Charlton delays inevitable

LONDON, Dec 15: Jack Charl-ton put off a decision Thurs-day on whether to end his 10-year reign as Ireland manager, while Wimbledon manager Mick McCarthy emerged as the favourite to replace him, reports AP.

Charlton was coy about his future after Ireland lost 2-0 to the Netherlands in Wednesday night's playoff in Liverpool for the 16th and fi nal spot in next summer' European Championships.

Charlton had strongly indicated beforehand that he would step down if Ireland failed to qualify. But, after the match, he said only that his immediate plans were to "have a merry Christmas."

"I am going to hang around until New Year," he said. "I'm going to talk to a few people, then make my decision.

In a BBC radio interview Thursday, Charlton said his decision could depend on the views of the Irish public. "I will see what the reac-

tion is in Ireland to what happened last night," he said. Charlton said he would

hold talks with the Football Association of Ireland before making his decision. "I am not going to walk

out of the job today," he said. FAI chief executive Sean Connolly said there would be no pressure on the 60-yearold Charlton either to stay or

"We are not pushing him to decide one way or the other," he said. "It is entirely a decision for Jack to make and no one else can make it for him."

McCarthy, a former Ireland international who was Charlton's captain during the 1990 World Cup campaign. confirmed he would like to take charge of the national

"To play for your country and then to have the chance to manage it, I would have to be interested," he said. "Yes, I would be delighted."

Another possible contender could be Wimbledon manager Joe Kinnear, who was born in Dublin and has strong Irish ties.

Charlton, an Englishman, has become a legend in Ireland. He led the nation to two World Cups and a European Championship finals, earning the nickname "Saint Jack."

However, as the defeat to the Netherlands confirmed. the Ireland team is aging and looks ready for a new generation of players and management to take over.

Tony Cascarino, Paul Mc-Grath, John Aldridge and Packie Bonner are all in their 30s, and Wednesday night's game probably marked the end of their international careers.

Driving into trouble

RIO DE JANEIRO, Dec 15 A group of out-of-town soccer fans mistakenly drove into a slum and were attacked by a drug gang, police said Thursday. One fan was shot to death and three others were wounded, reports AP.

The 11 fans of the Santos soccer club came from Sao Paulo for the first game of the national championship final between Santos and Rio's Botafogo Wednesday night Botafogo won 2-1.

The group, in two cars. got lost on the way back and drove into the feared Mare complex of seven "favelas," or shantytowns, on the edge of Rio's Guanabara Bay. Cocaine traffickers in one

shantytown thought the cars belonged to a rival drug gang and opened fire with automatic weapons, members of the group said. "Bullets were flying every-

where. It seemed like a cowboy movie. I'd never seen anything like it," Ricardo Alves Passos said in a radio interview

Ronaldo Ferreira, the driver of one car, was shot in the head and died later at Rio's Souza Aguiar hospital.

The group got lost in the maze of alleys and unknowingly drove deeper into the

complex, Passos said. We asked residents for couldn't for fear of reprisals.

help, but they said they he said. "We asked for a police car but were told that police don't go in there after midnight."

The passengers in one car came to a dead-end street. jumped over a fence and climbed out on a freeway. where they hatled a cab.

The other car was stopped by the traffickers, who ordered the passengers out

and frisked them. "We explained we were just Santos fans here for the game," Renato Pereira Jr said. "They didn't rob us. helped us change a flat tire and drew us a map to get out of the slum."

Pakistan scrape to post

DUNEDIN, New Zealand. Dec 15: Pakistan won the opening one-day cricket international on their New Zealand

tour by 20 runs in a low-

scoring match at Dunedin

today, reports Reuter. Batting first after winning the toss, Pakistan struggled to 189 for nine wickets on a slow-paced pitch.

New Zealand's chase got off to a bad start. Openers Craig Spearman and Nathan Astle departed inside the first five overs. Spearman was superbly caught by a diving ljaz Ahmed at backward point and Astle gave Akram a sharp return catch.

Wagar Younis cut through the middle order, taking three wickets in nine balls. an effort which earned him the man-of-the-match award.

