

Column One

DID U' KNOW?

(The Professor does)

HAT if your team scores only three fours in a 60-over innings, you would have bettered an infamous record held by Pakistan.

SPORTS TALK



Mark Taylor

(Australian cricket captain) In one-day cricket, they've improved a hell of a lot. They've now got a game plan which is based on positive batting and defensive bowling and they do a very good job of it.

Commenting on their seven-wicket World Cup final defeat to Sri Lanka.

WI tail wags in time



KINGSTON, Jamaica, Mar 27: West Indies pulled off a thrilling one-wicket victory over New Zealand with four balls to spare in their opening one-day international on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

New Zealand made 243 in 49.1 overs and appeared set for victory when West Indies were eight wickets down in the 44th over and 46 runs behind.

But spurred on by a partisan crowd of 12,000 at Sabina Park, Roger Harper (27 not out) and Curtly Ambrose (17) hit out effectively and West Indies clinched victory with 244 for nine with four balls to spare.

Harper hit Dion Nash for a six and two fours off the penultimate over. New Zealand, asked to bat first, struggled at 70 for five before Dipak Patel and Adam Parore rescued them with aggressive half-centuries.

Man-of-the-match Patel led the way with an electrifying 59-ball 71 and Parore scored 69 in a seventh-wicket partnership worth 111 runs.

Ambrose claimed four wickets for 36 and fellow fast bowler Courtney Walsh three for 30 to restrict the New Zealand score.

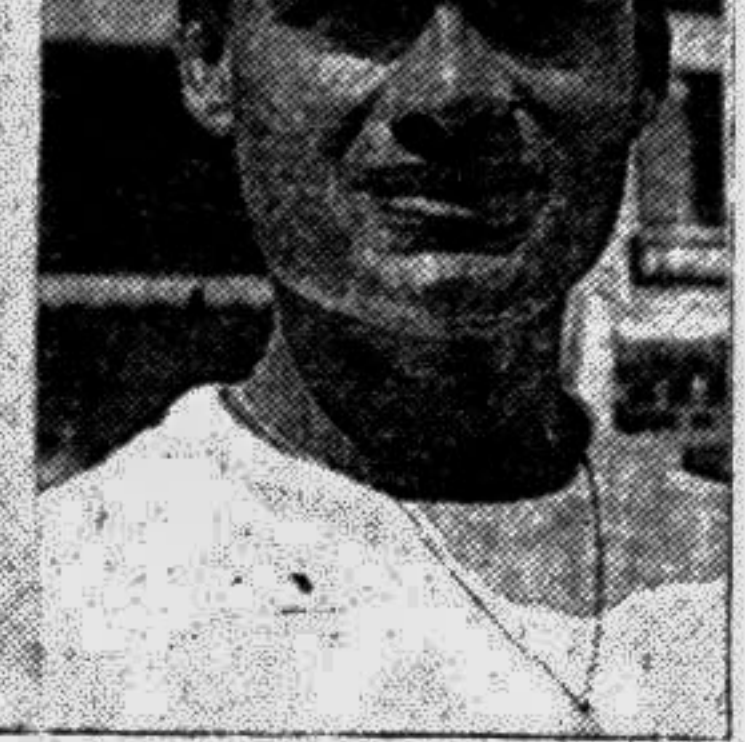
West Indies openers Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Stuart Williams got West Indies off to a great start with a stand of 125. Chanderpaul hit 61 off 75 balls and Williams 62 off 87.

Chris Harris, bowling with a quick leg-break action, dismissed both and then added the prize scalp of Brian Lara. Harris disposed of Chanderpaul, caught and bowled, and eight runs later bowled Williams off his pads.

Lara made only 12 off 13 balls before being trapped leg before wicket sweeping at Harris.

Wickets continued to fall but Harper and Ambrose hit out lustily and ran frenetically between the wickets to give the West Indies hope with their ninth-wicket partnership.

Ambrose lifted Danny Morrison straight for six in the 48th over to boost the score to 221 but was bowled by Morrison.



