Millennium Cup fails?

NEW DELHI. Jan 20: The Sahara Millennium Cup in India has struggled into its final phase with fans staying away and India's soccer authorities crying foul after last-minute withdrawals and the fielding of weakened teams, reports

Bosnia have already reached the semifinals in Calcutta next week after beating Uruguay B 3-2 on Thursday. They will play the winners of the quarterfinal between Yugoslavia and a Romania selection, which is being played in Goa today.

The other two quarterfinals take place in Calcutta this weekend. Today Chile take on Iceland, while Sunday sees Jordan face a Japan XI. The final will be played in Calcutta on January 25.

The two-week tournament was hit by the late pull-out of Cameroon and Iraq. The field was further reduced to 13 when Indonesia turned up with seven foreign players in contravention of the rules.

After the group matches. played before mostly empty stadia, and the early exit of the hosts, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) slashed ticket prices for the knockout stage.

"Commercially it was not a success." AIFF president Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi said on Friday, adding that total UEFA demands on Friday by spending had been about 160 million rupees (\$3.45 million).

The late withdrawals by reports Reuters. Cameroon and Iraq and the scratching of Indonesia forced the postponement of the tournament by two days and a revision of the fixtures.

These withdrawals post heavily, many sponsors withdrew and landed us in great difficulty," Dasmunshi said.

He added that Romania's ing body, the clear victor. soccer authorities also reneged on their promise to send their best team.

for higher fees was refused by the AIFF.

Critics said the AIFF was responsible for the tournament running into trouble after overhyping the event.

nounced Chilean World Cup decision to "go it alone" last is producing papers like this?" star Ivan Zamorano would lead | week. a list of well-known players at the tournament. "Things have been handled

in the most amateurish way, said Shyam Sundar Ghosh, soccer correspondent of The Statesman newspaper.

He put the blame for the problems on the AIFF's inefficiency and the lack of experience of the organisers.

Ranjit Gupta, an official at the West Bengal state soccer association, said it had turned out to be "a tournament of hoax and gimmick"

This way Indian football will lose credibility abroad and with spectators," he said.

Police want to talk to Anelka

SAINT-GERMAIN. France Jan 20: France and Paris St Germain forward Nicolas Anelka is set to face police questioning after assaulting a journalist from respected sports daily L'Equipe on Friday, reports AFP.

L'Equipe journalist Sebastien Tarrago, who was attending the French first division side's daily training session, told AFP he had logded a complaint to police alleging Anelka had "lightly assaulted" him.

According to an AFP journalist who witnessed the inci dent, Anelka slapped Tarrago in the face after a post-training session altercation at PSG's Camp de Loges training base in the Paris suburbs.

Tarrago explained that he tried to approach Anelka, who does not normally speak to the French press, as he was getting into his car.



NICOLAS ANELKA

An altercation between the player and Tarrago ensued and PSG stewards and other attending journalists were forced to intervene before Anelka slapped Tarrago in front of all present.

Tarrago, who is the newspaper's PSG correspondent, made a complaint to police in Saint-Germain (Yvelines)

