

Heera quits BCB

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national cricket captain Shafiqul Haque Heera resigned from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday.

The former wicketkeeper, who was working as a venue manager, felt embarrassed at the way he was blamed by the board high-ups for lack of progress of renovation works at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

"They just wanted to make me a scapegoat for the lack of progress of the Mirpur Stadium with the coming home series against India. The way they treated me is hard to accept and so I tendered my resignation," said an annoyed Heera.

"There were a lot of reasons behind the go-slow works but they only pointed the fingers at me only to save their skins," he added.

Heera worked with the board for the last seven years in various roles. Before his duty with the Mirpur Stadium, he worked for the Chittagong venue and as a manager of the national team.

It can be mentioned that Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury had also expressed his dissatisfaction over the progress of the renovation works of the venue during his visit ahead of the next month's two-match Test and three-match one-day series.

Chelsea let MU

FROM PAGE 20

playmaker danced past three challenges and squared a pass to Butt whose first time ball was played perfectly into the path of Dyer. Marginally offside, the midfielder was allowed to run clear and only a brave block from Czech maintained parity.

Substitute Joe Cole crossed for Lampard in the 62nd minute only for Newcastle defender Steven Taylor to intervene. But the loose ball broke to Kalou at the far post and only a combination of Carr, Harper and the backtracking Butt prevented the African from opening the scoring.

Mourinho replaced Makalela with Ukrainian Andrey Shevchenko 15 minutes from time as he made one final bid to claim all three points. But Chelsea were forced to settle for one point and could have few complaints after an unconvincing display.

Some more

FROM PAGE 20

"The legends have no problem with group photos during official ceremonies but lots of people want separate photographs and separate interviews which are not possible," Smith told AFP.

"The basic aims (of the group) are two-fold. To create a professional atmosphere through which we can produce future legends and to build a centre of excellence through the funds," said Smith of the organisation launched in April last year.

Smith said the Barbados legends realise the need for nurturing the talent which is in abundance in the Caribbean.

"In the wake of West Indies' recent performances we have realised the importance of harnessing the talent and once the centre is built, hopefully by next year, we are optimistic we can produce future legends."

Lloyd retires

FROM PAGE 20

Lloyd, who led the West Indies to World Cups win in 1975 and 1979 when the team dominated global cricket, was lauded by ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed.

ICC president Percy Sonn praised Lloyd's contribution as referee.

"When Clive hung up his boots as a player he did not disappear from the game but became a fine administrator with the West Indies Cricket Board and subsequently an excellent match referee," said Sonn.

"Just like when he played the game, Clive brought his own integrity and sense of fair play to his role as referee. He had the rare ability to forge good relations with the players and he always managed to retain their respect, which is so vital for match officials."

As an aggressive left-hander Lloyd scored 7,515 Test runs.

He was West Indies' most successful captain in history, leading his team in 74 Test matches with a remarkable run of 26 Tests without defeat and 11 successive wins.

Lloyd thanked the ICC for their acknowledgement of his services.

"This is a wonderful gesture by the ICC and I feel proud to have served them for such a long while. We all come to the end eventually and this is my time but it was a pleasure to have been involved with them."

"The transition from player to referee was not that difficult for me because if you believe in discipline it's obvious that you would fit quite easily into the role. I have always felt strongly about discipline in the game."

Lloyd is currently serving as manager of the West Indies team.



Chinese women perform during the draw ceremony of FIFA Women's World Cup in Wuhan on Saturday.

'Stay off Watson's back'

AFP, St George's



ICC Cricket World Cup
WEST INDIES 2007

double-defending champions to 348 for six.

They had no answer to his blistering 32-ball innings featuring four sixes and four fours.

Watson then took one for 20 with his brisk medium-pacers as New Zealand were bowled out for 133, the Black Caps suffering both their heaviest one-day international defeat and the largest inflicted upon a Test team at a World Cup.

Many were wondering what the injury-prone 25-year-old was doing in the Caribbean while he missed three comfortable victories with a left calf-muscle injury sustained while bowling against Bangladesh last month in Antigua.

