



FORGET ME NOT: Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq (3rd from L) is being given an ovation by his teammates as he leaves the field after finishing his last one-day international at the end of the Group D World Cup match against Zimbabwe at Sabina Park in Kingston on Wednesday.

Inzy's toughest day

AFP, Kingston



Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq admits that his final one-day international was one of the most difficult in which he has played.

Inzamam announced last Sunday that he was retiring from limited-overs internationals and stepping down from the post of Pakistan captain, following his side's shock early exit from the World Cup.

"This has been a very difficult decision," a sombre Inzamam told reporters, after Pakistan cruised to a 93-run victory under the Duckworth-Lewis method in their rain-marred final match against Zimbabwe on Wednesday at Sabina Park.

"I have played for Pakistan for the last 16 or 17 years, and it has been a great honour for me. I have enjoyed playing for Pakistan, and it has meant a great deal to me, but I had to make this decision in the interest of Pakistan cricket."

Inzamam, who will still be available for Test matches, completed a glittering ODI career in which he made 378 appearances for his side with 11,739 runs at an average of 39.52.

He and the Pakistan team endured three difficult days heading into the match, following the death of their coach Bob Woolmer.

Police are treating the death as suspicious.

"It was a difficult decision to play this match, but we had decided to dedicate this game to Bob," added Inzamam.

"When we got up this morning, we decided that though we were

down in spirits, we would all give 100 percent effort for Bob.

"Indeed, the last three or four days were very difficult for all of us, and we were under a lot of stress. We are delighted now that we came out, and we got a win to dedicate to him."

Many of the Pakistan team have spoken of Woolmer as a father figure, and Inzamam himself was reportedly very close to the coach.

"It was very emotional for me to be out there," said the 37-year-old who was given a standing ovation by the sparse crowd as well as the Zimbabwe team while his own team descended from the pavilion to form a guard of honour when he was dismissed for 37.

"The reception I got from the fans, and of course, the way the boys treated me when I was walking off, and Bob not being here made it extra emotional."

Inzamam felt that had the pitches

in the previous two matches, which his team lost to West Indies and Ireland, been anywhere close to the hard, easy-paced surface upon which Wednesday's match was played things may have been different for his side, he was not prepared to make excuses.

"It could probably have been different if we had pitches like this in our previous matches, but that is in the past," he said.

"It doesn't make much sense dwelling on things that have already gone," he concluded.

Inzamam and his teammates will spend two days in the Jamaica north-coast resort town of Montego Bay before beginning the long, difficult journey home on Saturday.

Pakistanis have reacted angrily to the team's early exit from the World Cup, and the side can expect a lukewarm response when they arrive home.

Country's longest walkathon starts today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The longest walkathon ever in the country, a 100-kilometre walk across the stretch of beach from Teknaf to Cox's Bazar, starts from the Teknaf beach point today.

Youth and Sports adviser Tapan Chowdhury is expected to inaugurate the 'Grameenphone Activate Bangladesh -- Challenge of the Longest Beach-2007' to be held on the world's longest beach.

A total of 500 candidates have been selected for the event. Among 10,496 applicants, 934 were found fit as per Body Mass Index (BMI), but only the 500 fittest candidates got the opportunity, told chairman of selection committee Anupam Hossain at a press conference at the local press club yesterday.

The findings show that only about nine percent of candidates are physically fit to take part in the walkathon. The committee has also put 200 more candidates on the waiting list.

Apart from the BMI, the candidates were selected on the basis of their sporting background and written comments. Ten percent of them were selected under special category considering their academic and professional backgrounds.

A total 470 males and 30 females made the final list.

Maj Gen (Retd) Mohammed Anwar Hossain, chairman of Activate Bangladesh, said the longest beach challenge comprises a three-day beach walk from Teknaf to Cox's Bazar and an 'Activation Day' at Cox's Bazar on March 26 that include a fun 10-km walk and

Pak president's condolence for Woolmer

REUTERS, Islamabad

President Pervez Musharraf sent his condolences to the wife of Pakistan cricket coach Bob Woolmer on Thursday, saying he and the country were immensely saddened and shocked by his death in Jamaica on Sunday.

Former England batsman Woolmer was found unconscious in his Kingston hotel room less than 24 hours after Pakistan's shock World Cup defeat by Ireland which knocked them out of the tournament. He was pronounced dead in hospital later that day.

Jamaican police said the 58-year-old's death was being treated as "suspicious" and a second pathologist's opinion was being sought.

