

Peace on PCB boss' mind

Pakistan A cross border today

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan's new cricket chief Wednesday vowed to forge peace with rivals India by reviving cricketing ties that will bring the two teams face to face early next year.

"Cricket can act as a bridge between Pakistan and India," new Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Shaharyar Khan said in his first press conference.

Shaharyar, 69, a former foreign secretary and ambassador, took over as country's cricket chief last week after the incumbent chairman Tauqir Zia resigned citing personal reasons.

"Indian Premier Atal Behari Vajpayee visited Pakistan after we formed the bridge with our cricket team's tour in 1998," said Shaharyar who served as manager on Pakistan team's last tour to India in 1998-1999.

"Had there been any incident on that tour I suppose the Indian Premier would not have toured Pakistan

"We are happy that India has accepted our offer to tour and we welcome them and hope that with their tour the traditional (cricket) rivalry would grow," said Shaharyar, who is about to publish

Never has winning the toss been more vital than it will be for the first

cricket Test between New Zealand

and Pakistan starting here Friday

with the bowlers on both sides

desperate to have first crack on the

hindered the hopes of ground staff to prepare an ideal pitch, and

despite cloudless skies this week the

strip still holds a green tinge and the

attacks in Test cricket today with

Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad

Sami, and likely backup from the

lanky Shabbir Ahmed and leg-

spinner Danish Kaneria, a point

"This is as good a bowling lineup as there is in world cricket at the

moment," said New Zealand

opener Mark Richardson, who faces

the daunting task of mainting or

"I'm trying to get my head around how hard it's going to be to

Akhtar has 107 wickets from 28

Tests at 25.1, Sami 26 wickets from

improving his Test average of 49.4.

acknowledged by the Black Caps.

Pakistan has one of most potent

Persistent rain in recent weeks

expected green-top wicket.

prospect of early fireworks.

Football

AFP, Hamilton

a book mainly about 1998-1999 India tour titled "Cricket a bridge of peace'

months ago.

countries were broken after New Delhi refused to allow any bilateral cricket following an attack on its parliament in December 2001 which India blamed on Pakistan-

The PCB awaits acceptance from Board of Control for Cricket in India over a proposed itinerary of three Tests and seven one-day games

rounder Shahid Afridi said Thursday he was confident Pakistan A team would win a trination series in India starting next eek, raising his chances of a recall to the national team.

great challenge but we are up to it and I am confident that my side will win the series," Afridi told AFP.

22-29.

Win toss, win the Test?

Westpac Park.

Miandad said.

2001.

Indian government cleared its team's tour to Pakistan for February-March next year as a confidence building measure announced in New Delhi two

the World Cup match. The cricket ties between the

to regain my place in the national team as I am anxiously waiting to play against India on home based militants. ounds," said Afridi.

junior level events agreed upon by arch rivals Pakistan and India during the Asian Cricket Council Meanwhile, discarded allmeeting in London in June this

year as the first step towards reviving stalled cricket ties. SOUAD Shahid Afridi (captain), Imran

"Playing in India would be a Nazir, Salman Butt, Mohammad Hafeez, Naved Latif, Faisal Igbal, Bilal Asad, Abdul Rauf, Khalil Ahmed, Mansoor Amjad, Junaid A 14-member Pakistan A team

with Afridi as captain leaves for India on Friday to face hosts India and Sri Lanka in a three-nation series in Calcutta from December The 23-year-old Afridi was

Pakistan boasts an exceptional

batting line up, including the excit-

ing young pair of Taufeeq Umar and Imran Farhat, but history suggests they will struggle more than New Zealand on the bowlers' track at

"I give ourselves a very, very good chance of bowling them out cheaply

with our bowling attack," said

Richardson, who scored a century

against Pakistan here in March

bowling attack, but as long as we can

just get enough runs to keep our

Miandad said it was a definite bowl-

first wicket, he was not too con-

cerned about his young openers should Inzamam ul Haq lose the

noses in front we can win it.

