

Column One

DID U' KNOW?

(The Professor does)

HAT this is perhaps the longest period since independence that the country has been without any sports activities.

Why this emptiness? Don't ask me. I prefer to keep sports clean of politics.

SPORTS TALK



Monica Seles

(American tennis superstar) "The first one is always very special. But this one is, in a way, special too."

On winning a Grand Slam title (the Australian Open) after her comeback.

Sports

WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Sports WHIZZ KID

competition-31

Tick the Correct Answer

(Competition closes: 8 p.m. Mar 29, 1996)

- 1. In the 1996 World Cup, Sri Lanka's Aravinda de Silva won the man-of-the-match awards...

Name: Class: Roll No: School Address: Phone: (if any)

Steffi starts in style

KEY BISCAINE, Florida, Mar 23: Steffi Graf launched her defence of the Lipton championships here on Friday with a 6-1, 7-5 victory over Sandra Cacic in the second round of the 4.1 million-dollar event, reports AFP.

Graf, who arrived in Florida fresh from victory in the Evert Cup in Indian Wells, California, last week, had a first round bye.

The Evert Cup was her first tournament of the year, but so far she has shown no ill-effects from surgery to remove bone spurs in her left foot in December.

The women's competition lost its marquee match-up earlier this week when co-number one Monica Seles withdrew with a sore left shoulder.

In other matches on Friday, third-seeded German Anke Huber defeated Jolene Watanabe of the United States 6-3, 6-7 (8-10), 6-1. Fifth seed Kimiko Date of Japan downed Barbara Schett of Austria 6-3, 7-5, and eighth seed Lindsay Davenport of the United States breezed past Laura Golarsa of Italy 6-1, 6-2.

Among the men in second round action, 12th seed Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine defeated Guillaume Raoux of France 6-4, 6-4. Chile's Marcelo Rios, seeded 13th after reaching the final of the Champions Cup at Indian Wells last week, beat Karol Kucera of Slovakia 6-4, 6-2.

4 WI World Cuppers axed

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, Mar 23: West Indies have dropped four of their World Cup squad for the opening one-day international against New Zealand, starting in Jamaica on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

With former skipper Richie Richardson declaring himself unavailable and all-rounder Ottis Gibson ruled out with a groin injury, six members of the squad which reached the World Cup semifinals earlier this month are missing from the 13-man squad announced on Friday.

The players dropped are

Lankans stick to winning combination

COLOMBO, Mar 23: Sri Lanka have retained the same 14-member squad that won the World Cup last week for next month's Singer Cup triangular tournament in Singapore, the cricket board said, reports AP.

India and Pakistan are the other teams that will take part in the round robin tournament April 1 to 5. The final will be played on April 7.

The same squad is likely to be retained for a subsequent series of matches in the West Indies and in California in the United States.

TEAM

Arjuna Ranatunga (captain), Aravinda de Silva (vice captain), Roshan Mahanama, Hashan Tillekeratne, Asanka Gurusinghe, Sanath Jayasuriya, Gurusish Kaluwatharana (wicketkeeper), Chaminda Vas, Kumar Dharmasena, Pramodya Wickremasinghe, Muttiah Muralitharan, Ravindra Pushpakumara, Upul Chandana, Marvan Atapattu.

out-of-form batsmen Sherwin Campbell and Keith Arthurton, fast bowler Cameron Cuffy and wicketkeeper Courtney Browne.

Two uncapped players, wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs and all-rounder Laurie Williams, have been brought into the squad selected for the first three of five one-day matches.

Three batsmen ignored for the World Cup, Phil Simmons, Stuart Williams and Philo Wallace have been recalled.

Jamaican Laurie Williams, a fast-medium bowler, captured 20 wickets in four Red Stripe Cup matches this season at an average of 17.55 apiece.



PHIL SIMMONS

The recall of Stuart Williams and Simmons was widely expected after both batsmen 'enjoyed a prolific 1996 Red Stripe Cup season.

Simmons, a veteran of over 100 one-day internationals, topped the batting averages (72.62) with 581 runs. Williams hit 495 runs at an average of 61.87.

Wallace, a surprise omission from the World Cup party, has finally been given another opportunity at international level after playing 10 one-day internationals in Sharjah (1991) and Pakistan and Australia

(1991-92) in the World Series Cup.

After Tuesday's opening match in Kingston the teams move on to Port of Spain, Trinidad, for the next two matches on March 29 and 30. The fourth match is in Georgetown, Guyana, on April 3 and the final clash at St Vincent on April 6.

