

From Kenya with no revelation

Sports Reporter

The officials as well as the captain of the Bangladesh national team appeared as ignorant as any layman in their bid to come up with any plausible explanation for the side's mind-boggling, abject failure in the recently concluded fifth ICC Trophy cricket tournament at a press conference at the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) office yesterday.

In what seemed to a 'programmed', muddled and confusing account of a tragic tale of miscarriage of a nation's ambition, the people at the helm culled batting as the factor that made all the difference during the Kenyan safari.

Although Faruque Ahmed, the skipper, and Reza-e-Karim, the manager, tried to give a run around about the mysterious role and presence of Indian Mohinder Amarnath, it was clear that the buttoned-up former Test cricketer, who took over as the coach of the Kenya-bound squad last August, could not, or as many felt, didn't bring into play his vast experience for the cause of Bangladesh cricket.

According to Aminul Huq Moni, the general secretary of BCCB, Amarnath, who flew straight back to Bombay to take care of some personal business, would send a report on the Bangladesh performance in two week's time and, if need be, would come to Dhaka for some sort of a review.

Brushing aside the suggestion that the dismal performance in the world championships for the ICC associate members would act as a negative catalyst in the over all progress of the game in this country, the BCCB general secretary said that the board would look into the matter after Eid-ul-Fitr.

Abahani-MSC semifinals today

Sports Reporter

Calcutta Mohammedan Sporting Club reached the final of the Churns Cup invitational football tournament when they beat reigning Calcutta league champions East Bengal by the odd goal in three at the East Bengal ground yesterday.

According to a telephonic message, Mohammedans came back from behind after being down by a 34th minute goal from Saravan of East Bengal.

Ashfaq restored parity in the second half and Tausif Jamal, the player-of-the-year, scored the match winner for the black and whites with a powerful shot.

Dhaka Mohammedans play their arch-rivals Abahani Krira Chakra, another top Dhaka team, in the second semifinal today.

Doordarshan Calcutta and Akashvani will cover the match live from 3 pm (BST).

Biman Cup final round from Apr 2

Sports Reporter

The final round of the Biman Cup under-14 football tournament will begin from April 2 at the Dhaka Stadium.

Nine teams — eight zonal champions and the last year's winners Tangail — split into three groups will participate in the round robin tournament.

Hughes exonerated

JOHANNESBURG, Mar 10: Australian team manager Cameron Battersby has decided to take no action against paceman Merv Hughes following a bat-swinging incident on the final day of the first Test against South Africa, reports Reuter.

Hughes was shown on Australian Television swinging his bat at the fence separating the players from the crowd on his way back to the pavilion on Tuesday.

Battersby told reporters he was aware of the incident, but had not seen it on television. He added that Hughes was provoked and acted accordingly.

Battersby said Hughes had been abused and sworn at and as far as the team management was concerned the incident was closed but added if the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) decided to take further action that was their decision.

Hughes and leg-spinner Shane Warne had already been fined during the match over previous incidents.

They were each fined 1,000 rand (285 dollars) by match referee Donald Carr and then had a further fine of A4,000 dollars (2,840 dollars) slapped on them by the ACB for verbal abuse against South African batsmen.

The Australian team are currently having a break at the Leisure Resort of Sun City, 150 kilometres north of Johannesburg, before flying to Cape Town on Friday.

Their next match is a three-day game against a Bowl XI in Stellenbosch, starting on Saturday.



Faruque Ahmed skipper of the Bangladesh national cricket team (second from left) answering the queries (if they can be called answering) on Bangladesh's abject failure in the recently concluded ICC Trophy cricket tournament yesterday. — Star photo

Pakistan's double victory



AUCKLAND, Mar 10: Pakistan's cricketers will leave New Zealand next week with a winning tour record — and an enhanced reputation for their on-field behaviour, reports AP.

It will be in contrast to some of Pakistan's previous tours to New Zealand that have been marked by controversy on the field. The 1989 tour produced a constant flow of criticism aimed at the New Zealand umpires led by captain Imran Khan.

