

Shakib in running for top accolade

Cricket

AGENCIES, undated

Bangladesh allrounder Shakib Al Hasan has been nominated in two different categories as the nominations for LG ICC Awards 2009 were announced at a ceremony of the International Cricket Council in Mumbai on Wednesday. Shakib, the world's number one ranked all-rounder in ODIs, is the only Bangladeshi to be included in the 14-man list for Cricketer of the Year award and is also among the 19 players nominated for the Test Player of the Year.

India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Sri Lanka's Tillakaratne Dilshan lead the nominations though with three categories each. Dhoni and Dilshan are in the running for the Cricketer of the Year and Test Player of the Year awards. The Indian also figures in the One-Day Player of the Year category while Dilshan has also been nominated for the Twenty20 International Performance of the Year award.

Bangladesh's stand-in skipper Shakib Al Hasan was also nominated in 2007 for the Emerging Player award and had made the short list. Shakib was delighted with his nomination for the two categories.

"I have had a good couple of years in international cricket and the form with the bat and ball has been reasonably consistent. I guess the significant aspect of the nomination is that I have been recognized for my Test performance also. I am still learning the trades in Test cricket and this

will encourage me a lot. I am not going to lose sleep over it but it will be great to make the short list," said an elated Shakib.

Bangladesh is also featured in the Twenty20 International Performance of the Year category with left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak's four for 16 against South Africa in 2008 making the list.

The awards will take place at a glittering ceremony in Johannesburg on October 1.

The players appear among the long-lists of nominations for prizes at the sixth annual LG ICC Awards, presented in association with the Federation of International Cricketers' Associations (FICA).

The long-lists were announced at a function in Mumbai Wednesday hosted by former India all-rounder Ravi Shastri and attended by current India opener Virender Sehwag -- who himself is one of the players nominated for the ODI Player of the Year award -- and ICC Chief Executive Haroon Lorgat.

This year's LG ICC Awards includes eight individual prizes and also features the selection of the Test and ODI Teams of the Year and the award to the side that has adhered most to the Spirit of Cricket.

The nominations were made by a five-man ICC selection panel chaired by former West Indies captain and current chairman of the ICC Cricket Committee Clive Lloyd. The panel also includes former players such as India's Anil Kumble, Mudassar Nazar of Pakistan, Bob Taylor of England and New Zealand's Stephen Fleming.

The individual player awards will be selected by an academy of 25 highly

credentialed cricket personalities from around the world. The academy includes a host of former players and respected members of the media, representatives of the Emirates Elite Panels of ICC Umpires and ICC Match Referees.

The nominations from the Women's Cricketer of the Year were decided after a committee of former players, current administrators and journalists created a long-list. The award will then be voted for by a separate 25-person voting academy.

The Spirit of Cricket Award was voted on by all international captains as well as all members of the Emirates Elite Panel of ICC Umpires and Emirates Elite Panel of ICC Match Referees. The Umpire of the Year Award was voted on by the captains and the match referees based on the umpires' performance statistics.

Based on the period between 13 August 2008 and 24 August 2009, the LG ICC Awards 2009 -- presented in association with FICA -- will take into account performances by players and officials in a remarkable period for the game.

That period includes such high-profile events as the ICC World Twenty20 in England, the ICC Women's World Cup 2009 in Australia and the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2009 in South Africa, as well as several bilateral Test and ODI series.

"The LG ICC Awards are an opportunity for the ICC and FICA to acknowledge and celebrate the remarkable performances of the world's top players," said ICC chief executive Haroon Lorgat while announcing the list of nominations in Mumbai.

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PHOTO: AFP
This file picture shows Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan rejoicing at the top of his voice after taking a New Zealand wicket at home in October last year. Performances such as these throughout the year, both with the ball and bat, have put him in contention for two top accolades of the LG ICC Awards 2009.

COC defers opening ceremony

SPORTS REPORTER



The central organising committee (COC) for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011 has rescheduled the opening ceremony of the mega event.

As per the COC recommendation the opening ceremony will be held on February 17 while the opening match is to take place in Bangladesh on February 19.

The routine gathering took place in Mumbai on Wednesday to discuss details relating to the staging of the event.

The meeting, under the chairmanship of ICC vice-president Sharad Pawar, was attended by ICC Chief Executive Haroon Lorgat and representatives of the three countries Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka, also made their recommendations to approve the operational plan and the event budget, fix the venue inspections

in the three host nations for October-November and announce the full match schedule and list of fixtures in Mumbai on November 9.

The recommendations of this COC meeting will now be communicated to the ICC finance committee and ICC board for consideration.

"This was another productive meeting and we have continued to make real progress. We are operating at full steam ahead for what should be a great event in 2011 and there is a great spirit of cooperation amongst the hosts and the ICC," tournament director Prof. Ratnakar Shetty was quoted as saying in the ICC press release.

Pakistan, previously the tournament's fourth host nation, was not present and will not attend any future meetings of the COC following the settlement made with the ICC last week whereby it was agreed the Pakistan Cricket Board would be relieved of its obligations as a co-host.

Bangladesh A name 19 probables

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 19-member preliminary squad of the Bangladesh A team on Wednesday to prepare for the upcoming tour of Maharashtra.

The preparation camp will start at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on Saturday.

The second string Bangladesh side is scheduled to visit Maharashtra from September 25 to October 16.

