

Can BARÇA

SPORT

The Daily Star

Gazza gets a club!

AFP, Beijing

Former England star Paul Gascoigne has joined the team bottom of China's Second Division, saying the chance to become a player-coach was too good to pass up.

Gascoigne suggested a diet of Chinese delicacies would help him adapt to life with B-league Gansu Tianma in Lanzhou, a largely Muslim industrial city on the fringes of the northwest desert

"I've tried everything. I've tried duck's head, I've tried chicken's head, chicken's feet, bats and everything," Gascoigne said. "And hopefully if I keep that up I'll be

The 35-year-old who arrived in China earlier this month hoping to revive his career, said he passed up an offer to stay with First Division side Liaoning Bodao, which expressed concerns about his fitness, to coach as well

said

Zhong said Gascoigne was picked because he is a real professional although they felt he was

"He has a good sense of the Football rience, especially in the big matches," Zhong said. "We think he could play a key role in the team We'd like him to be the spiritual AFP, London leader of the team.'

Gascoigne has been without a club since being released by English First Division side Burnley at the end of last season.

Capped 57 times by England, Gascoigne had spells with English Premiership sides Newcastle, Tottenham, Everton and Middlesbrough, Scottish giants Glasgow Rangers and Rome side Lazio during a 15-year career.

Gascoigne also had a try-out with Major League Soccer side DC United in Washington last July but the club decided not to take him on. Gascoigne, who made his name

when England reached the World Cup semi-finals in 1990, admitted in 2001 he is a recovering alcoholic.

He came to China earlier this month in the hope of reviving his fading career and trained with First Division side Liaoning Bodao, but was described in the press as weak and clumsy.

Refs on the

Football wins the war

Football

AFP, Arbil, Iraq

Despite the terrible suffering the Baghdad regime has inflcited on Iraqi Kurds, whose northern enclave has been off limits to it since 1991, the two sides still come Kurdish team, financed by the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), together amicably for a favorite pastime: football. one of two parties controlling northern Iraq, pays well. Arab striker

When it comes to national competitions, Iraqi and Kurdish-run teams leave politics on the touchlines.

The three main Kurdish teams in northern Iraq have kept playing through turbulent times, brushing up their skills against Iragi football teams, most of which are linked to state institutions.

Last Sunday, in the Kurdish city of Arbil, the Hawler club kicked off a match against Baghdad's Jawive. which belongs to the Iragi air force. Despite the preparations for a

possible devastating US-led war against Irag, and fears here that Baghdad could retaliate by launching an offensive against the Kurds as it did in 1991, the match drew some 20,000 spectators.

policemen "The international crisis has nothing to do with all this," said to Kurdistan in early January, sports Jawive's deputy coach Saadi Toma. and football are about all that "If the war started today, we would remain of their relations." said Jalal still have played."

Premiership rivals Manchester

United and Arsenal will clash at Old

Trafford in an FA Cup fifth round

two most successful English clubs

United, winners of the trophy a record 10 times, will meet the hold-

ers and Double winners, on

February 15 or 16. They beat the Gunners 2-0 at Old Trafford in the

The two sides last met in the

competition when Ryan Giggs

1999 semi-final replay at Villa Park

after Danish keeper Peter

Schmeichel had saved Dennis

triumph of English championship,

United marched on to a Treble

Previous to that the clubs had

played out an amazing climax to the

1979 final. That day United, 2-0

down with five minutes left, drew level only for Alan Sunderland to

break their hearts with a last-gasp

Arsenal's French international

midfielder Robert Pires has

revealed how his mother Mabe

saved his career after partying and

born Mabel had not shaped his

my career, helping me avoid the

path my uncle Jose Fernandez

Monday's Evening Standard news-

37 Class

room

38 Antiknock

40 Scratched

fluid

(out)

42 "Crouch-

ing Tiger,

Hidden

Dragon

director

a board

in a way

43 Forgoes

49 Baltic

50 Diner

Sea

feeder

52 Lawless

53 Nervous

employee

Solution time: 25 mins.

furniture

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

DOWN

2 Com-

Unruly

bunch

motion

3 Central

4 Haphaz

ardly

why not?"

8 Kids' ca

game

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10 Bread

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places

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order

Average

-5 So

6 "Sure,

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"She had a decisive influence on

scored a sensational winner in a

Monday's draw pits together the

blockbuster next month.

Premiership this season.

Bergkamp's penalty.

FA Cup and European Cup.

Football

AFP, London

grade

career

paper.

