

Mehdi on top alone

Sports Reporter

Mehdi Hasan Parag earned a solo lead in the qualifying round of the fourth United Insurance International Masters chess tournament yesterday. In the fifth round of the nine-round Swiss league held at the NSC Chess room, Parag defeated Kambar Ali to remain atop the table with full five points. Mohammad Nooruddin, who had also been sharing the top spot before the start of yesterday's round, fell apart from the race when Kazi Mahbub Ahmed held him. Nooruddin, with his collection of 4.5 points, now shares the second spot along with Aminul Islam Palash and Anisuzzaman Mallick. Besides, Anis beat Kazi Selim Ahmed while Palash overcame Naim Arefin Ratul. Thirteen players were sharing the crowded third place with each having four points to their credit. The sixth round will start at the same venue today at 3 pm.

Zia Smriti cricket

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, Feb 9: Juba Cricket School defeated Bosepara Cricket Club by 76 runs in the third round of the 10th Shaheed Zia Smriti Cricket tournament of the Rajshahi Government College playground today. Winning the toss, Juba Cricket School batted first and made 195 runs for seven wickets in the stipulated 25 overs. Shohag, Ripon and Bablu bagged 67, 39 and 20 runs. In reply, Bosepara scored 119 runs for all in 20 overs. In the second match of the day at the same venue, Elite Club outplayed Mohammadpur Tarun Sangha by eight wickets. Mohammadpur won the toss and scored 144 runs for nine wickets in the stipulated 25 overs. In reply, Elite made 148 runs for two wickets in 25 overs.

CONCACAF Gold Cup Brazil, Jamaica in last four

LOS ANGELES, California, Feb 9 (AP/AFF): World champions Brazil and Jamaica reached the semi-finals of the CONCACAF Gold Cup Sunday. Jamaica scored twice in the space of two minutes (86 and 88) for Brazil, while Ednuino in the seventh and Romario in the 19th grabbed the other two goals as Brazil thrashed El Salvador 4-0 in their final Group One match. The South Americans, who are playing the tournament sanctioned by the governing body of Central and North America and the Caribbean by special invitation, finished first round play with two draws and a victory. Paul Hall scored twice to lead Jamaica past Guatemala 3-2 at the Los Angeles Coliseum. Jamaica would advance to the semifinals against Mexico or the United States unless they lose to El Salvador by three goals or more on Monday night. If Jamaica wins, they would play Mexico on Thursday night. If they tie or lose by two goals or fewer, they would play the United States on Tuesday night.

A sweet & sour day for Goran

SPLIT, Croatia, Feb 9: Croatian tennis star Goran Ivanisevic expressed his regrets Sunday that he would not be playing for his country in this month's Davis Cup match in Finland, but said it had been unavoidable, reports AFP. Ivanisevic, who beat top-seeded Briton Greg Rusedsksi in the Croatian indoors tournament final here, had threatened not to play in the Davis Cup unless Staud Rivanbegovic stood down as president of the Croatian Tennis Federation, the pair has a long-standing feud. When Croatia's four-man team for the Euro-African Zone match against Finland was announced, Ivanisevic's name was predictably not included. "I am unhappy that I am not playing for Croatia, but it seems that it had to be that way. I don't deserve this kind of treatment," he told Croatian television after the match, which he won 7-6, 7-6.



England wicketkeeper Jack Russell jumps in joy after taking Brian Lara's catch off Angus Fraser (not in picture) during the fourth day's play in Trinidad on Feb 8. — AP/UNB photo

