



French World Cup hero Zinedine Zidane (C) his wife (L) and a friend walk near the exit of the Ibiza Nautic Club at Ibiza on the Balears Islands, Spain on Friday. — AFP photo

Russell, Asif depart

Sports Reporter



Philip Edgar Russell, the South Africa-based English pitch expert who has been appointed by the International Cricket Council (ICC) to supervise ground development work of the Dhaka Stadium and other practice wickets for the forthcoming Willis International Cup, has said that the wickets need to be brought up to international standard.

The nine-nation knockout tournament involving all full members of the ICC will be held at the Dhaka Stadium from October 24 to November 4.

The former Derbyshire cricketer, who arrived on July 14, said this to The Daily Star at a hotel on Friday before heading for Durban, South Africa.

The preparation of the pitch at the Dhaka Stadium is excellent but the practice venues in BUET, Dhanmondi and Women's Sports Complex need

work," said Russell. "I have instructed the people concerned how to improve the practice grounds. You have good groundsmen here who produced a nice pitch at the Dhaka Stadium last year and I have full confidence in them that they will also make it this time," he added.

"I am not worried about the Dhaka Stadium because it's going to be a superb ground," the expert said.

He also revealed that he will go to England next week to submit his report to the ICC. Meanwhile, Asif Iqbal, the nine-nation tournament manager who came here Wednesday to supervise the preparation, also left the city last morning.

During his four-day stay, Asif inspected installation work of the new floodlights at the Dhaka Stadium and also visited practice venues.

Asif will return in the second week of October and stay till the end of the tournament.

Goodwill Games get underway today

NEW YORK, July 18 (Reuters) World champions Maurice Greene and Ato Boldon have decided for the time being to abandon predictions of a world 100 metres record.

Greene, the world 100 metres champion and Boldon, the 200 gold medalist, meet Canada's current world record holder Donovan Bailey at the Goodwill Games on Tuesday. The four-day athletics competition starts on Sunday.

The Californian training partners have made regular world record predictions this season, so far without a result.

"I was going to the races and thinking, I'm about to break the world record, I'm about to do it now," Greene told a pre-Games news conference on Friday.

"Then the gun goes off and I don't run my technique. There was just too much emphasis on it (the world record)."

"Now I'm just going to the race and run the best race I can."

"If it comes to us, great, I could care less about it right now. I'm not going to talk about the world record any more."

The men's and women's 100 metres are the elite events of the athletics competition at the 15-day games with 40,000 dollar first-place money on offer and 100,000 dollars on the line for a world record.

World women's champion Marion Jones heads the women's 100 and 200 with Olympic 400 metres champion Michael Johnson, world record holders Dan O'Brien in the decathlon, Jackie Joyner-Kersey in the heptathlon and Javier Sotomayor in the men's high jump also taking part.

There is also a high-quality men's high hurdles field containing US Olympic champion Allen Johnson, British world record holder Colin Jackson and American Olympic silver medalist Mark Crear.

Jones will be an overwhelming favourite to win the women's 100m on Sunday, but the men's race on Tuesday may come down to who has the best lean.

Both Greene and Boldon, have come within two-hundredths of a second of Bailey's 1996 world record of 9.84 seconds this season.

"The season has just begun," said Boldon. "There are a lot of races coming up. When we get back to Europe, we'll take more shots at it there."

A strong headwind, he believes, will make the record difficult at the Goodwill Games.

"That's going to be a very important factor in the times of these races," Boldon said after observing conditions at Mitchell Field, the Long Island facility that will host the athletics competition.

"It's a strong headwind of very close to two metres per second," said Boldon. "I know what that is going to do."

Yet, Greene still promised: "I'm going to give you something to write about... I know I can do it."

Greene and Boldon also steered clear of any overt criticism of Bailey, who set his world mark in the Atlanta Olympic final.

"As the world record holder, he's obviously a great athlete. But he's just beginning to run what we were running at the beginning of the year," said Boldon.

Greene, who said in May that Bailey "had self-destructed" since Atlanta was also cagey.

"For a meet like this, you have to have Donovan Bailey in there because he is the world record holder," Greene said. "It wouldn't be the same without the world record holder. I love running against Donovan Bailey, he just brings out the best in me."

Schools kabadi

Dolairpar in final

Dolairpar High School moved into the final of the All Sports eight school kabadi tournament eliminating Bangladesh Rifles School & College by 96-49 points in the first semifinal at the court near Dhaka Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

The winners led the first half by a narrow 33-32 points. Dolairpar earned eight creditable lonas against Rifles' three.

