

Pakistan shocked

ISLAMABAD, Nov 18: Islamabad on Friday deplored New Delhi's statement that it called off its cricket team's tour of Pakistan because of hostile propaganda and calls for a holy war, reports AFP.

"I would only like to say that we deplore the outbursts of Indian officials against Pakistan," a foreign office spokesman said in a statement to the official Associated Press of Pakistan.

The Indian team was due here in December to play three Test matches and five one-day internationals.

But New Delhi cancelled its team's first Test tour of Pakistan in 11 years on Wednesday saying the atmosphere was not conducive for cricket.

On Thursday, an Indian foreign ministry spokesman said Pakistan's "hostile propaganda and constant calls for jihad (holy war)" provoked the cancellation.

The Pakistani official described the statement as "unwarranted, propagandistic and part of Indian policy of keeping tension high."

The cancellation of the tour is a matter between the cricket authorities of the two countries, he said.

Pakistan Cricket Board has now threatened to boycott all future matches with India.

"This puts us in a position where we would like to review our relationship with India and may not play them even in off-shore, tri-nation, one-day events," the Board's chairman, General Tauqir Zia, said Wednesday.

Replay incident makes Kiwis unhappy

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa, Nov 18: New Zealand expressed their disappointment on Friday after a television umpiring system failed in their first Test against South Africa, reports Reuters.

Jacques Kallis was 76 not out on the first day when a straight drive from batting partner Daryll Cullinan was deflected onto the non-striker's stumps by bowler Shayne O'Connor.

However, replays supplied to third umpire Rudi Koertzen did not enable him to make a conclusive decision on whether Kallis was run out.

Kallis went on to make an unbeaten 153 as South Africa reached the close on 270 for three.

But a replay of the incident included in a subsequent highlights package of the day's play showed Kallis had made his ground.

However, that was not the issue as far as New Zealand coach David Trist was concerned.

"It was disappointing that they didn't have the technology available to the third umpire when he required it to make a decision," Trist told reporters.

"If the technology is going to fail, it does make the game very frustrating not only for the players but for the public as well."

Trist was asked whether the incident had angered the New Zealand players.

"No, because once it's gone, it's gone and you've got to press on," Trist said. "You can't carry that kind of baggage with you because the next ball's the major issue."

Vince Gibbons, executive producer of the television broadcast, said: "The video tape operator rewound the tape to play the incident back and the machine indicated that it had a reel error."

"It kept on rewinding to a point where he couldn't identify the tape any longer."

World Indoor soccer

Boys from Brazil start favourites

GUATEMALA, Nov 18: Brazil head a group of South American teams here this Saturday in an unprecedented campaign for a fourth world indoor football title, reports AFP.

An early Christmas present perhaps but Brazil will be used to such accolades by now having won the three previously-staged events in Holland (1989), Hong Kong (1992) and Barcelona (1996).

With 16 national teams present for this FIFA-credited event Brazil are favourites for a fourth consecutive title, with Spain, Brazil's 1996 finalists, hotly favoured from among the five-team European group.