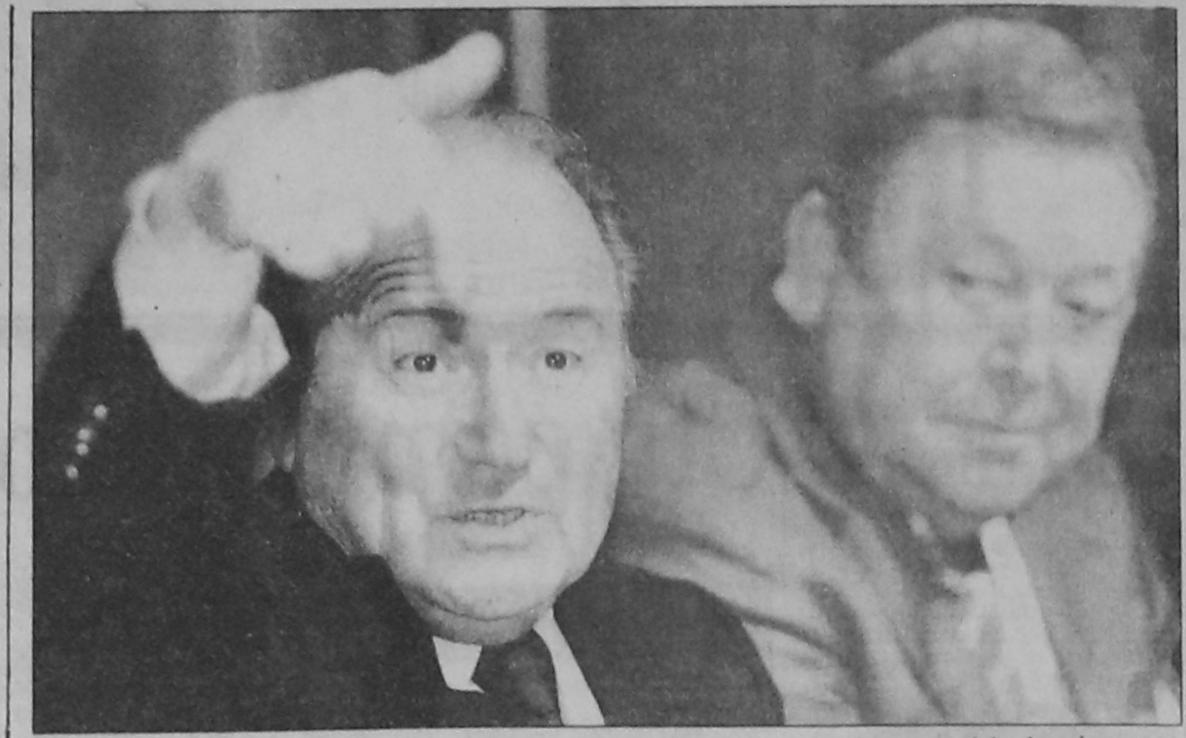
Anelka joined PSG last year for 31 million dollars from Real

Madrid.

English Premiership club Arsenal. Anelka leaving the London club after complaining of media harassment. PSG's deputy president

Laurent Perpere said he despeak to coach Luis Fernandez about it with a view to repairing | Friday. relations with the local media. which have fractured over the

affair. Friday afternoon's news conference at which PSG presented Didier Domi, their new signing switched the venue of the World and are looking forward to great from Newcastle.



FIFA president Sepp Blatter (L) making a point during a press conference at the headquarters of football's world governing body in Zurich on January 19. On his left is UEFA chief Lennart Potential upset in heavy rain. Johansson.

FIFA concedes to UEFA



ZURICH, Jan 20: Sepp world man, caved into

agreeing to withdraw proposals he made to the European Union over a new transfer regime,

dent of European soccer's rul-

Lennart Johansson, presi-

ing body UEFA, had arrived at the emergency meeting with what he described as two "nonnegotiable demands." After 90 minutes of talks Jo-

hansson left the headquarters of FIFA, world soccer's govern-Blatter said he regretted the bitter row between the two fed-

erations. The proposals he had Dasmunshi said Cameroon submitted to the EU last week pulled out after their demand | were now "invalid" and a "nonpaper"- to save face. Blatter stopped short of using the word "withdrawal" He said FIFA would re-start

negotiations with the EU jointly with UEFA who had been in-The organisers had an- censed by FIFA's unilateral

> taken the initiative to bring the football family together and work hand-in-hand to find a solution to this matter," Blatter UEFA vice-president Per Ravn

> "We have settled our differences and made the following mood, admitting he had made a decisions to go forward. First we will reinstate the (joint UEFA. UEFA/FIFA) Task Force.

Therefore we will start neonly document that formally includes ourselves. commits FIFA-UEFA is the one October.

"The last document sent on January 10, referred to as an unofficial non-paper, is declared not valid and we will inform the European Commis-

Johansson, who lost out to

Blatter in the FIFA presidential

elections in 1998, was satisfied with the talks, which were seen as a watershed in the relationship between the two major powerbases in the world's most popular sport. "We start again now from the

point where we had the Task Force," said Johansson. "We are satisfied with outcome of these discussions. Now we are back to co-operation. "It's not constructive to go

FIFA and UEFA are again talking with one voice. "I can only regret what happened. I have more important tasks then to ask: "Who the hell

back and blame each other.

Both men appeared together "As president of FIFA I have at a news conference along with FIFA general secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen. UEFA chief executive Gerhard Aigner and

> Blatter was in conciliatory 31 deadline. mistake failing to consult with

situation," said Blatter. "We are gotiations again and that the appealing for fair play and this

Today we came back to this

logue and not confrontation.