However, he demonstrated both his fitness and his form heading into Wednesday's semifinal against South Africa in St Lucia with a hard-hitting 65 not out in the 215-run trouncing of New Zealand with which Australia wrapped up their Super Eights campaign.

The Black Caps, who looked like restricting Australia to around 300, instead saw Watson power the

a very encouraging come back for him.

"Shane Watson is a very talented cricketer and someone who works extremely hard at his game."

"He hasn't had a great run with injury over the last couple of years but if you have a look at his form in the one-day side, he's hardly put a foot wrong."

"It's great to see somebody that works as hard as he does, gets the results from his game."

Watson has played just three Tests, injuring his shoulder in his third appearance in Brisbane in November 2005 against the West Indies.

He made his one-day international debut in 2002 but his 63-game career in the shorter format has also been interrupted by fitness problems.

Chosen for the 2003 World Cup squad, he withdrew because of a back injury and had to withdraw from Australia's one-day squad that toured Bangladesh 12 months ago because of a right calf strain sustained while making 201 in the domestic Pura Cup final.

He then missed the whole of Australia's recent 5-0 home Ashes triumph against England with a hamstring problem.

Rokibul

FROM PAGE 17

from 51 deliveries that featured three fours and two sixes.

Local left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain continued his impressive performance by taking two wickets for 42 runs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA ACADEMY: 218-8 in 50 overs (Perera 0, Daniel 64, Ranjitha 37, Mathew 42 not out, Zoysa 27, extras 19; Shaqaf 1-34, Mosharraf 2-42, Mehrab 2-46, Sadat 1-34).

BANGLADESH ACADEMY: 202-5 in 42.5 overs (Sadat 9, Zunaed 26, Nazimuddin 33, Rokibul 69 not out, Mehrab 47, Nadif 6, Mahmudullah 8 not out, extras 4; Zoysa 1-24, Vida-napathirana 1-40, Paranavithana 2-22).

Result: Bangladesh Academy won by five wickets.

A rare genius

FROM PAGE 17

England host the West Indies for four Tests and three one-day internationals starting in May.

"We have a lot of young players coming up and Ravi Bopara is one of them. He looked good with whatever opportunities have been given to him," said Vaughan of the all-rounder.

Pietersen looking

FROM PAGE 20

the Vaughn that's really positive, that's the way I like to see Michael Vaughn playing," Pietersen commented.

Wicket-keeper Paul Nixon also played a vital part in England's win, making 38 before he was bowled in the final over, leaving county teammate Stuart Broad to collect the winning runs.

"That was an amazing game of cricket. There was some tremendous batting from West Indies. We had to do something, we'd all talked about Duncan Fletcher (leaving) and it means a lot for him," said Nixon.

"The lads paced the game so well. Michael Vaughn played beautifully, Kevin Pietersen came in and played magnificently and then the Leicestershire partnership finished it off."

Koertzen sets

FROM PAGE 20

Cups.

The 2003 Cup semifinal between Australia and Sri Lanka in Port Elizabeth was his 100th one-dayer since making his international debut in a match between South Africa and India in Port Elizabeth in 1992.

Koertzen has also stood in 80 Tests.

ICC Umpires Manager Doug Cowie paid tribute to Koertzen's achievements.

"Rudi's achievement is testament to his remarkable consistency and enormous ability as a decision-maker. He has proved himself to be unyielding, resilient, dependable, loyal and dedicated, all qualities that are needed to make it to the top of his profession," said Cowie, a former international umpire.

ICC President Percy Sonn, a countryman of Koertzen said: "For someone to stay at the top of his game for as long as Rudi has required incredible commitment and dedication. Thankfully, Rudi has that and his obvious love for what he does is apparent every time he takes the field."

"And on a personal note, as a South African it's great to see him continue to do so well and we are all very proud of him at home."

Apart from Koertzen and Shepherd, West Indian Steve Bucknor (161), Australians Daryl Harper (141), Darren Hair (131) and Simon Taufel (115), New Zealand's Billy Bowden (114), South Africa's David Orchard (107) and New Zealand's Steve Dunne (100) have stood in 100 or more one-dayers.