"I can't see us dominating their

While Pakistan coach Javed

"If you are good there is no prob-

"I have full confidence in my

In the 2001 series, Pakistan were

"Bounce is crucial for these guys,

skittled for 104 and 118 on the same

ground and lost the Test by an

because in Pakistan the ball doesn't

bounce above knee height," bats-

lem. If you are a class cricketer

you've got to show your ability,"

boys the way they are playing.'

Brazilian attacking midfielder Gomez Oliveira, who joined the dumped after a poor run in Pakistan's dismal first round exit club just two weeks ago, made an instant impact heading his team om this year's World Cup. He was then banned from a infront in the 26th minute after four-nation event in Sharjah in April after he was charged with

Zia, Saeed Bin Nisar, Mohammad

in 2000 and the Wasim Akram

Waqar Younis Pakistan side in 1993

obvious affection for the ground

Many New Zealanders have an

However, in total Tests between

the two countries the figures are

overwhelmingly in favour of

Irshad, Aminur Rehman.

Coach: Naved Anjum.

Manager: Azhar Zaidi.

apiece.

Pakistan.

TEAMS

were drawn.

there were three draws.

Daryl Tuffey, Ian Butler.

veteran Bangladesh international Alfaz Ahmed had done the spade abusing India's Virendar Sehwag in work (1-0). Liton doubled the margin with a powerful shot from Afridi was not considered for the the top of the box in the 43rd minute after the ball fell to him from a national team and instead played provincial cricket in South Africa. Monwar corner (2-0).

FROM PAGE 13

Arambagh

Immidiately after the start of the second half, Alfaz showed his class "This would be a ladder for me when he broke through the Arambagh defence from the left and then shot from an acute angle with his left foot to find the far The A series is the last of three corner of the net (3-0).

Midfielder Iqbal made it 4-0 in the 65th minute with a spectacular side volley from 25-yards while substitute Topu completed the rout by tapping in a Monwar pass just before the long whistle (5-0). Yellow cards: Mustafa, Asad,

Abil (Arambagh) and Iqbal (Brothers Union).

Brothers Union: Biplab, Rajani, Sujon, Nazrul, Parvez Babu (Liton Khan), Liton, Abul (Rikto), Alfaz, Oliveira (Topu), Monwar and Igbal.

Aramabagh KS: Tareq, Khaled, Shamsher (Zahed/Sohel), Anupom, Ashraful, Mustafa, Arman, Asad, Chrest, Walib and Abil (Johnny).

Referee: Tajul Islam. **ICC working** FROM PAGE 13

Akhtar and England pace man James Kirtley have all undergone extensive video analysis to have their actions cleared in the past.

The Sri Lanka spinner, who had taken 478 Test wickets going into the current match against England, has recently developed a delivery that goes the other way from his normal off-spinner.

Richardson emphasised that no players could be cleared for life as actions may change over time.

REUTERS, London

Points

903

695

692

676

668

652

Struggling Aston Villa pulled off a shock 2-1 victory over big-spending Chelsea on Wednesday to reach the semi-finals of the League Cup.

"Damaging the pitch is an immature act... It can not be justified when the Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee is taking the initia-

Lara back

PAKISTAN (from): Inzamam-ul-Bowler Haq (captain), Taufeeq Umar, Muralitharan

Muktis redfaced | Spanish King's Cup **Mallorca stunned** Federation Cup, Brothers' national stars were out to set the records straight and totally dominated

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Sport

Second division Levante beat King's Cup holders Real Mallorca 2-0 to provide the biggest upset of the second round on Wednesday.

David Aganzo scored both goals for promotion-chasing Levante, turning in a cross from Felix Ettien after 14 minutes and adding a second 12 minutes from time after beating Javier Olaizola and slip-ping a shot past keeper Miki.

Racing Santander followed Mallorca out of the competition. They went down 3-2 on penalties at second division Eibar after the match had finished goalless over 120 minutes, but there were no further shocks in Wednesday action.