The European Commission look to bolster their sagging threatened to rule the current | confidence without the injured international transfer system Nicolas Anelka when they face illegal under EU competition nearby Thouars, bottom of the law if it were not changed to French third division. allow players to have the same freedom of movement within the 15 EU countries as other work-

FIFA's unilateral proposals club was relegated.

spect existing contracts.

will meet on Tuesday.

Blatter and Johansson in-

The EC said this week they intense speculation following were prepared to give the foot- the arrival of Finn Jari Litma-

nen and Fowler's involvement ball authorities more time to

to show the yellow card to my- only to go down to Nantes self or FIFA.

I'm satisfied we have a dia- title contenders Sedan while

would have enabled players to end their contracts if they disagreed with a coach's tactics, gave three months' notice or the The UEFA consensus is that kick on three minutes - to

clubs and players have to re-The Task Force will be reformed with Norway's Omdal again serving as chairman and

The group will discuss duration of contracts before resuming negotiations with the EC on Wednesday in Brussels.

sisted negotiations had not returned to square one, but they offered little hope that a deal could be worked out with the EC by the original January

"I regret the creation of this settle their differences.

Fowler and Liverpool manager Court believes Grobbelaar Gerard Hollier has also fuelled rumours of a transfer.



alleged that for- article. mer Liverpool and Zimbabwe goal

keeper Bruce Grobbelaar had fixed matches described him on Friday as a "crook, cheat, liar" and "traitor" after he lost his marathon legal battle to clear his name, reports AFP.

The Sun. Britain's highestselling daily paper, was not surprisingly crowing after the Court of Appeal in London upheld a challenge by the newspaper to a jury verdict in August 1999 that Grobbelaar had been libelled.

In a damning judgement, Lord Justice Simon Brown said the jury's original verdict was "an affront to justice" and added that "Grobbelaar's story is, quite simply, incredible."

The Sun published claims that the goalkeeper had deliberately conceded goals to rig matches in a series of articles in November 1994. Grobbelaar, who lives in

southern England, had sued the newspaper and its former editor, Stuart Higgins, for substantial compensation.

The newspaper dedicated no less than 16 pages of reports to the ruling on Friday, accompanied by photographs of a Sun journalist "informing Grobbelaar of the decision" in South Africa, where he is coaching the modest SuperSport United team in Pretoria.

"Grobbelaar was finally The tabloid news- nailed as a lying, crooked paper which first match-fixer," said a front-page

The ruling "proved we were right when we exposed former Liverpool goalkeeper Grobbelaar as a corrupt traitor whose despicable deals with betting

Just in 6 hrs!

COLUMBUS, Jan 20: Tickets for the United States' World Cup qualifying match against Mexico on February 28 sold out Friday, reports AP.

Nearly 19,000 tickets were now." sold in advance and the 5,000 in six hours.

first to college, high school and in England youth teams as well as the season ticket-holders.

consecutive home World Cup ciation) put the word out that qualifying match to be held in they didn't want me to work in Columbus. The US men's team played to a scoreless tie against Costa Rica before a crowd cans then won 4-0 at Barbados on Nov 15 to win their semifinal

the 2002 tournament in Japan and South Korea. Other nations in the finals are Jamaica, Honduras. Trinidad and Tobago and Costa Rica.

syndicates threatened the very fabric of our national game." Grobbelaar, 43, stands to

lose the 85,000 pounds leaving." Fowler told Sky (127,000 dollars, 136,000 euros) he was awarded in damages and faces having to pay the costs of the case, estimated at more than one million pounds.

Mark Lawrenson, Grobbelaar's teammate in Liverpool's 1984 European Cup-winning team, told The Sun: "No longer will Bruce be remembered as a great keeper and personality. He was both of those, but everything he won means nothing

Times newspaper, remaining tickets were bought owned like The Sun by Rupert Murdoch's News International US Soccer, tried to keep group, said Grobbelaar was tickets out of the hands of embittered that he had been Mexico's fans by offering them excluded from coaching posts

In an interview with the Crew's Major League Soccer newspaper 10 months ago, he said: "I couldn't categorically The game will be the second say that the FA (Football Asso-England, but that was the strong impression."

The core of the Sun's case 24,430 on Oct. 11. The Ameri- was a series of secretly videoed meetings at which Grobbelaar was heard to confess to taking money for losing matches and The six-nation regional finals having missed out on some will produce three qualifiers for payments for failing to do so.

