



The festivity called World Cup finals that started at the Soccer City in Johannesburg with Colombian singer Shakira Waka Waka-ing the world in a swing on June 11, culminated exactly after a month at the same place with Spain captain Iker Casillas receiving the 18 carat gold trophy from FIFA president Sepp Blatter and South Africa President Jacob Zuma. The month-long tournament saw a lot, lot of twists and turns as happened with champions like Italy and

France bowing out in the first round. Heavyweights like Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Wayne Rooney came in with a load of expectations, but only the Portuguese managed to get on the scorers' list. The World Cup had its fair share of controversy too as England failed to get a goal against eventual semifinalists Germany recorded. Brazil playmaker Kaka was shown a red card for no apparent good reason. Purists may call Luis Suarez's

goalkeeping a non-footballing act, but his ploy brought Uruguay the good. Winners Spain started with a defeat to Switzerland and Casillas's girlfriend was blamed, because she was allegedly standing behind the net. Maradona's busyness in the tactical area seemed more exciting to the cameramen. Although South Africa winger Siphiwe Tshabalala got the score-sheet rolling, it was Gonzalo Higuain who slammed the only hat-trick. Five goals each to David Villa,

Thomas Mueller, Wesley Sneijder and Diego Forlan earned them plaudits and Maicon's emotion was acceptable as he got Brazil on the score-sheet, but there was no answer to what England keeper Robert Green did. Fans out of South Africa did enjoy their time as they did in the Rainbow Nation. Striker Asamoah Gyan was instrumental in taking Ghana into the quarters, but again it was him who hit the American crossbar to end Africa's presence. Miroslav Klose

gave Ronaldo a scare, but the Brazilian legend will survive some more time. Vintage forward Landon Donovan starred for an ever-fighting USA side. And finally the much-loved father of post-apartheid South Africa Nelson Mandela agreed to greet the fans at the Soccer City. But it was none other than Paul the octopus who won all his predictions, and was rightly presented with his own trophy at his aquarium in Oberhausen in Germany.