SQUAD

Courtney Walsh (captain), Stuart Williams, Shtnarine Chanderpaul, Philo Wallace, Brian Lara, Phil Simmons, Jimmy Adams, Roland Holder, Ridley Jacobs, Roger Harper, Ian Bishop, Curtly Ambrose, Laurie Williams.

Six-a-side cricket Biman may go to Bangkok

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Biman along with another local club is expected to take part in a six-a-side cricket tournament to be held in Bangkok from March 27 to April 1.

This was disclosed yesterday by Ali Ahsan Babu, the cricket manager of Bangladesh Biman, who further added that the team is expected to leave for Bangkok on March 25.

Biman apart, another outfit named Commonwealth Club, an unknown factor in local sports, will also take part in the six-day meet.

It was also learnt that national skipper Akram Khan, Aminul Islam Bulbul, Enamul Haq Moni, Imrul Hamid Partha, Athar Ali Khan will feature in the so-called Commonwealth Club.

However, the tour to Bangkok may be postponed if the on-going Premier cricket league, suspended for the last 15 days due to the prevailing restive political situation, resumes within the next couple of days.

Tennis squad off to KL

Sports Reporter

A four-member Bangladesh tennis team left the capital yesterday to take part in the ITF Malaysian International junior tennis championship, scheduled to begin in Kuala Lumpur from Monday.

In the week-long meet, a regular event of the ITF world junior-ranking circuit, the Bangladesh contingent includes three players and an official.

Faheem Ahsan Romi, Faisal Safullah and Rahat Kamal are staying members while Mohammed Shahidullah will be the manager.

More than 100 players from 22 nations will feature in the tourney.

Prabhakar, Kampli dropped

NEW DELHI, Mar 23: India's cricket selectors on Saturday penalised experienced all-rounder Manoj Prabhakar and batsman Vinod Kampli for their poor World Cup form by dropping them for two limited-overs triangulars 'next month, reports AFP.

The duo were replaced by uncapped batsmen Vikram Rathore and Rahul Dravid for the Singer Cup in Singapore from April 1-7 and the Sharjah Cup in the United Arab Emirates from April 11-19.

Another casualty from the World Cup squad was seamer Sallit Ankola, who made way for another new ball bowler Prashant Vaidya.

Chief selector Gundappa Vishwanath said Prabhakar, Kampli and Ankola were dropped after faring poorly in the World Cup in which India lost in the semi-finals to eventual champions Sri Lanka.

Former Test batsman Sandeep Patil takes over as manager from Ajit Wadekar, whose four-year term expired after the World Cup.

India play arch-rivals Pakistan and world champions Sri Lanka in the Singer Cup, Singapore's first international fixture.

The Sharjah line-up is India, Pakistan and South Africa who will make their first appearance at the desert venue.

SQUAD

Mohammad Azharuddin (capt), Sachin Tendulkar, Navjot Sidhu, Ajay Jadeja, Rahul Dravid, Vikram Rathore, Sanjay Manjrekar, Nayan Mongia, Javagal Srinath, Venkatesh Prasad, Prashant Vaidya, Anil Kumble, Venkatapathy Raju, Ashish Kapoor.

Manager: Sandeep Patil.

Doordarshan reaps rich from WC

NEW DELHI, Mar 23: Doordarshan earned a net revenue of over Rs 25 crore from commercials aired during 236 hours of World Cup cricket telecast on its channels, reports PTI.

The quarterfinal match between India and Pakistan in Bangalore recorded the highest-ever rating, since the introduction of Doordarshan Audience Research Rating (DARR) - 72.2 on DD-2, according to a DD press release.

The national network telecast live two and even three matches simultaneously and Doordarshan earned, according to preliminary estimates, Rs 25.30 crore from commercials.

A total of 236 hours were devoted by Doordarshan for the live telecast of the Wills World Cup matches and an additional 13 hours of highlights.

Harris humbles Jansher

LONDON, Mar 23: World champion Jansher Khan was beaten for the first time for two years on the PSA World Circuit when he went down in five games to world number six Del Harris in the Supper Series final, reports AFP.

The great Pakistani had beaten the Englishman in four games to achieve a record of seven World Open titles in Cairo in November, but this time looked both lethargic and error-prone and was beaten 9-4, 8-10, 8-10, 9-6, 9-6.

This sensational result occurred after Harris appeared to have missed his chance of causing an upset by fluffing a backhand drive at 8-6 in the second game and losing the chance for a two-game lead.

In the fourth however he applied tremendous pressure with phenomenal retrieving - several times performing the splits in getting balls back and the longer the match went on the more Jansher appeared to grow tense.

Though the champion made no excuses after the match he may have been placed under extra pressure by the experimental point-per-rally nite-up scoring system being used for the first time.

