



Mohammedan's prolific striker Alfaz (17) scoring the winner against Fakirerpool at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday.

— Star photo

## Diego's agent optimistic

BUENOS AIRES, Jan 2: Diego Maradona's manager Guillermo Coppola told a Buenos Aires TV channel Thursday that discussions to make the mercurial Argentine the president and coach of Italian Serie A club Napoli have been "positive," reports AP.

Coppola spoke on his return from Italy, where he negotiated on behalf of Maradona and said the club has proposed a deal to bring the 1986 World Cup hero back to the club where he played from 1984 to 1991.

Napoli, who won their only two Serie A titles with Maradona in 1987 and 1990 but later sued him, has fallen to last place in the Italian first division having lost eight of its last nine matches.

"This problem is going to settle in the first days of January. It all depends on whether Napoli's president Corrado Ferlaino is willing to give away his club shares," Coppola said. "Maradona's offer is real. If Ferlaino sells his shares, Diego will take care of Napoli's soccer activities and will have absolute powers."

Coppola did not elaborate on Maradona's proposal to the Italian club. Earlier this week Maradona had said that his appointment as president and coach of Napoli "is almost 60 percent a fact."

Maradona was transferred from FC Barcelona of Spain to Napoli in 1984 for a then world-record 7.5 million dollar fee. He led Napoli to two league titles, an Italian Cup crown (1987) and their only international honour, the 1989 European Cup.

However, he often feuded with club management, sparing over training and other matters. In March 1991, he tested positive for cocaine during a routine doping test and was barred from soccer internationally for 15 months.

In December of 1990, Napoli sued its star claiming that his behaviour had damaged the club's reputation, and Maradona countered later that month by saying he wanted to leave Italy having grown tired of the relentless media attention.

After his drug suspension, he refused to return to Napoli and demanded a transfer. FIFA intervened and pressured the club to sell him to Sevilla, where he played an unremarkable half season before returning to Argentina.

He has returned to play with Boca Juniors on a number of occasions, each ending in "retirement."

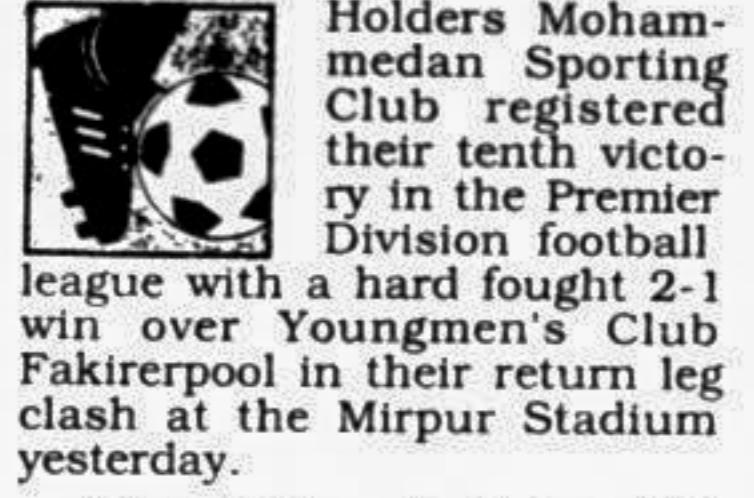
## Hudson hurt in road mishap

LONDON, Jan 2: Former Chelsea soccer star Alan Hudson was in critical condition Tuesday after being hit by a car while walking home in the east end of London, reports AP.

Hudson, 46, who also played for Arsenal and Stoke, underwent emergency surgery for internal and head injuries after being struck Monday night.

## MSC earn full points

Sports Reporter



Holders Mohammedan Sporting Club registered their tenth victory in the Premier Division football league with a hard fought 2-1 win over Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool in their return leg clash at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday.

