

## Sport

## Asian U-16 soccer Bangladesh wants to host G-4 ties

Bangladesh has proposed to host the Group-4 matches of the ninth Asian Youth (Under-16) football championship involving India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, reports UNB.

This was disclosed by secretary general of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) Harun-ur-Rashid, MP, who returned home yesterday after attending the executive committee meeting of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

"Bangladesh has given the proposal for staging Asian Junior Soccer meet but final decision is yet to be made as India also showed interest to host the championship," he added.

The date for the meet is yet to be fixed.

The final round of the Asian Youth (Under-16) football championship will be held in Vietnam in 2001.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has already earned the rights to host the Group-4 matches of the 32nd Asian Youth (Under-19) football championship.

Bangladesh had been placed in Group-4 with Iraq, Nepal and Maldives but recently Iraq was shifted to another group and a new country will enter in Group-4.

The final round of the 32nd Asian Youth (Under 19) Football Championship will be held in Iran, said in 2001.

## Rajshahi cricket roundup

From Our Correspondent  
RAJSHAH, Feb 20: Provati Sangha crushed Town Club by ten wickets in a Premier Division cricket league encounter at the local district stadium here today.

Chasing a paltry Town Club total of 91 in 40 overs, the winners raced to 92 in 20.3 overs without fuss. Ranak was unbeaten on 54 while Dola was not out on 30.

## FIRST DIVISION LEAGUE

Meanwhile, Mukti Sangha handed Avijatri Club a 59-run defeat in their First Division fixture at the divisional stadium.

Batting first in a 40-over-a-side match, Mukti Sangha were all out for 176 in 32.4 overs with Ripon scoring 39, Rony (28) and Sajjad (23) were the other notable run-getters.

In reply, Avijatri Club were bundled out for 126 in 36.5 overs.

Mukti Sangha bowlers Ripon and Milan captured four wickets each respectively.

## ZIA SMRITI TOURNAMENT

Jubo Cricket School clinched the 12th Zia Smriti title with a two-wicket win over Diganta Proshari Sangha in the final played at the Rajshahi Government College ground.

Batting first, Diganta Proshari Sangha scored 146 for nine in the stipulated 35 overs. Rashid made 43 followed by Himel with 29.

Apollo and Arshad shared six wickets for Jubo Cricket School.

Jubo Cricket School reached 147 for eight in 35 overs. Arshad and Murtaza both hitting 20 runs.

## Warne not warned

DUNEDIN, New Zealand, Feb 20: The Australian Cricket Board said Sunday it will not reprimand national team vice-captain Shane Warne for his role in a dispute with two teenage cricket fans who photographed him smoking, reports AP.

An ACB spokesman said the board's policy was to let team management deal with incidents on tour and team manager Steve Bernard said earlier Sunday that no action would be taken after Warne apologised for "any misunderstanding".

Warne grabbed the bag of 15-year-old Daniel Bassett and allegedly swore at him after he'd photographed the star leg-spinner smoking a cigarette during a rain delay in the one-day international at WestpacTrust Stadium in Wellington on Thursday.

Police intervened when the dispute became heated and Bassett, who has since described Warne as a "loser" and "a tosser," said the photo would not have received publicity if Warne had not reacted.

"If he hadn't said anything about it, the photo would just be in a photo album now and nothing would be done about it," Bassett told a New Zealand newspaper. "He said 'either you give the camera to me or I'll get security to take it and smash it'."

"He's supposed to be a role model and kids are supposed to look up to him. He shouldn't be around mouthing off at his fans."

Bassett's friend Shannon Nightingale, who saw the incident, said Warne was "trying to intimidate us... so he would not be in any trouble for smoking."

He was going ballistic, swearing and screaming at us," Nightingale, 15, said.

Warne issued a statement on Saturday night which was read out by Bernard after Australia beat New Zealand by five wickets in the second one-day match in Auckland.