Lankans unite for Cup

FROM PAGE 20

link just hours before they take on the Kiwis, Tillakaratne said.

"It is a show of encouragement and support," Tillakaratne said, adding that leading figures from other sports such as rugby, tennis, swimming and athletics were also expected.

The Sri Lankans play New Zealand in the first World Cup semifinal on Tuesday in Jamaica in their quest to repeat their 1996 tournament victory.

The veteran cricket broadcaster Premasara Epasinghe said New Zealand would be demoralised after a crushing defeat at the hands of Australians.

Epasinghe said the emphatic Australian win over the Kiwis had once again underlined their superior mental and physical fitness, which the Sri Lankans need to be aware of and must match, should they meet in the final.

Ranjan Paranavithana, a well-known cricket writer and coach, said that New Zealand's defeat without their main bowling weapon Shane Bond might not have been a

Speed slams critics

AFP, Bridgetown

International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive Malcolm Speed said Saturday some of the criticism of the World Cup was unwarranted.

"The prospects of the semifinals are mouth-watering but less so is the criticism of the tournament, some of which has been over the top, to put it mildly," said Speed.

"No-one ever pretended this World Cup would be a straightforward event to stage."

"There have been some negatives, yes, but there have also been plenty of positives and they surely outweigh the negatives to a significant degree."

The ICC was criticised for the duration of the tournament with 51 matches spread over 47 days.

High ticket prices, which were out of reach of most locals, and the lack of crowds also came under fire.

The ICC chief executive agreed poor attendance was disappointing.

Smith hurts

FROM PAGE 17

only 65 deliveries against Scotland. Smith has also struck the second highest number of fours in this World Cup to date, second only to Australia's Matthew Hayden.

South Africa, ousted by Australia in the 1999 World Cup semifinal, are bidding to make it to their first-ever final of a World Cup. The only other time South Africa entered the last four was in 1992 when they went down to England, thanks largely to the rain rule prevalent at the time. In 1996 they lost to West Indies in the quarterfinal while their 2003 home campaign ended disappointingly, with a first-round exit.

A total of 498 athletes including 128 females from 50 teams competed for 36 gold medals decided in the event.

Youth and Sports secretary Golam Mostafa Talukder distributed prizes as chief guest.

Beauty

FROM PAGE 17

12.24s for her third national women's 100m triumph but as soon as the race was over, she got into a dark mood.

"We are going through bad times. The overall condition of BJMC is not well. Unfortunately, they are one of the few organisations that promotes people's athletics," said Beauty after finishing the double following her triumph in the 200m on Saturday.

"If BJMC run into trouble, where shall we go for our future?" questioned the ace athlete.

F o r m e r c h a m p i o n s Shamsunnahar Chumki of BJMC (12.50s) and Ihsrat Jahan Eva of BKSP (12.55s) won silver and bronze respectively.

Bangladesh Army topped the medal table with 14 gold, 13 silver and 10 bronze medals, closely followed by BJMC who hauled 14-9-5. Bangladesh Air Force (3-3-1) and Bangladesh Navy (3-1-1) each won three golds while BKSP had a rather disappointing show with a tally of 2-1-1.

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AND V WEST INDIES SCOREBOARD

FROM PAGE 20

Ramdin not out 10 20 11 1 0

Taylor c Daryl 9 10 1 1 0

Polwell run out (Flintoff) 0 4 1 0 0

Collymore run out (Flintoff) 1 3 2 0 0

Extras: (lb-1, w-14, nb-3) 18 30 0 0 0

Total: (All out in 49.5 overs) 300 300

Fall of wickets: 1-131, 2-168, 3-173, 4-181, 5-258, 6-276, 7-277, 8-296, 9-298, 10-300.

Bowler O M R W NB/W

Anderson 6 0 39 0 w-6

Plunkett 7 0 71 1 nb-2, w-5

Broad 6 1 32 0 w-1

Flintoff 9.5 0 59 2 nb-1

Daryl 3 0 19 0 w-1

Collingwood 8 0 40 1 w-1