In a well-contested match marked a series of mistakes by the man-in-uniform Tayeb Hossain forwards Don and Alfaz struck one goal each for the winners while Jalal senior pulled one back for Fakirerpool. Mohammedans had won the first leg encounter 3-1. Mohammedans, inspired by leaders Muktiyoddha Sangsads draw against Brothers Union on Wednesday, took the lead when Don, capitalising on a rebound after a goal mouth melee, tapped the ball home in the 14th minute. The striker joins Abahani forward Amin Rana at the top of the individual goalscorers' list having eight goals each.

A funny thing happened when the referee blew the short whistle in the 42nd minute and revised the decision after a minute when both teams had left the ground for break. The teams however had to return to the field and play the remaining three minutes before going for the interval.

Buoyed by the slim 1-0 lead the black and whites produced two good chances early in the second session. But poor finishing let them down.

Fakirerpool levelled the margin when Jalal senior volleyed home from 25-yards after being fed by Moni in the 37th minute.

But their joy lasted a minute

points from 15 matches. Mukti has 33 points with one match in hand.

Meanwhile, the worst incident happened in the 42nd minute, when Mohammedan defender Nazrul handled the ball inside the danger area and the referee overlooked it. All the Fakirerpool players condemned Tayeb and few of them even physically attacked him and demanded a penalty which was turned down.

Fakirerpool defender Rezaul, who was seen manhandling the referee, was only cautioned with a yellow card when the match resumed after three minutes.

Mohammedans, with the win, took a temporary one-point lead over Muktiyoddha having raised their tally to 34

### Rajshahi football

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Jan 2: Soniachandi Sporting Club became champions beating Tekharia Sports Club by a solitary goal in the Naogaon Bijoy Dibash football tournament final held at Mirpur Chalantika under Shibganj in Chittagong district yesterday.

Meanwhile, Kansat Sporting Club emerged undefeated champions and Rohanpur club became the runners-up in the Bijoy Dibash football tournament held at Kansat Stadium under Shibganj in Chittagong yesterday.

It was the eighth win for Badda in 15 matches which raised their tally to 28 points, one ahead of second placed Wanderers.

Wanderers remained stuck to their previous 18 points on completion of their 15 outing.



Teammates tries to prevent Youngmen's Fakirerpool skipper Tofazzel (18) from getting into a dispute with the referee during their yesterday's Premier league match with Mohammedan. Tofazzel was challenging the legitimacy of Mohammedans' second goal.

— Star photo

## For the growth of Asian soccer

SINGAPORE, Jan 2: Asian soccer will seek more corporate money to bolster its growth but will avoid losing control to television and sponsors, the sport's top regional official said Friday, reports AP.

"We need television. We need sponsors. But we want healthy relationships," said Peter Velappan, general secretary of the Asian Football Confederation. "Football is for sale but not its soul."

Velappan was addressing a news conference on next week's Football Expo '98, billed as the sport's first worldwide trade show. More than 600 participants are expected, including FIFA head Joseph Blatter and other top-level officials.

"We should really look at the American sports model, particularly the NBA," Velappan said. "There are a lot of lessons to be learned."

But at the same time, he added, "We don't want to be like an American game where they are totally dependent on television and sponsors."

As an example, he cited the potential profits from pay-per-view television as opposed to the need to ensure that at least some high-profile games are available to the general public.

Velappan noted Asian soccer's long history. All 45 countries belong to his federation and huge sellout crowds were on hand for qualifying matches that resulted in four teams making the World Cup finals this year for the first time, he said.

## Amsterdam may stage Champs' Cup final

GENEVA, Jan 2: Amsterdam was tentatively announced as the site of the European Champions' Cup final on May 20, with Stockholm and Paris hosting the Cup Winners' and UEFA Cup championship matches, UEFA announced Tuesday, reports AP.

The Cup Winners' Cup final will be held May 13 at Rasunda Stadium in the Swedish capital Stockholm, while Paris' Parc des Princes will be the site for the UEFA final on May 6, the first time a neutral venue and one game has been used to decide that tournament.

In previous years, the UEFA Cup had a two-leg final with each team hosting one match.