"Shane certainly doesn't want any animosity or grief out of this and he wants to get on with life," Bernard said. "I think everyone involved feels the same way and we hope it's gone as far as it has to."

The Australian squad arrived in Dunedin on Sunday afternoon to prepare for the third day-night match at Carisbrook on Wednesday.



Manchester United's Mikael Silvestre (L) tackling Leeds United's Australian international striker Harry Kewell during their Premiership encounter at Elland Road yesterday. — AFP photo

## Premiership

# United owe Cole one



LEEDS, England, Feb 20 (Reuters/Internet): Manchester United, playing without David Beckham

who had been dropped, beat closest Premier League pursuers Leeds United 1-0 away on Sunday to move six points clear at the top.

United manager Sir Alex Ferguson refused to elaborate on a newspaper story claiming he had a training ground bust-up with the England midfielder on Saturday.

Ferguson was reported to have had a row with Beckham after he failed to turn up for training on Friday.

Said Ferguson: "We picked a team for today and that's it. I've no comment about him. Whatever we do is inside the club and that's all I'm going to say on the matter."

"He's got a decent chance of playing next week because we've got (Roy) Keane and (Paul) Scholes suspended next Saturday."

Ferguson said Beckham would be joining the England squad later on Sunday for next Wednesday's friendly against Argentina. Andy Cole scored the only goal in the 52nd minute after capitalising on a mistake by Lucas Radebe near the halfway line and racing through on goal before lifting his shot over Nigel Martyn.

"It was a very important result for us but I know from experience that it doesn't mean it's over," said Ferguson.

"We had a 12-point lead two seasons ago and it had vanished by March. Our most important games are ahead of us."

Leeds manager David O'Leary insisted his team lost because they failed to make the most of their scoring opportunities.

"There was nothing in it but they took their chances and we didn't take ours," he said. "Six points is a good cushion and with 13 games to go it makes it hard for us."

"But we will give it our all to the end and we will enjoy the adventure."

Goalkeeper Mark Bosnich kept United in the game during the cagey opening exchanges with two tremendous saves from curling Ian Harte free-kicks.

United were then hit by the loss of Dwight Yorke. He limped off in the 29th minute with a calf injury.

Minutes after the goal Roy Keane side-stepped challenges from Radebe and Erik Bakke to find space for a shot that

cannoned against Martyn's arm and came back off the post.

Leeds fired back but their best efforts were coming from set pieces, with Norwegian Bakke sending his powerful 59th minute effort against the bar after rising well to meet Harte's corner.

Leeds had the perfect opportunity to equalise with nine minutes to go but after Jason Wilcox's shot was saved Alan Smith hit the post from the rebound.

Lee Bowyer sent his follow-up shot over from six metres with an empty net at his mercy.

# Fergie gets tough with Beckham



LONDON, Feb 20 (Reuters/Internet): Manchester United dropped David Beckham for the key Premier League match against Leeds United on Sunday after he reportedly clashed with manager Alex Ferguson.

The England midfielder did not appear even among the substitutes for a match between the league leaders and second-placed Leeds.

The absence of United's most high-profile player, runner-up in FIFA's world player of the year poll last month and a regular in glossy showbiz lifestyle magazines, inevitably increased speculation about his future.

Spanish champions Barcelona and Italy's Inter Milan and Juventus have all shown an interest in the London-born player.

Beckham had been seen arriving on the team bus with the rest of the squad and there was no immediate comment from United officials about his absence from the side.

Newspapers reported he had been sent home by Ferguson on Saturday after a training ground argument between the two.

Beckham had apparently been absent on Friday after attending a fashion show in London with his wife, pop star Victoria "Posh Spice" Adams.

The News of the World quoted photographer Chris Neil as saying Ferguson and the England midfielder argued before Beckham stormed off to the dressing-room.

Police intervened when the dispute became heated and Bassett, who has since described Warne as a "loser" and "a tosser," said the photo would not have received publicity if Warne had not reacted.