At the time he was pressing a case for neutral umpires in Tests, which has now happened, with one neutral umpire and one home-based official standing in all Test series.

There was also criticism of Pakistan's constant appealing for wickets, notably when their spinners were operating with a cordon of close catchers.

On their brief tour last season, bad on-field relations hit a new low when fast-medium

bowler Aaqib Javed became the first player to be suspended for a match by an International Cricket Council (ICC) referee.

Javed was suspended by referee Peter Burge of Australia after abusing umpire Brian Aldridge after a decision had gone against him in the one-day international at

Maradona looks forward to World Cup

BUENOS AIRES, Mar 10: Diego Maradona, sacked by his club and facing criminal charges for shooting at reporters, still hopes to make it to the World Cup finals and wants to play in Argentina's friendly against Brazil on March 23, reports Reuter.

"I'm thinking in terms of the World Cup finals," Maradona told local radio. "But before that I could be playing against Brazil. I can't rule that out. Let's see how I feel physically."

Napier. There were also angry exchanges between players during the one-off Test at Hamilton, which Pakistan won by 33 runs.

This time, there have been few incidents, and the reason might be that a winning team is a happy team.

Pakistan have won all three one-day matches against New Zealand — the fourth match in the five-match series is on Sunday in Auckland — and two of the three Test matches.

Pakistan coach Intikhab Alam said Thursday that there is a growing awareness among players of the standards expected on the field.

"We have tried our best to make sure nothing goes wrong," Intikhab said. "Also we now have the very strict ICC (International Cricket Council) code of conduct and I think now all sides have got the message. It's good for the game."

"Everyone plays hard and you want to do your best. But this has also been a very happy tour," Intikhab said.

Jansher regains his touch



VALE DO LOBO, Portugal, Mar 10: World squash champion Jansher Khan returned to form with a crushing 15-9, 15-6, 15-4 victory over Pakistan teammate Mir Zaman Gul in the second round of the Portuguese Open on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Juvenile soccer

Sports Reporter

Shahjahan Smriti Sangsad and National Football Training Club advanced to the semi-final of the Jadukar Samad Smriti juvenile football tournament, winning their respective quarter-final matches at the Outer Stadium yesterday.

Shahjahan Smriti Sangsad blanked Golzarbagh Sporting Club 2-0 in the first match of the day.

Azad and Imran were the scorers for the winners.

In the other match, a keenly-contested one, at the same venue, National Football Training Club beat Begumganj Udayan 3-1 in the tie-breaker.

The match rolled into penalty shoots-out as both teams failed to score in the regulation period.

Mahboob, Bahar and Shah Ali converted the spotkicks for National Football while Mahboob was the only scorer for the vanquished.

Div II cricket

Sports Reporter

Babu played as anchor role as his team Ajax Sports and Cultural Club earned promotion to the Milnars First Division cricket league defeating Amarjoti club by 49 runs in a Second Division play-off match at the Mirpur Pallabi ground yesterday.

Babu made a quick-fire 20 off 19 balls in his teams modest 172 runs for all in 39.4 over and then captured six wickets to bundle out Amarjoti for 123 in 32.5 overs.

However, Dola with 31 was the top scorer for Ajax while Rafiqul and Murtoza contributed 29 and 24 runs respectively to the Ajax total.

Sezan, the most successful Amarjoti bowler claimed four for 36. He was followed by Palash and Raju who took two wickets each.

Ajax who thrashed Orient SC by seven wickets in their first play off match now ride on to the First Division by an excellent piece of bowling from Babu who reeled off the Amarjoti innings for 123.

Babu's six wicket haul cost him only 28 runs in his eight over spell. He was well supported by Rafiqul who took two for 10.

Gul, the world number 18, was so confused by the end that he presented his compatriot with victory in 30 minutes by serving into the wrong side of the court on the final point.

After his shock second-round defeat by Scotland's Peter Nicol in the recent Welsh Classic in Cardiff, Jansher struggled to overcome English qualifier Olive Leach in Tuesday's first round match.

But Jansher recaptured his touch and killer instinct against the unfortunate Gul.