Tension grips Trinidad

PORT-OF-SPAIN, Trinidad, Feb 9, (AP/AFF): The second Cable & Wireless Cricket Test between West Indies and England was delicately poised at the end of a day of fluctuating fortunes at the Queen's Park Oval on Sunday. Curtly Ambrose's five-wicket burst in the morning session reduced England from their overnight 219 for four to 258 all out. The home team, chasing 282 for victory, slipped to 124 for five before Carl Hooper and David Williams lifted them to 181 without further loss by the close of Day Four. Angus Fraser, England's bowling hero who took eight for 53 in the first innings, was again the most successful of the visiting bowlers finishing the day by taking another three wickets for 32. England could add only 38 runs to their overnight total as Curtly Ambrose mopped up with a scintillating spell in the morning session. It was his 19th 5-wicket haul in Test cricket. And the West Indies were then rescued after tea by a stubborn unbeaten stand of 57 between Hooper and Williams after opener Stuart Williams had boosted home hopes by scoring 62. Fraser's first innings eight for 53 eclipsed even the eight for 75 which helped England win in Barbados in 1994, his five for 28 in Jamaica eight years ago also played a big part in the great win that kicked off Graham Gooch's 1990 tour. But this performance has been the best of the lot, bearing in mind Fraser's gutsy 90-minute 17 in England's first innings struggle and the fact that he has twice bagged the prize scalp of Brian Lara. So much depended on the new West Indies skipper, especially on his home ground, and after Ambrose's blitz of five for 15 in 42 balls, Lara would have fancied his chances of leading a successful victory charge of his own. Dean Headley made the vital early breakthrough with the new ball. Sherwin Campbell's thick edge being grasped jubilantly by Alec Stewart at second slip, but fellow opener Stuart Williams was then joined by Lara in a stand of 58. England skipper Mike Atherton initially ignored Fraser, perhaps holding him back, but once he brought the Middlesex bowler in with the West Indies on 62 for one, things soon started to happen. Fraser's eighth ball lifted Headley and left Lara fenced awkwardly to give wicketkeeper Jack Russell the catch that mattered. The aggressive Williams was then joined by Hooper and the two added, another 52 runs before Fraser struck again. Williams turning a ball off his hip straight to forward short-leg where John Crawley took a marvellous reflex catch. With the pressure now very much on the West Indies, Shivnarine Chanderpaul succumbed to a rush of blood and, trying to hit Phil Tufnell out of the ground, sent a simple skier which was taken by Graham Thorpe running back from silly mid-off. Chanderpaul's exit for nought was soon followed by the end of Jimmy Adams — Fraser's third victim who brilliantly caught by Stewart at second slip leaving the home side struggling on 124 for five.

SCOREBOARD... WEST INDIES: First Innings 191 (B Lara 55, A Fraser 8-53) ENGLAND: Second Innings (overnight 219-4) Atherton b Hooper 31 Stewart c Hooper b McLean 73 Crawley lbw b McLean 22 Hussain c Lara b Walsh 23 Thorpe c Lara b Walsh 39 A Holloake c Lara b Ambrose 12 Russell lbw b Ambrose 8 Caddick c D Williams b Ambrose 0 Headley not out 8 Fraser c Hooper b Ambrose 4 Tufnell c D Williams b Ambrose 6 Extras (b-5, lb-15, w-1, nb-11) 32 Total (All out in 94.5 overs) 258 Fall of wkts: 1-91, 2-143, 3-148, 4-202, 5-228, 6-238, 7-239, 8-239, 9-246. BOWLING: O M R W Benjamin 15 3 40 0 McLean 12 1 46 2 Ambrose 19.5 3 52 5 Walsh 29 5 67 3 Hooper 19 8 33 0 WEST INDIES: Second Innings Campbell c Stewart b Headley 10 S Williams c Crawley b Fraser 62 Lara c Russell b Fraser 17 Hooper not out 40 Chanderpaul c Thorpe b Tufnell 0 J Adams c Stewart b Fraser 2 D Williams not out 36 Extras (b-1, lb-6, nb-7) 14 Total (For 5 wickets in 67 overs) 181 Fall of wkts: 1-10, 2-68, 3-120, 4-121, 5-124. Bat: C. Ambrose, McLean, Benjamin, C. Walsh. Bowling: O M R W Headley 12 1 53 1 Caddick 10 1 40 0 Tufnell 26 9 45 1 Fraser 17 5 32 3 Holloake 2 0 4 0