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# Fergie gets tough with Beckham

Fergie looked furious and he made a bee-line for Beckham as soon as the players were out on the pitch," said the

"Beckham stood his ground but not for long. Fergie told him to go in no uncertain terms. Before he headed off, Beckham threw his gloves on the floor and kicked a ball away and looked furious when he drove away."

Sunday's newspapers reported the row as a potentially fatal blow to Beckham's relationship with Ferguson.

The Sunday People, with the headline "Fergie Boots Out Becks," suggested Beckham was likely to leave United in the summer for around 25 million pounds (dollars 40.11 million).

Victoria Adams, knocking down suggestions that she wanted Beckham to play for a London club, said last year her husband was happy at United but would also like to play overseas "at some point" in his career.

Beckham is rarely free of media attention, often appearing to court it by appearing in glossy magazines, but the pressure

on him has become even more intense in a career that has threatened to go off the rails.

It would not be the first time his personal life has triggered

# Fergie gets tough with Beckham

arguments between himself and Ferguson.

Last year he was fined for attending a party with his wife two days before a Champions League match.

Beckham was a quiet and unassuming character in his early days at United but his temper has got him into increasing trouble.

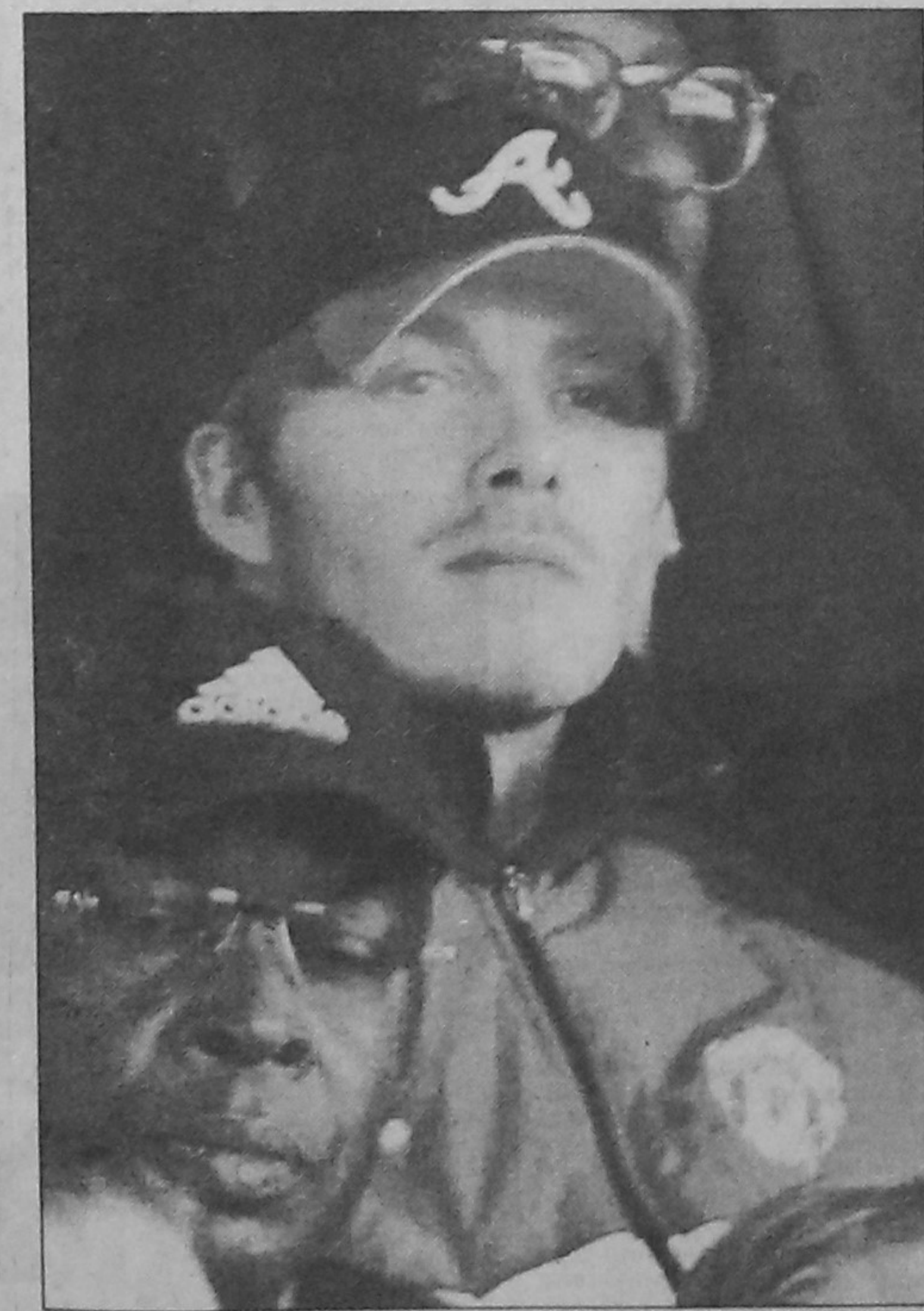
He was sent off in United's world club championship game against Necaxa of Mexico last month, following on from his red card against Argentina during the 1998 World Cup finals.