The day before he had complained about such an experiment taking place in this event, saying: "They should try it in smaller tournaments first because this scoring gives the underdog a better chance."

"That's because it shortens matches, and so if someone hits a hot streak they can win. Then your confidence can be affected."

That is partly what appeared to happen, although Harris also deserves credit for setting out to force the pace of the rallies from the beginning and keeping that pace high.

Apartheid reversed!

Nizamuddin Ahmed back from Karachi



TRUDGING alongside me at Delhi's Indira Gandhi Airport on our flight to Lahore, the Gujarat-origin South African, sporting a French cut, surprised me, "In South Africa we are jumping for India and Pakistan"; his eyes widening at the prospect of starting me. He was not disappointed. For a South African having travelled all the way to the sub-continent only to watch the World Cup along with his teenager cricketer son, Rustam Kassam would be expected to back Cronje and his men. Little wonder that in spite of South Africa's ouster in the quarters, bearded and balding Kassam was still carrying along; after Karachi to Calcutta to Chandigarh to

Lahore. It cost the father-son duo two lakh taka including return and venue-to-venue flights, hotels, city transport, game tickets, etc. Not a bad deal through an agent, admitted a content Kassam; his son hardly ever speaking but through his eyes communicated that he was very much part of the conversation.

According to Kassam, in South Africa the resident Asians side with either Pakistan or India when they are playing cricket against the home side. What about nationalism? Asians and blacks have been deprived of crickets and other facilities over the years, explains Kassam. Only during the last three years limited facilities have been on offer for the coloured mass which is about the period the land has been free from the evil clutches of apartheid. Junior Kassam at last open his mouth, "We have nothing." "He should know. He plays for the Junior Natal side."

The degree of discrimination has been so deep-rooted that the problems is indeed acute for the non-whites even today. In Natal, Newcastle where Kassam is a businessman, a school could not muster half the money needed for a practice net; Kassam had offered to pay the other half.

So, when can we expect the first Asian to be capped for South Africa? Not in the next five to ten years, admits Kassam frankly. An avid follower of the game, locally and internationally, who would be more qualified to comment on that?

Kassam should be back in Natal by now supporting Asian and black children to make it to big league cricket. "We are now treating the whites like they treated us before. Soon it will be apartheid reversed," added Kassam as a parting remark.



The South Africans in white. — Star file photo

Foes fight it out today

KUALA LUMPUR, Mar 23: Casualties are Japan's main worry in their preparations for the semifinals of the Asian Football Cup qualifying finals Sunday, reports AFP.

Skipper Masakiyo Maezono, defender Hideto Suzuki and striker Sotaro Yasunaga have sustained slight injuries, but head coach Akira Nishino is hoping for their speedy recovery against Gulf giants Saudi Arabia.

Manager: Sandeep Patil.

Japan's attacks may lose their sting in their crucial match against Saudi Arabia, who destroyed Kazakhstan 4-0 on Thursday.

Japan need a fully fit striker to face Saudi Arabia, who have improved over the past three games but still lack the Japanese speed.

"Japan are fast, rushing up to attack and charging back when they lose their ball. Tight defence, good teamwork and tactics," observed Saudi head coach Ivo Wortmann.

"Players from the Gulf states do not have the speed unlike Japan said South Korea," he said. Even hattrick star Obied

Al Dossary, who helped Saudi Arabia demolish a dispirited Kazakhstan, missed three chances, he said.

"We can't afford to miss such chances against Japan," Wortmann warned, adding Saudi Arabia still needed to polish up their attacks and scoring.

For Iraqi head coach Anwar Jassam, it will be do-or-die for his team when they play against a more polished South Korean side Sunday.

Iraq edged Oman 1-0 Wednesday to book their semifinals berth.

"We respect Korea's swift and effective raids at the goalmouth," said an Iraqi team official, adding Iraq must have a tight defence and be able to launch fast counter-attacks to score.

Korea, who ended China's Atlanta hopes on Thursday with a 3-0 victory, are anticipating a tough battle against the Iraqis Sunday, a team whom they have not beaten in recent years.

"We are not taking any chances," said head coach Anatoli Bychovets, adding: "They will be tougher than the Chinese team."

China were unable to put a fight Thursday after sustaining injuries during their earlier two matches. Korean Football Association manager Kim Won Dong said.

China were pushed to the limit to check Kazakhstan in their first match on March 17, Kin said.

