

Lara calls for calm

AFP, St John's



West Indies captain Brian Lara issued an appeal for unity as tensions within the World Cup hosts' camp surfaced after their seven-wicket Super Eights defeat by New Zealand.

This latest loss came hot on the heels of a 103-run thrashing by world champions Australia.

Lara's men have now lost both their first two matches in the second phase of the tournament and face an uphill task in qualifying for the semifinals.

West Indies selector Andy Roberts, during the New Zealand match, gave an interview on local radio saying the five-man panel as whole had, since February, no say in the make-up of the team.

The comments from the former West Indies fast bowler came amidst suggestions that only Lara and coach Bennett King were currently picking the side.

"Bennett King is best to answer that," Lara told reporters after Thursday's match.

"I think we picked the best team possible. I can simply say to Andy Roberts that I did not select this World Cup team. I was not there at the meeting.

"The team was selected without me but I still go out there and fight my best with the 15 players (World Cup squads are 15 strong) given to me.

"Everybody has West Indies' interests at heart and if people want to be critical at this point in time, I don't think it's fair. We just have to try to play to the best of our ability and get to the semifinals."

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming was among those surprised by the omission of fast bowler Jerome Taylor, which meant the West Indies attack had just one genuine quick in Daren Powell, on a

pitch Lara had labelled a "batting paradise" after the Australia game.

"We were scouting for three seamers playing but we were able to get best use of the pitch and our boys bowled incredibly well," Fleming said.

But Lara, after seeing West Indies bowled out for 177, said batting, not bowling, was the team's biggest problem.

"We haven't scored 250 runs yet in any of our games at the tournament," said Lara.

"The significance today (Thursday) was in scoring 177. You can have 10 bowlers and you are not going to defend it.

"We've just got to look at where we are going wrong -- on this track we've lost our top order twice and today it was 81 for four. We are putting the rope around our necks.

"If we are going to perform then we need one of the top three or four batting through and getting a score."

Lara added there was only so much he could do as captain to improve the batting.

"You can't pat people on their backs if they are not doing well. You've got to look at the mistakes and correct them.

"We didn't play to our full potential and the guys have to be told that."

But Lara, whose 37 against the Black Caps was surpassed only by opener Chris Gayle's 44, said a lack of patience with the bat was proving costly.

"I just think on a couple of occasions guys got set and we didn't go on -- Chris Gayle was looking good, (Ramnaresh) Sarwan and all of a sudden in a matter of three or four overs we had lost wickets.

"I think maybe the guys are not looking at the fact we've got 300 balls to face."

Lara, asked if he was batting himself too low at No 5, said he likes of Marlon Samuels, who'd

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PHOTO: AFP

New Zealand batsman Scott Styris drives on the up off West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo during their World Cup Super Eights clash at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in St John's on Thursday.

TWENTY20 WC Hosts open against WI

CRICINFO, undated

South Africa and West Indies will contest the opening game of the inaugural Twenty20 World Championship which will be held in South Africa between September 10 and 24.

A day after the opening match is played at the Wanderers, Durban's Kingsmead Stadium will host the first double-header when New Zealand and Kenya square off in the morning followed by Pakistan and Scotland in the afternoon. On the same day, Newlands in Cape Town will host its first match when Australia take on Zimbabwe in a night fixture. India face Pakistan, which could be a marquee match, in the third slot on September 14.

Each venue will host nine games and the ten Full Member countries and two Associate nations have been split into four groups of three teams and will play a round-robin format. Once that is completed, the top two teams from each group will qualify for the Super Eights in a bid to make the semi-finals. The final will be played in Johannesburg on Heritage Day on September 24.

ICC goes easy on Peterson

AFP, Georgetown

South African spinner Robin Peterson earned the dubious distinction of becoming the first player to get an official reprimand in the ongoing World Cup on Thursday.

The 27-year-old from Eastern Province, smashed the stumps after hitting the winning boundary in South Africa's nail-biting one-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the Super Eight match at the Guyana National stadium here on Wednesday.

"Peterson has been officially reprimanded for breaching the International Cricket Council Code of Conduct during the World Cup match against Sri Lanka," the ICC said in a statement.

Peterson, playing in his 34th one-day international, was wicketless in his five overs in Sri Lanka's 209 all out.

He went to the crease after Sri Lanka paceman Lasith Malinga took four wickets off as many balls to set up an intriguing finish.

Peterson survived four deliveries off Malinga and in his next over hit the winning boundary.

In celebration, the South African demolished the stumps at the striker's end.

"Peterson immediately pleaded guilty to abuse of cricket equipment fixtures and fittings in a

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'Give me four wins'

AFP, St John's



Dejected West Indies captain Brian Lara admitted on Thursday that his side need to win all four of their remaining Super Eights games if they are to salvage their World Cup dream.

The hosts slumped to a second defeat in two days when New Zealand coasted to a seven-wicket win at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, adding to the West Indies' problems after their 103-run defeat to Australia on Wednesday.

Now Lara's side will have to defeat Sri Lanka, South Africa, Bangladesh and England if they are to have any hope of making the semifinals.