They will open their trip with a four-day match against Maharashtra Under-22 starting from September 27 at Nasik.

The Bangladesh A team will then travel to Pune on October 1 to play a four-dayer (October 3 to October 6), three one-day matches (October 9, 10, 11) and three T20 matches (Oct 13, 14, 15) against Maharashtra.

SQUAD

Hannan Sarker, Imrul Kayes, Nazmus Sadat, Nafis Iqbal, Shamsur Rahman, Imran Ahmed, Rajin Saleh, Sahagir Hossain, Nazmul Hossain Milon, Shahadat Hossain, Dollar Mahmud, Talha Jubair, Tareq Aziz Khan, Ziaur Rahman, Sohrab Shuvro, Arafat Sunny, Faisal Hossain, Nadir Chowdhury and Sajedul Islam.

Kiwis post 141

CRICINFO, undated

New Zealand's bid to gain momentum after last week's Test series defeat hit a potential roadblock as they were kept to 141 in the first Twenty20 at the R Premadasa Stadium on Wednesday. With the openers dismissed early, the pressure was on Ross Taylor, who carried the team almost single-handedly with a busy innings until the 18th over after which, Lasith Malinga returned to stifle the tail. The coloured clothing was out and with it a fresh look to New Zealand's Twenty20 unit, but the pattern of Sri Lanka keeping a check on proceedings spilled over from recent weeks.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: 141 for 8 in 20 overs (Guptill 29, Taylor 60; Malinga 2-21)

Murray off and running

AFP, New York

The men's singles formbook continued to be largely respected at the US Open on Tuesday with second seed Andy Murray and fourth seed Novak Djokovic both cruising into the second round.

There were straight-set wins too for seventh seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, 10th seed Fernando Verdasco, 11th seed Fernando Gonzalez and 17th seed Thomas Berdych, as for once, most of the day's drama was being played out in the women's tournament.

Murray, losing finalist here last year to Roger Federer, was below his best, especially on serve, but still was a class above Latvia's Ernestas Gulbis, winning 7-5, 6-3, 7-5 in the featured night match on the Arthur Ashe Stadium court.

But he was left knowing that he will have to move up a gear or two if he is to win six more games and become the first Briton since Fred Perry in 1936 to win a Grand Slam tournament.

Murray has always said that Flushing Meadows is his best chance of doing so.

"I had a good experience here last year and enjoy playing on that court," he said.

"It's the coolest atmosphere of all of the Slams and hopefully I will play all my matches there."

"When I needed to I upped my game but my concentration could have been better."

Serbia's Djokovic, who lost to Federer in the 2007 final, was too powerful for a fading Ivan Ljubicic of Croatia, winning a canter 6-3, 6-1, 6-3.

The 2008 Australian Open champion revealed afterward that his secret weapon this year is retired American player Todd Martin who has joined his coaching team for Flushing Meadows.

"We had a lot of hours on the court trying hard to improve my game so Todd, being a former top five player and in a couple of Grand Slam finals and very respect brought freshness to our team and things are functioning quite well."

"He always looks for positives and that is

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Safina scrambles thru' Ivanovic bites the dust

AFP, New York

Open women's top seed to lose in the first round, battling back from a break and two break-points down in the third set to edge Australian teen Olivia Rogowska 6-7 (5/7), 6-2, 6-4.

"God knows how I pulled it out," Safina said. "Worse it cannot be. From now on it can only get better."

Fourth seed Dementieva, who could meet Sharapova in the third round as she bids for her first Slam crown, beat French qualifier Camille Pin 6-1, 6-2 to reach a second-round match with American teenager Melanie Oudin.

"It was a good start," Dementieva said. "I was pretty aggressive. I was glad I was able to stay all the way and not lose my concentration."

French Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova also won to complete the sweep of opening matches by Russian seeds, while Serbian fifth seed Jelena Jankovic, last year's US

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PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka pacer Nuwan Kulasekera (R) celebrates the dismissal of New Zealand batsman Brendon McCullum (L) during their Twenty20 clash at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on yesterday.

Nielsen takes a break

Cricket

AFP, Manchester

Troy Cooley will become acting coach of the Australia side for the final three games of their England tour because Tim Nielsen is returning home early to spend time with his family.

Nielsen, in charge for Australia's 2-1 Ashes series defeat, wrapped up at the Oval last month, will return home to Adelaide after the fourth fixture in the upcoming seven match one-dayers.

Wednesday's announcement by Cricket Australia (CA) means Cooley, primarily a bowling coach, will take over ahead of the fifth match on September 13 before Nielsen rejoins the

squad before the Champions Trophy in South Africa, which starts on September 22. Cooley played a key role as a member of England's backroom staff during their 2005 Ashes win, helping hone the skills of the 'Fab Four' pace quartet of Stephen Harmison, Andrew Flintoff, Matthew Hoggard and Simon Jones.

But soon afterwards he returned home to take a similar role with Australia.

"The Australian team has played back-to-back international cricket since September 2008 and looking at the busy schedule over the next 12 months, we believe it is the right time for Tim to take a break," said CA general manager of cricket Michael Brown in a statement.

This will also provide an excellent opportunity for Tim's assistant, Troy Cooley, to continue

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PHOTO: INTERNET
Former world No. 1 Ana Ivanovic of Serbia breaks into tears after going down to Katerina Bondarenko of Ukraine 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 in their first round match of the US Open at the Flushing Meadows