Many fans blamed him for England's exit from that tournament and he was subjected to merciless booing at almost every ground during the following season.

The abuse has become more personal with his sartorial choices, including an infamous appearance in a sarong before the World Cup finals, receiving widespread derision.

Beckham has also said he was tortured by the obscene abuse chanted by fans and directed against his wife and baby son Brooklyn.

In October the English FA felt so concerned about Beckham's behaviour after a spate of early season bookings and displays of temper that they summoned him to an informal meeting.



PUNISHED! David Beckham watches from the stands after being dropped from Manchester United's Premiership clash against Leeds yesterday. — AFP photo

## Serie A scorers

ROME, Feb 20 (AP): Leading scorers in the Italian Serie A following Saturday's Week 22 matches (penalties in parentheses):

Andriy Shevchenko, AC Milan, 16 (3); Vincenzo Montella, AS Roma, 15 (3); Hernan Crespo, AC Parma, 13 (2); Gabriel Batistuta, Fiorentina, 12; Cristiano Lucarelli, Lecce, 11 (1); Oliver Bierhoff, AC Milan, 11 (1); Christian Vieri, Internazionale, 11; Roberto Muzzi, Udinese, 10; Marco Delvecchio, AS Roma, 9; Marco Ferrante, Torino, 9 (2); Filippo Inzaghi, Juventus, 9 (1); Marcelo Salas, Lazio, 9 (2); Mohamed Kallon, Reggina, 8 (3); Filippo Maniero, Venezia, 7; Giuseppe Signori, Bologna, 7; Francesco Totti, AS Roma, (3); Patrick Mboma, Cagliari, 6 (1); Sinisa Mihajlovic, Lazio, 6 (4); Maurizio Ganz, Venezia, 6 (2); Adailton, Verona, 5 (2); Daniele Berretta, Cagliari, 5; Alvaro Recoba, Internazionale, 5; Juan Sebastian Veron, Lazio, 5 (2).

## Netherlands friendly

## Deisler drafted in German 18

BERLIN, Feb 20 (Reuters/Internet): Germany coach Erich Ribbeck has added Hertha Berlin midfielder Sebastian Deisler to his squad for Wednesday's friendly against the Netherlands in Amsterdam. Deisler, 20, was called up on Sunday after two players from the original 19-man squad, Bayern Munich striker Carsten Jancker and Borussia Dortmund defender Christian Werns, pulled out because of injury.

The promising Deisler, who has been compared to Liverpool and England striker Michael Owen, has been included in Germany squads three times but injuries have prevented him from making his international debut. Bayern Munich libero Lothar Matthaeus is expected to earn a world record 144th cap on Wednesday.