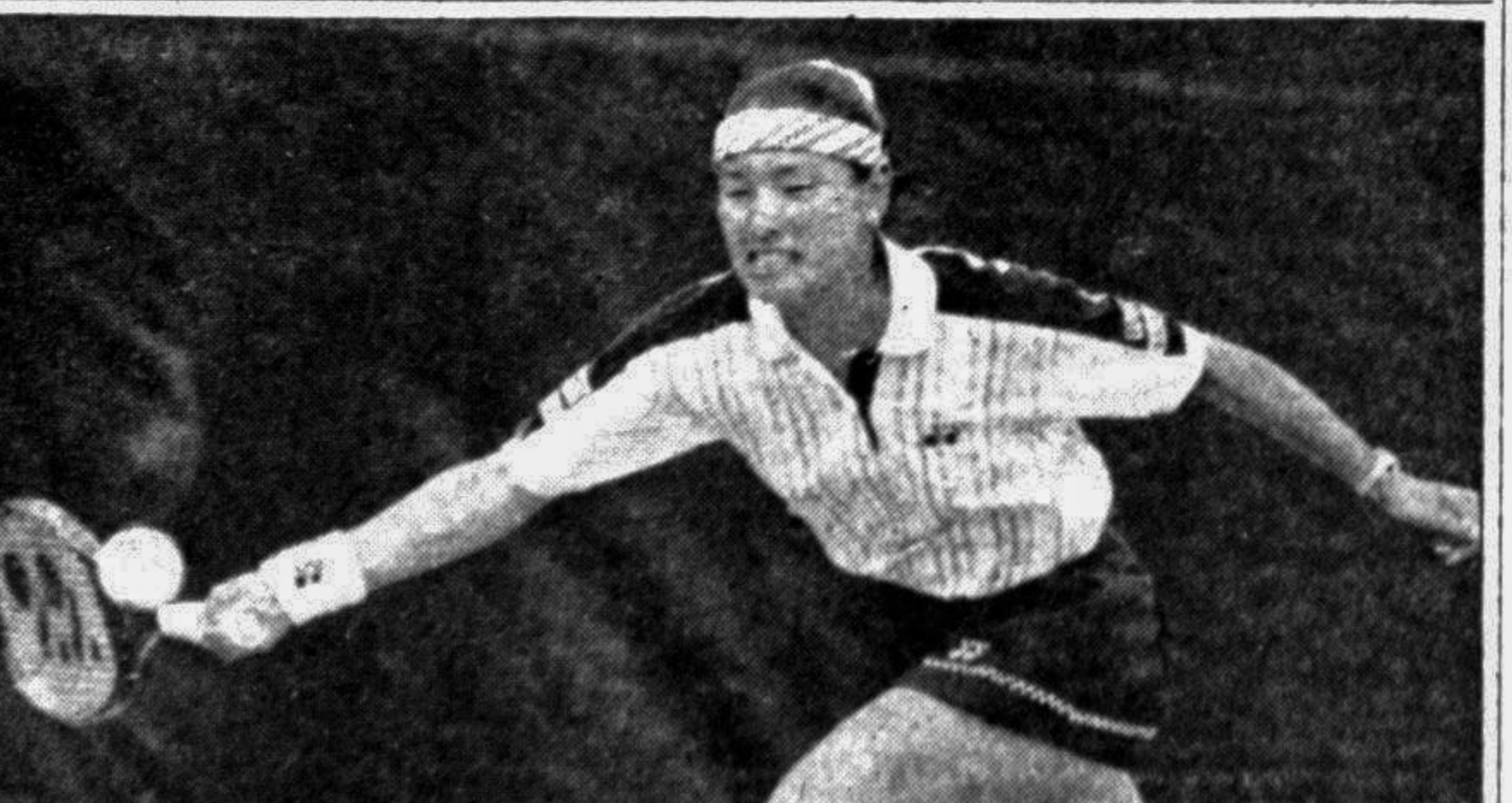
Ihara named Asian booter-of-the-year

KUALA LUMPUR, Mar 23: Japanese central defender Masami Ihara Friday was named the 1995 Asian footballer-of-the-year by the Asian Football Confederation, reports AFP.

Ihara, 28, beat Thailand striker Natipong Stritong and Oman teenager Amor Al Kathiri to clinch the annual award, but was unable to attend the ceremony as he was in Japan preparing for the J-League.

Ihara had a vintage year home and away and is now the most-capped player in Japanese football.

The Daily Star PHILIPS Cricket World Cup Quiz '96. Includes prizes list: 1st Prize 29" Powervision Colour TV Tk. 47,800.00, 2nd Prize 20" Powervision Colour TV Tk. 22,850.00, 3rd Prize CD Player Tk. 7750.00X3= 23,250.00. All prizes courtesy: Transcom Electronics Ltd.



Kimiko Date of Japan plays a forehand return against Barbara Schett of Austria in their second round match of the Lipton Championships in Key Biscayne on Mar 22. Date won 6-3, 7-6. — AFP/UNB photo