Musharraf, according to a copy of his letter to Gill Woolmer released by his office, did not refer to the investigation.

"I had the pleasure of knowing Bob personally, we found him to be a thorough professional and above all an excellent human being," the Pakistani president said.

Some solace for Pakistan

AFP, Kingston



Imran Nazir plundered his second one-day international hundred to set up a 93-run victory for Pakistan under the Duckworth-Lewis Method in the rain-rained World Cup Group D match on Wednesday at Sabina Park.

Nazir struck 14 fours and eight sixes in 160 from 121 balls to lift Pakistan to 349 in 49.5 overs after they were sent in to bat.

Zimbabwe had crashed to 30 for three in the 10th over, then a 2-1/2 hour stoppage for rain meant they had to chase a revised target of 193 from 20 overs before they were dismissed for 99 in 19.1 overs.

Only four Zimbabwe batsmen got into double figures -- Elton Chigumbura top-scored with 27, including three consecutive sixes off Danish Kaneria, Stuart Matsikenyeri made 18, Brendon Taylor got 13, and Sean Williams 11.

Shahid Afridi, playing his first match of the competition, after serving a four-match for a breach of the ICC Code of Conduct in South Africa last month, was the most successful Pakistan bowler with three wickets for 20 runs from four overs.

Umar Gul collected two for 10 from five overs, and Kaneria bagged two for 48 from four overs.

Earlier, a tearful exit from ODIs for Inzamamul Haq was overshadowed

by Nazir's hundred. Inzamam delighted the modest crowd with a brief cameo of 37 off 35 balls, but Nazir brought the curtain down with some enterprising strokes.

Last Sunday, Inzamam announced that this match would be his last ODI for Pakistan, and he would also give up the post of national captain following the World Cup and the death of coach Bob Woolmer.

When he arrived, Nazir was well into stride, but he joined in the fun with two fours and three sixes before he skied an on-drive to extra cover off Tawanda Mupariwa in the 28th over.

As Inzamam retreated to the dressing room, the celebrating Zimbabwe players all rushed to shake his hand, pat him on the back, and hug him to offer their congratulations for a stellar ODI career in which he played 378 times and scored 11,739 runs at an average of 39.52.

Meantime, his Pakistan teammates had descended the steps to the dressing room to form a receiving line, and Inzamam, usually a stony-faced character, began to wipe away the tears they too began to applaud him.

By the time Inzamam departed, Pakistan were well in control, and Nazir never took his foot off the throat of the Zimbabwe attack.

After Kamran Akmal was caught behind for 15 off Elton Chigumbura in the seventh over, and Shoaib Malik was caught at backward point for 21 in the 18th over, Nazir drove Utseya to long-off for a single to reach his 50.

After he and Inzamam put on 70 for the third wicket, Nazir was dropped on 81 at deep mid wicket, when Friday Kasten put down a skier off Gary Brent, who had Mohammad Yousuf was caught

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HIGHEST WORLD CUP SCORES

Highest individual World Cup scores after Pakistan's Imran Nazir made 160 against Zimbabwe at Sabina Park here on Wednesday:					
Score	Player	Against	Venue	Year	
188no	G Kirsten (SA)	UAE	Rawalpindi	1996	
183	S Ganguly (India)	Sri Lanka	Taunton	1999	
181	V Richards (WI)	Sri Lanka	Karachi	1987	
175no	Kapil Dev (India)	Zimbabwe	Tunbridge	1983	
172no	C Wishart (Zim)	Namibia	Harare	2003	
171no	G Turner (NZ)	East Africa	Birmingham	1975	
161	A Hudson (SA)	Netherlands	Rawalpindi	1996	
160	Imran Nazir (Pak)	Zimbabwe	Kingston	2007	
152	S Tendulkar (Ind)	Namibia	Pietermaritzburg	2003	

Media come down hard on restless Indian fans

AFP, New Delhi



Two leading Indian newspapers on Thursday lashed out at violence-prone fans as their cricket team prepared for a last-ditch effort to remain in the World Cup.

India, who were shocked by Bangladesh last week, must defeat in-form Sri Lanka in their last group B match in Port of Spain today to qualify for the second round.

A defeat will send the 1983 champions and 2003 finalists home to what is expected to be a hostile reception from fans who, in the past, have resorted to damaging cricketers' homes and burning effigies.

Wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni's house in the eastern town of

Ranchi was vandalised on Sunday following the loss to Bangladesh. Batsman Mohammad Kaif suffered similar treatment in 2003.