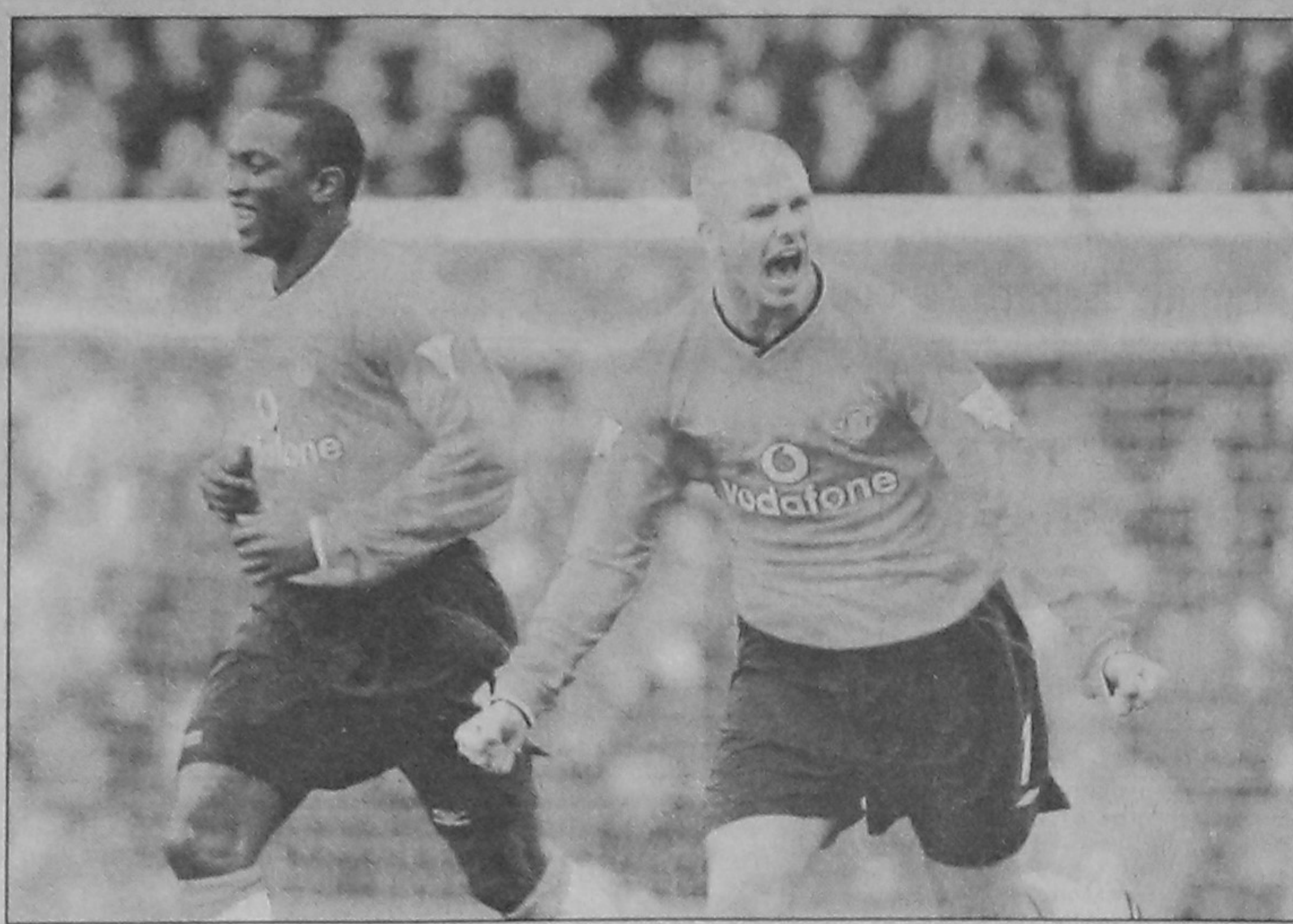
The first day of competition at the specially-built 'Domo' (Dome) pits hosts Guatemala against Portugal in Group A, while fellow Group opponents Kazakhstan has the unenviable task of squaring up to Brazil.

The hosts are largely expected to be eliminated before the quarter-finals, the reason being that indoor football is a relatively new phenomenon in this country.

But still the boys from Brazil are taking no chances and coach Fernando Cardoso has recalled Fredy Garcia, Claudio Rojas and goalscorer Carlos Ruiz.

Also included in the South American group are Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba and Uruguay. Europe will be counting on Spain, Portugal, Holland, Russia, Croatia, while Asia is represented by Iran, Kazakhstan and Thailand.

Oceania has one representative in Australia while Africa look to Egypt to do the continental proud.



Manchester United's David Beckham (R) is ecstatic after scoring against old rivals Manchester City in their Premiership match yesterday. — AFP photo

Premiership Beck breaks City hearts

LONDON, Nov 18: A goal by England captain David Beckham after just two minutes was enough to give Premiership leaders Manchester United a 1-0 win over local rivals Manchester City in the 125th Manchester derby at Maine Road Saturday, reports AFP.

