

Janata Bank, Neer Ltd in final



Janata Bank moved into the final of the Uttara Finance Office football league...

Lennart no more interested in UEFA post

BONN, May 4: UEFA President Lennart Johansson told German football magazine Kicker Monday that he would not stand for another term as head of European football's governing body...

Johansson said: "When the next UEFA President is elected (in 2002), I will no longer be available."

Johansson, 69, has been in charge of UEFA since 1990, but also ruled leaving his post early, saying: "I have never had the intention of stepping down early. I like my job and I am in good health to fight on."

He admitted, meanwhile, that his shock defeat by Switzerland's Sepp Blatter in the race for the presidency of world governing body FIFA had been "extremely disappointing".

Marseille decide against appeal

GENEVA, Switzerland, May 4: French league leaders Marseille withdrew their appeal Monday against the sanctions imposed on the club for the incidents at the end of their UEFA Cup semifinal with Bologna in Italy, reports AFP.

UEFA fined the club 80,000 dollars while French World Cup winning striker Christophe Dugary was banned for five games and teammate Hamada Jambay for four.

Stephane Courbis, son of Marseille coach Roland, has been banned from any involvement with football until April 28, 2000.

Bologna will appeal, however against their 100,000 dollars fine and the suspensions imposed on three of their players.

The appeal will be decided Friday by UEFA.

A brawl between players and officials of both teams ensued after Marseille had qualified for the final on the away goals thanks to a late and highly controversial penalty from Laurent Blanc.

Alex staying until 2002

MANCHESTER, England, May 4: Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson on Tuesday signed a new three-year deal that will keep him at the English Premiership club until July 2002, reports AFP.

The board of Manchester United plc is delighted to announce that it has reached agreement with Alex Ferguson on a new three-year contract commencing July 1, 1999, until June 30, 2002," read a club statement.

"Mr Ferguson was appointed by the club in November 1986 and has been the most successful manager in English football during the 1990s. The terms of the new contract reflect his success and his importance to Manchester United."

Ferguson's new contract follows a hugely successful season which sees United on course for an unprecedented treble.

United trail leaders Arsenal by a point but with a game in hand in the English Premiership, they face Newcastle United in the FA Cup final on May 22 and Bayern Munich in the European Cup final on May 26.

Since replacing Ron Atkinson as United manager in 1986 Ferguson has won the Premier League four times, the FA Cup three times and the European Cup Winners Cup.

The 57-year-old Scot expressed his delight at being given the deal.

"I am delighted that the matter has been settled and that I have a contract which will take me to 60 years of age," he said.

Zia - champion in luxury

Sports Reporter

Defending champion International Master (IM) Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh retained the National Chess Championship title with an easy win over Khorshed Alam in the 13th round of the 25th edition played at the NSC conference room yesterday.

Playing with black pieces, Zia, who earlier won the national title in 1988, 1994, 1996 and 1998, adopted the Queen Gambit defence with accepted variation and checkmated his opponent after 33 moves to win his fifth national title.

With yesterday's win, Zia, who had already won his 15th round clash against Ali Amjad in advance on the rest day, raised his tally to 12 points out of a possible 14 and earned a 2.5 points lead over fellow IM and former champion Reefat-bi-Sattar and national junior champion Enamul Hossain with one match in hand.

Ali Amjad had to play his 15th round tie with Zia in advance on April 28 because he will move to India tonight along with six other players to take part in a tournament in Maharashtra.

Reefat and Enamul, who are jointly sharing the second spot with 9.5 points each, have two matches in hand.

In yesterday's round, Reefat edged past Jamilur Rahman while Enamul was forced to a draw by last year's runner up IM Abdullah-Al-Rakib.

Playing with black pieces, Reefat followed the French defence to checkmate his veteran opponent after 33 moves while the tie between Enamul and Rakib ended in a draw after 32 moves.

Rezaul Haque of Biman was in the third spot after yesterday's round where he earned a walk-over against Monir Hossain. Rezaul, with the full point, raised his tally to 8.5 points.

In another board, Narayan-ganj's Feroz Ahmed defeated Ali Amjad of Ansars while three other matches—Sheikh Nasir Ahmed vs Aminul Islam, Sawkat Hossain vs Mohammad Javed, and Taibur Rahman vs Saifuddin Ahmed—were going on till our filing of this report last night.

The penultimate round of the 15-round robin league will start at the same venue today at 3 pm.

Leaders: 12 points--Zia, 9.5



ZIAUR RAHMAN

Italian Cup final second leg

Fiorentina badly need a trophy

ROME, May 4 (AFP): Once again, Gabriel Batistuta is having a spectacular individual season. And once again, his club could go home empty-handed.