DIPAK PATEL... m-o-m

son two balls later as he tried to repeat the shot. Walsh joined Harper and together they saw West Indies home. The two teams meet in Trinidad on Friday for the next one-day international.

Scoreboard in the first one-day international between West Indies and New Zealand at Sabina Park on Tuesday.

NEW ZEALAND

Table with columns: Player, Runs, Wickets, Overs. Includes players like C. Spearman, N. Astle, S. Fleming, etc.

WEST INDIES

Table with columns: Player, Runs, Wickets, Overs. Includes players like S. Williams, S. Chanderpaul, B. Lara, etc.

ROK crowned Asian soccer kings

Sports Reporter South Korea won the Asian Olympic football qualifiers defeating arch rivals Japan 2-1 in the final at the Shah Alam Stadium in Kuala Lumpur last night.

After a goalless first half, all the three goals were scored in a span of only two minutes with South Korean defender Lee Sang Hun opening his side's account in the 80th minute heading home a right flank free-kick.

But Japan hit back after only 40 seconds through their striker Jo Shoji, who side-footed the ball into the opponents' net from close.

South Korean striker Choi Yung then sealed the fate of the match converting a 12-yarder awarded in the 82nd minute.

With both teams, already assured of their places in the Atlanta Games by virtue of making the final, the outcome has once again established South Korea's claim as the super-power of Asia ahead of their bitter foes Japan.

SARABIA 3RD

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia booked their tickets for Atlanta as the third team from the region when they piped Iraq by a golden goal scored by their striker Solaiman during the sudden-death 30-minute extra time of a see-saw encounter.

Sohail to skipper Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Mar 27: Amir Sohail will captain Pakistan in next month's one-day tournaments in Singapore and Sharjah, reports Reuter.

Wasim Akram, who led Pakistan in the World Cup, was not included in the 14-man squad named by the country's cricket board on Monday.

He is still being treated for the side strain which forced him to miss the World Cup quarterfinal against India.

Akram's place goes to young medium pacer Mohammad Akram.

Basit Ali replaces the veteran Javed Miandad who has quit international cricket after a record sixth appearance in the World Cup.

SQUAD

Amir Sohail (captain), Saeed Anwar, Salim Malik, Ijaz Ahmed, Inzamamul Haq, Basit Ali, Rameez Raja, Rashid Latif, Mushtaq Ahmed, Waqar Younis, Aaqib Javed, Mohammed Akram, Ata-ur-Rahman, Saqlain Mushtaq.

Indo-Pak ODIs in Canada

NEW DELHI, Mar 27: The Indian and Pakistan cricket teams will play an annual series of one-day internationals in Canada starting this year, organisers announced today, reports AFP.

The inaugural Friendship Cup tournament between the two rivals will comprise five one-day matches and take place in September. Mark McCormack, chairman of International Management Group (IMG), told reporters here.

Exact dates and venues have not been finalised, he added. He said the matches would be accorded one-day international status by the International Cricket Council and are being held in conjunction with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the Pakistan Cricket Board.

McCormack, whose company represents a galaxy of sporting stars, said the tournament would be televised and he hoped it would promote the popularity of cricket in North America.

Border ends a loser!

SYDNEY, Mar 27: Former Australian Test captain Allan Border bowed out of first-class cricket on a disappointing note today when Sheffield Shield holders Queensland failed to reach this year's final, reports Reuter.

In his last appearance before retirement, Border was given a standing ovation from a small crowd at the Melbourne Cricket Ground after Queensland's five-wicket defeat against Victoria. The loss allowed rivals Western Australia to claim a place in the five-day final against South Australia in Adelaide, starting on Saturday.

Western Australia booked their place with a comfortable five-wicket win against Tasmania on the fourth and final day of their encounter in Hobart on Tuesday.

IAAF exonerates Modahl

CAPE TOWN, Mar 27: British middle distance runner Diane Modahl was cleared of doping on Monday after the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) said a "serious element of doubt" existed about her guilt, reports Reuter. Modahl who waged an 18-month fight to clear her name said: "I am delighted with the decision."