Barcelona reached the last 16 with a convincing 4-0 win away to Ciudad de Murcia, Valencia eased to a 2-0 win at home to fellow first division side Murcia and Real Betis came from behind to beat Cordoba 3-1, with Dani claiming two of the

Barca have not had much luck in the Cup in recent seasons but they took a first-half lead against Ciudad de Murcia through Javier Saviola and ran away with the game following the introduction of substitute Marc Overmars in the second half.

The Dutch winger scored an outstanding solo goal to make it 2-0 on 74 minutes and produced another precise shot for the third four minutes from time.

Football

English League Cup



PHOTO: AFP Barcelona's Brazilian supersta Brazilian superstar Ronaldinho celebtrates his goal against Murcia with a dance at Murcia on December 17.

With a minute left on the clock, Ronaldinho won and converted a penalty to put a satisfying gloss on the scoreline

The defeats for Mallorca, Racing Santander and Murcia brought the total of first division casualties in the second round to five, following defeats for Real Sociedad and Espanyol among four games

Villa add to Blues' blues

League honours.

Park.

cied Bolton.

bigheart.

placed Chelsea challenging for

premier league and Champions

Chelsea's squad has been

assembled at a cost of 111 million pounds (\$194.7 million) since the

July takeover by Russian billionaire

Roman Abramovich and between the starting XI and the substitutes,

coach Claudio Ranieri fielded

virtually all his best players at Villa

that Wednesday's setback followed Saturday's first home league defeat

of the season, a 2-1 loss to unfan-

More worrying for Chelsea is

"In this period, everything is

played on Tuesday. Osasuna were set to become the sixth side from the top flight to go out but they scored twice in the last two minutes to come from behind

and beat Cadiz 2-1. Real Madrid will make the short trip to play Leganes on Thursday in the final tie of the round

Angel seized possession, dribbled

past John Terry and smacked a

the second round tie. Inspired by playmaker Eugenio 30th minute when striker Simone Pepe headed Corini's cross past

Shorn of several first team regulars including Francesco Totti, Roma lacked ideas and were fortunate to equalise in the 69th minute took a deflection and ended in the back of the net.

swerving shot past keeper Neil Sullivan. Substitute Hernan Eleven minutes later striker Crespo teed up Chelsea's equaliser, knocking the ball back Marco Delvecchio made it 2-1 when he shook off his marker to for the inrushing Cole to steer past keeper Thomas Sorensen. slot home a low cross from close range.

> between AC Milan and Sampdoria, which European champions Milan lead 1-0 after the first leg.

saved a Terry header and Cole volleyed into the side-netting. Darren Anderton put Spurs in Lazio and Parma set up a quarfront after just 62 seconds when Boro failed to clear a cross, only for Michael Ricketts to level four minutes from time.

PHOTO: AFP

going wrong for us," Ranieri told Sky Sports television. "We tried to level at 4-4 in the shootout, French win, but Villa played better than us defender Franck Queudrue conand deserved to win, honestly." verted Boro's winning penalty after "When we drew level I was sure we would win. But Villa had a very Spurs' Argentine defender Mauricio Taricco hit the post. Boro also beat Everton 5-4 on penalties **at doping trial** also beat Everton 5-4 on penalties in the previous round. **REUTERS,** *Turin*

All parties then assembled at the stadium in Bolton to start proceed-

ings, with Barrow due to outline the

likely to centre around whether Ferdinand failed to take the test

because he forgot at the time, or

and will face a strong defence of their

player from United and his legal

using drugs.

team.

managerAlexFerguson.

The Daily Star Italian Cup

Inter thank luck

REUTERS, Rome

A freak own goal by Reggina keeper Emanuele Belardi sent Inter Milan through to the quarter-finals of the Italian Cup on Wednesday.

In the second minute of stoppage time, with the score 1-0 to Reggina, Inter looked to be heading out of the competition on the away goals rule.

But Argentine striker Julio Cruz's long-range drive struck the post, bounced off Belardi's head and rolled into the net to give the visitors an unlikely 1-1 draw on the night and a 3-2 aggregate win.