The Argentine star leads Fiorentina into the second leg of the Italian Cup final Wednesday night against visiting AC Parma, and the team from Florence needs a victory to salvage its disappointing campaign.

The first leg ended 1-1, on goals by Batistuta and Parma's Hernan Crespo.

Both finalists are out of the running for the Serie A title, though that's nothing new. Fiorentina last topped the league 30 years ago, and Parma have never finished first.

But while Parma will also go after a trophy in the May 12 UEFA Cup final, Fiorentina were kicked out of that competition back in November, after an explosive device was tossed onto the field during a game.

It all means that Batistuta must deliver Wednesday.

He has scored consistently since joining Fiorentina in 1991, averaging 18 goals-per-season and finishing among Serie A's leading scorers five times.

The tall forward has 20 goals this season and is on pace for his second scoring crown of the decade (the other was in 1995). But he's occasionally been criticised for not improving his team the way other standout scorers can, and another year without a title would only add fuel to that argument.

The only success Batistuta has brought to Fiorentina was the 1996 Italian Cup.

Fiorentina and Parma both tuned up by notching league victories Sunday. Portugal's Rui Costa and Brazil's Edmundo each scored twice and Batistuta added the other before being expelled from Fiorentina's 5-1 rout of Perugia.

It was Batistuta's third time Batistuta had been kicked out of a game in his career; his last expulsion was in April 1993.

"We finally played the way we should have been all season," Fiorentina coach Giovanni Trapattoni said. "We are charged for the game against Parma, even though we know it will be a real battle."

There was one sour note Sunday: defender Andrea Tarozzi tore his left hamstring muscle and is out for the season.

Parma snapped a four-game losing streak by barely getting past Empoli 1-0. It was far from the dominating performance one might have expected Parma to produce against the Serie A's worst side.

Coach Alberto Malesani and several players acknowledged that they were thinking ahead to the cup final.

Malesani rested Argentine striker Crespo (team-high 16 goals). French midfielder Alain Boghossian and Argentine playmaker Sebastian Veron. All have nagging injuries, but the trio is expected to start Wednesday.

Another starting midfielder, national team stalwart Dino Baggio, is suspended.

Hodgson hailed

ROME, May 4: The Italian press who sniggered and ridiculed Roy Hodgson's return to Inter Milan last week were hailing the English coach as a miracle-worker on Tuesday after his team beat AS Roma 5-4 here, reports AFP.

Hodgson returned after a two-year absence in a desperate attempt by the club to try and salvage a UEFA Cup place in Inter's last four matches.

However, his appointment as Inter's fourth coach of the season, replacing Romanian Mircea Lucescu, was widely treated as a joke.

But on Tuesday morning, newspapers were falling over themselves to praise the former Blackburn boss, with the Gazzetta dello Sport saying: "Welcome back mister Roy...we're even better friends than before."

Lauding Hodgson's decision to give Roberto Baggio a play-making role in the middle behind Ronaldo and Chilean Ivan Zamorano, from which the Italian star provided three goal assists, the Gazzetta said: "You prepared for the match as carefully as ever."

"Nothing out of this world, admittedly, but if you had been able to leave English football a bit earlier, perhaps we would have been spared all the little stories trotted out for months by the affable Lucescu."

"Welcome back mister Roy. Inter needed to get its dignity back and with a few changes, you have given it back to them."

The Corriere della Sera went even further, headlining a column with "Hodgson performs seven-day miracle" and claiming: "The mistake was not in bringing him back seven days ago, when Inter had gone off the rails, but in having sent him away in the first place."

Venus climbs

MIAMI, Florida, May 4: American Venus Williams jumped to places to No. 5 in the WTA Tour rankings released here Monday, returning to her career high, reports AFP.

Williams moved up thanks to her win over Mary Pierce in Hamburg, the first claycourt title of her career.

France's Nathalie Tauziat crept into the top 10, moving up from 11th to ninth.

Swiss teen Martina Hingis remained atop the rankings, ahead of American Lindsay Davenport.

- 1. Martina Hingis
2. Lindsay Davenport
3. Monica Seles
4. Jana Novotna
5. Venus Williams
6. Steffi Graf
7. Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario
8. Mary Pierce
9. Nathalie Tauziat
10. Serena Williams
11. Sandrine Testud
12. Patty Schnyder
13. Anna Kournikova
14. Amanda Coetzer
15. Dominique Van Roost
16. Amelie Mauresmo
17. Irina Spirlea
18. Conchita Martinez
19. Natasha Zvereva
20. Barbara Schett

FIFA team in Seoul

SEOUL, May 4: FIFA, soccer's world governing body, began its first official check on South Korea's preparations for the 2002 World Cup Monday, reports AFP.