ACROSS

1 One of

Bears

5 Glitch in

9 Move up

print

12 Valhalla

VIP

better

bravo

15 Protector

Ruby

yourself!" 19 City

bigwig

leade

erites

24 Bleach-

25 Catcall?

26 Pleases

30 Remnan

31 Type of

hat

32 Acapulco

33 Designed

particular

driver Yar

borough

gold

in a

way

35 Jet forth

36 Race-car

18 "Stifle

17 Sandra or 48 Pouch

21 Monastery 51 Wapiti

14 Bullring

13 Get

the Three

and down

of the past decade.

No political slogans could be Pareshan, an artist and football-

heard from the stands of the lover in the crowd Francois Hariri stadium, named But football in Iraq was not after an assassinated Iraqi Kurdish always this friendly. In the late 1980s, when the leader, where the crowd followed Baghdad regime launched a violent

the match excitedly. Surprisingly the Hawler club has anti-Kurdish campaign, games in a dozen Arab players in its ranks, Iragi Kurdistan led to clashes when and its trainer Hakim Shakir, is also the Kurds accused referees of an Arab. This is probably because the

Hamed Qasim gets 5,000 dollars a

year, said team official Abdullah

run team makes about 200 dollars a

month, he added. Even so, some

Kurdish athletes play for Iraqi

match unfolds peacefully. When te

final whistle goes Jawiye, in fourth

place in the league, have defeated

for a picture between two Kurdish

"Since Iraq cut the petrol supply

Ahmad Khazair, who poached

their ninth-placed opponents 2-1.

On the bare, uneven pitch, the

The average player on an Iraqi-

Majid.

ational teams.

ny other"

City

Rochdale

Watford

Fulham v Burnley

Stoke City v Chelsea

against Leeds United.

Gillingham respectively.

Sheffield United v Walsall

favoring Iraqi Arab teams. For several years after the Gulf War, when the United Nations decided Iraqi Kurdistan was offlimits to Baghdad, Iraqi teams stopped coming to Kurdistan, but the Kurds continued to take part in national competitions by sending their teams south.

Today three Kurdish clubs, Hawler, Dohuk and Zakho compete against 17 other Iraqi teams, among them Shurta, the police force team, and Talaba, the students' team

Jawiye is among the top teams. was the Iraqi air force which bombed the Kurdish town of Halabja in 1988 with chemical gases in an attack which killed some 5,000 civilians

the first goal after a lapse in the Kurdish defense, is worried about a The town at the time had fallen US attack, but this was a "match like under the control of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), backed Later he could be seen posing by Iran, but was then bombed into

submission by Saddam. The PUK are the second main party controlling northern Iraq.

As good as it gets winner for the Gunners. Last year's losing finalists Chelsea were given a tricky away draw against Division One Stoke

FIFTH ROUND DRAW

Crystal Palace or Liverpool

Gillingham or Leeds United

Southampton or Millwall v Norwich

Wolverhampton Wanderers v

Blackburn Rovers or Sunderland v

The other big tie of the round

The pair will clash at Anfield if

could figure 2001 winners Liverpool

they come through home replays

against Crystal Palace and

Giant-killers Rochdale, conquer-

ors of Coventry on Saturday, have a

trip to Molineux to face Wolves as

Manchester United v Arsenal

Division One, while League Cup semi-finalists Sheffield United face fellow Division One outfit Walsall. The winners of the replay

between Millwall and Southampton will host Norwich in the last 16. And Watford must travel to the winner of the replay between Sunderland and Blackburn.

Former Manchester United defender Gary Pallister, who made the draw with Bryan Robson, made his former club slight favourites to beatArsenal.

"I'm sure both clubs will be delighted with the draw and I'm sure it will be a terrific game. Manchester United have home advantage but either way it's going to be one hell of a game," he told the BBC.

Robson said United would have been pleased with the home draw.

"You alwavs look to get a home draw and I'm sure United will be happy with that. If you are going to win the competition you have to beat

the best," he said. Manchester United are now 3-1 favourites with Corals to win The FA Cup, with Chelsea 7-2 second favourites, Arsenal 9-2 and Liverpool 5-1.

heir reward. Fulham will host Burnley of

European competition. Both those records are in clear danger this season

REUTERS, Barcelona

Football

Dutch coach Louis van Gaal agreed to leave Barcelona on Tuesday, just eight months into his second spell in charge at the Nou Camp.

Van Gaal, who resigned as Barcelona coach in 2000 after three fraught seasons, said he had decided to move on again because of his side's poor results in the Spanish league

"After reflecting on the recent performances of the team and speaking with (Barcelona) president Joan Gaspart we have decided that it is in the best interests of the club that we go our separate ways," van Gaal told reporters.

