Premier hockey from today, but...

Sports Reporter The return leg of the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League begins today, although the defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club and their archrivals Abahani Krira Chakra have refused to field their teams under protest.

Mohammedan, who are scheduled to take on Azad SC in the first match, said that they would not field their team in protest against what they termed as unplayable the artificial turf at the Moulana Bhashani Stadium.

Although the league committee secretary Habibur Rahman said yesterday that the league would resume as per schedule. Abahani also sang the Mohammedan tune for the common interest of all the clubs.

It was learnt that the League Committee had earlier agreed to remove the slippery portions of the turf in a meeting on March 27. It is reported that the imminent stalemate situation arose following a go-slow attitude of the Grounds Committee, which only yesterday started the revamp works.

Meanwhile, the League Committee has summoned an emergency meeting at 7 pm to-

Zimbabwe announce WC 15

HARARE, Apr 4(Reuters/Internet): Zimbabwe were in upbeat mood as they named their final squad of 15 for the forthcoming cricket World Cup in England, describing it assone of the strongest to represent their country.

"I think this is probably one of the best teams we have assembled so far." Zimbabwe Cricket Union chief executive Dave Ellman-Brown told local media

"It has a sound batting order and a good team of seasoned bowlers who include really good fast bowlers Heath Streak and Henry Olonga and world class spinners Andy Whittal, Adam

Zimbabwe's batting has been considerably strengthened by the emergence during the 1998-99 season of Murray Goodwin and Neil Johnson.

The impressive form of Goodwin and all-rounder Johnson has eased the burden on opener Grant Flower, whose batting propelled Zimbabwe to 'their recent success in the three-nation tournament in Bangladesh, and his brother Andy, the lynchpin of the team in recent years.

Alistair Campbell retains his place as captain of the squad which includes two black players, seamer Mpumelelo Mbangwa and Olonga.

"Our cricket has come of age and I am sure we will do well at the World Cup and hopefully get to the super six (second round)," said Ellman-Brown.

SQUAD

Alistair Campbell (captain), Andy Flower (vice-captain), Grant Flower, Neil Johnson, Murray Goodwin, Stuart Carlisle, Dirk Viljoen, Guy Whittal, Paul Strang, Andy Whittal, Adam Huckle, Eddo Brandes, Henry Olonga. Mpumelelo Mbangwa, Heath

Div I cricket to start Wednesday

The super and relegation league matches of the Metropolis First Division cricket will begin on Wednesday at the different city grounds, reports

Gopibagh Friends Association will take on Eskaton Sabuj Sangha at the City Club ground while City Club will encounter Dhanmondi Club at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on the

Dhaka Wanderers Club will face Jatrabari KC at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium in the lone match on the following

Meanwhile, the Acme Metropolis Second Division circket league will begin on

Kalindi ground; Tejgaon CC will

play Azad SC at the Uttara

Friends ground; Nabin Sangha

will encounter West Jatrabari

KC at the DOHS ground and

Youngones will play Kakrail

Stadium on the day.

Boys Club at the Mirpur Outer

Ticket touts

arrested in

Mumbai

MUMBAI, Apr 4: Mumbai police has detected sale of bogus

tickets for the Pepsi Cup tri-se-

ries one-day cricket final be-

tween India and Pakistan at

Bangalore today with the bust-

ing of a gang involved in the

counterfeit printing, reports

owner of the printing press were

arrested late on Friday night

following a raid on a private

premises at Kamathipura in

south Mumbai, they confessed

that they had printed bogus

tickets for the tri-series

matches earlier held at

Chennai and Pune, police said

yesterday. They had also admit-

ted to selling such tickets for

the matches in Chennai and

Pune as well as Bangalore, po-

lice said.

Six persons including the

Thursday at the five different city venues. Five matches will be held on the opening day.

Chelsea were able to canter Progati Seba Sangha will meet Mill Barrack CC at the T&T ground; Amar Jyoti Club take on Ganderia CC at the

"They didn't trouble us too much and I think we deserved it," said player-manager Gian-

United are the best teams in the league but all we can do is try to

There was no stroll for United, who fell behind when Jason Euell seized on a weak back header by Gary Neville to

Stam, United looked disorganised at the back and needed Peter Schmeichel to prevent Euell claiming a second.