Reggina midfielder Julio Leon put his team ahead in the 38th minute when he nodded in Gianluca Falsini's cross at the far post.

The home side were then reduced to 10 men after defender Simone Giacchetta committed a second bookable offence, but Inter failed to take advantage of their numerical superiority.

Reggina defended well and nearly made it 2-0 shortly after the interval when striker David Di Michele headed narrowly over the bar, before Inter's late goal provided an agonising finale to the home side's evening.

Inter's quarter-final opponents will be the winner of Thursday's fixture between Bologna and Udinese.

In an earlier match AS Roma moved through to the quarter-finals with a laboured 2-1 win at Serie B side Palermo.

The victory gave the Serie A leaders a 3-1 aggregate success in

Corini, Palermo dominated Roma early on and took the lead in the Roma reserve keeper Andrea Zotti.

when a Damiano Tommasi lob

But McCann rifled in the winner In the last eight Roma will face the winner of Thursday's fixture and Chelsea were twice denied in the dying minutes when Sorensen

ter-final clash by beating Modena and Venezia respectively on aggregate. Parma lost 1-0 at home to Serie B team Venezia but went Deadlocked after extra time and through 2-1 overall.

Ex-Juve stars

In 43 Tests since 1964, Pakistan have won 20, New Zealand six and In the past 10 years Pakistan have won five, New Zealand two, and

NEW ZEALAND: Stephen Fleming tive for normalcy between both countries," he added. (captain), Mark Richardson, Lou

Vincent, Scott Styris, Craig McMillan, Chris Cairns, Jacob Oram, Robbie Hart, Daniel Vettori,

FROM PAGE 13

where Richardson has scored centuries against Pakistan and Bangladesh and averages 72.5, McMillan has a century and two 90s and averages 62.4, Chris Cairns has his two best bowling hauls of seven for 27 against the West Indies and seven för 53 against Bangladesh, and Daryl Tuffey has 15 wickets from his last two Tests here at 8.7

Unsporting FROM PAGE 13

"We condemn the action of the Shiv Sena and the pitch will be prepared again. The match will be held as scheduled," said Sameer Chaturvedi, a member of the match organising committee.

Villa will play Bolton Wanderers for a place in the final on February 29 in Cardiff, while Middlesbrough, who beat Tottenham Hotspur 5-4 on penalties in Wednesday's other quarter-final, will play Arsenal.

TEAMS goals

10 Tests at a surprising 44.2, Ahmed 23 from four at 21.1 and Kaneria 62 from 14 at 26.1.

But while acknowledging the lethal strike power that faces them, New Zealand are not conceding favouritism, sensing if anything the conditions are better suited to the home bowlers.

"We've got big tall guys like Oram and Cairns who get that extra bounce. If we get that we can put them under some pressure.

man Craig McMillan said.

innings and 185 runs.

Hamilton's Westpac Park where they have won five of 11 Tests, including four of the last five, and To match its bowling power, suffered just two losses to Australia

Lanka and England on Thur

Trescothick c I'dene b M'tha

Vaughan c I'dene b Chandar

Butcher c S'kara h Fernando

ENGLAND: First innings

Hussain lbwb Vaas

Read not out

Gilesrun out

Kirtley not out

Thorpelbwb M'tharar

Flintoff cand b M'tharan

Extras: (b-4, lb-7, nb-1)

BattycAtapattub Chandana

History backs the Black Caps at

Yousuf Youhana, Salim Elahi, Asim Kamal, Younis Khan, Moin Khan, Abdur Razzaq, Shoaib Malik, Danish Kaneria,Shoaib Akhtar, Mohammad Sami, Shabbir Ahmed, Umar Gul. Umpires: Dave Orchard (South Africa), Steve Davis (Australia),

n Farhat Vasir H

Miserly Muralitharan

FROM PAGE 13

succeed.

Paul Collingwood after England opted to play an extra bowler. sparred unconvincingly against Muralitharan before being dubiously trapped lbw by Chaminda Vaas.