"At this time, the atmosphere surrounding the club is having more effect on the team than I am, and for that reason I have changed my mind and decided to leave because I don't want to damage Barcelona."

The club's directors decided late on Monday to negotiate an amicable departure for the former Dutch national team coach after a 2-0 defeat at Celta Vigo left Barcelona 12th in the First Division, just three points above the relegation zone and heading for their worst-ever league finish.

In complete contrast, Barcelona's European form was brilliant with van Gaal steering them to a record-equalling 10 successive victories in the Champions League. He leaves them joint top of second phase Group A with Inter Milan.

Van Gaal leaves

Cup.

expires in June 2004.

"Barcelona Football Club is more important than any individual," said van Gaal. "Despite the fact that the players were with me and that I feel I am the most appropriate coach to take the team forward, perhaps it is

better for me to leave. Gaspart highlighted van Gaal's "professionalism and honesty" and insisted that he had made the right decision in bringing the the Dutchman back to the club in May. "I don't regret what I did last

summer and I am certain that if I had the chance I would do the same Gaspart said that the club's sporting director Carles Rexach. who coached Barcelona last season, would analyse the situation and decide who would succeed van Gaal until the end of the season. Rexach himself is favourite to take over as coach, at least on a caretaker basis. Van Gaal was an unpopular figure among Barcelona fans and news of his return in May 2002 came

Premiership preview

as a huge surprise, particularly as in

Coach Louis van Gaal attends a normal training session of Barcelona club on January 27. Hours later Van Gaal resigned from his position.

league titles in the first two seasons

"I am really upset that as a coach I haven't lived up to the expectations of the Barcelona fans...but I would like to appeal once again to everyone involved with the club, especially the media, to lend their sup-

negotiated departure will allow Barcelona to save at least part of an estimated six million euros (\$6.48 million) owed to the Dutchman for the remainder of his contract which

the interim his Netherlands team had failed to qualify for the 2002 Van Gaal steered Barcelona to World Cup finals

of his original three-year spell from 1997 to 2000 and also landed one King's Cup and a European Super

port to whoever is the next coach."

Van Gaal's decision to accept a

he was unconvinced about the Argentine's suitability for the Spanish game

Van Gaal also signed Spanish midfielder Gaizka Mendieta on Ioan from Lazio and German goalkeeper Robert Enke but none of the three new arrivals was able to hold down a place in the first team.

One of his first decisions on

returning to Barcelona was to let

Rivaldo go on a free transfer to AC

Milan, thus avoiding a repeat of the

damaging spat between the pair

Roman Riquelme as Rivaldo's

replacement, however, even though

He accepted the arrival of Juan

during his first spell in charge.

The first doubts about the quality available to van Gaal second time around arose in the fourth game of the season, when a talented young Real Betis side dealt them a humili-

ating 3-0 defeat. The club continued to slip down the First Division standings but van Gaal's hand was strengthened by the team's excellent European form.

A 3-0 defeat at home to Sevilla in December had van Gaal against the ropes but the Dutchman was saved by a 4-0 win away to Real Mallorca in the next game.

Intercontinental Cup Barcelona followed that up with Winner (1995), finalist (1996) ctory over Recreativo Huelva and European Super Cup

AFP, Barcelona Louis van Gaal factfile after it was announced on Monday he was set

VAN GAAL FACTS

VVVV

to leave his post as Barcelona manager pending a negotiated settlement for his departure: Louis van Gaal

Nationality: Dutch Date of birth: August 8 1951 Place of birth: Amsterdam

PLAYING CAREER

Position: Striker

Clubs: De Meer (amateur side, till 1971), Ajax (1971-73), AZ Alkmaar (1973-75), FC Antwerp (Bel/1973 -February 1978), Telstar Beverwijk (Feb - June 1978), Sparta Rotterdam (1978-86), AZ 67 Alkmaar (August - November 1986)

COACHING CAREER

Clubs: AZ 67 Alkmaar (November 1986 - November 1987), Ajax (1988-91, youth coach team and then assistant coach), Ajax (1991-97), Barcelona (1997-2000) Dutch national coach (2000-2002), Barcelona (Since 2002)

HONOURS AS COACH **Champions League**

Dutch championships

UEFACup

Ninner (1992)

Winner (1995)

1998, 1999)

Winner (1995), finalist (1996)

flying."

"I've been missing football and it's a big opportunity for me," he

"I had the opportunity to be player-coach at this team. There's some young players. The manager speaks good English and some of the players do. It's an opportunity to be player-coach and enjoy both

sides of the football." Gascoigne said he had signed a nine-month contract while Gansu Tianma general manager Zhong

dollars, was renewable.