Lindsay on the ladder

TOKYO, Feb 9 (AFP): Martina Hingis may be the undisputed top women's tennis player in the world, but Lindsay Davenport proved with her weekend win in Tokyo that she is narrowing the gap on the Swiss prodigy. "Martina is still very far away, she is still a better player, more consistent than everybody else right now," Davenport, the world number two, said after beating Hingis 6-3, 6-3 in the Toray Pan Pacific Open final. But I feel like my game has been improving, and I feel every time I go into a tournament, I have the chance to win. I didn't think so three years ago. When Davenport came to Tokyo in 1995, she said she hoped to be at the top of her game when she was 21 or 22. Now 21, Davenport reached her first Grand Slam semifinal at the US Open last year and did it again in the Australian Open a week ago. When she beat Hingis in straight sets in Tokyo on Sunday she narrowed the gap in their head-to-head clashes to 4-5. "It was probably the best match I've played ever in my life," Davenport said. "I knew how I had to play today and the style I had to play. There are not many days you feel great and today I felt like I played great." A series of aggressive service returns and effective approach shots were the basis for the victory by Davenport, one of the only five players to have beaten Hingis last season. Davenport, the daughter of a US Olympic volleyball player, captured her first WTA title at the European Open in Switzerland in May 1993. The 1.89 metre (six feet three inch) Californian enjoyed her biggest moment in the limelight when she upset two-time French Open champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain to win the Atlanta Olympic gold medal in 1996. She added her biggest WTA title so far at Indian Wells in March in a year in which she won six titles including the European Indoor Championships in Zurich in October. "I had worked pretty hard, for the last two years in trying to get in better shape I knew if I get to the top of the rankings I have to get in better shape and get a little bit faster," said Davenport. "I did a lot of running, a lot of weightlifting to try to get a bit fitter and it does give me a big advantage now. I can see how much of a better player I am because of that. "I feel better about myself on the court with the shots I have. I'm in better shape with a better serve, and I think that came from working very hard to get my game better and putting in a lot of hours of training." Hingis agreed Davenport deserved to be number two in the world and is improving.

Windies win a thriller

Sports Reporter

A super-tense unbeaten 94 by vice-captain Carl Hooper and a highly valuable career best 65 by wicketkeeper David Williams helped West Indies to make a remarkable ground to make a remarkable ground to inflict a heart-breaking three-wicket defeat on England. The Queen's Park Oval at Kingston came alive as Hooper danced down the track to drive England tweeker Phil Tufnell past the mid-off fielder for the winning four runs. Needing 282 to win the match, David Williams, who survived few close shaves including the first ball of the day, nicked to the slips off a Dean Headley delivery at the stroke of the lunch. In one of the most absorbing Test matches, in which England supposedly held the upper hand till the final day's play, West Indies ended up scoring the highest total in the fourth innings of the match to snatch victory from England's cradle shortly after lunch. The despondency of the England captain Mike Atherton took its toll when a low delivery from Fraser, who returned with a career best figure of 11 wickets, hit the helmet behind the stumps giving West Indies an extra four runs in the penultimate over of the match. But with a telling demonstration of conviction and commitment to the cause, Hooper played an innings of his life to give the Caribbeans a much-needed win after their disastrous tour of Pakistan. The mid-manned Guyanese was later named player-of-the-match.

Nagano Games Mike grabs 30km gold

NAGANO, Feb 9, (AFP): Reuter's Mike Myllylae of Finland won the men's 30km classical cross-country gold medal at the Snow Harp in Hakuba today in 1hr 33min 55.5sec. Norway's Erlin Jevne took the silver in 1:35:27.1. The bronze went to Silvio Fauner of Italy in 1:36:08.5. Ekaterina Dafovskya surprised everyone except herself today as she captured the women's 15km biathlon title to become Bulgaria's first gold medalist. Defovskya's track record had not been impressive this season in the biathlon — a grueling combination of cross-country skiing and target shooting. She went into the race a mere 51st in the World Cup standings. Elena Petrova of Ukraine was another unexpected medalist, taking the silver 17.8 seconds behind Defovskya. Germany's Ursula Disl, who was fifth after the third shoot, surged ahead with the fastest lap time of the day in the last loop of the technically-challenging course to take the bronze with a finish 25.9 seconds behind the winning time. Marseille Indoors stays with Enqvist MARSEILLE, Feb 9: Sweden's Thomas Enqvist retained his Marseille Indoors title on Sunday beating top seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia 6-4, 6-1 in the final, reports AFP. The 23-year-old Enqvist seeded sixth, broke Kafelnikov returning from a knee injury that forced him to pull out of the Australian Open, three times in the second set to claim his 12th career title. Enqvist who took his head to head record against the 23-year-old Russian to 3-2 took the first set when the 1996 French Open champion netted a weak drop shot. The tall right-handed Swede, ranked 29th in the world produced a flurry of superb cross court forehand and backhand passing shots frequently leaving the Russian rooted to the spot. It was Enqvist's first tournament success since winning here last year and he became the second player to win the event two years running — following in the footsteps of Marc Rosset of Switzerland in 1993 and 1994.