Roger Twose and Chris Cairns added 42 for the sixth wicket in 40 minutes before Cairns and captain Lee Germon fell to consecutive Mushtaq Ahmed deliveries. New Zealand seemed

down and out at 114 for eight before Twose and Gavin Larsen put on a spirited 50 runs for the ninth wicket. Twose, dropped by wick-

etkeeper Rashid Latif before scoring, worked the ball around the ground in his 93ball innings. However Larsen was caught in the gully for 23 and

he dragged a ball from Akram onto his stumps to finish the match. New Zealand were all out

Twose's innings ended when

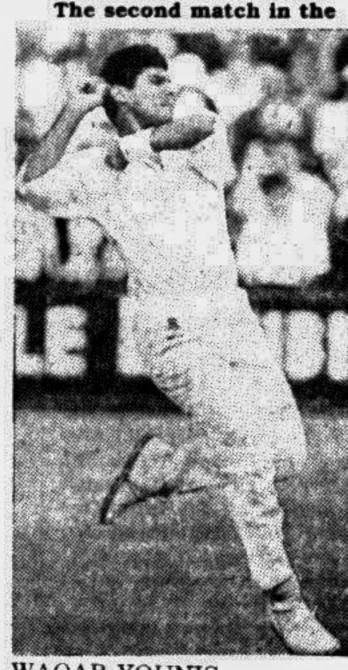
for 169 in the 48th over. It was a poor response to

Pakistan's less than challenging 189.

Only two Pakistani players got to 30. Opener Rameez Raja top scored with a painstaking 35, and Inzama-

mul Haq hit 32 off 49 balls. Wickets fell regularly but there was an important hand towards the end from Latif. His 26 off 33 balls gave the Pakistan bowlers something

to work with. The wickets were spread among the New Zealand bowlers and Adam Parore chipped in with two impressive pieces of fielding to run out Basit Ali and Akram with direct hits from point.



WAQAR YOUNIS ... m-o-m series is at Christchurch on

Sunday.

Dunedin today:

SCOREBOARD Scoreboard in the one-day international between Pak-

istan and New Zealand at

Ahmed Ibw b Larsen Inzamamul Haq c Patel b Malik c Twose b Astle B Ali run out W Akram run out R Latif not out M Ahmed c Twose b Cairns W Younis b Morrison A Javed not out

Sohail c Spearman b Patel

Extras: (lb-6, w-3) Total: (for nine wickets, 50 overs) 189 Fall of wickets: 1-31, 2-52; 3-82; 4-101; 5-123; 6-

138; 7-158; 8-173; 9-175. Bowling OMR 0 21 Patel 0 39 Morrison 10 0 29 Larsen Cairns 42 0 34 5 0 18 **NEW ZEALAND** Astle c and b Akram

Spearman c Ijaz b Javed Young b Wagar Fleming lbw b Wagar Parore b Wagar Twose b Akram Cairns c Latif b Mushtag Germon c Akram b Mushtaq Patel c Ali b Malik Larsen c ljaz b Akram Morrison not out Extras: (lb-9, w-5, nb-1) Total: (47.4 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-16;

3-43; 4-46; 5-50; 6-92; 7-94; 8-114: 9-164. Bowling Akram 0 38 Javed 0 38 Younis Mushtag 10 31 Sohail 0 30 0

Man-of-the-match: Wagar Younis.

Result: Pakistan won by 20

Pakistan lead four-match series 1-0.

take behind the stumps.

South Africa 225 all out

Africa, Dec 15: South Africa were all out for 225 on the

second day of the third cricket Test against England today, reports Reu-

Earlier on Thursday, Peter Martin had a burst of three for 31 and Richard Illingworth snapped up two wickets to give England the initiative on a curtailed first day of the Test.

Paceman Martin and leftarm spinner Illingworth reduced South Africa from an encouraging 54 without loss to 89 for five after they won the toss.

Jonty Rhodes (36 not out) and Brian McMillan (26 not out) were leading a recovery which had lifted the score to 139 for five when bad light stopped play for the day just two overs after tea.

Illingworth, recalled to the side after being left out for the drawn second Test in Johannesburg, came on in the 16th over of the innings and bowled most of the way through the afternoon, finishing with 22-8-33-2.

Martin, in his first appearance of the series, conceded 17 runs from his first three overs but came back to take his three wickets in his next 10 overs for a haul of three for 31.

It was Martin, a surprise choice with left-arm pace bowler Mark llott ahead of Devon Malcolm and Angus Fraser, who made the initial breakthrough in the morning.

Gary Kirsten (8) flashed at a ball outside off-stump, it flew off the edge and Graeme Hick at second slip took a good catch high to his left.