Bohong said the one-year contract, reported to be for 653,000 US FA Cup

physically out-of-shape. game. He has good skills and expe-

Barcelona have never finished lower than 12th in the Spanish league and that was back in 1942.

Since then, they have always finished in the top half of the table and have never failed to qualify for

Emirates makes history

AFP, Dubai

Dubai's Emirates airline signed up Tuesday to pay about 30 million dollars to become an official partner for the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

The deal is part of efforts by the booming government-owned company to develop into a global brand, said chairman Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed al-Maktoum

"This is the first time there has been an airline as an official partner and ... the first time a Middle East company has been an official partner," the sheikh added at a press conference.

Emirates signed the deal with FIFA vice president Jack Warner in the presence of German football legend Franz Beckenbauer, who heads the 2006 World Cup Organising Committee

The flag carrier for Dubai's ambition to become the Gulf's leading transport and tourist hub already sponsors London's Chelsea football club, Home United in Singapore and the Asian Football Confederation.

It is also a partner for the FIFA world Youth Championship to be held in the United Arab Emirates in March and supports other events from the Dubai World Cup, the world's richest horse race, to rugby sevens and Dubai's Desert Classic PGA golf.

The airline was launched in 1985 and serves 64 cities in a rapidly expanding network. It has 58 aircraft on order to bring its fleet to more than 100 by the end of the decade.

a draw at Malaga only for a 4-2 home defeat by defending champions Valencia to put the pressure right back on the coach.

miraculous escape and Sunday's bad result against Celta Vigo turned out to be van Gaal's final game in charge. (\$1=.9255 Euro)

Dutch Super Cups This time there was to be no

Spanish Cup Winner (1998) Coach of the year Dutch coach of the year (1996) backfoot AFP, Rome

Winner (1994, 1995, 1996) Italian referee Fiorenzo Treossi is to Winner (1993, 1994, 1995) be suspended for his performance Spanish championships in last weekend's Serie A match between bottom club Como and AS Roma, according to media reports here Tuesday.

The 43-year-old match official sent off Roma defender Traianos Dellas for an innocuous challenge on striker Benito Carbone and failed to spot a handball offence by Como's Cristian Stellini in the penalty area

Roma lost Saturday night's match 2-0 to give Como their first victory since being promoted from Serie B with both goals being scored after Dellas' dismissal to.

On Friday referees' chief Paolo Pairetto suspended Treossi's work colleagues Alfredo Trentalange and Paolo Bertini for similar mistakes. Bertini was in charge of

Perugia's 4-1 thrashing of title contenders Inter in Umbria on January 19 where two of his errors led to the home side taking a twogoal lead.

First he awarded a penalty to the home side after claiming Ivan Cordoba had prevented a header from crossing the line by using his hand, but television replays showed the ball had struck the Colombian's thigh

Treossi's second mistake was to miss Greek striker Zizis Vryzas diverting a cross into the net with his fist rather than his head to doubled Perugia's advantage. Trentalange meanwhile was

banned for sending-off Roma midfielder Emerson after just 20 minutes against Atalanta the same afternoon. The decision seemed harsh as

Emerson's challenges, which earned him two yellow cards, were no worse than some of the tackles that went unpunished earlier in the match.

Trentelange then dismissed Roma coach Fabio Capello for protesting from the dug out. After the match, which Roma lost 2-1. Capello insisted he had not opened his mouth.

Media reports suggest Trentalange could miss six matches and Bertini four

Pires salutes Mom

constant reminder of the sacrifices that were necessary.

"He'd had lots of fun when he was younger. He'd touched his dream, but it ended up passing him

by. "Jose still plays now, but it's only factory, team for the steelworks factory team where he works.

"I almost went the same way between the ages of 18 and 20.

staying out late in his teens almost destroyed his hopes of making the start to crave freedom, you discover girls, you go clubbing and get in at Pires said his journey from four of five in the morning and then hopeful at French club Stade de you have to play the next afternoon. Reims to English Footballer of the "That was the path Jose took Year honours last season might and there was no one there to hold never had taken place if Spanish

him back. Thanks to my mother, I didn't go down that road."

Pires, who turns 30 on Wednesday, said his mother was a tough woman. "She was hard on me, but I thank

took." Pires said in extracts from his her for that now. She'd keep asking new autobiography, serialised in me, 'What do you want? I get the impression you don't actually want to be a professional footballer. Do Jose was a good example of you want to end up like your uncle?'. how I didn't want to end up and a

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piece

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45 Staff

47

Sedgwick

hindrance

31 Cylindri-

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37

16 Eviscerate 38 Other-

BEF

"I would sav to her. 'Mum. just eave me alone. I'm fed up with you looking over my shoulder all the time. Liust want to be who I am."