Dead-ball specialist Beckham curled a superb free-kick past City goalkeeper Nicky Weaver after Alfie Haaland had cluttered into Paul Scholes just outside the penalty area.

The goal was particularly sweet for Beckham who was pelted with missiles thrown by City fans when taking corner kicks.

United, with nine wins from their last 10 games, take a five point lead at the top of the table although second-placed Arsenal can close the gap should they win at Everton later Saturday.

City, competing in their first local derby for four-and-a-half years, have lost their last four league games and are still dangerously close to the relegation zone.

Costa Rican striker Paulo Wanchope was on the bench for City which meant Shaun Wright-Phillips, son of former Arsenal star Ian Wright, made his first home start in the Premiership.

For United, Scholes, Wes Brown and Roy Keane recovered from injury, while Ryan Giggs started on the bench.

Manager Sir Alex Ferguson was away in South Africa at his

son Mark's wedding, leaving assistant coach Steve McLaren in charge.

City were unable to get into their stride in front of a passionate home crowd with United finding the back of the net after just 95 seconds.

Haaland cut down Scholes 30 yards out from goal in a central position and City rather foolishly decided not to form a wall for the free-kick.

Up stepped Beckham and his trusty right foot curled an unstoppable shot past Weaver and into the top right-hand corner.

City tried to respond - Nicky Butt made a great saving tackle on Haaland in the box and Jeff Whitley's shot from the rebound was blocked.

Wright-Phillips shot over the bar as City went in search of an equaliser but after 22 minutes Dwight Yorke should have doubled United's advantage.

In a swift counter attack, Beckham's long pass found Scholes with space on the left wing and his low cross ran into Yorke's path.

The Trinidadian's first touch was a poor one, forcing him away from the City goal, but he still managed to get in a low shot which Weaver did well to turn away for a corner.

Eleven minutes later, the home side came close to levelling the scores.

Wright-Phillips broke the United offside trap with a beautifully timed pass and put Haaland through on goal with just Fabien Barthez to beat.

The City skipper tried to go

round the French international but Barthez stretched out a hand to force Haaland wide and the chance was gone.

Four minutes from the interval Butt was denied by Weaver who came rushing out of goal to tackle the England international.

The ball fell kindly to Yorke who lofted the rebound towards goal but Steve Howey ran back in time to boot the ball to safety.

Beckham, who was booed with every touch by the home fans, stepped up to take the corner and was showered with coins before police moved in.

Butt almost doubled United's tally after 56 minutes when a Beckham free-kick fell to him in the City penalty area but he shot lazily over the bar with the goal gaping.

Despite enjoying the lion's share of the possession, United failed to increase their lead further and City almost made them pay with 20 minutes to go.

Barthez managed to prevent Haaland getting a clean contact on a close-range header but the City captain's effort still travelled towards goal only for Brown to thump the ball away for a corner.

Five minutes later Scholes fired into the side-netting with an open goal to aim at and then Weaver blocked Yorke's low effort with an outstretched leg.

Temperatures boiled over in the closing stages with both sets of players involved in nasty exchanges but United kept their nerve to take all three points.

Barthez feels so regal

PARIS, Nov 18 (AFP): Life under the grey, cold skies of northern England is just fine, thank you very much, says Manchester United goalkeeper Fabien Barthez.

The man whose southern twang conjures easy-life images of Mediterranean vineyards and eternal sunshine is adjusting rather well to life at Old Trafford after a successful but torrid time at former club, Monaco.

Indeed Barthez, the exuberant French international whose cheeky smile hints slyly at the presence of an internal bad boy, says that in professional and informal terms, Manchester United are head and shoulders above the rest.

"Manchester is simply regal. I want for nothing, the guys are great and what's more, the results are going our way," he told France Football on Friday.

"I could even say that the friendly atmosphere and empathy between the players is similar to that in the French national side. What more could you ask for?"

Apparently nothing, if Barthez continues to transfer the success he has enjoyed with "Les Bleus" to United.

Since his short spell in charge of keeping goal at the English Premiership leaders, Barthez, originally from Toulouse in south western France, has had little to do - outwith plying his trade as a world champion goalkeeper.

