

Tigers return home today

SPORTS REPORTER



Indies, their best-ever success in three appearances in the mega event.

Outgoing coach Dav Whatmore will also accompany the team to complete his last assignment with the Tigers against India at home in next month's two-match Test and three-match one-day international series.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) requested all the former national skippers to be present at the Zia International Airport to receive the heroes.

Habibul Bashar's men made the promise before leaving the country almost two months back that their main target was to qualify to the second round in the showpiece event and they have achieved it by beating India and Bermuda in the preliminary round.

Despite their heartbreaking 74-run loss against Ireland, the Tigers not only enhanced their reputation with a splendid 67-run win against the then-number one ranked South Africa at the Super Eights but also buried their bitter memories of 2003 World Cup as they are making a Tiger-like return.

Bangladesh won seven matches out of 13 since they reached the Caribbean in the last week of February including the triangular series and the build-up matches which also included the self-confident two-wicket victory against a full-strength New Zealand side.

The national cricketers will however get little rest as the crucial

home series against India, who are scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on May 7, will start with the first one-day on May 10 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed, who is also with the team, will sit with his colleagues soon after the arrival as the BCB have already announced that they will announce the squad for the home series by April 30.

The board will also announce the names of the captain and his deputy for the series as Bashar's and Shahriar Nafees's assignment were till the World Cup.

The board high-ups already told that they will announce the names only after the selectors picked up the squad. There was a debate on Bashar's fate as a captain following his below-per performance in the tournament but it was learned that the most successful Bangladesh skipper may get another chance to decide his one-day career.

On the other hand, left-handed opener Nafees, who have been on a rich vein of form in the last year achieving the 1000-run mark in a calendar year, has his form concerning the think-tank.

Meanwhile, the cricket team will take part in a talk show in the Bangladesh Television this afternoon.

Former Bangladesh captain Roquibul Hassan will moderate the programme in the state-run television which will see a number of former national skippers participating in the panel of discussions. Besides, academy team players will also take part in the programme.

"They made us proud that's why it would be a reception," said Roquibul.



Australia paceman Glenn McGrath (2nd from L) is the toast of his teammates after taking the wicket of South Africa batsman Mark Boucher (not in the picture) during their World Cup semifinal at the Beausejour Cricket Ground in Gros Islet, St. Lucia on Wednesday.



Did U Know?

India will stage the 2011 ICC World Cup final. Pakistan and Sri Lanka will host semifinals, with the opening ceremony taking place in Bangladesh.



Malcolm Speed

(ICC chief executive)
"It is always sad when a player leaves the stage, especially when it is someone of Brian Lara's stature, but he has left us with some fantastic memories and for that cricket owes him a great deal."

NAT'L YOUTH FOOTBALL 5 hattricks on opening day

SPORTS REPORTER

Jibon, Rubel and Hasan slammed hattricks as Lalmonirhat recorded the biggest win on the opening day of the Western Union National Youth Football Championship qualifiers yesterday.

All three players notched three goals at the Lalmonirhat Stadium each as the hosts Lalmonirhat brushed aside Panchagarh 9-0.

Ghafur and Jewel also slotted trebles in Dhaka's 7-1 thrashing of Madaripur at Shariatpur.

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AFP, Kingston



run defeat by Sri Lanka in the World Cup semifinals here on Tuesday.

But Fleming said he wants to continue playing in the side and stay in charge of the Test team.

The 34-year-old opening batsman had been in charge for 10 years, leading his country in 218 one-day internationals, including three World Cups and two semifinals, New Zealand losing by nine wickets to Pakistan in 1999.

"I want to keep playing but I'm standing down as captain of the one-day side," Fleming, who won 98 and lost 106 one-dayers as skipper, told reporters.

"I still want to captain the Test side," added Fleming, who became skipper in the longer format at the same time as taking over the reins

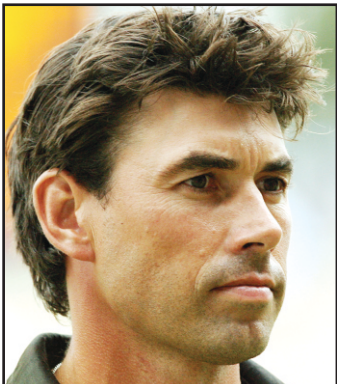
New Zealand's Stephen Fleming announced his resignation as captain of his country's one-day team after the 81-

in the one-day team. "I've only just turned 34 and I think I've still got some good batting years ahead of me."