The Amsterdam announcement was tentative, pending on the stadium authorities agreeing to UEFA's contract within 10 days and renouncing all commercial rights at the facility.

If Amsterdam fails to agree by the deadline, then London's Wembley Stadium and Barcelona's Nou Camp Stadium are the main contenders for the Champions' final, said Thomas Kurth, the head of UEFA's competitions department.

The European Super Cup, which pits the winners of the Champions' and Cup Winners' Cups, will be played in Monaco's Stade Louis II Aug. 28.

## No change of heart!

LONDON, Jan 2: (AFP): The 17,000-plus members of the all-male Marylebone Cricket Club, the headquarters of British cricket, will vote in February on whether women should be allowed as members. It was announced on Wednesday.

The committee, which met at Lord's this month to discuss the controversial move, sent a report outlining its decision to all members on Tuesday.

The last time an attempt was made to introduce female members was in 1991, when Rachael Hayhoe-Flint, a former England women's captain, was backed by four influential members, but failed to gain the necessary two-third majority. It was decided then to raise the matter again in five years.

This year a working party, under the chairmanship of Charles Robins, reported there were still mixed feelings among the members.

In a statement the committee said, "The report stressed that MCC has always played a dual role as a prominent custodian and promoter of cricket on the one hand and, on the other, as a private association of members devoted to the game."

— Star photo

## 'Queen Helen' passes away

CARMEL, California, Jan 2 (AP): Tennis great Helen Wills Moody, who won eight Wimbledon titles and was one of the premier figures in America's golden era of sports, has died. She was 92.

Moody died Thursday at Carmel Convalescent Hospital, which would not disclose the cause of death.

Known for hitting the ball harder than any woman, she ruled her sport in the 1920s and '30s and her trademark white eyeshade became an enduring tennis fad.

Moody, nicknamed "Little Miss Poker Face" and "Queen Helen," won 31 major titles including doubles and mixed doubles. Besides Wimbledon, she captured seven singles US crowns and four French championships.

She won her first US championship in 1923 and retired after winning Wimbledon in

Club. "Children are great imitators," she said in a 1984 interview with the Monterey County Herald. "I watched the seniors play and the visiting Australian champions."

One year after she started playing at age 14, she won the first of her two US junior titles. She was just 17 in 1923, when she won the US women's singles championship — the youngest champion at the time.

She won an Olympic gold medal in Paris in 1924, the last time tennis was an Olympic sport until it returned at the 1984 Seoul Games. She was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1959 and was the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year in 1935.

Moody played a power game, slamming both forehand and backhand shots the length of the court. Her serious demeanor led to her "poker face" nickname.