He stormed through the opening game in 13 minutes and the second in 10. Gul was not playing badly, he was simply being outplayed by a champion with a point to prove.

"I am getting better now all the time," said Jansher. "My wife and two young children are here with me and that makes me feel good."

In today's quarterfinals, Jansher will play veteran New Zealander Ross Norman.

The 25-year-old Norman overcame a rocky start to beat England's former British junior champion Paul Johnson — 14 years his junior — 8-15, 15-13, 15-8, 15-5 in 52 minutes.

Second seed Brett Martin of Australia also had a shaky opening against French

BJKF VP resigns

Sports Reporter

Hasanuzzaman Moni, vice-president of the Bangladesh Judo and Karate Federation (BJKF), resigned recently as a sequel to his difference in opinion with the federation president.

Earlier, Moni failed to convince the president of BJKF in retaining the job of a national coach of North Korea.

outsider Julien Bonetat. But he gradually took control to win easily enough in the end 7-15, 15-12, 15-12, 15-4.

Fellow Australian Rodney Eyles, the fourth seed, had no problems, however, as he cruised into the last eight with a 15-8, 15-8, 15-4 win in 25 minutes over countryman Anthony Hill.

Pakistan international Zarak Jahan Khan made a dramatic exit from the second round while match point down to Scotland's Peter Nicol.

Nicol, who beat world champion Jansher Khan in Cardiff two weeks ago, was leading 10-15, 15-9, 17-16, 11-15, 14-12 after one hour 58 minutes when Zarak went down clutching his left knee, which he injured three years ago and was subsequently out of squash for a year.

After being carried off court, he was found to be suffering from severe cramp, but was unable to continue.

China to look into it

KUALA LUMPUR, Mar 10: The Chinese Football Association has been asked to investigate charges of match-fixing levelled at its national team and top club, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) said today, reports Reuter.

The Chinese team and club champions Liaoning may have been paid off by a syndicate of Thai bookmakers, AFC secretary general Peter Vellapan said.

"All this time we thought this cancerous disease was confined to this region, and now I've been informed it has spread to the Chinese team," Vellapan said from the AFC headquarters in Kuala Lumpur.

Bad day for Indian bowlers

DUNEDIN, New Zealand.

Mar 10: New Zealand Test opener Blair Hartland missed out on an elusive fifth first-class century Thursday on the first day of a three-day match against India, reports AP.

Hartland made 98 for the New Zealand Emerging Players XI as they finished at 233 for four at stumps on the first day of their three-day match at Carisbrook Oval.

"It has been good to spend time in the middle and get a good look at them," Hartland said. "But it is really disappointing not getting the three-figure mark. I haven't scored a ton at first class level for nearly three years now."

Hartland said his 4 1-2 hour stay at the crease allowed him a good look at the Indian attack.

The leg-spinner (Anil Kumble) moves the ball very quickly through the air. But definitely Raju (left arm spinner Venkatapathy Raju) is the most difficult to play."

The placid nature of the Carisbrook pitch offered little to the seam bowlers on Thursday.

"Javagal Srinath is pretty quick but you really can't tell how good he is because of the track," Hartland said.

Veteran Kapil Dev did not bowl Thursday. Captain Mohammed Azharuddin said the 35-year-old had a stiff neck and he wasn't prepared to risk him in the cold weather.

India will play two three-day matches leading up to a one-off Test, which starts in Hamilton on March 19. India will also play four limited-overs internationals.

Scoreboard at stumps on the first day of the three-day cricket match between India and the New Zealand Emerging Players today:

NZ EMERGING PLAYERS:

First Innings
B Hartland c Prabhakar 98
R Lawton c b Ankola 62
S Wilson not out 42
M Douglas c Azharuddin 6
M Srinath 6
G Bradburn not out 12

Extras: (b-2, lb-6, nb-4) 12
Total: (for four wickets) 233
Fall of wickets: 1-167; 2-170; 3-180; 4-186

To bat: L Germon, N Astle, P Wiseman, M Owens, M Sharpe

Bowling:

	O	M	R	W
Prabhakar	6	1	12	0
Srinath	23	6	42	2
Ankola	15	3	44	2
Raju	31	10	69	0
Kumble	33	11	52	0
Kambli	1	0	6	0

Wadekar's call for red balls

DUNEDIN, Mar 10: Indian

cricket coach Ajit Wadekar called today for red balls instead of white ones to be used for daytime limited-overs internationals, reports AP.