United, who had lost only once away to Wimbledon in 10 years, battled back and David Beckham scrambled in the

ahead of Wednesday's European Cup game against Juventus as they laid siege to the Wimbledon goal but could not get through.

Southampton showed their senal at the Dell.

came late on when Nwankwo

ruffled them, got at them," said Southampton boss David

Costa Rica hold Nigeria LAGOS, Apr 4: Unfancied reports Reuters. Championship

reports Reuters. The Nigerian crowed were in buoyant mood as the tournament, taken away from them four years ago because of health and security fears, finally be-

Championship on Saturday,

The 45,000 spectators ex-

pected to watch the hosts win the opening game, a result that appeared to be on the cards when Julius Aghahowa fired

them ahead in the 20th minute. But the Central Americans, regarded by local fans as little more than sparring partners, hit back with a penalty converted by captain Allan Melendez seven minutes from the end of the Group A game.

Nigeria dominated the first half against nervous opponents and could have gone in at halftime with more than one goal to their credit.

Aghahowa's goal capped a fine first-half performance by the 17-year-old, who plays for local club Bendel Insurance.

But, like his team, Aghahowa lost his way in the second half. Costa Rica made two substitutions, grew in confidence, created several chances and were finally rewarded when Esteban Santana was tripped by goalkeeper Sam Okoye.

"They are stronger than us but we fought a lot in the second half," said Costa Rica coach Carlos Watson. Nigerian coach Tunde Disu

said: "We threw our chances away because we lacked co-ordination in the new attack."

The game was played on a near-perfect pitch, which at least gave Nigeria an early in over those who believed they could not provide adequate fa-

Watson also said his squad were happy with their treatment since they had arrived. Germany meet Paraguay in

another Group A game today. There are two Group B games today in Kaduna, where Ghana meet Croatia in Kaduna followed by Argentina v Kazakmatches. stan.

The two Group C matches in Ibadan are Australia v Saudi Arabia and Mexico v Ireland.

Valencia stay in the hunt



MADRID, Apr 4 (Reuters/Internet): Valencia cranked up the pressure on Spanish Primera Liga

leaders Barcelona on Saturday with a 1-0 win at Racing Santander.

Victory for Claudio Ranieri's side, secured late on through a header from Thomas Bjorklund, moved them second, just three points behind the Catalan giants. Fourth-placed Deportivo

Coruna, who went in to the weekend level with Valencia. six points off the pace, saw their own title aspirations fade as they were held 1-1 at home to Atletico Madrid.

Barcelona, who can reopen a six-point lead with victory over standings on 53 points, with Valencia second on 50 having played a game more. Deportivo

remain fourth on 48, behind Celta Vigo on goal difference.

Atletico had looked on course to give returning coach Radomir Antic a dream start to his second spell in charge at the club.

The Serb boss, who was

reappointed coach in March after eight months away from the club, chose an attacking lineup, pairing Juninho with Juan Carlos Valeron in the midfield. And the tactic paid an early dividend as Valeron gave his

side the lead with a well-taken

goal on nine minutes. The Spanish international, picking up a loose ball just outside the area, waltzed past a couple of half-hearted challenges to plant a shot past Jacques Songo'o.

Deportivo had most of the Oviedo on Sunday, lead the possession thereafter but were nervous in front of goal and were comfortably held by Atletico until halftime.

Five minutes after the break the home side passed up a great chance to equalise.

In a leading candidate for miss of the season, Pauleta Recende was presented with an open goal 20 metres out following a miscued clearance from Atletico keeper Francisco Molina but succeeded only in striking a post.

The Portuguese striker made up for his error 11 minutes from time, though, as he managed to squeeze in a shot from just inside the area after another flap from Molina.

Atletico were against the ropes for the remainder of the game as Deportivo pushed hard for the victory.

They showed plenty of commitment as their defence held firm, though -- an encouraging sign ahead of the first leg of their UEFA Cup semifinal against Parma on Tuesday.

Nakamura comes so near HONG KONG, Apr minutes 39.82 in 1998.



4: Japan's Mai Nakamura fell just short in her assault on the women's 200 metres backstroke world record to-

day at the World Short-Course Swimming Championships in Hong Kong, reports Reuters. She swam well ahead of the pack throughout the qualifying heat, more than four seconds in front, but finished just shy of come with your umbrella," it suggested. "A lady got the bapthe 2:06.09 world record set by

China's Cihong He in 1993. Nakamura, going flat out from the outset, clocked two minutes 06.42 seconds ahead of today's finals in the closing session of the four-day champi-

onships. She is expected to take another shot at the record in the final. She also grabbed the gold medal in the 100 metres backstroke and the silver in the 50 metres backstroke in the championships.