## SQUAD

**Goalkeepers:** Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich), Jens Lehmann (Borussia Dortmund).

**Defenders:** Markus Babel, Thomas Linke, Lothar Matthaeus (all Bayern Munich), Frank Baumann (Werder Bremen), Jens Nowotny (Bayer Leverkusen).

**Midfielders:** Michael Ballack (Bayer Leverkusen), Sebastian Deisler, Dariusz Woz (Hertha Berlin), Dietmar Hamann.

(Liverpool), Jens Jeremies (Bayern Munich), Zoltan Sebestyen (VfL Wolfsburg), Christian Ziege (Middlesbrough).

**Strikers:** Oliver Bierhoff (AC Milan), Oliver Neuville (Bayer Leverkusen), Michael Preetz (Hertha Berlin), Mehmet Scholl (Bayern Munich).

## Policemen hurt in Leipzig riot

LEIPZIG, Germany, Feb 20 (Reuters/Internet): Two policemen were injured in clashes with rioting fans after a German Third Division match in Leipzig.

One officer was taken to hospital with a head injury and the other sustained minor injuries.

Five people, believed to be followers of the local club, were arrested in connection with the attack and faced charges, police said on Sunday.

Battles erupted after Saturday's match between VfB Leipzig and FC Magdeburg. Some 250 Magdeburg fans went on the rampage on their way back to the railway station, hurling stones at tramways and police cars. Six were detained and later released.

Four German hooligans were sentenced to jail terms last November for savagely beating a French policeman during the 1998 World Cup finals.

Germany play the Netherlands in Amsterdam on Wednesday in a friendly which security officials from both sides regard as an important test ahead of Euro 2000 being staged in Belgium and the Netherlands.

## Asian Cup soccer

SOME solace for Singapore

MACAU, Feb 20: Mohamed Noor Ali scored in the final minutes of play as Singapore beat Brunei 1-0 Sunday in the final round of the Group 10 Asian Cup qualifiers, reports AP.

The Singaporeans finished three rounds of group play with two victories and a defeat in the four-team competition that also included Japan and Macau.

Singapore dominated play but squandered numerous scoring chances in the first half. The Singaporeans continued to press after the break and Mohamed Noor finally gave his team the victory in the 88th minute.

The Japanese, who have won two straight matches, are virtually certain to advance to the finals in Lebanon in October.

Japan need only a draw against Macau in the match later in the day to finish on top of Group 10. Japan, winner of the 1992 Asian Cup, has scored a total of 12 goals so far without conceding any.

Macau beat Brunei 1-0 in the opening round for their sole victory. Brunei lost all three matches.

More than 40 teams are competing in the Asian Cup qualifying tournament. They are divided into 10 groups, with the winner in each group advancing to the finals.

Kuwait, Iraq, Uzbekistan, Indonesia and China already have secured places in the Asian Cup, along with hosts Lebanon and defending champions Saudi Arabia.

## Serie A

# Roma lesson for Fiorentina



ROME, Feb 20 (Reuters/Internet): Striker Vincenzo Montella scored a hat-trick as AS Roma hammered

Fiorentina 4-0 to move into third place in the Italian First Division on Saturday.