Patil row surfaces

PTI, Mumbai

Even as the name of Sandeep Patil is doing the rounds to take over the Indian team's reins as its interim coach from Greg Chappell, a former Cricket Board official revealed how several senior players had conspired to oust him as team coach eleven years ago.

"Several players, including four seniors from the present Indian team, wanted us to remove Patil as coach and we had no option but to appoint Madan Lal as the new coach overnight. It happened in 1996," said the official, who did not wish to be identified about the incident.

"Patil then went on to coach other teams and notably guided Kenya to the semifinals of the last World Cup," he said.

The official named Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Anil Kumble, Sourav Ganguly and former cricketers Javagal Srinath, Ajay Jadeja and the then captain Mohammad Azharuddin as the players who had revolted against Patil.

"It was in the aftermath of the Navjot Singh Sidhu walkout incident in England. After the tour these players met some top board officials and said they did not want Patil as coach anymore," he elaborated.

Former opener Sidhu had returned home from England midway and the reason for the cricketer-turned-politician cum commentator for having done so is still shrouded in mystery.

"I don't know the reasons why they (the players) did not want Patil as coach," he added.

"We will have to win those four," said Lara.

"It was always going to be a luxury to lose your first two matches in the Super Eights. We didn't want to do that first up.

"Now we are down to the fighting part of the tournament. There are four games left and we need to win them all if we are to qualify."

The West Indies were put in by New Zealand and were skittled out for just 177 in the 45th over with Jacob Oram, Shane Bond and Daniel Vettori all claiming three wickets.

Opener Chris Gayle top-scored with 44 while Lara hit 37.

Scott Styris, with an unbeaten 80, guided the Black Caps to victory and into second place in the Super Eights table.

They and Australia both have four points each.

"Losing the toss played a small part but we were 60-1 after 15-16 overs and we were in a strong position," added Lara.

"But we lost some quick wickets which set us back again. It looked like a 250-plus track.

"We got some early wickets (New Zealand were 36-2 at one stage) but when you are defending 177 you need to get 10 wickets to win the match."

New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming admitted it was a good toss to win and that his bowlers laid the foundation for victory.

"The opening bowlers created a lot of pressure and Jacob took the wickets that they could easily have had," said Fleming who did his part when the Kiwis batted with a gritty 45.

"We took wickets at key times and kept them to a score which was below par.

"Then we knew that if we batted out the overs we would win. We were pretty conservative because we knew that after (main bowlers) Daren Powell and Corey Collymore, the West Indies didn't have a lot of resources."

New Zealand's next match is against Bangladesh here on Monday but the Black Caps are aware of the danger posed by the Asian side who beat them in a pre-tournament warm-up match.

Watch and learn: Moody

AFP, Georgetown

Sri Lanka coach Tom Moody on Thursday stressed his team needs to learn quickly from the mistakes made against South Africa during their one-wicket defeat in the Super Eights match.

"It will be important how we come back in our match against the West Indies (on Sunday) who will also be looking for points," said Moody.

Sri Lanka, on the verge of defeat with South Africa needing four runs with five wickets intact on Wednesday, hit back through pace-man Lasith Malinga's history-making four wickets off four balls before last man Robin Peterson hit the winning runs.

Malinga became the first bowler in one-day international cricket to grab four wickets off successive deliveries and fifth to achieve a hat-trick in World Cup history.

Earlier, Sri Lanka struggled to 209 all out with South African pace-man Charl Langeveldt taking a career-best five for 39.

Moody said his team failed to keep the momentum of the first round where they won all their Group B matches -- including a crucial win over former champions India.

"It was not a bad defeat, but it's a defeat. I am disappointed the way we played. We did play well in the first 30 overs but against teams like South Africa you need to play lot more than 30 overs," Moody told the International Cricket Council website.

"There are a lot more positives which we can take from the South Africa game but we need to learn very quickly from our mistakes and give a better account of ourselves on Sunday."

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Dad stands by Veeru

PTI, New Delhi

Virender Sehwag's father on Friday said it would be unfair to blame his son only for India's disastrous World Cup campaign as the failure of key players like Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid led to the debacle.

Kishan Sehwag said India could have performed better in the cricket World Cup if his son had got the chance to open the innings.

"I am satisfied with Virender's performance as he played well. If others do not perform, what can he do. Sachin and Dravid did not perform," he told a television channel.

"If they had made Veeru open, we could have played more games and defeated other teams," he said.

Styris, Oram turn it on

AFP, St John's



Super Eight campaign in style at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium here Thursday.

For the West Indies this was a second comprehensive defeat in as many days after their 103-run reverse against reigning champions Australia and now the hosts face a major struggle to qualify for the semifinals.

Chasing 178 to win, New Zealand finished on 179 for three with more than 10 overs to spare. Styris was 80 not out -- his third fifty of this tournament -- with Craig McMillan unbeaten on 33 as the experienced duo shared an unbroken fourth-wicket stand of 102.

Victory had been all but assured by a disciplined bowling display that saw New Zealand dismiss the West Indies for 177 with 32 balls left in the innings.