She never showed any ex-

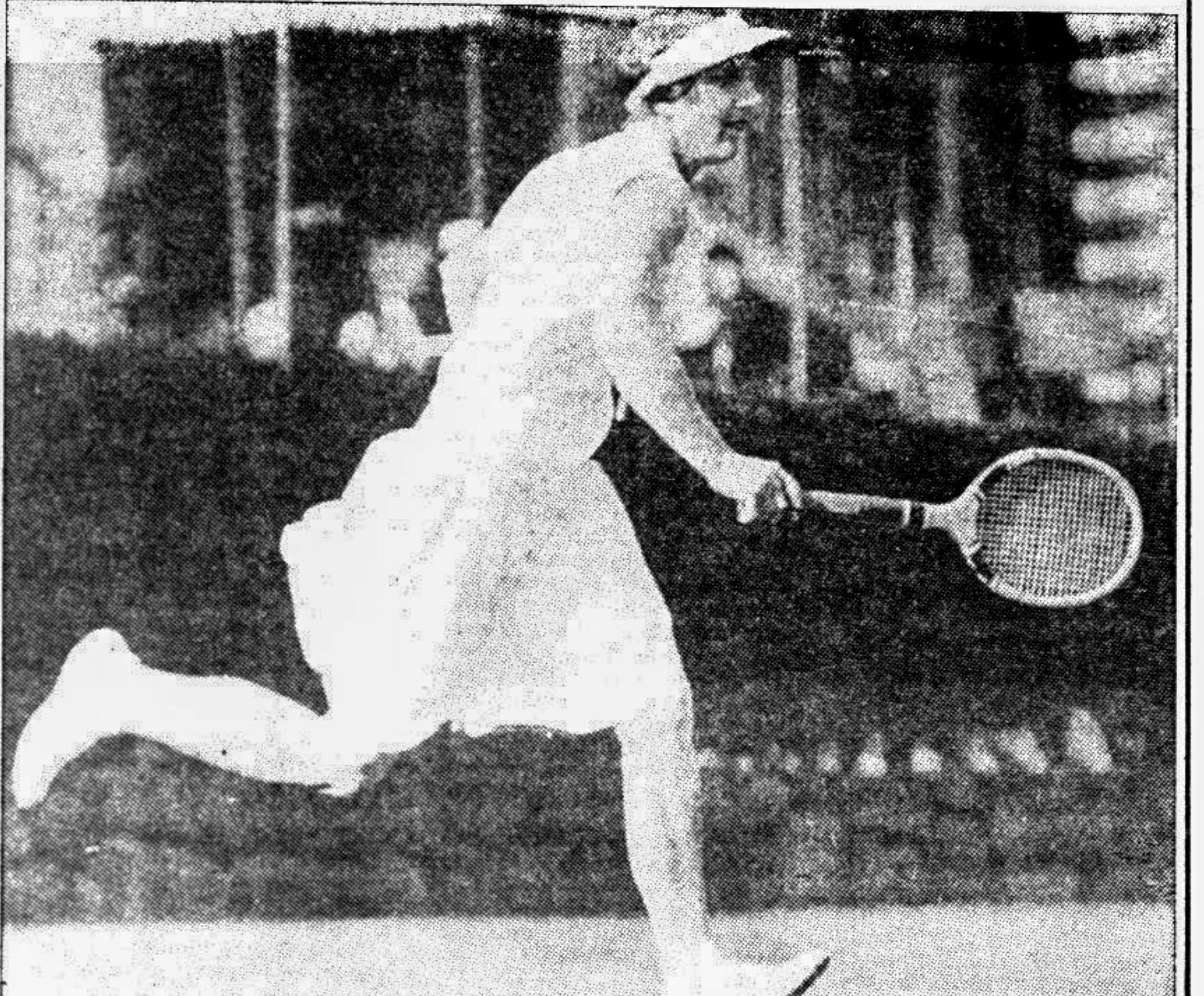
aminers, including actor Charlie Chaplin, who when asked to name the most beautiful thing he had ever seen, said: "the movement of Helen Wills playing tennis."

She wrote three books, including her autobiography "15-30: The Story of a Tennis Player," published in 1937. In the 1920s, she also wrote a tennis instruction book and a mystery, "Death Serves an Ace."

She followed tennis closely in her later years, watching matches on television.

"She admired Martina Navratilova greatly as a tennis player who broke her [Wimbledon] record," Los Angeles tennis historian Jeanne Cherry said. "I once asked her how she felt about Martina breaking her record, and she said, 'Well, you know, she pumps iron.'

She divorced in 1937 and two years later remarried and took the name Helen Wills



1938. She was 18-2 in singles at the Wightman Cup, a women's team event between Britain and the United States.

Moody learned the game without ever taking a lesson — picking it up from watching players at the Berkeley Tennis

pression on the court. Nobody knew what she was thinking," said Margaret Osborne duPont, a 1947 Wimbledon champ.

Moody led a reclusive life after she retired, causing tennis great Alice Marble to dub her the "Greta Garbo of tennis."

Moody Roark. She was also an accomplished artist, with her drawings and paintings exhibited in the United States and abroad.

There are no survivors. Her ashes will be scattered at sea and there will be no service.

