

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

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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 Cech 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 Makelele with Ukrainian Andriy 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

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"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

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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.



PHOTO: AFP

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

Hayden knows one way

AFP, St George's



Australia's Matthew Hayden has said there is no great mystery to his success after carving out another place in cricket's record books at the World Cup.

The opening batsman's 103 in the champions 215-run Super Eight's thrashing of fellow semifinalists New Zealand saw him equal the record of three hundreds at a World Cup held jointly by Australia's Mark Waugh and India's Sourav Ganguly.

It was also the 35-year-old Queensland left-hander's fifth hundred in 21 one-day international innings after he was dropped for the Champions Trophy in India in October and November, a run that included his Australia record 181 not out against New Zealand in Hamilton in February.

Hayden, this World Cup's leading run-scorer with 580 at an average of 82.85 and an all-time Australian tournament best of 158

against Wednesday's semifinal opponents South Africa in a group match in St Kitts last month, is renowned for his methodical approach.

This will even extend to walking out onto the pitch in his socks the day before a game to get used to his surroundings.

"There's no replacing hard work," said Hayden. "I had a bit of a boost going to New Zealand before this competition, on similar wickets."

However, he insisted his approach was common throughout the Australia squad.

"There's not one bloke that's not doing as much work as the other. It's not just me in this scenario, I've enjoyed great partnerships along the way," explained Hayden.

The opener put on 137 for the second wicket against New Zealand in Grenada with captain Ricky Ponting on Friday during the biggest defeat suffered by a Test side at a World Cup.

"We've worked very hard throughout the (southern) summer on our one-day game and all elements of our game," added

Hayden.

"It's no surprise that we are here at a World Cup at the height of our games. We are looking forward now to the next two games. All of what we've been able to achieve means nothing if we don't go all the way."

"Day in, day out, this side just desperately wants to complete its skills and give itself every chance to play good cricket."

"That's the discipline of training, the discipline of what we've been able to achieve over the last seven weeks. More than anything this side loves big games and big occasions."

And Ponting said Hayden's way was typical of an Australia side chasing an unprecedented third straight World Cup title.

"It's a very motivated team, with a lot of champion players and you don't have to motivate champion players," said Ponting.

"It's no coincidence Matty got a hundred. He batted for probably two hours in the nets the day before."

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP Tough draw for US

AFP, Wuhan, China

Two-time champions the United States were handed a tough assignment in the draw for this year's Women's World Cup on Sunday.

The world's number one side were ranked alongside Sweden, runners-up in 2003, and Asia's top team North Korea in Group B.

The US, many people's favourites for the title, will also face Nigeria.

Reigning champions Germany were given a relatively easy ride against Japan, England and Argentina in Group A.

The draw also smiled on hosts China, runners-up in 1999, who will play Denmark, Brazil and New Zealand in Group D.

World number three Norway will play Ghana, Australia and Canada in Group C.

The fifth World Cup will be played from September 10-30 across five Chinese cities: Wuhan, Chengdu, Hangzhou, Shanghai and Tianjin.

The top two teams from each group progress to the quarterfinals.

Nadal rolls over Federer

AFP, Monte Carlo

Spaniard Rafael Nadal extended his all-time win streak to 67 matches at the expense of Roger Federer as he won the Monte Carlo Masters for the third straight year here on Sunday.

The Spanish world number two won 6-4, 6-4 as he defeated his Swiss rival for the second year in succession for the title. Federer saved two match points before falling in one hour, 35 minutes.

Nadal improved to 7-3 over Federer, who lost three major clay finals to the Spaniard last season, at Monte Carlo, Rome and Roland Garros. Nadal stands 5-0 against Federer on clay.

Beauty

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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 female 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.

Former champions Shamsunnahar Chumki of BJMC (12.50s) and Ishrat 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 (3-1-3) each won three golds while BKSP had a rather disappointing show with a tally of 2-1-5.

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.

'Stay off Watson's back'

AFP, St George's



Shane Watson's detractors have been told to shut up by Australia captain Ricky Ponting who said the Queensland

all-rounder was a key member of his side's bid for an unprecedented third straight World Cup title.

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

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.