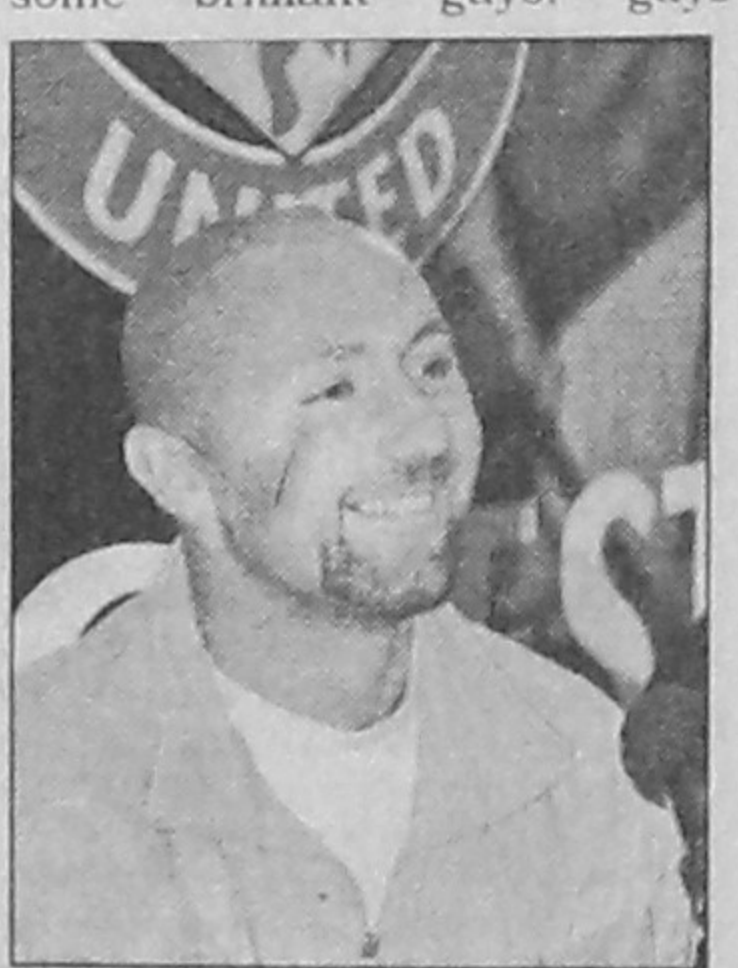
That task has, he says, been made much easier by the efforts of team members to integrate

him into the side.

And while he was expecting a somewhat frosty reception from a team of prima donnas, his heart has been warmed by the help he's received - something which would just not happen in the French league.

"It's true that before I came here I thought I would be walking among a team of superstars, and playing with guys who were a bit distant."

On the contrary, I've met some brilliant guys, guys



FABIEN BARTHEZ who've been working together for a long time and who have come to me spontaneously to put me at ease.

"Whether it's been in the dressing room, in town, or in a restaurant, there's always one who takes the time to explain what's been said, or what's happening."

"You really feel that you're among professionals here. At least when you've got something to say here, they take the

time to sit down and listen to you."

That wasn't the case, admits Barthez, at Monaco, where the club president Jean-Louis Campora rules with an iron fist and even this week graced the training field with his presence in a bid to motivate the players, whose results have left them in lowly 13th place and out of the Champions League.

"Yeah, well... when I wanted to skip a Cup game against a team from the much lower divisions in order to give my body a rest, I was simply told: 'Impossible, we need you. Believe me, it was Monaco who told me that. A bit scary, eh?'"

Ironically, it was Campora who, in a rare gesture of compliance after initially personally vetoing any move for the world and European champion, helped orchestrate Barthez's move to England.

But while Barthez retains a hint of respect for the man who sanctioned his departure for the Premiership, life in the tax-free sunny Principality simply pales in comparison to the warmth and welcome of Old Trafford.

"Fortunately, the medical staff here respect me enough professionally to allow me to adapt a special training session for myself. They know I've been around the block a few times so they trust me."