Prabhakar hits back



NEW DELHI, Mar 27: Indian all-rounder Manoj Prabhakar announced his retirement from international cricket after being over-looked for two limited-overs triangulars next month, reports AFP.

"I have no motivation left since the men who rule Indian cricket have no faith in me," an angry Prabhakar told a crowded news conference at the Ferozeshah Kotla ground.

Prabhakar's decision came three days after he was dropped from the Indian team for the Singer Cup in Singapore (April 1-7) and the Sharjah Cup in the United Arab Emirates (April 11-19).

The omission was expected in many quarters after the all-rounder's dismal performance in the World Cup, but the intensity of the outburst caught many by surprise.

"The team management obviously had something against me, but what hurt more was that no-one gave me any reason why I was dropped," said Prabhakar, who turns 33 next month and has been a regular since his international debut in 1984.

"For all my hard work and all my sacrifices on and off the field, I did not receive a second chance from the same people who raved about my performance not long ago."

"I had one bad match in the

World Cup, but is one match enough to ignore someone who has played for so long?" he asked bitterly. Prabhakar was not considered for India's remaining Cup campaign after being thrashed for 33 runs in his first two overs in the league match against eventual champions Sri Lanka at the Kotla here on March 2.

"Even a great fast bowler like Pakistan's Waqar Younis was smashed for nearly 40

runs in two overs in the quarterfinal against India, does that mean he is finished?" he said.

"Everyone can love a bad

day. It's not unusual. But you can't be sacked because of that. Obviously they (the team management) did not have any faith in me."

Prabhakar refused to mention skipper Mohammad Azharuddin or ex-manager Ajit Wadekar by name. But he added: "You all know who comprised the team management. What's the use talking names. They are all in it together."

Many expected the all-rounder to be selected for the upcoming tour of England where conditions are more conducive to his seam bowling.

"I don't want to play at the international level any more, but I will continue to assist Delhi in first-class cricket," said Prabhakar, who in the later stages of his career opened both the batting and bowling for India.

"I know I still have a few years of top-class cricket left in me, but I would rather concentrate my energies for Delhi, where I am wanted, than for the national team where I am not wanted."

Prabhakar took 96 wickets and scored more than 1,500 runs in 39 Tests. He had one Test century to his credit — a heroic 120 against the West Indies at Chandigarh in 1994 before being felled by a short ball from Courtney Walsh.

Prabhakar also played 129 one-dayers, scoring three hundreds and claiming 157 wickets.

Graf scrapes into semis



KEY BISCAIYNE, Florida, Mar 27: Americans Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi, Michael Chang and Jim Courier all advanced to the 4.1 million dollar Lipton Championships quarterfinals with victories on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Rosset of Switzerland and Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands respectively, round out the men's quarterfinals.

On the women's side, top-ranked and top-seeded Steffi Graf struggled to beat fifth-seeded Kimiko Date of Japan 7-6 (7-4), 6-3 and reach the semifinals against eighth-

ing to regain the top ranking with a tournament victory here. "I was keen to play well this match, got off to a really good start and, as the match went on, started playing better and better."

Agassi found some relief for his troubled play here in his match against Lareau, ranked 14th. Despite the Canadian's 14 ace, Agassi still managed to break three times thanks to improve baseline play and his own strong serving, which included four aces.

On court for just over two hours, Courier and the 96th-ranked Tebutt battled fiercely to gain a foothold in the match. In the final set, after two exchanges of service breaks, Courier broke Tebutt at love to take a 6-5 lead and then held his own serve for the match.

In today's men's quarterfinal match ups, Boetsch will face Courier and Agassi will meet Joyce.

In women's semifinal play today Gabriela Sabatini will play Chanda Rubin, and Karina Haboudova of Slovakia will face Irina Spirlea of Romania.