Muralitharan, who took 19 wickets in the two drawn first Tests, had put Sri Lanka in the driving seat when he trapped Graham Thorpe (14) lbw.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play on the first day of the third and final Test between Sri

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

CUODD	WORD	Dy Lugene	Snejjer
ACROSS	34 Ostrich's	54 Earthen-	9 Set aside
1 Ticket	cousin	ware	10 Lose color
holder's	35 Profound	pot	11 Paw
memento	37 Exuberant	55 Paradise	17 Once
5 Appre-	"My Fair	56 CA's	around
hend	Lady"	ocean	19 H-dos-O?
8 Squabble	song	57 Crystal	22 Pranks
12 Resi-	39 'The	gazer	24 Bankroll
dence, to	Practice"	0	25 Waste
Rodolfo	practice	DOWN	not a
13 Old	41 Croon	1 Wound	moment
French	42 Brothers,	reminder	26 Brunch
coin	in Brest	2 Verboten	order
14 Golfer	45 Wages	(Var.)	27 Self-
Aoki	49 Cole	3 Compu-	evident
15 First	Porter	Serve	29 "What
victim	classic	client	Kind of
16 Prosper-	51 Reed	4 Romantic	Fool?"
ous	instrument	rendition	30 Eviscerate
18 Coarse	52 Aware of	5 Shiny coin	33 Author
fabric	53 Sea	6 Expert	Ferber
20 Nijinsky's	urchin	7 Tulip, to	36 Minister
field	eggs,	start	38 Northern
21 On in	sushi-	8 Bookstore	hemi-
years	style	listings	spheres?
23 Shooter			40 Take a
ammo	Solution tin	ne: 24 mins.	mate
24 "Murder,	STARR	AVESTA	42 Ice mass
She	GEISHA	AVESTA	43 Split in
Wrote"	NATION	UNLACE	two
script	PLODD		44 Entree
28 Unes-		N M D L T A O A H U	preceder,
corted		ARUCKUS	maybe
31 Tooth-	YOREH	ITSERN	46 Compe-
paste		LIED	tent
brand		S S J A P E T O I L E R	47 Portrayal
32 "My	C A T N A P T R I U N E	INNATE	48 Calendar
Dinner	SECTOR	CENSE	quota
With —"			50 — jiffy

sday:		139, 6-226, 7-23	86,8-258			
		To bat: Anderso	on			
aran	70	Bowler	0	Μ	R	W
na	18	Vaas	14	4	61	1
)	23	Fernando	12	3	55	1
	8	S'weera	4	1	11	0
	13	Chandana	26	7	82	2
	77	M'tharan	37	20	38	3
а	14	Jayasuriya	2	1	1	0
	13	SRI LANKA:	Tillakar	atne,	Atar	battu
	10	Jayasuriya, Sa	angakkar	a, Jay	awar	dene
	1	Samaraweera, Chandana, Vaas				
	12	Fernando, Muralitharan, Dilshan				
)	259	Umpires: Steve Bucknor (West Indies)				
3-114,4	4-135,5- and Aleem Dar (Pakistan)					

Total: (For 8 wkts in 95 overs Fall of wickets: 1-78, 2-108,

18, 3-114, 4-135, 5- and Aleem Dar (Pakistan)													
	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11	
2					13				14				
5					16			17					
8				19			20						
			21			22		23					
4	25	26					27		28		29	30	
1				32				33		34			
5			36		37				38				
		39		40		41							
2	43				44		45			46	47	48	
9						50			51				
52					53				54				
55					56				57				
CRYPTOQUIP													
KDLR TA YSQ LRBPRL													
ΜΡΙΜ, ΤΑ ΧΡΖΖΑ ΚΕΜΜΑ													
YNTTLRZLM "KSZZLQA													
s N	Satu U'R	rday E F Y O	y's C IAVI 9F RI	Cryp ING ELA	toqı FU TIV	uip:	IS' TH ?	'TIN E C	1E F GAM	LIE E I	S W LOV	L!' 'HEN ER'S	I
		oquip	is a	subst	itutio	n ciph	er in	whicl	h one	letter	r stan	ds for	
not	nother. 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.