"The result is that, every time I get injured, they tell me to rest and take my time."

No doubt, if he is to add to the French league title he helped Monaco attain this year with a Premiership title next year, Barthez will be accepting every word of affection the staff and players, can gently send his way.

French First Division

Marseille show no mercy

PARIS, Nov 18: Marseille fired four goals to move within one point of Metz on Friday night as the troubled French outfit launched their battle against relegation with gusto, reports AFP.

Although the 4-1 win over fellow strugglers Metz will do nothing to save departing coach Abel Braga it was a move in the right direction for Marseille, now third bottom of the league on 18 points just behind Metz.

"This team will climb back up. I've always said it," said an emotional Braga, nevertheless

confirming his decision to leave the club.

"It was my last match," said the Brazilian, adding that he had taken the decision three weeks ago following the sacking of sporting manager Eric Di Meco.

And Braga said that despite the ups and downs with the club he would remember Marseille with fondness.

"I return to my country, but with Marseille in my heart," he said.

Marseille looked as if they were on a mission on front of the home crowd in the Stade

Velodrome with Djamel Belmadi opening the scoring in the 15th minute following a pass from team captain George Weah from just outside the penalty area.

Five minutes later Metz equalised when Frederic Meyrieu struck a free kick from 30 metres out straight into the hands of Marseille goalie Stephane Trevisan, who fumbled and let the shot in.

Jerome Leroy put Marseille ahead again just before half time and added a second for good measure after the break in the 62nd minute.

ICC has \$4m to probe 'fix'

LAHORE, Nov 18 (Reuters): International Cricket Council (ICC) President Malcolm Gray said on Friday the council's anti-corruption unit had a 4 million US dollar budget to investigate wrong-doing in the game.

He said the unit's leader, former London police chief Paul Condon, would send investigators around the world to collect evidence.

"In terms of criminality we have no power at all," Gray told a news conference here, adding each country was conducting its own inquiries.

The anti-corruption unit will give its first report next April to the code of conduct committee headed by Lord Griffith who will look into the findings before taking any action against an individual or cricket board, he said.

"I believe they have enormous job to carry out. Membership of ICC of any board found violating the code of conduct could be suspended by the ICC."

Cricket has been rocked by a series of corruption scandals in recent months, the most high-profile being the admission by former South Africa captain Hansie Cronje that he took money to fix matches.

Earlier this month a preliminary report by India's Central Bureau of Investigation named nine former international captains as being involved in match-fixing or having been linked with Indian bookmakers in different ways.

Gray meanwhile admitted that the proposal of shifting the ICC headquarters from London was in the pipeline.

He said in Singapore, discussions were held on the next location. "Holland, Monaco, Switzerland, Singapore and England are under consideration."

He said the ICC was also considering the appointment of both the third country umpires. He added that at the moment, the ICC was reviewing the standard of umpiring.

Veron out for one month

ROME, Nov 18: Lazio's Argentinian international midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron will be sidelined for almost a month after picking up an injury to his left leg in his country's match with Chile this week, reports AFP.

Club doctor Andrea Campi examined Veron shortly after he arrived back at the San Giacomo Hospital and said the player would be unavailable for selection from three to four weeks.

His leg was put in a cast and although he can continue working in the gym he will be unable to kick a ball for 20 days and may only be able to return in his club's last match before Christmas.

Veron picked up the injury during the 2-0 victory over Chile.

J-League

Miura back with a bang

TOKYO, Nov 18: Atsuhiko Miura proved he is back in form after an injury at the Asian Cup by scoring a goal and assisting for another to lead Yokohama Marinos to a 2-1 win over Cerezo Osaka in the J-League on Saturday, reports AFP.

It was the first game for the 26-year-old midfielder after he suffered a strained lumbar during a first-stage match against Qatar in Beirut at the Asian Cup, which eventually Japan went on to win for a second time.

Only two minutes after Osaka opened the scoring in the 19th minute, Miura dribbled through down the left for an equalizer.