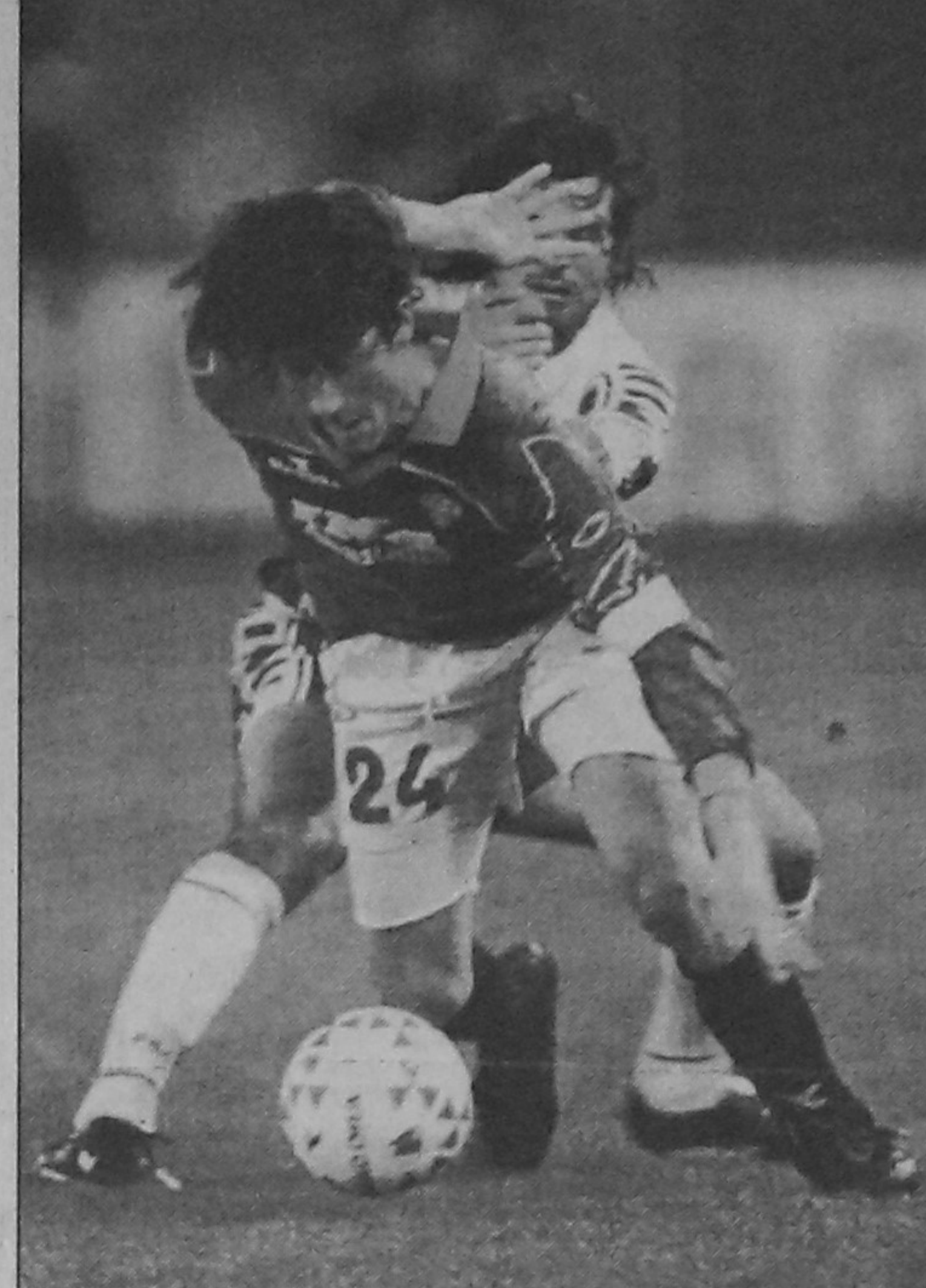
Montella, pushing for a call-up to the Italian squad to face Sweden in a friendly next week, struck in the seventh, 80th and

89th minutes with typical close-range efforts.

His hat-trick was his second of the season and took his goal tally to 15 in the championship -- just one behind leading marksman Andriy Shevchenko of AC Milan.

It lifted Roma above Milan in the standings and leaves four teams divided by just four points at the top of Serie A.

Juventus lead on 44 points



Marco Delvecchio (No 24), the AS Roma forward, trying to stave off the challenge by a Fiorentina defender during their Serie A tussle at Roma on February 19. — AFP photo



Roy-Makkaay (C), Deportivo la Coruna's Dutch international finds himself caged by a host of Athletic Bilbao defenders during their Primera Liga match at La Coruna on February 19. — AFP photo

# European soccer scene

## FRENCH LEAGUE CUP

PARIS: Giant killers Gueugnon, led by veteran striker Amara Traore, claimed a new scalp when they booked a place in the League Cup semifinal at the expense of Racing Strasbourg.