## Serie A's super Sunday



ROME, Jan 2: League leaders Inter Milan face unbeaten champions Juventus on Sunday as 1998 kicks off with the clash so far in this season's Italian title race, reports Reuters.

Inter have been top of Serie A since the third week of the campaign and were undefeated before they travelled to third placed Udinese the weekend before Christmas.

"I admire the way Del Piero plays, he's always a danger," Ronaldo said. "But Juve are very strong technically and also physically, they're not just Del Piero."

"(Zinedine) Zidane is a player who can decide the outcome of a game too because he controls the rhythm of the play."

Inter will be without their own midfield playmaker, Dutch international Aron Winter, who fractured his left cheekbone against Auxerre and is likely to be out until mid-February.

He will be replaced on Sunday by Frenchman Benoit Cauet or by the more defensive-minded Argentine Javier Zanetti, who filled in for him in the match in Sicily.

Juventus, the only unbeaten side in Serie A going into 1998 with eight victories and five draws, are almost certain to be without French midfielder Didier Deschamps, who missed the whole of December through injury and suspension.

Their only other notable absentee is forward Nicola Amoruso, who broke a leg the

new year with Inter — Juventus, it's a match I want to play straight away."

It is also a match which pits Ronaldo, with 14 goals this season in all competitions, against Alessandro Del Piero, who scored a hatrick in Juve's last match to take his tally for the season to 16.

Sunday's match brings together two sides with intriguingly different styles.

Inter are a disparate collection of hugely talented individuals gathered from all parts of the world while Juventus are the ultimate team side, their squad based very much on the best Italy has to offer.

Inter rely on fast counter-attacks, Juventus prefer patient build-up in their opponents half of the pitch.

Inter-Juventus is not the only big match on a day which could well prove decisive for this year's Italian championship.

Indeed, the top six sides in the league are all involved in head-to-head clashes.

Udinese seek to build on their fine defeat of Inter when they travel to fifth-placed AS Roma while Parma, in fourth, face sixth-placed Lazio.

With AC Milan at Napoli in the battle of the fallen giants and Fiorentina playing Sampdoria, Italian soccer could hardly stage a bigger party to welcome in the new year.

## The Daily Star TV Guide

### STAR SPORTS

7:30am Tilawat aur Tarjuman/Hamzat 8:20 Cartoons 8:30 Khabrain 9:45 Visitors Book 9:45 Jubilee Plus 5:00 Britania Marigold Tea Time Cinema: "Sultana" (Sunny Deol, Sri Devi, Dharmendra, Juhu Chawla, Karan Kapoor) 8:00 Awaz 8:30 Kiran Kher Today 9:30 Star News 10:00 Ghutan 10:30 Newsrack 11:00 Rin Ek Do Teen 12:00mn L A Law 1:00 STAR News 1:30 Movie :Necessity 3:30 Hardcastle and McCormick 4:30 The Darling Buds of May 5:30 21 Jump Street

### STAR MOVIES

7:30am Family: Malachi's Cove PG 9:30 Classic: The Long Duel 12:10 Action: Die Hard With A Vengeance 15:10 Comedy: Bye Bye Love 15:30 Horror: Tomb of Ligeia 12:50 Action: Winners and Sinners 15 (Hindi Subtitles) 7:30 Thriller: Muriel's Wedding 15:30 Film: 10:30 NBA Action 1:30 NBA Basketball 4:00 NFL Blast 5:00 Sportscenter International Edition 5:30 Cycling 6:30 Australian Cricket 2nd Ansett Australia Test D-2 South Africa vs. Australia 2nd Test D-2 H/L South Africa vs. Australia

### ESPN

6:00am Australian Cricket 2nd Ansett Australia Test D-2 South Africa vs. Australia-Live 1:00 NBA Action 1:30 NBA Basketball 4:00 NFL Blast 5:00 Sportscenter International Edition 5:30 Cycling 6:30 Australian Cricket 2nd Ansett Australia Test D-2 H/L South Africa vs. Australia 2nd Test D-2 H/L South Africa vs. Australia