Steffi Graf is all concentration while playing a backhand slice against Kimiko Date of Japan during their quarterfinal match of Lipton Championships in Key Biscayne, Florida on Mar 26. Graf won 7-6, 6-3.

Sampras played brilliantly to upend fellow American Todd Martin 6-3, 6-4. Agassi, struggling in his first two outings, finally found his rhythm for a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Canada's Sebastian Lareau.

Courier, however, struggled past Australia's Michael Tebutt 3-6, 6-4, 7-5 and Michael Chang barely edged tough Czech Petr Korda 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.

Sixth-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia also advanced, as did Arnaud Boetsch of France.

Upstart Americans Michael Joyce and Vince Spadea, scoring upset victories over Marc

seeded American Lindsay Davenport, who scored a quick 6-0, 6-1 victory over third-seeded German Anke Huber.

Playing in a relaxed front-runner role to perfection, Sampras appeared barely troubled by the 6-foot-4 (1.93 metres) Martina's towering presence on court.

With first serves slamming in at 130 mph (210 kph) even late in the match, crisp volleys and decisive groundstrokes, the top-ranked Sampras broke three times to Martin's once for a decisive victory.

"This is the best match I've played in a couple of weeks now," said Sampras, 24, shoot-

Stefan to miss Davis Cup tie against India

STOCKHOLM, Mar 27: Veteran Stefan Edberg has been ruled out of the Swedish team to meet India in the Davis Cup quarterfinals next month, team captain Carl-Axel Hageskog said on Tuesday, report agencies.

Hageskog said Edberg, who lost to Frenchman Arnaud Boetsch in Key Biscayne on Tuesday, was suffering from a wrist injury and had been taking painkillers. Edberg would need a cortisone injection as soon as his match ended, Hageskog added.

The second-round World Group Davis Cup match is played at Calcutta, April 5-7. India's team is composed of Leander Paes, Mahesh Bhupathi, P. Sriniath and Gaurav Natekar.

France book Atlanta slot

METZ, France Mar 27: France qualified for the Atlanta Olympics and reached the European, under-21, championship semifinals at the same time when they crushed Germany 4-1 on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Two goals from Robert Pires, playing on his home pitch, and two more from Lyon striker Florian Maurice paved the way for a game from Bayern Munich's Christian Nerlinger.



Robert Pires (R) of France blasts the first goal of his side 3-1 win over Germany during their quarterfinal engagement of European Championship in Metz, France on March 26. France with this win booked their berth for the Atlanta Olympics.

Ray resigns his post



LONDON, Mar 27: Raymond Illingworth has decided to step down as manager of the England cricket team although he wants to stay on as chairman of the selectors, reports AP.

England's Test and County Cricket Board met Tuesday to consider the next move and decided to appoint a coach for this season rather than a manager. The Board said an appointment probably would be made within the next two weeks.

Quoted in the Times of London Tuesday, Illingworth, a 60-year-old former England captain said he had been hurt by criticisms from within the team during their recent run of bad performances, in South Africa and the World Cup.

But he admitted a younger person should take over and Ian Botham, David Lloyd, John Emburey and Phil Neale are among the favourites to take over.

"We need a younger man as manager and I have made my own recommendation. It is up to them now," Illingworth told

the Times. "It has not been a pleasant week. A lot of knives have been stuck in my back and although I've found out where they came from, that, too, has upset me. "Some were from too close to home, even from within our

from it all, because it was getting to my wife and family as well as to me, but I've been stung, so my reaction is to carry on (as chairman of selectors). "I am that sort of stubborn bloke. When people do things like this to me, it gets my back up."

Illingworth as re-elected unopposed as England's chairman of selectors last week after the only other candidate, David Graveney, withdrew his candidature.

The changes mean England's teams for the forthcoming series against India and Pakistan and the touring parties for next winter's programme will be chosen by a five-man panel headed by Illingworth.

A working party is looking into the administration, selection and management of England teams and is due to report to the TCCB in August.

Surrey cricket club chairman Mike Soper, who has called for changes in the way the sport is run, said: "I'm sad for Ray but pleased for the future of English cricket because it's time for a change and the future needs a new outlook."