Local Davis Cuppers down Oman U-19 cricketers call on PM

Bangladesh made a good start in the Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group Four competition defeating Oman 2-1 in their inaugural match at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday, reports UNB. Three teams — Bangladesh, Bahrain and Iraq — earned full two points eliminating their rivals. In the day's opener, Bangladesh faced an early setback as national number two Dilip Passia conceded 6-7, 6-3, 2-6 defeat against Mudrik Al-Rawahi of Oman in a Marathon first singles match that lasted 105 minutes in the morning. Bangladesh number one Shibu Lal restored the parity beating Khalid Al-Nabhani 6-1, 6-0 in the second singles. In the doubles, Shibu Lal pairing with Sheikh Moinuddin Waliullah Jhilani defeated Mudrik Al-Rawahi and Khalid Al-Nabhani 6-3, 6-2. In the day's other two matches, another title contender Bahrain outplayed United Arab Emirates 3-0 while Iraq beat Brunei also by the same margin. A total of 28 players from seven countries — Bangladesh, Bahrain, UAE, Iraq, Oman, Jordan, Brunei — are taking part in league basis matches for the top two places of the tourney to be qualified for the group three competition. Earlier, State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader declared the week-long meet opened.

Soccer's start deferred

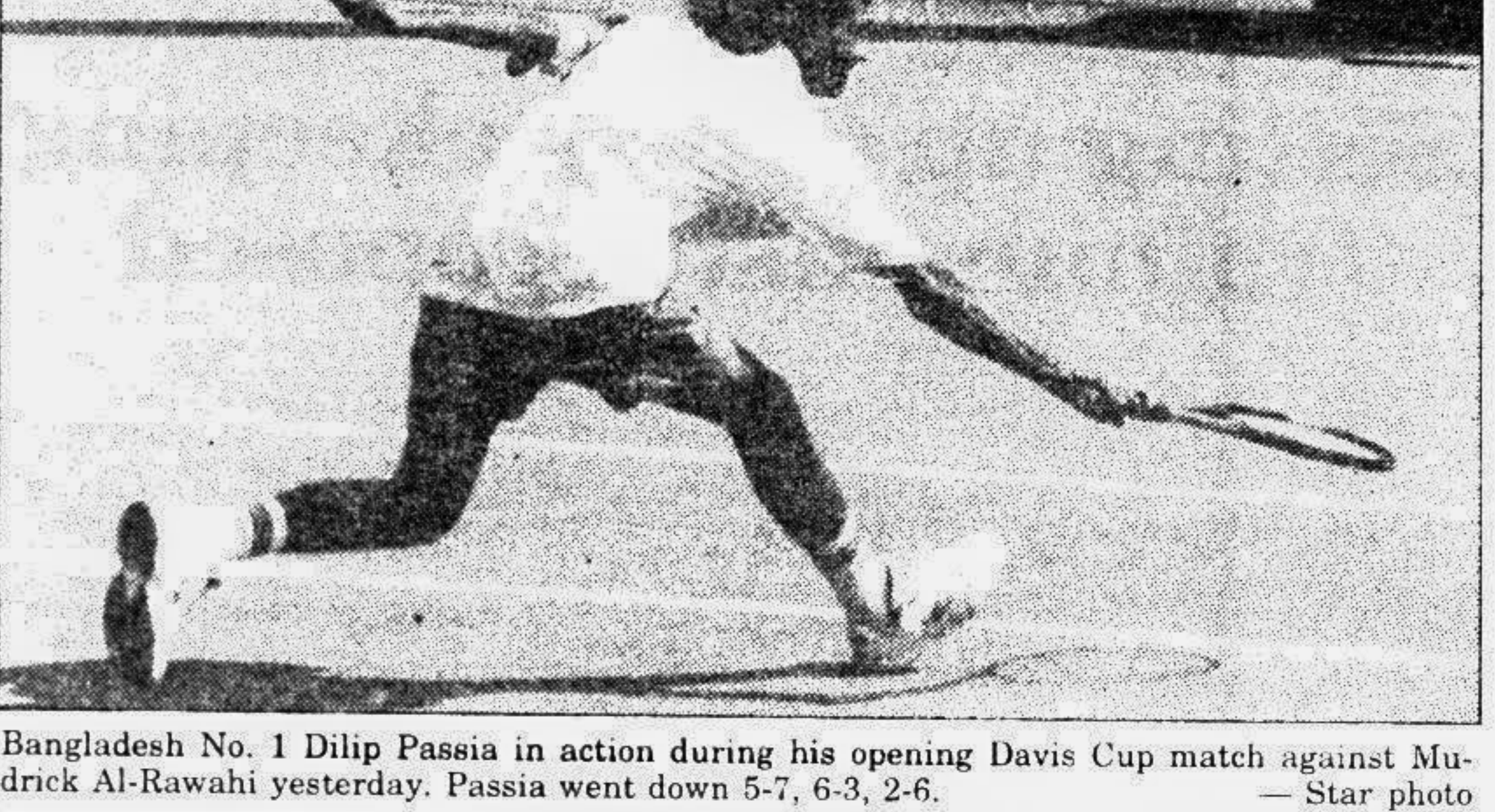
The super and relegation leagues of the Premier and First Division football leagues, which was scheduled for a February 10 start, have been deferred by four days, Dhaka Mahanagari Football League Committee (DMFLC) president Abdur Rahim said yesterday. According to Rahim, the leagues will now start on February 14 following requests from 12 out of 20 Senior Division clubs last week. The fixtures are likely to be finalised today.