After the 200 metres backstroke heat and final, her stamina will be tested today when she swims in the 4x100 relay medley.

Going head-to-head in the heats for the men's 200 metres individual medley were Australia's Matthew Dunn and Britain's James Hickman.

(ESPN/Internet):

Wolfsburg had agreed to sell

him to Scottish league leaders

Glasgow Rangers -- effective

by the club, but the Scotsman

newspaper in Edinburgh re-

ported the deal was worth 2.2

million dollars, some of which

America's best young players,

but can he hold up in the rugged

Scottish Premier League with

the Rangers. "Reyna's creden-

tials speak for themselves, and

we are confident that he will

contribute," Rangers manager

Reyna is expected to play his

Reyna is excited about mak-

"I know that the Rangers-

Celtic rivalry is one of the

biggest in the world, and I want

a chance to play in that game,'

Reyna said. "There's nothing

desliga had its ups and downs.

I'm glad that I was able to finish

on an up and help Wolfsburg ac-

complish some of its goals. I

learned, and I got better as a

player. I was treated well and

"I think my stay in the Bun-

Claudio Reyna is one of

Details were not announced

immediately.

will go to Reyna.

Dick Advocaat said.

like that in Germany.

ing the move.

fairly here."

first match next Sunday.

Dunn, ranked world number one in the event and world record holder for the 400 metres medley, seized the best time in the heat's with one minute 58.83 seconds, but Hickman, ranked number two, was close behind.

World record holder Jani Sievien of Finland was further back and well away from his record 1.54.65 in 1994.

The most likely record to fall in today's finals is the men's 1,500 metres freestyle, where Australian teenage star and world record holder Grant Hackett has vowed to beat the

I've really been at ease in recent weeks, competing just for myself and enjoying it's a relaxed Hackett said on Saturday. He predicted records would tumble in coming months as swimmers push into top form ahead of the 2000 Olympics in Sydney.

Hackett, who rested on Saturday and this morning, set the 1.500 metres record in 1998 with 14 minutes 19.55 seconds.

He has set a blistering pace at the championships and blazed his way to a 400 metres freestyle world record of three minutes 35.01 seconds on the second day, eclipsing teammate lan Thorpe's record of three

Can Reyna brave the

Thorpe set a world record in the men's 200 metres freestyle on the opening day and was just behind Hackett in the 400 metres freestyle. He will show off his form again when he anchors the men's teams 4x100

medley relay in the final event. He pulled the Australians ahead over a strong Swedish team with his closing freestyle sprint in today's heat. His team set the fastest time of three minutes 34.24 seconds.

The US team was disqualified from the 4x100 team medley for an early takeoff.

Slovakia's Martina Moracova battled it out in the heats with world record holder Claudia Poll of Costa Rica in the women's 200 metres freestyle. Moracova broke her own

European record on Saturday to win the final of the women's 100 metres individual medley. but Poll has lagged throughout the championships. Moracova turned in the

fastest time in the heat, one minute 57.87 seconds, but Poll was a close second and the rivalry will be taken up again in the evening.

Australia and Japan will battle it out in the women's 4x100 relay medley after winning their morning heats.

Chelsea home in on MU, Arsenal



LONDON, Apr 4 (Reuters/Internet) Manchester United and Arsenal were both held to draws on Satur-

day, allowing Chelsea to gain ground in the English premier league title race with a 1-0 win at Charlton Athletic. United needed a David Beckham equaliser for a 1-1 draw at Wimbledon, Arsenal finished 0-

0 at Southampton, while Roberto Di Matteo hit the Chelsea goal after 14 minutes, United lead the standings with 64 points, Arsenal have 60 and Chelsea, with a game in hand, 59.

Leeds United remained in the hunt on 57 after beating Nottingham Forest 3-1 for their seventh successive win.

With United and Chelsea both facing semifinals in European club competitions next week there was always the chance of an upset, but Chelsea were handed victory.

