

IAAF Boss Diack promises to help SL athletics

by Reemus Fernando

Lamine Diack, President of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) pledged his full support for the development of athletics in the island addressing the media commencing his historic visit to Sri Lanka at the Athletic Association headquarters yesterday.

"I will be beside you to help you. Let me be informed what kind of help you need whether it is financial or technical," said the 75-year-old president who began his two day visit with a visit to the new sports complex which is under construction at Diagama.

"I am really impressed with the development work carried out by the authorities and will support in every way they want my assistance" said Diack who has been holding the prestigious position of the IAAF since 1999.

Asked what kind of assistance the IAAF has so far extended to poorer nations to close the gap between them and the developed world, Diack said that the IAAF is providing technical assistance and help develop infrastructure.

Among the development programs of the IAAF is to provide synthetic tracks to their affiliates who do not have them. He added that the country doesn't seem to need any assistance on this regard as a modern complex is being built with own funds.

However, the powerful president of 213 affiliated associations, lamented that the current annual expenditure of \$ 25,000 by the local authorities is hardly enough to develop the talent in the country. He pledged his support to the Association if they forward a viable project.



Major General Palitha Fernando, the President of the Athletic Association showing the progress of the building of a new sports complex to Lamine Diack (centre), the President of the IAAF at Diagama, yesterday.

Meanwhile, Diack highlighted the need of identifying talents at a very young age and stressed the importance of bringing in foreign expertise to fine tune local talents without sending athletes to

foreign lands.

Incidentally, Diack is the first IAAF president to visit Sri Lanka, a member of the IAAF since 1922. Diack also met President Mahinda Rajapakse, a former

president of the Athletic Association at Temple Trees and spoke to athletes and coaches at the auditorium of the newly built National Olympic Committee headquarters yesterday.

(Pic by Kamal Wanniarachchi)

12-year-old run machine says he kept a promise

by Reemus Fernando

12-year-old Chamika Sasanka Fernando of Central College, Wadduwa, who scored a sensational triple century in only 98 balls, in an Under-13 Division II Tournament match last week told 'The Island' yesterday that he has promised his father to score a century on that day having failed in two previous games.

"My father was bullying me for not doing well in the past two matches. He said I had to do better to get a new pair of shoes and a new kit. I promised dad to score a century," revealed the shy lad, who had received his primary (up to grade five) education at a Girls' school.

"There's an incentive of Rs. 1000 for us by an old boy (Jinadasa Fernando) to buy cricket gear if we score a century. I was duly paid that and I heard that my colleagues are collecting money to buy me a pair of shoes," said the youngster who had scored the record breaking knock in a tight T-shirt and in worn out shoes.

Fernando, who has received his primary education at Wadduwa Balika Vidyalaya, is the only son of a family of three children. He said that his father, a driver, had found it hard to help him persevere in the sport he loves so dearly. He also said that Jinadasa Fernando, an old boy of the school, whose son is the captain



Chamika Sasanka Fernando

Pic by Kamal Wanniarachchi of the Under-13 side had helped the cricketers by motivating them.

The youngster, who scored five sixes in an over twice, during his 316 said that his only aim was to score a century but it changed when every thing went well for him on that day. In all, he scored 34 sixes and 16 boundaries. He said that his immediate aim is to help his school achieve success in the tournament.

Meanwhile, his coach Rishan Sajith Silva said that the college authorities had to bear the brunt of accusations from residents of neighboring houses as many of the big hits from Fernando had disturbed fittings of their houses. "Many of his big hits went out of the park. Finally, we had to allow several boys to climb on to the wall of the ground and had to keep several boys out of the ground to fetch the balls that were hit out of the park," said Sajith Silva.

Ambepitiya did a Bolt - Diack

by Reemus Fernando

Lamine Diack, president of IAAF, compared the feat of sprint sensation Shehan Ambepitiya, who won a hat-trick of Gold medals at the recently concluded Commonwealth Youth Games, to Beijing Olympic hero Usain Bolt's effort at the Athletic Association headquarters yesterday.

Diack, who has witnessed Usain Bolt's running in his early years in regional championships and winning medals in Beijing said that Shehan Ambepitiya had done equivalent to what Bolt did in Beijing.

"Shehan is very impressive. He has done what Bolt did in Beijing. Like Bolt who won three medals with records, Shehan also won his events with records," said Diack.

Diack said that Bolt impressed him when he ran as a teenager in a regional event. "I said that he would do well in the future and he did exactly that when he won three medals at Olympics," Diack added.

Diack met Shehan Ambepitiya and a host of other young athletes at the NOC headquarters yesterday evening where he addressed the athletes and coaches.