The second semifinal between Ansar and VDP High and Sharmeen Textiles Mills Model High was abandoned due to heavy downpour in the afternoon.

The match will be held at 9 this morning at the same venue.

Cricket: A Malaysian dream

KUALA LUMPUR, July 18 (AP): Pictures of Garfield Sobers, Sunil Gavaskar and other cricketing greats fill a wall of the Long Bar in Kuala Lumpur's Royal Selangor Club. Bats decorate the mantelpiece of the clubhouse that overlooks a lush green field beyond a pavilion, and one corner is dedicated to Lal Singh, a Malaysian who played for an Indian side against England at Lord's in 1932.

The world of Malaysian cricket sequestered within the portals of the 19th century colonial club has even lost its playing green — now Independence Square.

But decades after it jettisoned the game of its colonial masters, Malaysia is making a comeback to world cricket and even hoping for Test status by 2020. That would put it in the league of teams that play full-fledged, five-day matches and series.

After Malaysia lobbied and

won inclusion of cricket in this year's Commonwealth Games, to be held in the capital, Kuala Lumpur, the government quickly built eight venues to match international standards. Last year, the city hosted the International Cricket Council Trophy tournament.

Sports administrators are urging more Malaysians to strap on pads and wield the willow so that stands are filled at such tournaments.

This month, an eight-a-side tournament is being held as a run-up to the Commonwealth Games that begin on Sept 11. A national squad is being trained by former Pakistani Test cap Sadiq Mohammad.

Malaysian cricket lovers have watched with dismay as Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe developed Test teams and Kenya and Bangladesh moved into the expanding world of one-day cricket.

"At one time the difference between Malaysia and Sri

Lanka wasn't great," said Prince Karu Selvaratnam, secretary of the Malaysian Cricket Association, whose office as headquarters of a sprawling business empire displays his picture, in white flannels with Sobers.

"Independence in 1957 saw the decline of cricket. It was taken out of schools and the government ignored the game," said the Prince, second son of Malaysia's King, Tuanku Ja'far.

Lal Singh remains the only Malaysian to have donned a Test cap, but Prince Imran, who this year became the first Malaysian to be elected to the ICC, hopes there will be more in a few years.

Creating a world-class team will be an uphill task from among a generation that knows very little of the game, cricket administrators say.

"It is a complicated game for people who haven't grown up with it. Silly mid-offs and silly mid-ons can sound silly if you

don't understand cricket," said Karu Selvaratnam, secretary of the cricket association.

Malaysia's national squad of 20 are amateurs. It has created two domestic leagues, but there are less than a dozen teams participating.

"If there is no club cricket, then boys have nowhere to go after playing school-level cricket," Selvaratnam said.

Cricket was imported by British officers and popularised among rubber planters and their employees from Australia, New Zealand, India and Sri Lanka.

More than 20 clubs nationwide regularly played each other, and a unified Malaya team even won against an Australian Test team that had stopped on the voyage back from an England series in 1926.

At independence, the game lost official patronage because majority Malays preferred football and cricket was seen as a preserve of ethnic Indians, who comprise 10 per cent of the 22 million Malaysians. Ethnic Chinese, the largest minority, also favoured football over cricket.

A few like Prince Imran, who said he played for Nottingham University and was in school with former English captain David Gower, learned cricket in British schools and universities.

"All races now are playing cricket, which is good for cricket and good for the country," Prince Imran said.

Man United spends most

MANCHESTER, July 18: Britain's biggest Premier League soccer club, Manchester United, turns over almost as much money as the top two Italian clubs combined, a survey revealed Friday, reports AP.

A survey by accountancy firm Deloitte and Touche showed the Old Trafford club had an annual revenue of 87.9 million pounds (146 million dollars), compared with the combined turnover of Inter Milan and Juventus, estimated at 90 million pounds (149.4 million pounds).

The survey said merchandising accounted for the major difference in revenue between Britain's best supported club and its rivals in Serie A.

ROW in sight of victory

Star Sport Monitor



Skipper Sachin Tendulkar and Aravinda de Silva had put the Rest of the World in sight of victory in the Princess of Wales Memorial 50-over game against the MCC at Lord's last night.

The pair put on an undefeated 173 runs for the third wicket as their side reached 227 in 37 overs. Tendulkar had blasted 121 of 111 balls and De Silva was on almost a run-a-ball 75.