He claimed at the various libel trials that his confessions were false in an attempt to bring the real culprits to jus-

Platini PARIS, Jan 20: Former na

tional coach Michel Platini continued his rise up the ranks of the French sporting establishment on Friday when he was elected a vice-president of the French Football Federation (FFF), reports AFP. Platini, who skippered the

national side to the 1984 European Championship trophy, his country's first major honour in the game, has also gained influence at world body FIFA where he serves as special advisor to FIFA president Sepp Platini, 45, made his name

at St Etienne in the late 1970s and early 1980s before a switch to Juventus in Italy brought a host of honours, including the The final that year was

mainly Italian fans when Liverpool fans charged towards Juventus supporters, causing a dividing wall to collapse and a Platini, who becomes one of

four vice-presidents at the FFF. said president Claude Simonet had persuaded him to come on "Simonet asked me and I am

flattered and honoured as I have always been very attached to French football. I am passionate about the game," said Platini, who had a short unsuccessful stint as national coach. including a dismal 1992 European Championships.

Platini said he saw no n-

French Cup

Bordeaux, Rennes win

PARIS, Jan 20: French title Bordeaux eased through to the last 32 of the French Cup on Friday with a comprehensive 5-0 swatting of amateur side Issoire, reports

the tie from the outset.

the second to douse fears of a

the league cup, which has seen

more than its fair share of re-

cent upsets, then eased off un-

til Portuguese star Pauleta

scored twice in a minute on the

hour with a header and a crisp

cross-shot before wrapping up

his hattrick with five minutes

caused a storm last year by

struggling Paris St Germain will

Anelka, who is in hot water

Rennes thanked experienced

for slapping a reporter on Fri-

than a sore fist.

deau.

day, has a sore toe - rather

French midfielder Jocelyn

Gourvennec, a former league

title winner with Nantes, for two

ingamp - the first a fine free

sandwich a headed consolation

Determined

Fowler

favour Liverpool striker Robbie

Fowler has vowed to fight his

way back into the starting line-

up at the English Premiership

future has been the subject of

Talk of a dispute between

But Fowler Insisted Satur-

"But I have been at Liverpool

since I was 11 or 12 and I'm

very happy here. I'm not playing

lot to achieve medal-wise."

rift with Houllier.

him every day.

with each other.

drid - every day.

at the moment - but I've got a

Fowler scotched reports of a

"I get on very well with

"People say I have got a bit of

"People are in front of me

Fowler admitted he speaks

But although Fowler would

The Liverpool man added:

"Maybe in the future I would

FFF elevates

like to go abroad - but I am

perfectly happy at Liverpool."

Gerard Houllier and speak to

a conflict with him but that

could not be further from the

truth - we get on very very well

but I have got to pull my socks

to his former England and Liv-

erpool teammate Steve

McManaman - now at Real Ma-

not rule out a move to Europe,

he is not contemplating a

switch in the near future.

up and work a bit harder.

day he had no intention of

leaving and wanted to fight for

The 25-year-old's Anfield

giants, reports AFP

in a late-night fracas.

his place.

LONDON, Jan 20: Out-of-

from Pierre-Emmanuel Bour-

first half goals against Gu-

remaining.

Bordeaux, who remain in

from the international game ing as long as possible and after next week's World Cup Rennes joined Elie Baup's qualifier, the player's lawyer side in the next round after said Friday, reports AFP. winning their Breton derby with The latest tug of war which

fellow first division side Guhas raged over the last few days ingamp 2-1 between Leeds and the South Bordeaux's game against African Football Association what was effectively a seventh has "deeply affected" Radebe, division outfit drew a 12.500 lawyer Gary Blumberg told the crowd for their match, played at Press Association. Clermont-Ferrand, and they The 31-year-old central deduly stamped their quality on

position he has been left in is World Cup winner Christountenable, the Press Associaphe Dugarry hit the opener tion reported. after just 11 minutes following But Radebe has still not good work by Sylvain Legwinski ruled out hope a compromise and five minutes later Belgian can be reached enabling him to midfielder Marc Wilmots netted captain South Africa to the next

World Cup in 2002. That possibility looks remote with Leeds and SAFA at loggerheads over Radebe's club and country commitments.

fender is understood to find the

world by retiring

Leeds boss O'Leary is furious Radebe has been called up for next weekend's South Africa World Cup qualifier against Burkina Faso - ruling him out of the Yorkshire club's crunch

Fourth division Calais FA Cup clash with Liverpool. "Something has to give and powerful submitted by the Task Force in situation and now I don't have reaching the French Cup final this constant pressure applied by both sides has deeply af-On Saturday Calais take on | fected Lucas." Radebe's lawyer. Gary Blumberg, told PA Sport.