Earlier this month Pakistan unsuccessfully called for red balls here. Their coach, Intikhab Alam, said it made sense to use a red ball when an international was contested during daylight hours.

He pointed out that white balls became dirty and soft very quickly but accepted that they had to be used for day/night games.

Wadekar agreed. "In India when we played the Hero Cup we had coloured clothing and the white ball," he said.

But if we are to play an international match during the day then I'd like to see it played with a red cherry.

The Indians played with coloured clothing and white balls right through the Hero tournament as both semifinals and finals were played under lights at Eden Gardens in Calcutta.

And white balls were used for day/night games when New Zealand were in Sri Lanka last year.

But the second international of the series was played during the day with traditional clothing and red balls.

Illingworth edges Smith out



LONDON, Mar 10: Ray Illingworth became the new chairman of England's cricket selectors on Wednesday, winning the job ahead of fellow former Test captain Mike Smith, reports Reuter.

"Illingworth came out on top in a postal ballot among the 18 first-class counties, the MCC and minor counties, who each had one vote."

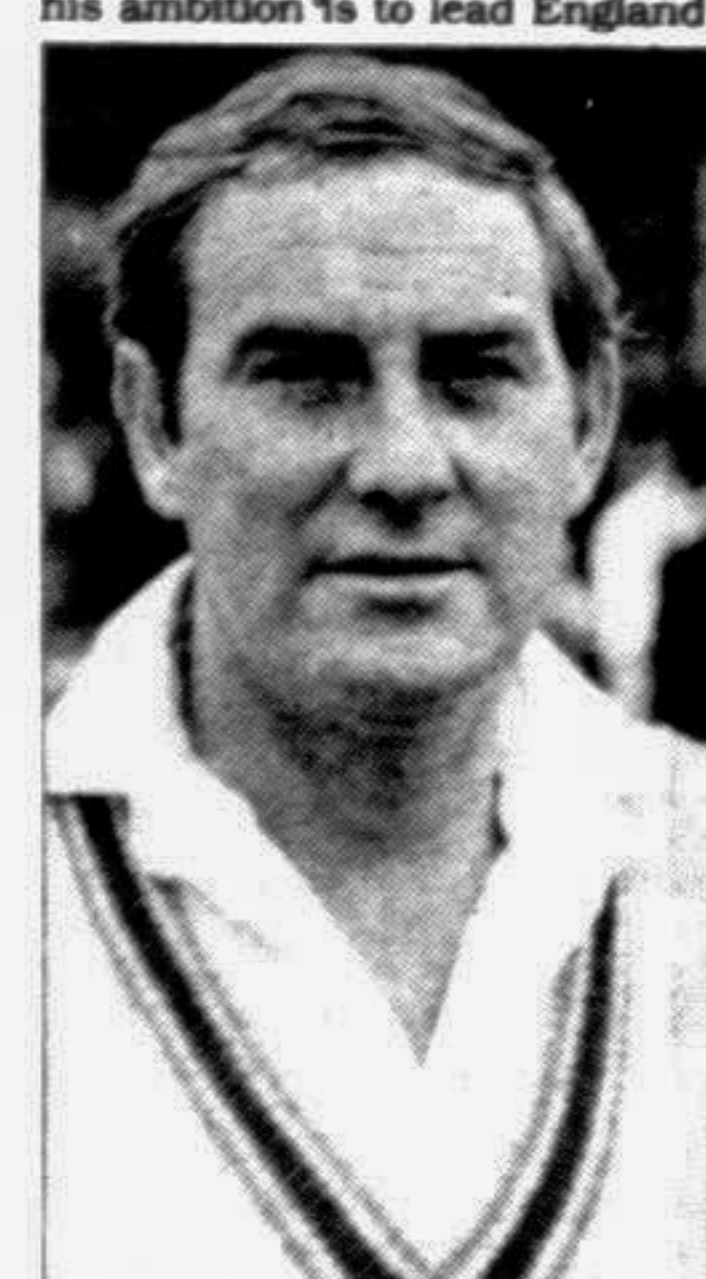
The Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB), announcing the news at the end of their two-day meeting at Lord's, refused to reveal the voting figures.