Wright wins a reprieve



LONDON, Mar 27: Mark Wright, the forgotten man of English football, made a dramatic return to the limelight on Wednesday when he was handed the chance to reestablish himself in Terry Venables's side ahead of the European Championship finals, reports AFP.

The 32-year-old Liverpool veteran, one of the stars of the 1990 World Cup, is joined in the squad by uncapped youngsters Phil Neville, Robbie Fowler and Ugo Ehiogu after the England coach kept all his options open for Euro '96.

"I've got my plans but that doesn't mean my mind can't be changed. I think I know where I am but I'm not adamant and this proves it," said Venables.

The England coach announced a 26-man squad for next week's friendly against Bulgaria, the last of three Wembley warm-ups before the opening game against Switzerland on June 8.

There are echoes of 1966 with the arrival of Fowler, a Liverpool striker in the Roger Hunt mould, and Manchester United's brothers-in arms Phil and Gary Neville following the path of Bobby and Ack Charlton.

The Nevilles are part of a new wave of a talented youngsters which includes the likes of Steve McManaman, Jamie Redknapp, Trevor Sinclair, Nick Barry and Fowler.

"The youngsters have got to get their experience from somewhere if they're going to be good for their country in the future," said Venables.

"I'm prepared to give them that shot. I believe you're never too old and you're never too young, it just depends how good you are."

Cultured centre-half Wright, a World Cup semi-finalist for Bobby Robson and a cornerstone of Taylor's 1992 European Championships finals plans until he was turned up on the morning of the flight to Sweden with an achilles strain in 1994. Though he was given his 43rd captain Spain the following September Taylor never forgave the player and Wright's career, plagued by injuries, went into free-fall.

But under Roy Evans, Wright has fought back brilliantly this season to displace Neil Ruddock in the Liverpool defence.

With serious injury worries about Arsenal's Adams, out nine weeks, and with Gary Palister plagued by back problems, Venables has turned the clock back.

"He's a confident player and he likes to play with the ball, which is always helpful. It's his opportunity. He's not been

with me before and I get a chance to see him. But he's done it at the top level," said Venables.

Fowler meanwhile may not make the starting line-up next week, but he now looks assured a long reign in the squad after this season's 30 goals delivered the promise of the 49, in the preceding two years.

"He's in the squad in his own right. His improvement has been very quick."



German soccer superstar Juergen Klinsmann, who had a successful international season for his country last year, proudly holds the "World top-scorer '95" trophy prior to the German national team's friendly match against Denmark in Munich on March 26. The prolific striker was awarded the trophy by the Federation for Soccer-History and Statistics.

'98 WC soccer tickets go on sale May 4

PARIS, Mar 27: The first tickets for the 1998 soccer World Cup finals in France will go on sale on May 4 with organisers promising lower prices than at the 1994 tournament in the United States, reports Reuter.

Michel Platini, co-president of the French Organising Committee, told a news conference on Monday the first batch of tickets would be available only to clubs and licensed players in France as part of an aim to reward the true fans of the game.

He said 500,000 more tickets would be given to FIFA next year for distribution among the 31 nations who will join France in the finals.

Platini said half a million tickets would be sold for 150 French francs (30 dollars) or less and the majority of seats would cost no more than 250 francs (50 dollars).

Cissie Charlton no more

LONDON, Mar 27: Cissie Charlton, the mother of Jack and Bobby Charlton, two of the greatest names in British soccer history, died on Tuesday at the age of 83, reports Reuter.

Mrs Charlton died in a rest home in Newbiggin, Northumberland, a few miles from the family's home town of Ashington.

She was a member of the Milburn family, whose involvement in soccer goes back to the 1880s. Her late cousin Jackie Milburn was the legendary Newcastle United striker of the 1940s and 1950s.

A spokeswoman for the home where she lived said: "She listened to football and talked football when she could because, along with her family, it was the most important thing in her life."