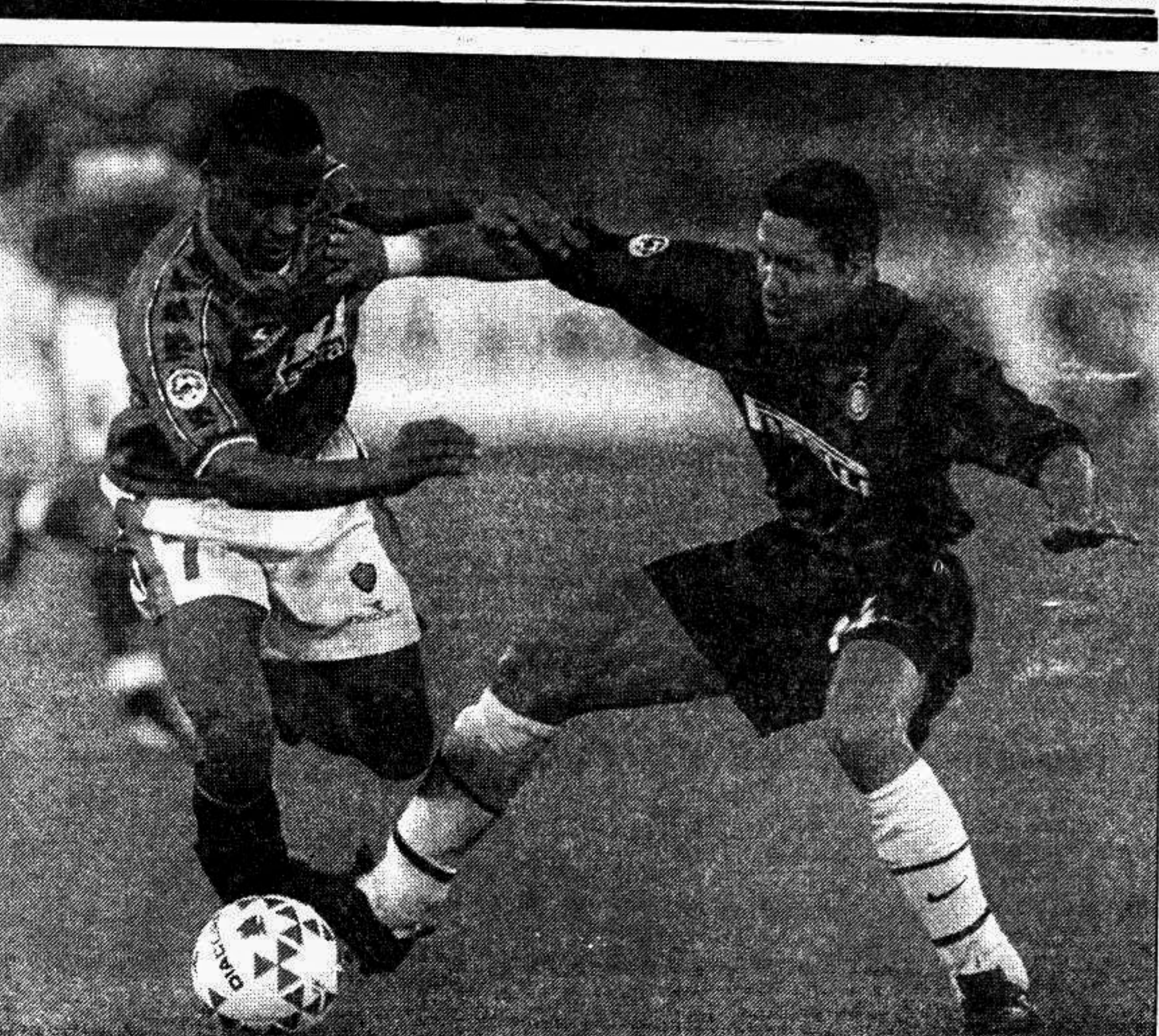
A six-member delegation, led by vice FIFA president Antonio Matarrese, arrived Sunday night for a five-day inspection tour. It was to be joined later Monday by two other delegates.

On Thursday, all eight delegates will fly to Japan, co-host of the 2002 event.

The six-member group visited two stadiums under construction in Seoul and on the southernmost island of Cheju on Monday. It will inspect a stadium in Pusan, a port city on the south coast, Tuesday.