Graf retreats

PARIS, Feb 9: Steffi Graf, the former world No. 1 tennis star, on Monday announced that she was withdrawing from the Gaz de France Open indoor tennis tournament, delaying once again her comeback after knee surgery, reports AP. Graf, a seven-time Wimbledon champion, made the announcement at the draw for the tournament, being played at the Bercy sports stadium. Members of the Bangladesh youth cricket team, who emerged Plate champions in the World Youth Cup in South Africa, called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office here yesterday, reports BSS. The Premier congratulated the cricketers for their excellent performance in the tournament, where they defeated West Indies to lift the Plate title. Sheikh Hasina handed over a crest and 50 thousand taka to each of the participating members of the team. State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader was present.



Star photo



Inter 12-4-3 led the league all season until a recent slump that has seen them win once in four games.

Inter all tangled up

ROME, Feb 9: Roberto Baggio set up defender Michele Parmatti's second-half strike Sunday to lift Bologna to a shocking 1-0 win at Inter Milan, who dropped four points behind streaking Italian league leaders Juventus, reports AP. Inter lost their second straight home match and Brazilian striker Ronaldo, the two-time FIFA world-player-of-the-year, again failed to find the target. His goal last week is the only one he's scored since Dec 6. "We played what I think was our ugliest game this year," Inter coach Luigi Simoni said. "We played badly, very badly. I think maybe we have some sort of fear about playing at home. ... We were afraid to go after the ball." Juventus, playing their first match since losing star defender Ciro Ferrara for the season, had little trouble beating 10-man AS Roma 3-1. France's Zinedine Zidane, Dutchman Edgar Davids and Alessandro Del Piero scored for the defending Serie A champions. Its fifth straight victory gives Juventus, who took over first place two weeks ago, 44 standing points to 40 for Inter with Udinese next with 37. German striker Oliver Bierhoff — who leads the league with 16 goals — and Paolo Poggi each tallied twice for Udinese in a 5-0 rout of next-to-last Lecce. At night, AC Parma's slide down the standings continued with a 0-0 draw against Atalanta. Once considered serious title contenders, Parma have dropped to joint fifth. In other matches Sunday: fourth-place Lazio got past AC Milan 2-1; Fiorentina moved up to fifth with a 1-0 victory at 10-man Bari; Empoli trounced last-place Napoli 5-0; Sampdoria edged Brescia 2-1, and Piacenza and Vicenza drew 1-1. The 20th round of games will be played Wednesday night. The league scheduled the rare mid-week contests in order to finish the season early, leaving time ahead of the World Cup.

Germany changes its mind

FRANKFURT, Germany, Feb 9: Germany has reversed a decision to boycott a World Cup swimming event in Beijing next month, reports AFP. The World Cup meeting will be held in Beijing on February 25-26 and the Germans had plan to miss the meet in protest against Chinese use of illegal drugs.

The Daily Star TV Guide

Table with TV schedules for various channels (ZEE INDIA TV, DD 7, SONY ET, CHANNEL V, etc.) including programs like Star Wars, The Simpsons, and various news and entertainment shows.