Miura fired a sparkling shot in the 56th minute, which Osaka goalkeeper Seigo Shimokawa saved, but Korean defender Yoo Sang-Chul quickly collected the ball for a right-foot winner.

"I was able to move very well, trying to control the ball as many times as possible. That's what I'm satisfied with," said Miura after the first-stage winners' seventh win against five losses and a draw for 22 points.

Kashima Antlers kept the lead by beating Sanfrecce Hiroshima 2-1 for a nine wins, one defeat and three draws for 29 points, one point above Gamba Osaka and Kashima Reysol with two more games remaining in the second stage.

MU under fire

LONDON, Nov 18: Pressure group Shareholders United claim Manchester United's board have made a mockery of the club's new policy of openness after they would not answer certain questions at the annual general meeting at Old Trafford on Friday, reports AFP.

The board would not discuss the record kit deal with US firm Nike or the fiasco over the botched appointment of the club's first director of communications Alison Ryan.

But United insist they could not discuss these matters for legal reasons and commercial sensitivity.

Shareholders United have grave reservations about the 302.9 million pounds (454.35 million dollars) 13-year agreement with Nike, which starts at the end of next season.

Thais take Tiger Cup



BANGKOK, Nov 18: Worrawat Srimaka scored a hat-trick to steer Thailand to a comfortable 4-1 victory over Indonesia in the final to lift the Tiger Cup trophy at the Rajamangala Stadium Saturday night, reports AFP.

Srimaka, suspended for the semifinal match against Malaysia, was in his element, scoring all three goals in the first half before he was substituted early in the second half.

Thailand's win confirmed their status as soccer kings in Southeast Asia after first winning the Cup in 1996.

Thailand, who won 80,000 dollars as champions, set a fast and furious pace at the start of the match, causing all sorts of problems for the more unsettled Indonesian team.

It was Thailand's Srimaka who tested Indonesian goalkeeper Hendro Kartiko as early as the fourth minute. He latched on to a cross from the left but his shot went straight to Kartiko.

Indonesia, who received 40,000 dollars as runners-up, caused the Thai defence some trouble, but not seriously as Thailand continued their relentless attack and the crowd of over 50,000 had something to scream about when Srimaka scored in the 14th minute.

Thai skipper Surachai

Jaturapattarapong sent in a superb cross from the left flank and Srimaka rose high above the Indonesian defenders to head it home.

Two minutes later Thailand's Kiatikus 'Zico' Senamuang saw his shot well saved but there was no stopping the marauding Thais who got their second goal in the 18th minute, again through Srimaka.

Tawan Sripan sent in a high pass from midfield and the Indonesian defender misread the bounce of the ball which went over him to the unmarked Srimaka who made no mistake.

Indonesia hit one back two minutes later when Uston Nawawi beautifully curled in a freekick past the wall and goalkeeper Kartiko.

Boosted by this goal, Indonesia threw themselves into the game but it was too late. Srimaka got his hat-trick in the 43rd minute when he headed in a corner taken by Jaturapattarapong to make it 3-1.

Thailand completely outclassed Indonesia in the second half and they made it 4-1 in the 65th minute when Thanongsak Pajakkat slammed the ball home from just outside the box from a poor defensive clearance.

Indonesia were reduced to 10 men in the next minute when defender Diet Donald Laala received his second yellow card of the match.

MALAYSIA THIRD
Earlier, unfancied Malaysia



Thailand's Surachai Jirasrichote (R) congratulates teammate Worrawat Srimaka after the latter scored against Indonesia in the Tiger Cup final yesterday. — AFP photo

USA aware of the task



WATERFORD, Barbados, Nov 18: With one hurdle cleared, the US national team are preparing for a

stiff challenge in the final round of qualifying for the 2002 World Cup, reports AFP.

After vanquishing Barbados 4-0 on Wednesday the US will have three and a half months to prepare for their next meaningful match, against an underdog opponent in February in the six-national final round of qualifying for the North and Central America and Caribbean region.

The draw for the February tournament was scheduled to be held in Guatemala on Sunday.