Earlier after MCC captain Michael Atherton won the toss, they made a fighting 261 for four. West Indian southpaw Shivnarine Chanderepaul

LATEST

The Rest of the World beat MCC Eleven by six wickets at Lord's yesterday. Skipper Sachin Tendulkar scored a dazzling 125 off 114 with 15 fours and a quartet of sixes to help his reach victory in 43.3 overs.

The little Indian master was ably supported by Sri Lankan stalwart Aravinda de Silva, who hit a 79-ball 82 embellished with eleven fours and a sixer.

Tendulkar was adjudged the player-of-the-match.

hammered 127 from 144 balls. Mohammad Azharuddin who is no stranger to the home of English cricket, stroked his way to 61.

SCOREBOARD

MCC XI				
Atherton c sub (H Marshall)			28	
b Cairns			12	
Sohail c Flower b Wasim			127	
Chanderepaul not out			61	
Azharuddin b Bishop			14	
Ganguly c Bishop b Moody			7	
McMillan not out			7	
Extras: (lb 5, w 5, nb 2)			12	
Total: (For four wickets in 50 overs)	261			
Did not bat: Healy, Kumble, Srinath, Donald, McGrath.				
Fall of wickets: 1-29 (Sohail), 2-57 (Atherton), 3-204 (Azharuddin) 4-226 (Ganguly).				
Bowling O M R W				
Akram	10	0	46	1
Bishop	10	0	63	1
Cairns	10	1	34	1
Mushtaq	10	0	53	0
Moody	10	1	60	1
REST TO THE WORLD XI				
Jayasuriya lbw b Srinath			8	
Tendulkar not out			121	
Anwar c McGrath b Donald			14	
De Silva not out			75	
Extras: (lb 3, w 2, nb 4)			9	
Total: (For four wickets in 37 overs)	227			

To bat: Hick, Moody, Flower, Cairns, Akram, Musthaq, Bishop.

Fall of wickets: 1-10 (Jayasuriya) 2-54 (Anwar).

Bowling O M R W				
McGrath	8	0	45	0
Srinath	9	0	39	1
Donald	6	0	21	1
McMillan	1	0	27	0
Kumble	6	0	35	0
Sohail	2	0	37	0
Ganguly	2	0	20	0

TEAMS

MCC: M A Atherton (England), Aamir Sohail (Pakistan), S Chanderepaul (West Indies), M Azharuddin (India), S C Ganguly (India), B M McMillan (South Africa), I A Healy (Australia), A Kumble (India), J Srinath (India), A A Donald (Sri Lanka), G D McGrath (Australia).

REST OF THE WORLD: Saeed Anwar (Pakistan), S T Jayasuriya (Sri Lanka), S R Tendulkar (India), P A De Silva (Sri Lanka), G A Hick (England), T M Moody (Australia), A Flower (Zimbabwe), C L Cairns (New Zealand), Wasim Akram (Pakistan), Mushtaq Ahmed (Pakistan), I R Bishop (West Indies).

Leics pull off a thriller

LONDON, July 18: Skipper Chris Lewis led Leicestershire to a remarkable four-wicket county championship victory over Northamptonshire on Friday, hitting 71 as they made 204 in 19.1 overs, reports Reuters.

Leicestershire were held up until after tea by the Northamptonshire tailenders, led by 111 from Gram Swan.

They then faced the daunting task of scoring 204 in 20 overs. Vince Wells (58) and Darren Maddy hit 47 off the first three overs but when Lewis went to the wicket in the ninth over three wickets had gone down for 99 and five were down at 118.

Lewis and Ian Sutcliffe put on 49 for the sixth wicket but Lewis went on to hit the winning boundary off the first ball of the final over.

West Indies fast bowler Franklyn Rose was hit for 93 runs in 9.1 overs and 91 came of nine overs from Paul Taylor. The win left Leicestershire in second place in the county championship but Surrey strengthened their position at the top when they defeated their near rivals Middlesex by 280 runs at Guildford.



Workers disassembling one of the four floodlight towers at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. These towers will be replaced by new ones to facilitate the ensuing ICC knockout one-day cricket tournament involving the nine Test-playing nations in October and November. — Star photo



HELLO: French World Cup wining captain Didier Deschamps is greeted by a group young fans at his hometown of Bayonne, southwest France on Friday. — AP/UNB photo