In the next over Illing worth ended Andrew Hudson's superb cameo innings of 45 which came from 62 balls and included nine sparkling boundaries - four of them off successive deliveries from Martin - when a ball struck his pad, flicked a glove and lobbed to John

Crawley at silly point. Shortly after. Hansie Cronje (8) came down the wicket to the Worcestershire

spinner but misread the flight as he tried to hit over the top and holed out to Martin at mid-on.

After lunch Martin struck again with two wickets in quick succession. First, Daryll Cullinan (10)

drove lazily outside off stump

and gave Robin Smith an easy catch in the covers. Then Martin removed debutant Jacques Kallis for one with a superb delivery

which just left him slightly

and caught the edge to give Jack Russell a comfortable Illy on the losing side!

LONDON, Dec 15: England cricket supremo Ray Illingworth lost his bid to gain more power over the national team on Thursday, reports

Chairman of selectors Illingworth had hoped that the Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB) would allow him to withdraw international players from county matches if he considered it to be in the best interests of England.

But a Lord's meeting of the TCCB did not even vote on the issue.

The TCCB are trying to close the loophole which allows players with dual na tionality to appear in county cricket without commenting themselves to England.

The problem was illustrated earlier this year when Gloucestershire's Anglo-Australian batsman Andrew Symonds declined an offer to go on the current England A team tour to Pakistan.

From the start of next season, players holding dual nationality will be required to sign an annual declaration not to play cricket for any country outside the European Union - although whether such a move will be legally binding remains unclear.

A decision to bar overseas players completely from county cricket in 1999 was deferred.

Rhodes, who batted 140 minutes, and McMillan had to battle determinedly to stem the English tide. Martin could not hide his

delight at recording his best Test figures but said the call to play had come later than expected.

I bowled well in Paarl (in the previous tour match) and had a vibe that I might be in the team but I didn't find out until 8:45 this morning.

On Cronje's dismissal, Illingworth said he was not surprised to see the South African captain advance down the pitch: "I bowled to him in Bloemfontein and so half expected it. I saw his feet twitching to just banged it in a bit shorter."

South African coach Bob Woolmer denied the decision to bat first was the wrong one but agreed there were "a number of soft dismissals."

There are two or three batsmen who are not happy with the shots they played," he said.

"We have got a lot of hard work to do and we appreciate that because we didn't play well today. But it's a typical Durban wicket with a bounce that means you're never quite in - you have to play well to stav in."

SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA: First in-

Scoreboard on the second day of the third Test between South Africa and England at Kingsmead today:

nings (overnight 139-5)

A Hudson & Crawley b Illingworth

H Cronje c Martin b Illingworth

G. Kirsten c Hick b Martin

D Cullinan c Smith b Martin Rhodes Ibw b flott J Kallis c Russell b Martin B McMillan c Russell b Martin D Richardson c Russell b llott S Pollock not out Matthews lbw b liott A Donald b Illingworth 32 12 Extras (b-11, nb-1) 225 Fall of wickets: 1-54; 2-56; 3-73; 4-85; 5-89; 6-141; 7-152: 8-153; 9-153; 10-225. 0 Bowling 64 llott

29

37

Illingworth



England paceman Mark liot 2nd from K is being congratulated by teammates after dismissing South Africa's wicket keeper Dave Richardson during the second day of the - AFP/UNB photo third Test match in Durban on Dec 15.

Valderrama joins MLS

LOS ANGELES, Dec 15: Colombian midfielder Carlos Valderrama on Thursday became the latest big-name foreigner to sign with Major League Soccer, the US First Division league scheduled to begin in April, reports AP.

The 34-year-old Valderrama, known for his bushy blonde hair, played in the 1990 and 1994 World Cups and has seven goals in 90 international appearances. He will be assigned either to the New York-New Jersey, Dallas or Tampa franchises.

MLS also signed two defenders from Cameroon's national team: Victor-Akem N'Dip, 28, and Samuel Ekeme, 27. N'Dip three goals in 86 internationals while Ekeme has none in 32 games with Cameroon.

Reports earlier this week had quoted Valderrama as saying he preferred to play in Tampa.

"I'm thrilled to be a part of Major League Soccer," Valderrama was quoted in a statement from the league announcing his signing. "I have great memories of the fans in the United States from my experience during the 1994 World Cup and I want to do everything possible to make Major League Soccer a success."

He played for Montpellier in the French League from 1988 to 1991, spent a season with Real Valladolid in Spain, then returned to Colombia. He has been with Atletico Junior since 1993.