Pollock McGrath Akhtar Gillespie Ntini Tuffey Kumble Harbhajan

Kallis Dhaka left

FROM PAGE 13

Rajshahi were four for no loss in four overs at close.

SCORECARDS

Scoreboard on the opening day of the two Mirzapore Tea Fifth National Cricket League matches played at different venues across the country yesterday.

Dhaka VS Chittagong

Diruk		abon	ъ			
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium						
DHAKA: First in	DHAKA: First innings					
Rashedul b Alaı	Rashedul b Alamgir					
Al-Shahriar har	ndle the b	all		35		
SanwarlbwbA	Sanwar lbw b Alamgir					
Niamur c Faisal b Alamgir						
Halim batting						
K Mahmud batting						
Extras: (b-1, lb-3)						
Total: (For 4 wickets in 33.4 overs) 75						
Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-26, 3-34, 4-56						
Bowler	0	Μ	R	W		
GAlamgir	17	8	30	3		
Debroboto	14	8	30	0		
YArafat 2.4 1 11 0						

Rajshahi VS Sylhet							
Venue: Cricket Garden, Rangpur							
SYLHET: First in	nnings						
Masud lbw b Sa	ifullah			2			
Imtiaz c Rafiqul	l b Saifulla	ıh		8			
Parvez run out				31			
Rahman c Shan	nsul b Am	inul		1			
Nasirul c Shahja	ada b Saif	ullah		2			
Hadi c Shamsul	b Shahja	da		19			
Moula b Shahja	da			12			
Tapash lbw b Sł	nahjada			6			
Rezaul b Aminu	ป			6			
Wadud c Shams	sul b Saifu	llah		1			
Nabil not out				1			
Extras: (b08, lb-4, w-1) 13							
Total: (All out in 85.1 overs) 102							
Fall of wickets:	1-11, 2-1	2, 3-1	9, 4-2	6, 5-			
60, 6-75, 7-90, 8	-95, 9-100						
Bowler	0	М	R	W			
Aminul	15.1	10	7	2			
Shahjada	18	6	23	3			
Saifullah	34	12	43	4			
EParvez	18	8	19	0			
RAJSHAHI: First innings							
Rafiqul batting				3			
Kabir batting				0			
Extras: (lb-1)				1			
Total: (For no loss in 3 overs) 4							
Bowler	0	М	R	W			
Tapash	2	1	1	0			
Rezaul	1	0	2	0			

883 The result was a huge upset, with Villa lying just a point above the relegation zone and third-815 791 756

shot had been blocked

A fantastic goal by Colombian

striker Juan Pablo Angel gave Villa a 16th-minute lead, Chelsea's

England playmaker Joe Cole lev-

elled in the 69th minute but Gavin

McCann lashed home the winner

nine minutes later after an Angel

Gattuso questions FIFA award

REUTERS, Rome

AC Milan midfielder Gennaro Gattuso has attacked FIFA's World Player of the Year award after Real Madrid's Zinedine Zidane was voted the winner for the third time in six years. Frenchman Zidane claimed

the accolade on Monday despite his club's indifferent 2002-03 season, in which the Spanish side were eliminated from the Champions League by Iuventus.

"With all (due) respect to Zidane, who is without doubt one of the best players in the world, if I look at his season I think to myself: 'So what?'," Gattuso was quoted as saying in Gazzetta dello Sport on 📲 Thursda

"If th handed of talen should year he

Juvent Nedved and Milan defender Paolo Maldini had stronger claims to the prize.

Both were instrumental in their respective teams' progress to the final of last season's Champions League.

award is based on the votes of 142 national team coaches. Gattuso was also bemused by

Caribbean islands Turks and Caicos to vote for him ahead of more illustrious names in Serie

their judgements on?" he asked. "I went there once on holiday

"But does it seem possible to you that I got one vote and (Roma striker Francesco) Totti

pitch".