Illingworth, 61-year-old Yorkshireman who led England in 31 of his 61 Tests up to 1973, immediately fills the post vacated by Ted Dexter's resignation last August.

Illingworth turned down the chance of becoming England's first cricket manager in 1986 because he felt the job would not carry enough power.

He now leaves a media career in which he wrote and

broadcast on cricket, saying his ambition is to lead England



RAY ILLINGWORTH

back to a high position in the world game.

Illingworth, who led Lei-

cestershire to their only county championship in 1975 and became Yorkshire's oldest captain at 51 while doubling as team manager, will be a high-profile, hands-on chairman.

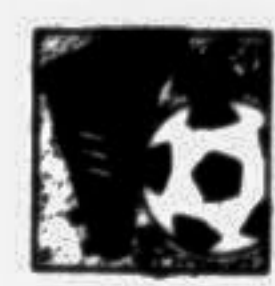
Those were the qualities which won him a considerable amount of late support over long-term favourite Smith, the Warwickshire chairman who is currently managing England's tour of West Indies.

Illingworth said after arriving at Lord's from his winter home in Spain: "I want my voice to be heard and if you are going to be chairman of selectors then you must act as chairman. There would be no point in doing the job for me otherwise."

Illingworth emphasised he wants more concentration on the basics of batting, bowling and fielding.

"We've worked hard enough in recent years at running around the ground but not enough on basic skills. You have to be fit, of course, but it's more a case of being fit for cricket," he said.

Perfect start for Venables



LONDON, Mar 10: Revitalised England ushered in a fresh era under new coach Terry Venables with a 1-0 win over European champions Denmark on Wednesday that restored some long lost pride, reports Reuter.

The victory, supplied by captain David Platt's early first half goal, not only gave England's eighth manager the perfect start but also patched up their damaged credibility and had a packed Wembley Stadium buzzing with optimism.

Venables unveiled an attacking style which threatened to deliver more than the solitary goal, and England rediscovered a confidence lost under former manager Graham Taylor during their failed campaign to reach the forthcoming World Cup finals in the United States.

Denmark, who like England will not be at the finals, rarely threatened to upset the hosts' party, although their outstanding goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel dampened the spirit slightly with his determined refusal to allow more than one goal.

Venables, who broke with tradition and sat in the Royal Box for most of the first half before moving to the bench alongside lieutenants Don Howe and Bryan Robson, was mobbed by photographers on his appearance and cheered off at the end by fans who believed they witnessed the arrival of a newly passionate and more stylish England side.

Platt, England's leading scorer, started off the new era with his 21st international goal

after just 17 minutes following a fast break from defence.

A rare Danish attack broke down in England's penalty area, debutant Graeme Le Saux moved the ball quickly out to Blackburn club mate Alan Shearer on the left, where he slipped inside his defender and rolled the ball to Platt's feet.

The Sampdoria midfielder collected the pass and, despite the close attention of Chelsea defender Jacob Kjeldberg, fired an angled shot into the net.

England should have gone ahead three minutes earlier when another example of inspirational passing from the recalled Peter Beardsley — winning his 50th cap — put his former Newcastle teammate Paul Gascoigne clean through in the box.

With the goal beckoning, Schmeichel fully spread his huge body and denied Gascoigne with an outstretched leg. Gascoigne had another excellent chance in the 29th minute when he had a free header in front of goal, but was again denied by the Manchester United keeper.

Against a less commanding keeper than Schmeichel, who had a run-in with Shearer when the England striker ignored the referees offside whistle and hammered the ball into the net after eight minutes, England would have had a much more impressive victory.