The second two-member group, led by another FIFA vice president, David Will, will check on logistical issues such as ticketing and hotel accommodations.

"I am really satisfied," Matarrese said after inspecting a 63,000-seat stadium under construction in western Seoul. "I am sure that this stadium will be one of the biggest and important stadiums in the world."



Inter Milan's Argentine midfielder Diego Simeone (R) intercepts an AS Roma booter during their Serie A fixture in Rome on May 3. Inter won 5-4. — AFP photo

Inter prevail in a goalglut

ROME, May 4: Inter Milan put a season of woe behind them here on Monday night as Ronaldo and Ivan Zamorano guided them to a sensational 5-4 win over AS Roma in Roy Hodgson's first match back in charge, reports AFP.

Inter's Latin American stars stole the show for the English coach, with Argentine Diego Simeone snatching victory three minutes from the end before a disbelieving crowd at the Olympic stadium.

It was a memorable match for the Serie A; one that was postponed from Sunday because of celebrations here for the beatification of Padre Pio.

But Ronaldo and Zamorano showed they had not lost their divine touch by giving Inter a 2-0 lead before Roma's 22-year-old skipper Francesco Totti pulled one back in the 22nd minute.

Zamorano bagged a superb second in the 35th but two goals in as many minutes just after the re-start, from Paulo Sergio and Marco Delvecchio, turned the match around as Roma roared back to 3-3.

Zamorano teed up Ronaldo for the simplest of goals in the 56th minute, only for Eusebio Di Francesco to drill home a 79th minute equaliser, setting the stage for Simeone's dramatic winner.

Hodgson said: "You don't see nine goals in a match very often in Italy, or anywhere else for that matter. But these were great goals on both sides and I don't want to say it was the defence's fault."

Recalling his week-old mission here, Hodgson said: "We are trying to finish the season with dignity. And perhaps this great win, against a Roma of this class, will give us optimism for the future."

AS Roma coach Zdenek Zeman kept his explanation as

concise as ever, insisting his team are not out of the race for a Champions' League slot.

Inter started off looking slow and predictable moving forward. Hodgson's team clearly happy just to bide their time for the right moment.

That moment came in the 17th minute when Baggio took possession in a crowded midfield, looked up and as Ronaldo started instinctively to move, sent over a perfectly flighted through-ball.

The Brazilian deftly collected the pass, rounded Austrian goalkeeper Michael Konsel and slotted the ball home with consummate ease.

Five minutes later, Baggio picked out the unmarked Zamorano with a low cross from the right flank and the Chilean scooped the ball first time into the roof of the net.

It was a dream start for the visitors but harsh reality was just four minutes away when Paulo Sergio, who had a hand in all his team's goals, was sent to the floor in a crowded area and Totti converted the spot-kick.

But just as it looked as though the tables were turning, Inter pulled a third goal out of the hat.

Argentine Javier Zanetti surged down the middle, flicked the ball wide for Zamorano, past three Roma defenders, and the Chilean scampered through to beat Konsel with a classy angled chip-shot into the far corner.

Roma hit back immediately and only two miraculous saves by goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca defied first Frenchman Vincent Candela, and then Delvecchio from point blank range before the break.

However, Inter's defence was caught napping twice in the first four minutes of the second half as Roma roared back to 3-3.

Damiano Tommasi floated a

dipping cross into the area and Paulo Sergio nipped in between Diego Simeone and Pagliuca to nod the ball home.

Two minutes later, it was the Brazilian's turn to provide the service, his cross from the right being met with Delvecchio's glancing header, and the ball flashing past a static Pagliuca before ricocheting in off the post.

Inter finally looked in the deep trouble which most people had expected after their disastrous season, but they hauled themselves out of it with another breakaway goal in the 56th minute.

Baggio sent the ball to Zamorano, who sprinted away down the right and instead of choosing to shoot, unselfishly picked out an unmarked Ronaldo who slotted into an empty net.

Roma refused to be beaten and their attacking football paid off yet again, thanks though to a fair dollop of luck.

Paulo Sergio hopelessly miscued a shot from outside the area, the ball spun out of control but finished on the head of Totti who nodded it down for Di Francesco to steer home from 10 metres.

Both sides had reason to rue the closing minutes, with Ronaldo seeing a possible hat-trick disallowed for off-side and Delvecchio failing to connect with a low cross for a certain goal.

But Inter had the final say when Baggio chipped over a free-kick from the right-hand side of the area and Simeone rose amongst a crowd of players to head the ball into the left-hand corner.