He recalled how he once came nome from training and announced he was giving up football.

"My mother was so livid she couldn't even bring herself to hit me.

'You're no better than a good for nothing,' she screamed. "At that age you and your mates "From now on you're on you

own. I can't be bothered with you.' Pires said that was the turning point in his career and he began to apply himself to his training

He moved to Metz and then on to Marseille before Arsenal's French manager Arsene Wenger brought him to Highbury in 2000 in an eight million pound (13 million dollar) move after Pires set up the winning golden goal for David Trezeguet in rance's Euro 2000 triumph over

Mabel and his Portuguese father Antonio now come to England as often as possible to see their son play at Highbury.

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ANYE-LNBM YMHLFHFL ADNBXHRF XYRETAMJ FMO ERATBMFZNYV: "DRO ZDM ODHJZ ΟΝΙ ORF Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SUPPOSE YOU'RE IN A CAR. BUT THE DRIVER KICKS YOU OUT. HAVE YOU BEEN DE-RIDED?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals W The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Arsene Wenger is urging his Arsenal team to make the most of Manchester United's midweek 'rest' and extend their lead at the top of the table when they travel to Liverpool on Wednesday. Reigning champions Arsenal are

Football

AFP, London

five points clear of second-placed United But Alex Ferguson's men, who

were drawn at home to Arsenal in the fifth round of the FA Cup on Monday, could fall further behind after they managed to get their match scheduled for Tuesday away to Birmingham City postponed until February 4.

> Ferguson, who saw his team thrash Premiership basement boys West Ham 6-0 in the FA Cup fourth round on Sunday, was worried

about his players facing two games in 48 hours Moving the match to this Wednesday was not an option as City's local rivals West Brom were already at home to Charlton and police were concerned about the prospect of two major matches taking place in the Birmingham area on the same night.

Wenger, whose team will go eight points clear if they beat Liverpool, said of United's move: "It gives us an opportunity to extend our lead and we will go there to do that.

"We are in great condition," the Frenchman added, following the FA Cup-holders Arsenal's 5-1 win over non-league Farnborough at

Traditionally, all FA Cup ties were played on Saturday. But the desire of broadcasters to space matches out over the weekend has angered Wenger

"The games should all be played at the same moment if you want a

Wenger eyes gap extension

Highbury on Saturday

regular competition," he explained. When TV rules interfere, that means The FA Cup interferes with the Premier League

"I can see that United have the right to say they don't want to play two big games in 48 hours," Wenger added.

He is set to recall Thierry Henry, David Seaman and Gilberto Silva, all of whom were rested against Farnborough and the Gunners also welcome back England full-back Ashley Cole after a two-game suspension.

But Cole's fellow England defender Martin Keown is banned and Sweden midfielder Fredrik Ljungberg is out with an Achilles injury.

Arsenal have had 24 hours more rest than Liverpool, who could only manage a goalless draw against First Division Crystal Palace in FA Cup tie on Sunday.

That match also saw Liverpool keeper Chris Kirkland sustain a season-ending knee injury after a collision with Palace striker Dele Adebola

Despite their slide down the league - Liverpool are 14 points behind Arsenal in sixth place - they are in the final of the English League Cup and still involved in the FA Cup and UEFACup.

But their French manager, Gerard Houllier, remains worried by his side's attacking play. Liverpool

have only scored eight goals in their last ten matches, and two were from penalties

> "I would like more composure in front of the box," said Houllier.

"We hurry it too often. But they are young. Apart from Sami Hyypia everybody who played against Palace was under the age of 25."

Under-pressure West Ham manager Glenn Roeder must somehow try to lift his side for the visit of Blackburn on Wednesday after their United hammering.

"This is the first time this season could accuse some of my players of not fighting all the way through to the end," said Roeder after the United debacle.

But at least he will have Paolo di Canio, as well as the Italian ace's fellow strikers Frederic Kanoute and the recently signed Les Ferdinand available

Czech defender Tomas Repka has completed a four-game ban and is expected to partner Ian Pearce in a Hammers' rearguard that has eaked 13 goals in their last three matches, with the veteran Nigel Winterburn replacing Scott Minto.

On Tuesday meanwhile, Bolton were scheduled to play Everton, Chelsea were up against Leeds, Middlesbrough were taking on Aston Villa and Sunderland were to meet Southampton.

FIXTURES 1945GMT unless stated) Wednesday: Liverpool v Arsenal 2000GMT), Manchester City v

Blackburn

Fulham, Tottenham v Newcastle,

West Brom v Charlton, West Ham