Radebe raises the stakes "He hates to let anyone Leeds and South down and whenever there is a Africa star Lucas national call up which results Radebe is set to in a clash of fixtures, one team

stun the football has to do without him. "Lucas wants to go on play-



LUCAS RADEBE

while nothing is certain in life. I possibly give him the best South Africa and play. chance.

Radebe's retirement, but added: "Lucas wants to inform SAFA personally about this decision. shouldn't be undecided. But he but I believe he has already has to make a decision and it is spoken to national team coach Carlos Queiroz.

"But because Leeds and SAFA have been unable to reach an agreement then Lucas will be making a formal state.

ment next week. "It's very sad. He will be a loss to South African and international football, and we are

hoping to try and find a way to play a proper farewell match. "But I would not rule out the possibility of trying to find a compromise which suits Lucas,

Leeds and SAFA." The decision concerning Radebe's future comes on a day when Leeds boss David O'Leary revealed the central defender had been advised by a top surgeon - after undergoing knee surgery in the summer - to quit international football to prolong his career.

O'Leary was also looking for Radebe to finally make a commitment one way or the other. with the 42-year-old Irishman's wish now having seemingly been granted.

O'Leary had said: "He has to decide whether he wants to be captain of this club and play against Liverpool next week and think he feels this decision will in the other games, or go with

"He signed a new contract Blumberg has not confirmed recently to say that his priority exact details surrounding is Leeds. We have to see if he is going to be true to his word.

> "It baffles me because he not going to be South Africa or Leeds making that decision



Issoire's Lionel Pereira (R) tackles Bordeaux's Christophe Dugarry off the ball during their French Cup fixture in Clermont-Ferrand on January 19.

Terim crisis

"I'd like a pound each time everybody's asked me if I'm leaving." Fowler told Sky



FLORENCE, Italy, Jan 20: Fiorenmoved tina quickly to avert a crisis Friday after

their Turkish coach Fatih Terim said he would leave the Serie A club when his contract expires in June, reports AFP.

appointed tycoon Mario Sconcerti as a new vice-president with the specific aim of keeping the Turk on board.

Sconcerti, who is in charge of day-to-day running of Fiorentina president Vittorio Cecchi Gori's media empire, left no-one in doubt what was the nature of his mission.

"From tomorrow I will try and find out what is dividing us and Terlin," said Sconcerti. "I don't know what it is despite having spoken to Cecchi Gori and also having listened to what Terim had to say."

Another Fiorentina director things forward rather than keep Giancarlo Antognoni had earlier the team in a state of uncersaid Cecchi Gori was consulting tainty and give people false lawyers in a bid to hold on to hope. Terim, who is persistently being linked with AC Milan after con- Fiorentina fans out on the tract talks between Alberto streets of Florence in scenes Zaccheroni and the San Siro that have not been seen since outfit broke down.

Antognoni, the playmaker in arch-rivals Juventus for a then Italy's 1982 World Cup-winning world record fee. In what was a clear bid to side, said: "Apart from when we persuade their highly-coveted were relegated to Serie B this is vanni Trapattoni, has won adcoach to stay the Florence club my saddest day since I joined miration for steering his team Fiorentina."

> saray to the UEFA Cup - a first talismanic Argentinian striker continental triumph for a Gabriel Batistuta to AS Roma. Turkish club, told journalists he would not take up an option for another season.

> season as my contract de- seen his position strengthened mands," he said. "The things by persistent reports - some that have happened since I emanating from the San Siro arrived here lead me to lose club's boardroom itself - that faith in the future here.

> Terim, who replaced Gioto third place - Fiorentina are Earlier Terim, who last year also the division's top scorers coached Istanbul outfit Galata- in spite of the loss of the club's

Terim's decision brought

Roberto Baggio was sold to

However he has had a difficult relationship with members "I will go at the end of the of the board and has recently AC Milan want him as new "I have made up my mind coach in the summer with Zacafter a sleepless night and I cheroni now looking likely to thought it was better to bring leave the northern Italian side.

best for Chelsea is best for me.