It could have finished better for Hodgson, recalled after a two-year absence last week, and whose job is to earn as many points as possible in the last three matches of the season in a bid to win a UEFA Cup place.

Anfield trap awaits United

MANCHESTER, England, May 4: Manchester United will aim to celebrate manager Alex Ferguson's new contract by winning at Liverpool in the English Premiership on Wednesday, reports AFP.

United fans will have their first chance to hail Ferguson following the announcement of his new three-year deal, but they know Liverpool would like nothing more than to poop their party and dent their title hopes.

Three points would also keep United, currently a point adrift of Arsenal with a game in hand, on course for the treble of Premiership, European Cup and FA Cup.

United's Danish goalkeeper has told his teammates that in some ways the match is even bigger for Liverpool.

The Merseysiders' season fell apart following their heart-breaking 2-1 FA Cup exit against United in January when Dwight Yorke and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer scored in the last two minutes.

They cannot qualify for Europe, but victory over United would go a long way to restoring some of their battered pride.

Schmeichel is aware of this and he said: "Liverpool are always going to come up with a

performance - there's no two ways about it. It's their big thing which is left in the season.

"If they could beat Manchester United then they would have a great season or at least they would have a good finish to the season. They would take great comfort from a win after all that has happened."

Ferguson claims that the cup triumph is history as far as he is concerned. His priority is to take another three points from the first of three potentially tricky away games in eight days.

"It's difficult to say what bearing that will have on the game because it was three months ago," said the United manager.

"But for our part I know we have forgotten about it and we're looking at the game as a step forward to the title for us.

"This is a massive game for us and there will be a great atmosphere with some terrific players on show.

"It will be difficult, but it does not matter when you go to Liverpool it is always a hard game.

"I don't think this game will be any different from the others."

Ferguson reported better news on the injury front.

Jaap Stam's chances of recovering from his Achilles tendon injury to play are improving, while Ryan Giggs remains the biggest doubt with his ankle problem.

Solskjaer is doubtful because of knee ligament trouble, but definitely back is Roy Keane, who is available after suspension, while Andy Cole should return from his ankle problem.

Hearing held on De Bruin's plea

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, May 4: For the first time in its history sport's highest arbitration body held a public audience here on Monday to rule on the appeal by Ireland's triple Olympic champion Michelle De Bruin against a four-year ban for tampering with an anti-doping substance, reports AFP.

The Sport Arbitration Tribunal (TAS) meeting took place in the city's luxurious Royal Savoy Hotel.

De Bruin, whose maiden name was Smith, won four medals - three gold and a bronze - by Ireland's triple Olympic champion Michelle De Bruin against a four-year ban for allegedly doctoring a urine substance during a surprise dope test in Ireland.



Michelle de Bruin (L), Ireland's triple Olympic gold medalist swimmer, and lawyer Peter Lennon at the opening of Bruin's appeal against a four-year ban at Lausanne on May 3. — AFP photo

'Grande Torino' returns

TURIN, May 4 (AFP): Turin is preparing to mourn Tuesday's 50th anniversary of the Superga air crash here, which wiped out one of the greatest football teams Italy has ever produced.

Torino are now a Second Division club hoping for promotion to the Serie A. But in the 1940s, the awesome side known as the "Grande Torino" won five consecutive championships before tragedy struck on May 4, 1949.

The disaster, similar to the one which devastated Matt Busby's Manchester United at Munich in 1958, claimed the lives of all 31 people aboard a flight back from Portugal.

A minute of applause broke out before the kick-off of Sunday's league match here against Napoli, and after a few moments, a photograph of the Grande Torino team appeared on the stadium's luminous scoreboard.

The week-long homage includes a conference, an exhibition and a youth-level football tournament.

On Tuesday, two Masses will be held, one private in the Superga Basilica and one public in Turin Cathedral. The services will be followed in the evening by a match at the Delle Alpi stadium here between Torino's present team and a Football League XI of top Serie A players.

The plane had ploughed into the Superga hillside overlooking the city, finishing in pieces against the side wall of a basilica. Eighteen players (10 of them internationals), five club officials, five crew members and three reporters were killed.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer. Includes crossword grid and cryptic clues. Cryptic clues include: 'EG WOEUNG SOV UVIBENU, E FIXUU NGX EU SWV', 'VN. MEGB MEGFXO WOEGVU. Yesterday's Crypticquip: IF THERE WERE A FLY EPIDEMIC, PERHAPS YOU WOULD CALL A SWAT TEAM.', 'Today's Crypticquip clue: W equals P'.