Charlton goalkeeper Sasa Ilic parried a cross straight to Di Matteo and the Italian sent the ball straight back past him into the net.

through and saved their energles for the visit of Real Mallorca in the Cup Winners' Cup on Thursday.

luca Vialli. "I still think Arsenal and

keep up with them."

score after five minutes. Without the injured Jaap

equaliser a minute before halftime.

There was no chance for rest

fighting spirit to cancel out Ar-The champions' best chance

Kanu saw his side-footed shot cleared off the line by Francis Benali. "We took the game to them,

"It was hard-fought but we deserved the point. Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger paid tribute to the hard-

working hosts, who remained third-from bottom. "We played against a very tough team but it would have been difficult for anyone here

today," said the Frenchman. "But I cannot reproach my players because they gave everything -- we just needed to be more clinical with our finish-

Leeds equalled the club record of seven wins in a row set by Don Revie's 1974 championship-winning team to remain in the chase for a top-three

Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink blasted them ahead and after Alan Rogers had given the bottom club hope, Ian Harte and

Alan Smith ended it. There were seven goals at Pride Park but despite leading 1-0 and 2-1, Derby County eventually lost 4-3 to visiting New-

Protesting soccer-style

ROME, Apr 4: Lazio defender Sinisa Mihajlovic and fellow Serbian midfielder Dejan Stankovic drew loud applause from a partisan crowd as they entered the field at Rome's Olympic stadium wearing a black band on their left uniform sleeve to protest NATO raids on Yugoslavia, reports

The two Serbian players embraced in front of Lazio fans before kickoff of Saturday's Italian league match against AC Milan and displayed while Tshirts under their jerseys reading — in English — "Peace No

war." Other Lazio players also wore the T-shirts, but not the band.

A group of Lazio supporters displayed a stripe reading "kill Private Ryan" as well as Nazi The slogan was a reference to

the American feature film "Saving Private Ryan" that depicted the American landings during the invasion of Europe during World War II. Groups of Lazio fans are known to be part of right-wing

Mihajlovic, a key to Lazio's success in the Italian Serie A this season, actively campaigned this week against NATO raids on his homeland and asked other Serbians playing in Italy to join Saturday's protest.

extremist group.

the goal.

castle United. There were fewer goals but perhaps even more excitement at Anfield where Liverpool beat local rivals Everton for the first time in five years in a pulsating Merseyside derby,

Frenchman Olivier Dacourt drove Everton ahead after just 41 seconds but Liverpool hit back with two Robbie Fowler goals, the first from the spot. Patrik Berger made it 3-1 in the 82nd minute with Everton's

teenage sub Francis Jeffers pulling one back. Despite the superb match, the main talking point was Fowler's celebration of his first goal, when he pretended to

"sniff" the white lines behind

The action incensed the Everton fans, causing the police to move in to restore order, and seems certain to land the England striker in more trouble. On Friday, he faces an En-

glish F.A. hearing into his recent bust-up with Chelsea's Graeme Le Saux. Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier defended Fowler, saying: "I had a talk with him and it's just a joke. Rigobert Song used to do it at Metz, pretending to eat the grass, it was nothing. The F.A. are unlikely to take

such a lenient view.

midfielder Lars Ricken in the 73rd minute. Each team had a man sent

Bundesliga record of 736 minutes when Ricken profited from blunder by Bayern defender Michael Tarnal to set up striker

Herrlich made it 2-0 by racfailed to clear a shot by Christian Nerlinger in the 32nd

Bayern, playing their last ders for a tackle from behind on

Dortmund defender Stefan ter a second bookable offence in

Substitute Alexandre Zick-58th minute and Jancker Levelled in the 63rd.

casion for Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld, who steered Dortmund to victory in the European Cup in 1997 and then became their sports director before moving to Bayern at the start of the sea-

'braveheart' land? CHICAGO, Apr 4 The move comes at a heady time for the 25-year-old Reyna. The strange jour-He and his wife, Danielle, are ney of American expecting their first child any midfielder Clauday (a boy, to be named Jack) dio Reyna took and the move promises to conanother twist on Thursday with tinue -- in many soccer fans' the announcement that VIL

> Rangers clearly needs a player like Reyna. His strength is that he can hold the ball, and they need that settlement as they head into Champions League qualifying play.
>
> Currently well atop the

minds, at least -- a rather

charmed ascent.