He added: "I want to concentrate on that for a while but I want to put a lot of energy into our Test cricket."

"I'd like to keep playing one-day cricket but as a batsman. In some way your energy levels are sapped when you captain the side."

"I want to play that with a fresh mind and finish off my career with



STEPHEN FLEMING

some stats that I think I'm worth," said Fleming, who averages just under 33 in 280 one-day internationals with only eight hundreds.

"Obviously, I'd dreamed the dream of lifting the Cup and saying 'thanks very much' but it's not to be," said Fleming after New Zealand, yet to reach the World Cup final, had lost their fifth semifinal in the tournament's nine-edition history.

"It's been mapped out for some time. But from a professional point of view, it's important we get some fresh ideas."

"I'm very proud of what we've achieved. 218 games as captain is a long time and, professionally, I think I've done the job well. Whoever takes over, I want to be around to assist. I've no problems stepping back."

Asked, who his successor should be, Fleming mentioned experienced left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori, still only 28, as a possible candidate.

"The way we've groomed Daniel

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Arambagh pricks Russel pride

Russel officials attack referee



SPORTS REPORTER

Iddi Badambuze's early strike helped Arambagh put an end to leaders Sheikh Russel's seven-match undefeated run in the B. League with an impressive 1-0 win yesterday.

The Ugandan slotted the ball into the net after six minutes when a corner by Kenyan midfielder Nicodemus was backheeled towards him by Ritu to catch the rival defence napping.

The last match of the eighth week, however, brought the worst out of team officials as Russel's

Habibur Rahman Manu and Mosharraf Hossain Dewan came out of the bench to physically assault referee Munaf Sarker after the final whistle.

The police had to separate the two Russel officials and a ball boy who now face punishment.

Perhaps, they got furious after the match official had turned down a second-half appeal for penalty.

Russel still shared lead with Muktiyoddha and Abahani -- all three level on 15 points -- but the latter have the advantage of playing one game less.

Arambagh's fourth win in seven games pushed them just behind the leaders with 13 points.

The day belonged to the four Africa-based footballers fielded by Arambagh, who outmanoeuvred Russel's Moroccan quartet on the pitch.

Apart from a long-range effort by overlapping rightback Mishu just before the break, Russel hardly took a shot at the rival goal in the entire first half despite Touati Younes returning after a three-match lay-off due to injury.

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SL Academy take top spot

SPORTS REPORTER

A patient 69 from Tharanga Paranavithana gave Sri Lanka Academy a 16-run victory over Bangladesh Academy in the Academy Cup at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

The local side chased a modest 236 for their second win but the visitors fielded and bowled well to restrict Bangladesh Academy to 219 for 9 in their 50 overs. Earlier, the islanders scored 235 for 9 as they batted first after being put in by Mehrob Hossain.

The 25-year-old left-hander struck five fours and a six in his 96-ball knock that spanned till the 42nd over when he fell to off-spinner Mahmudullah Riyad while trying to raise the run-rate. He shared a 77-run sixth wicket stand with Angelo Matthews, who struck a 67-ball 45. For the locals, Shafaq Al Jabir, Mehrob and Mahmudullah took two wickets each, while Kamrul Islam took a wicket.

Left-handed opening pair of Imrul Kayes and Junayed Siddiqui were in charge early on but after Imrul fell to a run out on 42 off 6.5 overs, the innings slowed down. Nazimuddin also followed suit but again, Rokibul Hasan held forte with a commanding 48.

The young right-handed Rokibul who struck 313 in the National League last month, hit four boundaries but once he fell in the 32nd over, only Sahagir Hossain (42 off 52 balls) tried to win the game for the Academy side.

For the visitors, Chaminda Vidanapathirana, Lakmal Fernando and Nisal Randika took two wickets each.

This was the Sri Lankans' second win in three matches while both the Bangladesh and Pakistan Academy sides had one win each from two matches.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

A super five-wicket haul from Mamun ensured a 31-run victory for North Bengal Cricket Academy over Udit Club in the Kai-Altech Second Division Cricket League at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

In a low-scoring affair, Udit failed to chase down 162 runs set by North Bengal who were earlier bowled out in 47.2 overs. Udit, in their turn to bat, were bowled out for 130 runs in 35 overs.