Oram took three for 23, his treble behind a slump that saw three top-order wickets lost for 15 runs in six overs.

Fast bowler Shane Bond had three for 31 and left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori, who late on took two

wickets in two balls, finished with three for 39.

Impressive wicket-keeper Brendon McCullum led a fine fielding effort with four catches.

In reply, New Zealand's Peter Fulton, promoted to open after Lou Vincent's World Cup ended when his wrist was broken batting against Bond

in the nets on Sunday, was bowled second ball by Daren Powell.

Hamish Marshall, Vincent's replacement, then fell for 15 when he chipped Powell to West Indies captain Brian Lara at mid-off.

But left-hander Fleming, driving confidently and lofting Corey

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WEST INDIES V NEW ZEALAND SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Super Eights match between the West Indies and New Zealand at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in St John's on Thursday:

WEST INDIES	R	M	B	4s	6s
Gayle b Oram	44	96	56	8	0
Chanderpaul c Styris b Bond	4	31	28	0	0
Sarwan c McCullum b Oram	19	35	27	2	0
Samuels c McCullum b Oram	9	16	18	1	0
Lara c McCullum b Styris	37	65	49	1	0
Bravo c McCullum b Bond	18	40	30	0	0
Ramdin c Oram b Vettori	15	32	22	2	0
Simmons not out	14	34	26	2	0
Smith b Vettori	8	8	6	0	1
Powell lbw b Vettori	0	2	1	0	0
Collymore b Bond	0	3	5	0	0
Extras: (b-1, lb-5, w-3)	9				
Total: (All out in 44.4 overs)	177				
Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-66, 3-78, 4-81, 5-128, 6-150, 7-158, 8-176, 9-176, 10-177.					

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Fleming hints at final

AFP, St John's



New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming believes his side have never been as well prepared as they are now to win a World Cup in the 10 years he has been leading the one-day side.

Fleming's team took a big stride towards the semifinals with a crushing seven-wicket win against West Indies in their opening Super Eights match where they bowled out the hosts for a meagre 177 before knocking off the winning runs with more than 10 overs to spare.

New Zealand have never won the World Cup and last reached the semifinals in 1992 but Fleming, after a dominating win at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, told reporters: "We've never been as prepared as this, we've looked at pretty much

every scenario and some of them twice."

New Zealand carried forward two points into the second phase after beating fellow Group C qualifiers England and Fleming reckoned they would need 10 in all to be certain of a last four spot.

"Ideally we need 10, eight will be close, it could be a logjam," the opening batsman, who made 45 against the West Indies before being run out, explained.

"It's still a little bit hard to work out. Part of the reason we put the foot down today is run rates may come into it as well so we wanted to finish the game after we felt we'd got in a position where we couldn't lose it."

New Zealand return here on Monday to face a Bangladesh side that beat them by two wickets in a warm-up match earlier this month.

"We know we've got a couple of tricky encounters. Bangladesh tripped us up in the warm-up match and Ireland have obviously tested Pakistan and in the right conditions can be tricky."

"But if we continue the way we're



PHOTO: AFP

Match referee Ranjan Madugalle (L) in conversation with ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed after the toss of the World Cup Super Eights game between England and Ireland at the Guyana National Stadium in Georgetown on Friday.

Ranjan reaches 200

AFP, Georgetown



Former Sri Lanka batsman Ranjan Madugalle reached a landmark here on Friday when he officiated in his 200th one-day match as a match referee during the World Cup Super Eights game between England and Ireland.

Softly-spoken, but a strict disciplinarian, Madugalle is widely-respected and is excited to reach the landmark.

"It's always good to reach a landmark," said Madugalle, whose first outing as a match referee was between Pakistan and Zimbabwe in Karachi in 1993.

"I would still look at it as another one-day international but yes, when I look back and reflect on the journey I

feel that it's something I enjoyed and will continue to enjoy."

Madugalle, who will turn 48 six days before the World Cup final on April 28, needs another six matches to complete a century of Tests as match referee.

As a stylish batsman Madugalle played 21 Tests and 63 one-day internationals until 1988 and also led his country in two Tests.

He feels playing the game was an honour but acting as a referee is a great test.

"There's no substitute for playing for your country, it is the single greatest honour. I'm also enjoying my current role and do it with a passion," said Madugalle, who became chief referee in 2001.

Madugalle disagreed that the implementation of the code of conduct and the match referee's role means that the International Cricket Council (ICC) is policing the game.

"I think that when the match

referee was introduced it was for the role of disciplining the players, but that actually was just one aspect of the job," said Madugalle.

"The role also deals with players' safety, creates safety standards and, more importantly, deals with the umpires."

"We like to think that the referees have played a role in standardising certain aspects of the game. No role is constant so it is evolving and we will also start moving towards changes."

Without doubt, he rates The Oval controversy, when Pakistan forfeited the final Test against England in a row over alleged ball-tampering, as the single most difficult case he has handled.

"Before that incident the game had not seen a forfeiture. I was not the referee but I had to officiate at the hearing and it was the single most difficult case," said Madugalle

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