The Times of India and The Hindu newspapers castigated fans who resorted to violence and urged them to take victory or defeat in their stride.

The Times of India chided fans in an editorial on Thursday, saying "India's cricket fans do not understand the game."

"The cricket fan is a lazy, pampered know-nothing who thinks he owns the cricket teams that he supports," the editorial went on.

"His sense of proprietorship is so developed that when his team loses, he speaks (or writes) of being betrayed without a tremor of self-consciousness.

"How do these lunatics justify their actions to themselves?"

"As cricket fans it's reasonable for us to feel frustrated and annoyed

by incompetence, but even chronic incompetence doesn't warrant a reaction as disproportionate as betrayal."

The paper compared the Indian fan to England's Barmy Army who "in between watching cricket get some sun, sand and sea in."

"England loses more often than it wins, but I don't notice this caravan of supporters killing themselves or threatening to kill their champions."

"They are different from our couch potatoes who never leave their rooms, never exert themselves except to find their remote controls and yet treat every Indian defeat as a conspiracy."

The Times even said it may not be a bad thing if India were to join arch-rivals Pakistan on the sidelines after the first round.

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LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakil Haider smashed his second hundred in the Kai-Altech First Division League in as many matches as Surjo Torun crushed Jatrabari by eight wickets at the Dhaka University ground yesterday.

After putting Jatrabari into bat, Surjo Torun only took 40.3 overs to notch up 219 runs as they won their sixth match in the competition. Jatrabari were bowled out for 218 in 49.5 overs.

Pappu scored 77 as Jatrabari batted first but James, Al-Amin and Apurba took two wickets each.

When Surjo Torun replied, Shakil found good support from Nazimuddin Ripon who scored an unbeaten 40, continuing his good form.

At the City Club ground, veteran Nishan smashed 142 against struggling CCS as Orient Sporting Club won by 118 runs.

Batting first, Orient scored 269 for six in 50 overs but CCS only mustered 151 runs. Skipper Biplob top-scored with 62 for CCS.

At BKSP, Gazi Tank (139-4 in 37.3 overs) rode on Zahidul Islam Kotton to beat Sadharan Bima (138 all out in 47.5 overs) by six wickets.

SCHOOL CRICKET

West End High School crushed Kalatia High School by 84 runs the sixth zonal final in the Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket tournament at the Gulshan Youth Club.

Opting to bat first, West End only managed 174 runs in 40.5 overs. Abdullah Ansari smashed an unbeaten 71.

In reply, Kalatia were bowled out for only 90 runs in 29.3 overs. Sohail took three wickets for the winners.

INDEPENDENCE DAY GOLF

Bank Al-Falah Independence Cup golf tournament begin at Ghatail Golf Club in the Shaheed Salahuddin cantonment today.

Area commander major general Mohammad Ishtiaque will be present as the chief guest in the

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They won it for Woolmer

AFP, Kingston



Inzamamul Haq broke down in tears on Wednesday as he dedicated his last match as Pakistan captain to Bob Woolmer, the team coach who died on Sunday.

It was an emotional day for Inzamam whose side, already knocked out of the World Cup, at least had the satisfaction of exiting the event on a winning note.

"It's thanks to Bob Woolmer and we dedicate this win to him. He is not in this world anymore but every Pakistani and every cricket lover is sad about what happened to him," said Inzamam.

After he was dismissed for 37 in the match against Zimbabwe, he sobbed as he made his way off the Sabina Park pitch.

He was congratulated by the entire Zimbabwe team who all rushed over to shake his hand while his own teammates formed a guard of honour to see him back into the pavilion.

The 37-year-old Inzamam raised his bat to the sparse crowd, removed his cap and tearfully acknowledged the warm applause after he was caught at long-on by Sean Williams off seamer Tawanda Mupariwa in the 28th over of the Group D match.

Inzamam had been attempting to launch another huge six having already smashed three over the ropes.

He finishes his 378-match one-day career with 11,739 runs to his name, 10 centuries and 83 fifties, at an average of almost 40 runs a game.

His team, led by Imran Nazir (160) also gave him the perfect send off by piling up 349 all out before dismissing Zimbabwe for 99 and a 93-run winning margin on the Duckworth-Lewis method after a lengthy rain suspension.



Pakistan opener Imran Nazir celebrates scoring 150 runs during the Group D World Cup match against Zimbabwe at Sabina Park in Kingston on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

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