The Americans know they will play Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Honduras and the winner of a special playoff between Guatemala and Costa Rica. Compared to the 1998 competition, there are no solid sides among the final six teams.

"Those teams are better than before," said midfielder-forward Cobi Jones, who scored the third goal on Wednesday. "We have to settle down and pre-

pare." US coach Bruce Arena felt his team was up to the task, claiming the world, or at least CONCACAF, hasn't seen the best of his team yet.

"Hats off to these guys," he said. "It was a great year for us. We faced some criticism that was unwarranted. To this day, we haven't put our best team on the field. I'm very confident we'll put a better team on the field in the next round."

The US did not have its full lineup available for Barbados - captain and playmaking midfielder Claudio Reyna, who served the final game of his two-match suspension and goalkeeper Kasey Keller had club commitments with Rayo Vallecano in Spain. In fact, Arena himself could not sit on the team bench or go into the team locker room before the match as he served the second game of a three-match ban.

While the US have visions of reaching their fourth consecutive World Cup, Barbados will have to wait four years to begin its quest to qualify. Still it was a major accomplishment just to get to the semi-final round, the tiny Caribbean country's best showing ever in qualifying.

pulled off a major upset when they defeated favourites Vietnam to win the bronze medal.

Two-goal hero Rusdi Suparman led the Malaysians to this unexpected victory with Rosdi Talib putting them ahead in the first half, followed by two goals from Suparman in the second.

Malaysia's win dashed Vietnam coach Alfred Reddi's hopes of returning home with at least one medal to pacify the soccer-crazy Vietnamese fans.

He said after the match that some of his players did not play to expectations as they had not really recovered physically after the semi-final match against Indonesia which went into extra-time.

Abdul Rahman Ibrahim was elated with the surprise result, saying that it was one of Malaysia's better matches and that the reserve players he fielded gave a good account of themselves.

"It's a good result and I am very happy," said Ibrahim.

Vietnam, who were bundled out of the semifinals by Indonesia on Thursday, created several goalscoring chances but their dismal finishing let them down.

They also felt the absence of attacking midfielder Nguyen Hong Son who was forced to sit out the match after receiving two yellow cards.

It was left to Vietnam stop striker Le Huynh Duc to get the goals but he was tightly marked by B. Rajiniradhin and none of his attempts really tested Malaysian reserve goalkeeper Abdul Azmin Azman.

In a closely contested first half, Malaysia nearly scored in the 39th minute but Ahmad Shaharuddin's freekick hit the left upright and Suparman headed the rebound wide.

However, in the 42nd minute, Malaysia led 1-0 when Rosdi Talib collected a pass from Jaafar Salleh and his shot from the right caught Vietnam goalkeeper Vo Van Hanh, who was off his line, off-guard.

He managed to get a hand to the ball but it still went into the net.

With the score 1-0 at half-time, Vietnam came storming back in the second half in search of an equaliser.

Despite a concerted effort Vietnam could not score and Rusdi Suparman made it 2-0 for Malaysia in the 54th minute after a defensive error.

With only the goalkeeper to beat, Suparman cleverly lifted over the on-rushing Vo for a superb goal.

Vietnam pushed their men forward but the Malaysian defence held firm and played the off-side trap well to frustrate the Vietnamese forwards.

Vietnam paid the price when in the 89th minute Suparman punished them with his second goal of the match in the 89th minute when he beat two defenders and slotted in the ball off the left post.

It was certainly a fine performance by the Malaysians who earned 20,000 dollars while Vietnam received half the amount.

"I'm disappointed we lost this match, but I have nothing to be ashamed of," national coach Horace "Tobacco" Beckles told the Daily Nation newspaper. "I feel bad that we lost in front of our home crowd, but I'm not disappointed because we achieved what we wanted. That was to bring respect back to football in Barbados."

Barbados did pull off one major upset, defeating Costa Rica earlier in the round.

The Barbadians (1-5), who had been eliminated from the competition before the match, need to find a way to bring get more money and support for its football association, according to Beckles. It will be an uphill battle because cricket is by far the most popular sport, far outdistancing soccer, on this island of 290,000 people.