In the first half Denmark managed only one shot while a more fluid England side threatened with nearly every attack.

And, for once, England had a rich number of options, from

debutants Le Saux and winger Darren Anderson, to some incisive passing from Beardsley and Platt.

Denmark struggled to win enough ball in midfield to mount attacks, although Laudrup brothers Brian and Michael troubled the England defence at times with their astute passing, and debutant defender Carsten Dethlefsen, the first black to play for the Danes, worried with his pace down the flanks.

Anderson, 22, bought by Venables when he was manager at Tottenham, almost marked his debut with a goal, but Marc Rieper denied him with a goal-line clearance in the 57th minute.

A minute later David Seaman pulled off a superb save as Brian Laudrup fired from point-blank range after being put through by his brother.

Denmark threatened to spoil the party as they gained some ascendancy towards the end of the second half, but England's defence, marshalled by Tony Adams, held tight.

Venables said: "It was a new era and it was a very promising start, but Germany next month will be a real test."

"I am particularly pleased that we had a win for the crowd and television fans. That was important. And I was pleased with the amount of chances we made. But we needed a second goal to relax."

Beardsley, playing for England for the first time in almost three years, added: "We were pleased with the way we played. We put together some very nice football. It was good to get a win, but that wasn't the be-all and end-all tonight."

Berthold finally recalled



FRANKFURT, Mar 10: Nearly three years after a red card put his international career on hold, Thomas Berthold was named Thursday to Germany's provisional squad for the World Cup warm-up game against Italy, reports AP.

The 29-year-old defender, who was a prominent member of the German team that won the 1990 World Cup title, could celebrate his comeback in Stuttgart March 23.

The game could open the way for Berthold to play at the World Cup finals in the United States.

Berthold was ejected for a rough foul on Kevin Ratcliff during Germany's 1-0 loss to Wales June 5, 1991 in a European Championship qualifying game and subsequently was banned for five games by

UEFA. Germany had three qualifying games left to play. Because his ban would have extended into the European Championship finals in Sweden in 1992, Berthold was dropped from the national team.

Berthold at the time played for the Italian club Roma. He later returned to Germany and signed for Bayern Munich.

His career took a further dive and appeared all but over when then Bayern coach Erich Ribbeck dropped Berthold from the first team.

After sitting out the entire last season, Berthold transferred to Stuttgart and has revived his career with a string of impressive performances that caught the eye of national team manager Bert Vogts.

Vogts on Thursday named Berthold to the provisional 23-man squad for the Stuttgart game against Italy and Berthold could celebrate his 50th international appearance in front of home fans.

"This is a bit of a surprise for me," Berthold said. "Few people thought I could do it after a year's break to Munich. But I always thought I could come back."

New-look Indian Davis Cup team

NEW DELHI, Mar 10: Indian tennis selectors on Wednesday named an inexperienced squad for the Davis Cup World Group first-round match against the United States in the Indian capital from March 25 to 27, reports Reuter.

The squad, comprising Leander Paes, Zeeshan Ali, Gaurav Natekar and Asif Ismail, was named by the All-India Tennis Association (AITA) after four days of trials.

Paes was the only automatic choice, filling the place of Ramesh Krishnan who retired last November after being accused by the AITA of hiding an injury to play against Australia in the semifinals last year, when India lost 5-0.

Bremen back on winning track

BONN, Mar 10: Werder Bremen, spurred by goals from New Zealander Wynton Rufer and Frank Neubarth, returned to winning form by beating Dynamo Dresden 2-0 in their German Cup semifinal on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Bremen, beaten by Franz Beckenbauer's Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga at the weekend and by AC Milan in the European Cup Champions League last week, face Second Division Rot-Weiss Essen in the final in Berlin on May 14.

Werder clinched their semifinal before halftime, Rufer scoring in the 18th minute and Neubarth following up with a headed goal in the 37th.

Despite being weakened — Mario Basler was suspended while Dieter Eilts, defender Uli Boderowka and forward Marco Bode were injured — Bremen dominated the game from the start.