Ambepitiya was awarded a cash

prize of Rs. 1,25,000 for his excellence at the CYG at the NOC headquarters yesterday. Ambepitiya's mates of the 4x100 meter relay team also won Rs. 25,000 each.



Lamine Diack, President of IAAF, greets young athlete Shehan Ambepitiya, who won three Gold medals at the Commonwealth Youth Games in Pune recently. The athletic boss compared Ambepitiya's efforts to that of Jamaican sensation Usain Bolt, who won three Gold medals at the Beijing Olympics.

(Pic by Kamal Wanniarachchi)

Cricket delegation returns empty handed



Lalit Modi

by Rex Clementine

The high profile Sri Lankan delegation that was supposed to sign a lucrative bail out deal with the Indian Cricket Board returned home empty handed Sunday night after Indian Premier League Convener Lalit Modi refused any relief package to the cash strapped Sri Lankan board.

Sports Minister Gamini Lokuge had nominated a delegation that included SLC's CEO, Duleep Mendis, Interim Committee member Sidat Wettimuny, representative of the Cricketers' Association Graeme Labrooy and Sports Ministry Secretary S. Liyanagama in Bangkok, Thailand, where a three day meeting of the IPL franchise owners was going on.

Modi, who had promised Labrooy a US\$ 40 million bailout, during a previous meeting between the two, if the Sri Lanka board cleared a window for the Indian board conducted IPL and Champions League Tournaments for ten years, had gone back on his word and refused any financial support at Sunday's meeting.

Before the team left for negotiations with Modi, the Sports Minister had ensured the cancellation of Sri Lanka's proposed tour of England that clashed with the second season of the Indian Premier League tournament next year.

Modi also had threatened to pull out the two promised tours by India in 2009 and 2010 and had accused Sri Lanka of supporting the rebel Indian Cricket League. Recently, the Sri Lankan board agreed to allow five players who represent ICL to play domestic cricket on request by the players.

The Sri Lankan officials are perplexed as to why the Vice-President of the Indian board invited a team of Sri Lankans to Bangkok for negotiations.

Cricketer officials didn't rule out a possible sabotage for the highly lucrative deal by interested parties in cricket administration at home who have opposed former Sri Lanka captain Arjuna Ranatunga's elevation as the Chairman of the Cricket Interim Committee.

Under-17 Division III Semi-final Central College, Wadduwa earn Division II status with massive win

by Reemus Fernando

Central College, Wadduwa earned their Under-17 Division II entry through a huge 109 run victory over Sri Sumangala College, Hikkaduwa in their Inter-School Under-17 Division III semi-final match played at Mercantile Cricket Club ground, Colombo yesterday.

Captain and off-spinner D.C. Perera with a five wicket haul restricted Sri Sumangala to a paltry 82 runs to achieve

the victory with many overs to spare after Y.G. Alwis top scored with 47 runs enabling the winners to post 189.

Central College, Wadduwa is one of the first five schools to have been established under the auspicious of philanthropist C.W.W. Kannangara. The school has been playing hard ball cricket since its inception, but this is the first time it has earned Under-17 Division II status. The Under-15 and Under-13 teams of the college are

already in Division II.

Scores:
Central College, Wadduwa 189 all out (49.4)
(Y.G. Alwis 47, C.N. Tissera 37, L.G. Kumara 33, L.T. Maduranga 19; D.I. Karunatunga 4/36, S.I. Madusanka 3/24)
Sri Sumangala 82 all out (28.2)
(S.I. Madusanka 24, D.C. Perera 5/17, W.M. Lakmal 3/19)

Under-15 Division I Quarter-final Petes win on D/L method

St. Peter's College, Bambalapitiya scored an eight wicket victory over Dharmasoka College, Ambalangoda on Duckworth-Lewis method after rain spoilt their rescheduled Inter-School Under-15 Division I quarter-final match at Galle International Stadium yesterday.

Batting first after winning the toss, Dharmasoka were restricted to 123 runs for seven wickets in their allotted 43 overs. Praveen Herath picked up four wickets in an impressive spell of nine overs which included four maidens.

In reply, St. Peter's were 61 for two wickets when rain stopped the match in the 21st over. The Petes were declared winners according to the Duckworth-Lewis system.

Scores:

Dharmasoka 123 for 7 (43)

(R. de Silva 14, A.I. Rangana 14, H.G. Miranga 21, B.T. Silva 40 n.o.; Praveen Herath 4/10)

St. Peter's 61 for 2 (20.2)

(Shesheen Fernando 21, Lahiru Milantha 24 n.o.) (RF)