Scottish Premier League, they have a Scottish Cup tie with St. Johnstone on April 10. Reyna functions best as a complementary player anyway. One of the most illuminating

things about Bruce Arena's U.S. coaching tenure is how much better Reyna looks when paired with a player willing to do the dirty work -- like Chris Armas -- and just how foolish Steve Sampson was to make Reyna "the man."

However, I have my worries. The team that he will be joining is so clearly stocked with talent that one wonders if even one of America's more talented youngsters can make a break into the starting lineup, despite Advocaat's endorsement.

But my trepidation has to do with Reyna's rep. Frankly, he is

It is an open secret that he

wanted out of VfL Wolfsburg. which followed an unhappy spell at Bayer Leverkusen. He had a disastrous World Cup. which could be summed up in one moment: when German midfielder Jens Jeremies socked him in the kidneys 20 seconds into the American's opening match, mysteriously removing Reyna for the rest of the tourney.

Reyna doesn't like to play hurt, and he doesn't seem to have a lot of fiber when push comes to shove. Since Reyna is so inarguably talented, one can be forgiven for wondering just what's going on in Reyna's

Also moving from a league that is not only far better, but much faster in terms of play, to one that, realistically, can no longer produce teams that can compete at the European level, is an odd one.

While Rangers is clearly both more recognizable for U.S fans and more prestigious overall, Rangers has yet to make a dent in any of the high-powered Euro competitions -- its last win was in the Cup Winners Cup in 1972. And despite routinely trading the top Scots spot back and forth between ancient rivals Celtic, the club is not exactly at the level of an Arsenal

The games differ dramatically as well. Bundesliga games emphasize ball-control, some-

Scots matches are rough-andtumble affairs -- and Reyna has proved not to be so good when the shots are coming his way.

Reyna also might face a conflict between Confederations Cup, where he will be expected to play for Arena, and the expanded Champions League qualifying which will include his new club. In years past, it almost wouldn't have been an issue, but with Confederations Cup now becoming a truly meaningful competition for the United States, whether to serve club or country will likely become the young man's first

One hopes the stay by the Clyde will toughen this young man up -- it would be good for him and for the U.S. national team. As Rangers is followed a bit more closely in the country than his last club, we shall all see, soon enough, for ourselves

Boxing full of fools'

HOUSTON, Apr 4: Former heavyweight boxing champion George Foreman says those looking for criminals in boxing may be in for some disappointment, reports AP.

fools, more nuts than crooks,"

said Foreman. "A crook would-

"I think boxing is full of

n't be as stupid as the way I have seen some of these people in boxing behave." Foreman, whose comments appeared in Saturday's Houston Chronicle, has been subpoenaed to appear before a federal grand

jury in Newark, New Jersey,

near New York City, investigat-

ing charges of corruption in

boxing's sanctioning organizations. The panel is looking into whether sanctioning organizations extort money from boxers by selling high rankings and

choice bouts. Foreman is likely to testify later this month. "The government views him

as a witness and a victim, and I assume they view other boxers in the same way," said Foreman's attorney, Larry Wechsler. The 51-year-old fighter was not impressed with some of boxing's cast of characters.