In the other matches, Badda

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Captain Fantastic

Jayawardene takes SL into final

AFP, Kingston



the 1996 champions beat New Zealand by 81 runs at Sabina Park on Tuesday.

Jayawardene's 115 not out was the centrepiece of an imposing total of 289 for five and showed the value of a well-paced innings after he'd taken 48 balls to score his first boundary.

Dropped on 70, in all he faced 109 balls with three sixes and 10 fours in his first century in 23 World Cup matches.

In reply, Sri Lanka bowled out the Black Caps for 208 with more than eight overs to spare, off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran taking four for 31, including a spell of three wickets in six balls.

Sri Lanka, through to their second final, will now play the winners of Wednesday's match in St Lucia between holders Australia and South Africa in Saturday's climax in Barbados.

This defeat meant New Zealand had lost all five of their World Cup semifinals.

Jayawardene, who'd won the toss under blue skies, saw Sri Lanka take the field in overcast conditions.

Lasith Malinga, having missed three games with an ankle injury, needed just three balls to take a wicket, the slingshot fast bowler having New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming lbw for one.

It was surprising when he was taken off by Jayawardene after a superbly accurate opening spell of one wicket for five runs in four overs.

Left-arm quick Chaminda Vaas made it 32 for two in the 11th over when Ross Taylor tried to hit across the line and was lbw for nine.

Scott Styris, fifth in the list of tournament run-scorers, counter-attacked by driving Dilhara Fernando and Muralidaran for sixes.

After two overs for 14 runs, Murali was replaced by fellow spinner Tillakaratne Dilshan.

It took just five balls for Dilshan to strike, Styris on 37 chipping to Jayawardene at mid-wicket who

gleefully held a catch above his head.

That was the start of a collapse that saw Sri Lanka's spinners taking five wickets for 11 runs in 23 balls to all but seal victory as New Zealand slumped to 116 for seven.

Murali held a brilliant lunging one-handed catch to dismiss all-rounder Jacob Oram off his own bowling.

Next ball Brendon McCullum's top-edged sweep was athletically caught by a diving Chamara Silva, running round from square leg to leave Murali on a hatrick at the start of his next over.

But before then opener Peter

Fulton, who top-scored with 46, chipped left-arm spinner Sanath Jayasuriya, one of three survivors along with Vaas and Murali from the 1996 team, to Silva at mid-on.

Daniel Vettori survived the hatrick but was then plumb lbw to Murali's 'doosra' for nought.

And not even a few hard hits from Craig McMillan, batting at seven and with a runner after being off the field with a stomach muscle injury, were going to change the outcome.

A last wicket stand of 59 delayed proceedings before Jeetan Patel (34) was last man out, holing out off Dilshan.

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ZEALAND V SRI LANKA SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup first semifinal between Sri Lanka and New Zealand at Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica on Tuesday:

SRI LANKA	R	M	B	4s	6s
Tharanga b Vettori	73	112	74	9	1
Jayasuriya b Franklin	1	11	6	0	0
Sangakkara c Fleming b Franklin	18	50	42	2	0
Jayawardene not out	115	155	109	10	3
Silva lbw b Bond	21	36	33	0	1
Dilshan lbw b Oram	30	42	27	3	0
Arnold not out	14	24	14	2	0
Extras: (lb-3, w-9, nb-5)	17				
Total: (For 5 wickets in 50 overs)	289				
Did not bat: Vaas, Malinga, Muralidaran, Fernando.					
Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-67, 3-111, 4-152, 5-233.					

Bowler	O	M	R	W	NB/W
Franklin	9	1	46	2	nb-2, w-2
Bond	10	1	59	1	nb-1, w-3
Oram	10	0	60	1	nb-2, w-1
Vettori	10	0	51	1	w-1
Patel	10	0	62	0	-
Styris	1	0	8	0	w-1
NEW ZEALAND	R	M	B	4s	6s
Fulton c Silva b Jayasuriya	46	116	77	2	1
Fleming lbw b Malinga	1	7	4	0	0
Taylor lbw b Vaas	9	43	25	1	0
Styris c Jayawardene b Dilshan	37	50	38	2	3
Oram c & b Muralidaran	3	8	7	0	0

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