N'Dip played with Cameroon in the 1986, '88 and '92 African Nations' Cup. Both he and Ekeme played last summer with the Hawaii Tsunami of the United Systems of Independent Soccer Leagues, a US Third Division.

The league also signed American midfielder Dominic Kinnear. The 28-year-old, who played with Mexico's Necaxa in the 1994-95 season, has nine goals in 56 games with the US national team.

Thursday's signings bring to 105 the number of players MLS has under contract. The league had previously signed Mexican goalkeeper Jorge Campos, Bolivian midfielder Marco Etchevery, Mexican forward Hugo Sanchez. and Nigerians Michael Emenalo and Uche Okafor.

A travelling circus

PARIS, Dec 15: It may be a logistical nightmare for travel arrangers, but organisers of the 1998 World Cup have made sure that fans and the 32 teams will see of a lot of France during the championship, reports AP.

Continuing its policy of making sure some teams don't get the advantage of playing in the same venue for all the qualifying games, FIFA is moving them around like they did in the United States last year.

Meeting before Tuesday's World Cup qualifying draw at the louvre. FIFA decided that defending champions Brazil, for example, shall play a first game in Paris, then travel 240 miles (384 kilometres) to Nantes and then 607 miles (972 kms) to Marseille.

Another team, possibly host nation France, would start in Bordeaux, then travel 304 miles (486 kms) to Montpellier and then 475 miles (760 kms) to Paris.

With a record 32 teams taking part this time, an increase of eight from the last World Cup in the United States, it will means hundreds of thousands of fans criss-crossing the country to follow their teams.

Buenos Aires to bid for 2004 Games LAUSANNE, Switzerland

Dec 15: Argentinian President Carlos Menem submitted Buenos Aires bid Thursday to host the 2004 Summer Olympics, reports AP.

Declaring that Buenos Aires had the necessary infrastructure and facilities to make the Games a success, Menem presented the official candidature to IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch at a ceremony at the organisation's Lausanne headquarters.

Argentina, which staged this year's Pan American Games in the Atlantic coastal resort of Mar del Plata, faces competition from 10 other

Brazil's Rio de Janeiro is the other South American candidate. National Olympic committee head Carlos Arthur Nuzman and bid committee director Renato Archer submitted Rio's bid at an afternoon ceremony

Spain's Seville is due to present its official candidacy Friday. The South African city of Cape Town follows Monday and Puerto Rico on Tuesday Sweden handed in its Stock holm bid earlier this week.



The Thai 4x400 metres relay team poses after clinching the gold at the 18th SEA Games in Chiang Mai on Dec 15. - AFP/UNB photo

Thailand's ton of gold

Burma's Khin Khin Htwe

CHIANG MAI, Thailand, Dec 15: Thailand topped the magic 100 mark in gold medals at the Southeast Asian Games today, winning nearly half of all the gold medals awarded in the first seven days of the nine-day competition, reports Reuter.

By late today hosts Thailand had bagged a total of 106 golds out of 242 awarded so far. The Thais also led in the overall medal count by a wide margin with 252. Indonesia were a distant

cluding 55 golds, while the Philippines were third with 117, 29 of which were golds. More than 3,000 athletes from 10 countries are competing for a total of 324 gold medals, 324 silvers and 421

bronze medals in 28 sports.

Competition would up on the track today with Thailand winning both the men's and women's 4x400 metre relavs. The men set a SEA Games record of three minutes, 5.47 seconds, breaking the 3:06.58 set by the Philippines in 1985.

bagged her second gold of the Games in the 3,000 metres. The lanky Burmese, who also won the 1.500 metres. looked set to win the 800 metres on Thursday but fell about 10 metres before the A total of 14 Games

records were set in 14 events in the six days of athletics competition. Eight of the records were by Thais. who won 44 of the 135 medals at stake on the track. second with 163 medals in-

Indonesia swept the golds in the four traditional rowing events, while Burma took the silver in all about the women's 400 metres event. Thailand came second in that event and took the bronze in the others.

Fans were gearing up for Sunday's soccer final, which will pit the host team against surprise finalists Vietnam. Today about 1,000 Thai soccer fans, upset that they could not buy tickets for Sunday's game, burned tents and blocked the road in front of the sports complex. On the shooting range to-

day, Thailand won the top two positions in the men's 50-metre free rifle, and bagged the gold in the team event.