"It might quieten a few people down, particularly back at home, that have been casting all these doubts around about Shane Watson and his value to this team," said Ponting.

"You are not going to see striking like that from somebody who can't play the game," added the captain of Watson, who was opening the innings before Matthew Hayden was recalled to the one-day set-up.

"He's done everything in his power to get back in the side and his performance was first-class. He looked good with the ball as well and felt no pain whatsoever, so it's

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 missed 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.

ICC CEO hails Lara

AFP, Bridgetown

The word "great" can be overused but in Brian Lara's case it is definitely merited, International Cricket Council chief executive Malcolm Speed said here on Saturday.

The 37-year-old West Indian great bowed out of international cricket with the last Super Eights match against England at the Kensington Oval, after a glittering career in which he smashed a host of batting records.

Speed said Lara's career was a treat for fans all over the world.

"As a batsman, he has provided superb value to all fans of the game over 17 years," Speed told AFP.

Lara made 18 in his last innings before he was run out and was given a standing ovation by a capacity crowd.

In all Lara played 299 one-day internationals, scoring 10,405 runs - the fifth highest by any batsman in limited overs cricket.

"It is fitting in some ways that his international career is ending here in Barbados because it was here that he played one of his great innings, the 153 not out that helped beat Australia in a Test match back in 1999.

KP spoils Lara's party

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when Pietersen hit the stumps at the non-striker's end with an underarm throw.

Lara had arrived at the crease to a thunderous applause from a capacity 22,500 crowd at the Kensington Oval, hugging returning Gayle on the way.

He opened his account with a single before hitting his first four, a square-drive off Flintoff bowling round the stumps. The England bowler then immediately tested Lara with a bouncer.

Lara flicked James Anderson for his second boundary and edged Flintoff for his third which eluded Andrew Strauss's outstretched right hand at the lone slip. Just when it

looked he had settled down, he was run out.

The celebrating England cricketers, who had formed a guard of honour on his arrival, applauded him when Lara was returning to the pavilion.

Lara stopped, turned back, took off his helmet and raised his bat, acknowledging the applause from the crowd before walking back to the dressing-room sporting number '9' on his shirt.

Gayle exploded with a flurry of big shots, once severely punishing seamer Liam Plunkett. He cracked two fours and as many sixes in an over before racing to his half-century off just 29 balls.

LAND V WEST INDIES SCOREBOARD

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Ramdin not out	10	20	11	1	0
Taylor c Dalrymple b Vaughan	12	9	10	1	0
Powell run out (Flintoff)	0	4	1	0	0
Collimore run out (Flintoff)	1	3	2	0	0
Extras: (lb-1, w-14, nb-3)	18				
Total: (All out in 49.5 overs)	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
Dalrymple	3	0	19	0	w-1
Collingwood	8	0	40	1	w-1
Vaughan	10	0	39	3	-
ENGLAND	R	M	B	4s	6s
Strauss c Smith b Collimore	7	10	12	1	0
Vaughan run out (Bravo)	79	116	68	6	2
Bopara run out (Bravo)	26	60	43	3	0
Pietersen b Taylor	100	144	91	10	1
Collingwood b Bravo	6	11	11	1	0
Flintoff c Powell b Sarwan	15	23	20	2	0
Dalrymple run out (Smith)	1	6	6	0	0
Nixon b Bravo	38	83	39	4	0
Plunkett c Bravo b Taylor	2	4	3	0	0
Broad not out	5	24	5	0	0
Anderson not out	0	7	1	0	0
Extras: (b-6, lb-11, w-5)	22				
Total: (For 9 wickets in 49.5 overs)	301				
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-101, 3-154, 4-162, 5-185, 6-189, 7-269, 8-271, 9-298.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	NB/W
Collimore	10	0	61	1	w-2
Powell	10	0	58	0	w-2
Taylor	10	1	65	2	-
Gayle	5	0	32	0	-
Bravo	9.5	0	47	2	w-1
Sarwan	5	1	21	1	-
Result: England won by one wicket.					
Man-of-the-match: Kevin Pietersen.					
Toss: England.					
Umpires: R Koertzen (South Africa) and S Taufel (Australia)					
Match referee: R Madugalle (Sri Lanka)					