"I had a hernia operation

The game now is a squad game.

and we have to work together.

niggling problem that caused

Bosnich being brave



nich said Satur- he could not hold down a day he is not ex- regular first-team place - even about eight weeks ago on a pecting to walk after his free-transfer signing

will join his new team-mates fight for a first-team place," said next week and will first have to Bosnich. regain full match fitness after a

LONDON, Jan 20: recent hernia operation. Bosnich experienced months keeper Mark Bos- of frustration at United where

straight into the Chelsea team Fabien Barthez last summer. "My immediate future is to from Manchester United, re- settle myself down both on and off the pitch, to continue with The Australian goalkeeper my rehabilitation and then to

before the arrival of Frenchman

"At the end of the day what's

me to miss games at the end of last season, so it just needed to be sorted. Italian Carlo Cudicini, who has already battled his way ahead of Dutch international Ed de Goey for the goalkeeper's jersey at Stamford Bridge, cer-

tainly has no intention of relinquishing his position without a fight. De Goey will also be looking for some reassurances from the 'club over his now clouded future after being pushed down

the pecking order along with

England youth international Rhys Evans. "What it means for Ed and Carlo is more competition in the goalkeeping position." said Chelsea's managing director Colin Hutchinson.

"Mark hasn't played firstteam football for some time and he knows he's going to have to work hard to get into the number one spot. He doesn't expect to get into the side immediately.

week and will be working very hard on his fitness with the staff here. He knows the competition will be tough.

Nigeria call up Kanu

LAGOS, Jan 20: Arsenal striker Nwankwo Kanu has been recalled by Nigeria for next weekend's World

Cup qualifying match against Sudan, reports Reuters. Kanu was dropped from the Nigerian squad that beat Zambia 1-0 last week in Lagos in an

African Nations' Cup qualifier. The Nigerian Football Association (NFA) said at the time it did not invite the striker because of a previous controversy He had previously played for with Arsenal over Kanu's release for international matches.

"Now everything has been settled and we expect Kanu to report in Lagos with his colleagues to start training on plored the incident and would January 22," NFA press officer Austin Mgbolu told reporters on

fica was the other change to the Several journalists boycotted 19-man squad, who are all with leader of this team not only on cabi Haifa). Bina Ajuwa (Benoverseas clubs, he said. He said the NFA had to have him rejoin the squad

Striker Bina Ajuwa of Ben-

Cup qualifier to southern Port- things."

Harcourt city from Lagos. "We want to be using the many internationally approved stadiums we have in Nigeria for matches." The January 27 international will be the first in

Valderrama extends stay at Mutiny

TAMPA, Florida, Jan 20: Colombian veteran Carlos Valderrama has signed a two-year contract extension with the Tampa Bay Mutiny of Major League Soccer, his club announced Friday, reports AFP.

have Carlos rejoin the team and are happy that he has come to terms with MLS." Tampa Bay head coach Alfonso Mondelo "He is an extremely impor-

"We're extremely pleased to

Fort-Harcourt.

Nigeria, with three points, are third in the table behind Ghana and Liberia. Sierra Leone complete the group from which only one team will qualify for the 2002 World Cup finals.

SQUAD Goalkeepers: Ike Shorounmu (Besiktas). Peterside Idah (Classic FC, South Africa). Defenders: Taribo West

(Derby County), Isaac Oko-

ronkwo (Shakhtar Donetsk), Celestine Babayaro (Chelsea). Ifeanyi Udeze (Salonika), Godwin Okpara (Paris St Germain). Midfielders: Garba Lawal (Roda Kerkrade), Sunday Oliseh (Borussia Dortmund). Austin

"Jay-Jay" Okocha (Paris St

Germain)

Strikers: Jonathan Akpoborie (VIL Wolfsburg). Victor Agali (Hansa Rostock). Victor Ikepba (Borussia Dortmund), Tijjani Babangida (Genelertant player to the Mutiny, the bilirgi). Yakubu Aiyegbeni (Macthe field but off. We're excited fica), Nwankwo Kanu (Arsenal), Julius Aghahowa (Shakhtar) Donetsk). Finidi George (Real) Mallorca)

European Cup in 1985. marred by the death of 39

fatal crush to ensue.

flict of interests with his Fir A post as he draws no salary with the world body.



An AFP file photo of Michel Platini who was elected vicepresident of French Football Federation on January 19.

"He'll start training next