Vietnamese shooter Thi Minh Tam Dao won gold in the women's 25-metre sport pistol, followed by Burma's Khin Soe Thaik and Thandar Su Myint.

Vietnam also won the team 25-metre sport pistol followed by Thailand and Burma.

Thailand's Trinya Srinok and Aranboulue won the women's 76 kg and men's 19 kg weight lifting events, re-, spectively.

In the swimming pool. Singapore's Joscelyn Yeo won her seventh gold medal of the SEA Games by finishing a few hundredths of a second ahead of Thailand's Ravee Intaporn-Udum in the women's 400-metre freestyle.

Yeo is due to compete in nine events, and hopes to win gold in all of them.

Maradona being Maradona been offered a contract to Maradona's career has



Dec 15: Troubled soccer star Diego Maradona said Thursday he would quit Boca Juniors, barely two months after making a come-

back, reports AP. "I'm leaving with great sadness," the 35-year-old former Argentine captain told reporters. "I don't want

so I'm off." He said the Boca Juniors' final game of the season on Saturday would be his last with the club. Maradona had warned that

if Boca hired former Argen-

to put rocks in Boca's path,

tine national coach Carlos Bilardo, he would leave the club at which he sprang to fame as a teenager in the early 1980s. Boca President Mauricio Macri confirmed he had offered Bilardo the post, but

said he would do everything to keep Maradona. "Boca is striving to be among the world's top five clubs and so we must keep Maradona," he said, adding that Bilardo did not object to

coaching Maradona. Maradona first played under Bilardo when he inspired Argentina to the 1986 World Cup title.

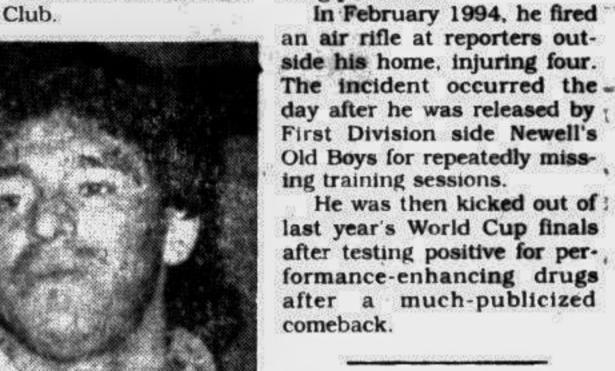
Their relationship soured at Spain's Sevilla when Bilardo substituted Maradona during a league game in 1992. Maradona threw his shirt to the ground and later came to blows with the coach.

Maradona did not comment on reports that he had

ভয়েস অৰ আমেরিকা'র সদর দপ্তর কোথায়

play in Japan. "I don't know who will want to sign me." he said, denying that he planned to retire. Maradona has shown

glimpses of his old genius since returning for Boca in late September. However the team squandered a five-point lead this month and even lost 6-4 at home to title chasers Racing Club.



DIEGO MARADONA

Complaining that he had an upset stomach, Maradona missed the following match, which Boca desperately needed to win. Without their captain, they lost 2-1 and fell out of the title race. The hot-headed star

blasted Boca fans Wednesday when told they considered Bilardo a better signing than Maradona. "They're idiots," he said. "I hope everyone in the stadium

swears at me during Satur-

day's game. That's how I'll say

goodbye."

been plagued by controversy since he left Boca in 1981 to play in Europe with Spain's Barcelona, Napoli in Italy and Sevilla. In 1991 he was banned for 15 months for cocaine abuse

while playing for Napoli. The following year he was arrested in Buenos Aires for drug possession. In February 1994, he fired an air rifle at reporters out-

day after he was released by First Division side Newell's Old Boys for repeatedly missing training sessions. He was then kicked out of last year's World Cup finals after testing positive for per-

formance-enhancing drugs after a much-publicized

Atalanta advance to last four

BERGAMO, Italy, Dec 15: Atalanta of Bergamo joined Bologna, Fiorentina and Inter in the Italian Cup semifinals following a 4-2 victory against Cagliari on Thursday night. reports AP.

The home win, in a sec-

ond-leg game of the quarterfinals, qualified Atalanta on a 4-3 aggregate score.

Veteran Italian striker Sandro Tovalieri scored two goals, the decisive one with 9 minutes left, to lift Atalanta in a semifinal round against Second-Division Bologna, who upset powerhouse AC Milan Wednesday.



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