The Second Division team from Burgundy, who downed Olympique Marseille in the French Cup 4-3 last week, beat Strasbourg 2-0.

Senegal's Traore, who struck twice against Marseille last week, opened the scoring in the 13th minute.

Strasbourg were one man down early in the second half when striker Lionel Rouzel was dismissed for elbowing an opponent.

Substitute Xavier Collin made it 2-0 for Gueugnon with one minute left in the match.

Crushed 6-1 by Nantes in the league last week, Olympique Lyon suffered another blow on Saturday when they lost at home to Bastia 1-0 after extra time.

Frederic Nee scored in the 101st minute from a long through pass by Morlaye Soumah to give the Corsican team their first away win in any competition since August 1998.

But it was not an easy victory by any means as Soumah was sent off with two minutes left in the game, shortly before Lyon international striker Tony Vairelles was awarded a penalty which he failed to convert.

Sedan host Red Star and Paris St Germain entertain Nancy today in the other quarter-finals.

**FA CUP**  
LONDON: Bolton, who played in the first English FA Cup final played at Wembley stadium 77 years ago, have a chance to reach the last final this spring before the landmark stadium is demolished to make way for a new one.

First-division Bolton put themselves in a position to make history with Saturday's 1-0 quarterfinal win over visiting Charlton on Eidur Gudjohnsen's 47th-minute goal.

The Basque side had much the better chances in the early part of the game, with the Depor defence repeatedly stretched by Maurauding winger Joseba Etxeberria.

The closest they came to scoring was on 30 minutes when Ismael Urzaiz beat three defenders on a powerful run through the centre only to drag his shot wide.

## PRIMERA LIGA

Deportivo la Coruna reestablished a six-point lead at the top of the First Division yesterday with a disciplined 2-0 win at home to Athletic Bilbao.

Depor, outplayed for much of the first half, took the advantage with a brilliant strike from Flavio Conceicao three minutes before the break, the Brazilian letting fly from 25 metres to surprise goalkeeper Imanol Etxeberria.

The league leaders were all but assured of victory within 15 minutes of the restart.

First, Bilbao midfielder Bititor Alkiza was sent off for his second yellow card on 50 minutes.

Then, 10 minutes later, Patxi Ferreira gifted Depor their second goal as he diverted an innocuous cross back over the head of his stranded goalkeeper.

Javier Irureta's side lead the standings with 46 points from 25 games. Real Zaragoza are in second place on 40, although they can cut that lead back down to three if they win at Real Sociedad.

Victory for Deportivo was reward for the patience they showed early on in the face of a concerted spell of attacking from Bilbao.

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from Lazio on 43, Roma on 42 and Milan on 41. Juve travel to Venezia on Sunday before Milan and Lazio meet in an eagerly awaited clash at the San Siro.

Roma's handsome victory was a personal triumph for Japan's Hidetoshi Nakata, given a more expansive role in midfield due to the absence of suspended captain and playmaker Francesco Totti.

Nakata scored Roma's second goal in the 28th minute and had a hand in all three Montella strikes.

The Asian Player of the year tested Fiorentina goalkeeper Francesco Toldo with Roma's first shot in the seventh minute.

Toldo parried the ball away but French defender Vincent Candela fired it back across goal and Montella slid in to open

the scoring.

Nakata's own goal was fortunate. His attempt from the edge of the penalty area took a cruel deflection off the heel of his

marker Aldo Firicano and sailed over Toldo into the net. Montella had a worthwhile penalty appeal turned down at the

start of the second half before completing his hat-trick in the final 10 minutes.

The former Sampdoria forward dived in with Toldo to meet a Nakata cross on 80 minutes but the ball ran