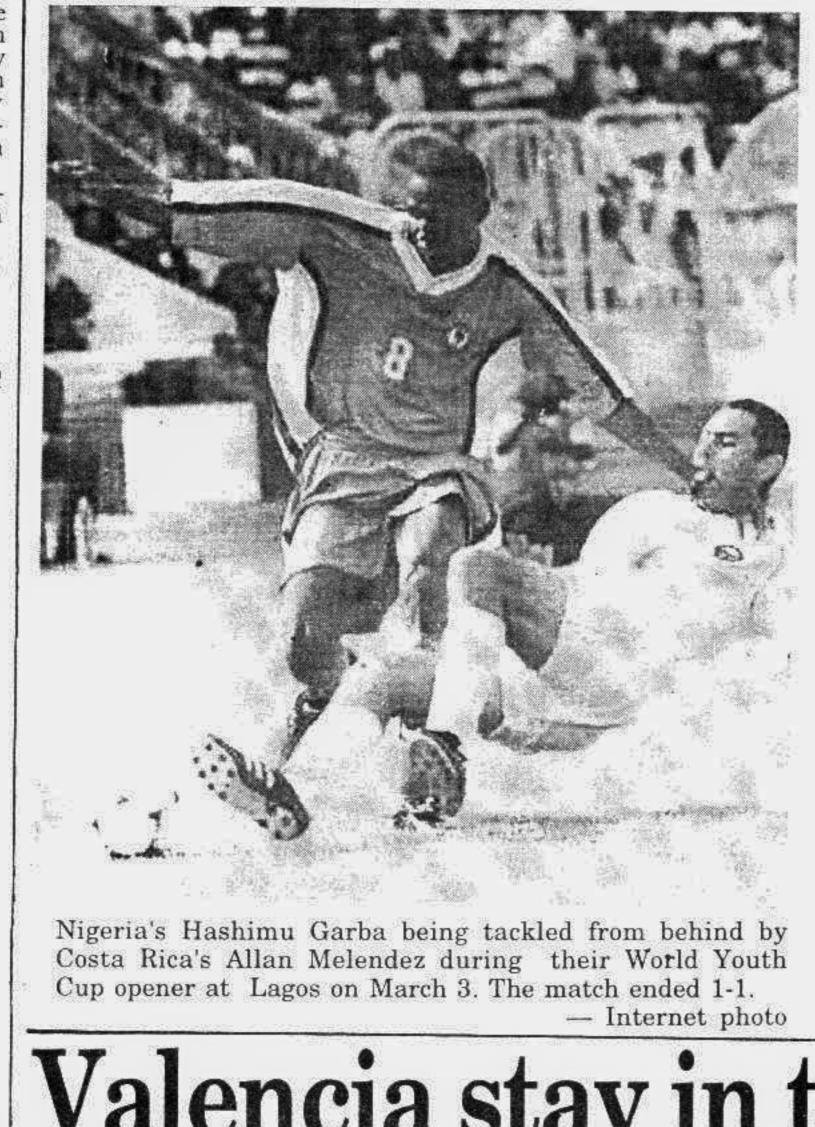
"The sport is loaded with

such silly people. When I lived

on the streets as a thief, I would

try to hide when I stole something," Foreman said. "When did steal and people were looking. I would leave something to make them think it didn't happen.
"To clean up boxing you've

got to get honest people in there. But tell me, how do you avoid the stupid ones?"



Costa Rica

snatched a

late equaliser

to force a 1-1

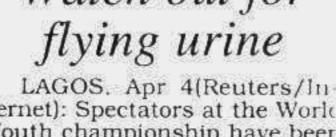
draw and deflate Nigeria's

celebrations in the opening

game of the World Youth

Championship on Saturday,

Wu Yanyan of China in action during the women's 200m medley at the World Championships yesterday. - AFP photo Watch out for



ternet): Spectators at the World Youth championship have been told to beware of flying urine at The Sports Vanguard news-

paper said youths had filled plastic bags with urine at Saturday's opening game between Nigeria and Costa Rica and then hurled them at unsuspecting supporters. When next your are coming to the stadium, endeaver to

K'lautern lose, Bayern draw

tism of urine and it was not

funny."

BONN, Apr 4: A first-half goal by Germany striker Ulf Kirsten gave Bayer Leverkusen a 1-0 victory at champions Kaiserslautern on Saturday which sent them to second place in the Bundesliga, reports Reuters.

Kirsten, set up by Brazilian midfielder Emerson, struck from close range three minutes from the interval to enable Leverkusen to move ahead of Kaiserslautern on goal differ-Leverkusen and Kaiser-

ranway leaders Bayern Munich. fought back from two goals down to draw 2-2 at arch-rivals Borussia Dortmund. Bayern were back on terms when goalkeeper Olvier Kahn saved a penalty from Dortmund

slautern, fighting for an auto-

matic place in the Champion

League, stayed 15 points behind

The Munich Club had won their last eight league matches without conceding a goal and Kahn had not been beaten for a

Heiko Herrlich for the opening goal from close range in the 14th minute. ing into the box after Kahn had

minute. match before visiting Dynamo Kiev for the first leg of their Champions' League semifinal on Wednesday, were reduced to 10 men four minutes later after Ghanaian defender Samuel Kuffour received his marching or-

Ricken. Reuter followed Kuffour off af-

the 51st minute. ler reduced the arears from a Carsten Jancker pass in the

The match was a special oc-



or a Real Betis. shirt with the words 'Peace, No War' written on it, walks towards the fans alongwith teammate and compatriot Dejan Stankovic during a Serie A fixture against AC Milan at Rome on April 3. Internet photo thing Reyna is good at. Most