 after scoring a golden goal. They now go on to play Brazil in Saitama, Japan, on Wednesday for a place in the World Cup final on their first appearance in the tournament for 48 years.

However, despite warnings from Turkish authorities before the game that people with dangerous health conditions should take it easy in the event of victory, one man failed to

SEE PAGE 14 COL 6



PHOTO: INTERNET

**SAS STYLE:** A Turkish kid shows his love for shaven-headed star Hasan Sas at Istanbul on June 22.

## Unlucky bets

AFP, London

Anyone who bet on a Brazil-Turkey, Germany-South Korea semifinal line-up at the World Cup finals would have walked away with 1,000 times their wager, British bookmakers said.

The William Hill betting agency said the unlikely quartet were on offer at 1000/1 before the finals got underway on May 31.

Apparently no-one was so inspired.

Now that they are there, Brazil are strong favourites to lift the trophy at 8/13 with Ladbrokes, Germany are at 3/1, South Korea at 6/1 and Turkey at 8/1.

The semifinal lineup has Germany playing South Korea at Seoul on Tuesday and Brazil taking on Turkey at Saitama, Japan the following day.

## Losers' home coming

REUTERS/AFP, London

England's World Cup team flew back from Japan into Heathrow airport, dodging hundreds of waiting fans and failing to talk to reporters.

After a 12-hour flight, the team merely posed briefly for photographers on the steps of their Boeing 777 after it drew to a halt away from terminal buildings.

Airport workers cheered and waved red-and-white St George's flags as the team, led by coach Sven-Goran Eriksson and captain David Beckham made their way to five waiting buses on the tarmac.

Beckham grinned at the crowd and even goalkeeper David Seaman, whose second-half error sealed England's fate in the 2-1 defeat by Brazil on Friday, managed a smile.

Striker Michael Owen admitted he risked injury to play in the crucial quarterfinal against Brazil even though he was not fit.

Owen opened the scoring for England after pouncing on a defensive error early in the first half before Brazil struck back through Rivaldo and Ronaldinho.

The Liverpool forward seemed

out of sorts in the second half as England failed to capitalise on a one-man advantage following the sending-off of Ronaldinho for a challenge on defender Danny Mills.

Owen explained his failure to make an impact for Sven-Goran Eriksson's men - he had been receiving treatment on a groin "niggle" for 11 hours a day prior to Friday's clash.

"I didn't train all week, except for the day before the Brazil game," Owens said.

"I had treatment every day - for 11 hours a day. When it first happened it

didn't feel like a bad injury. But then the next day it just went tight," he told the News of the World.

"There was nothing torn. It was just a niggle but I could feel it as I went out to play against Brazil."

"I could run but I couldn't go flat-out. But it was a game I didn't want to miss. It's not every day you are able to face Brazil in the quarterfinals of the World Cup."

Goalkeeper David Seaman was

SEE PAGE 14 COL 6



PHOTO: AFP

**I COULD HAVE BEEN KNIGHTED!** England coach Sven Goran Eriksson has lost in his thoughts in the team bus at London's Heathrow Airport on June yesterday.

### CUP CORNER

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's craze about England captain David Beckham reached new heights Sunday when the mayor of a remote town said he wants to erect a bronze statue of the star to promote the local football stadium.

"I want to place bronze statues of Beckham and others to promote the town's football practice field, which was praised by England," said Wasaburo Kashiwagi, mayor of Tsuna, England's World Cup base until last Friday's loss to Brazil in the quarter-finals. "The wholehearted England performances fascinated the entire town. The town was introduced to the entire world," Jiji Press reported Kashiwagi as saying.

During his stay in Japan, Beckham was given the full superstar treatment. Hundreds of young women constantly chased after him while fashion-conscious men copied his bleached mohican hairstyle.

Japanese television shows also treated him as befits a major celebrity. Kashiwagi is hoping to benefit from the media hype about Beckham to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

### NO MATCHES TODAY

Semifinals start from June 25