Chelsea's problems started when defender William Gallas misjudged a header over 30 metres out.

Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand arrives at the Reebock Stadium

in Bolton to appear before a disciplinary commission yesterday.

Ferdinand not

Former Juventus stars were to testify Friday at a doping trial in Turin of the Italian giants but Real Madrid's World Player of the Year Zinedine Zidane was excused the hearing.

Turin prosecutors said strikers Filippo Inzaghi and Roberto Baggio and goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi had been called to testify.

Expert witnesses at last month's hearing claimed the players' red blood cell count indicated they were using the enduranceenhancer EPŎ.

Zidane, former France captain Didier Deschamps and Italian star Alessandro Del Piero are all under suspicion of being given illegal substances by club doctors between July 1994 and September 1998, the most successful period in the Italian team's history.

Over that period, Juventus won three Italian league titles and the European Cup.

Zidane played for Juventus from 1996 to 2001.

Former Juventus striker Gianluca Vialli has already admitted the club doctor regularly administered substances for which there was no justification.

Juventus director Antonio Giraudo and club doctor Riccardo Ferdinand's defence is expected to include representations from Agricola stand accused of breachseveral witnesses, including United ing Italy's sporting fraud laws. The players are not facing any charges.

A written character reference The scandal broke in 1998 when from England manager Sven Goran Eriksson, with the full authority of his Czech coach Zdenek Zeman, then in charge of Roma, called on the employers - the FA - will also be given authorities to clean drug cheats out to the commission, which is headed by Bright, the FA's most experienced of Italian soccer, aiming his accusations at Juventus. disciplinary officer. The hearing,

Chinese rookie set for MU

refused to undergo the test, is one of the highest profile cases in English football history. Ferdinand, the world's most expensive defender contacted the **REUTER,** Beijing

FA after realising he had missed the Chinese teenage striker Dong test, which was taken by three of his team mates following a training session. He passed a test 36 hours Fangzhuo is set to agree a deal this week to join Manchester United from Dalian Shide, Dalian's genlater and has strongly denied ever eral manager said on Thursday.

"It's true," Lin Lefeng told But the FA have since excluded Reuters when asked about a him from England matches and are Chinese newspaper report that Dong's long-rumoured transfer to under pressure from FIFA to punish Old Trafford was imminent. "The the player. The FA has already been transfer of Dong Fangzhuo will be criticised by the English players' fixed this week. union for their handling of the case

Manchester United would pay between three and 3.5 million pounds (\$6.14 million), the Shanghai Morning Post reported.

tta dello Sport on ay. he prize is going to be d out solely on the basis	late this	time!
t then Diana Manadana	Football	All parties then assemb stadium in Bolton to start ings, with Barrow due to c
Italian international said tus playmaker Pavel	Reuters, Bolton	FA's case first. Ferdinand's defence is

The It Almost three months after missing

The FIFA Player of the Year

the decision of the coach of The hearing, scheduled to take two days, is taking place at Bolton Wanderers' Reebok Stadium. A decision is expected late on Friday afternoon.

"What do these coaches base

with Christian Vieri. Maybe this guy saw me having a kick around on the beach and liked what he saw

didn't get any?

"These prizes don't have credibility anymore. They have more to do with sponsors than real values and results on the

a drugs test, Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand arrived an hour early for the hearing which will decide his immediate future. Ferdinand is facing an independent disciplinary commission, set up by the English Football Association, to face a charge of misconduct for "failing or refusing" to take the test at United's Carrington training ground on September 23.

Ferdinand entered the ground 60 minutes ahead of the scheduled

start, wearing a black suit, white shirt

and black tie. The England interna-

tional was accompanied by solicitor

and Manchester United director Maurice Watkins and Ronald

Thwaites QC, who is heading the

been to the training ground, with the three members of the commission:

FA board members Barry Bright, Peter Heard and Frank Pattison

along with Steve Barrow, head of the

FA's compliance unit, to look at the site where Ferdinand's drugs test

should have taken place.

Watkins and Thwaites had earlier

player's defence.