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# The Island Sports

Wednesday 8th September, 2010

## Sanga says CEAT Awards could match up to Alan Border Medal

BY REX CLEMENTINE

Sri Lankan captain Kumar Sangakkara addressing journalists at a media conference yesterday to announce the annual CEAT-Sri Lanka Cricket Awards said that the local awards could match up to the prestigious Alan Border medal in Australia, which is conducted annually and attracts global interest.

CEAT, a leading tyre brand, tied up with Sri Lanka Cricket last year to sponsor the cricket awards for three years. Tillekeratne Dilshan was named CEAT Cricketer of the Year last year after consistent performances in all three forms of the game.

"CEAT sponsorship to Sri Lanka Cricket had grown very strongly since its inception. The Cricket Awards can be recognized on par with other most prestigious awards like the Alan Border medal in Australia," Sangakkara said yesterday addressing journalists.

"We should aim to be on par with Australia not just in cricket, but in all sports. It's important to have prestige and prime recognition. We want Sri Lanka cricketers to be the best cricketers in the world and the cricket team to be the best team in the world," Sangakkara number one ranked Test batsman in the world at the moment said.

Sangakkara is also the only Sri Lankan shortlisted for this year's prestigious ICC Award for Cricketer of the Year. The ICC Awards will take place just two days



Randeep Naranga, Managing Director of CEAT Sri Lanka hands over a replica of the annual CEAT-SLC cricket awards to national cricket captain Kumar Sangakkara at a media briefing held in Colombo yesterday. Picture by Dimuthu Premarante.

after the Sri Lankan awards presentation in Bangalore.

"We at CEAT believe in high performance and quality of performance and similarly cricketers also believe in these things. Performance is about talent, consistency and commitment and must be accorded due recognition." CEAT Managing Director Randeep Narang said.

The Awards Ceremony is set for the 4th October at the Water's Edge, where 61 awards will be presented to country's best cricketers.

The awards will include 16 categories and will recognize the efforts of cricket players in both domestic and international matches. Performances in the Under-23 level, women's cricket, Premier League Tiers 'A' and 'B' and Premier League Limited Overs Tiers 'A' and 'B' will be recognized during the function.

In International cricket meanwhile, awards will be presented for the best batting and bowling performances in Test and ODI cricket. There will also be an award for Emerging Player of the year, Best International Women's Cricketer of the Year and Best Junior Player of the Year.

It was revealed that five past cricketers will be felicitated for their lifetime contributions to the game.

Three big names of Sri Lankan cricket, Sanath Jayasuriya, Muttiah Muralitharan and Chaminda Vaas will also be presented with special awards for their contributions to the sport.



Nishantha Ranatunga

Only last week, the top brass of Sri Lanka Cricket told this newspaper that SLC is a corporate body and they know what they are doing. The current administration, corrupt to the core and promoting nepotism all around were badly exposed mere a week after claiming they were a 'corporate body' at a

## Sri Lanka Cricket stumped, yet again!

media briefing yesterday when they didn't have some basic ideas about an event they were promoting.

CEAT Sri Lanka, a leading tyre manufacturer, had committed to sponsor the annual cricket awards for three years and in the first annual awards alone had spent millions of rupees. At a media briefing held in Colombo yesterday to announce the second annual awards, a question was raised as to performances of which time frame will be considered for these awards. The sponsors clearly indicated that it was up to SLC to decide on that and when the question was referred to controversial Secretary of the Cricket Interim Committee Nishantha Ranatunga, he passed the buck on elsewhere.

It was confirmed that the performance of the season will be the yardstick for awards; however, SLC was clueless about what would happen to the international awards. Ranatunga said, "I am not too sure," paused a while before saying vaguely, "I think performance since the last awards will be considered."

The statement certainly wouldn't have impressed the sponsors who have invested millions on the project. And furthermore, if SLC is the corporate body they claim to be, aren't they suppose to have a clear idea about what they are intending to do?

Since the day Secretary Nishantha Ranatunga tried to undermine the position of former captain and CEO of SLC Duleep Mendis attending all overseas meetings meant for the CEO, we have raised concerns and wondered whether there could be any other person more suitable than the charismatic former Sri Lankan captain to represent Sri Lanka at overseas events.

SLC recently responding to an article in 'The Island' in defence of Ranatunga said, "It is the Interim Committee and Sports Ministry that decided that SLC should be represented by its Secretary (in overseas meetings), taking into account his skills in negotiating on behalf of SLC." But if what was exhibited yesterday was the actual skills of Ranatunga, then we fear for the worst for the future of cricket in this country.

When representing the board at an important event such as yesterday, we expect those who are present to be well equipped with facts and figures and not to give vague answers. Ranatunga was very badly exposed yesterday and the question has to be posed whether he should represent the country in future high profile meetings!

The local media, both print and electronic, have time and again reported on Ranatunga's sinister moves to sideline a world renowned figure like Duleep Mendis and promote himself in that slot. Yesterday, he showed that he wasn't prepared for an event of that magnitude and Sri Lanka Cricket was reflected in poor light especially after captain Kumar Sangakkara had hoped that SLC's awards scheme will match up to the prestigious Alan Border medal in Australia.

We have time and again pointed out that in past Interim Committees the position of Secretaries were filled by men who championed the cause of club cricket. Ranatunga's grand contribution to domestic cricket was attending just one meeting of his club - Colts CC - for the whole of last year.

The past Interim Committees had leading businessmen, some of them like Rienzie Wijetilleke and Hemaka Amarasuriya men of unquestionable repute as heads. Then there also was one Arjuna Ranatunga, a solid leader, a man who turned around Sri Lankan cricket and one who took great pride in being Sri Lankan.

Whom have we got today as the head of Sri Lankan Cricket? A former player who demanded money when he was called up to represent the country in its inaugural Test Match and was parachuted from total obscurity to head Sri Lankan Cricket. And what does he do? He in turn parachutes his nephew for the highest paid job in cricket here and another nephew for another lucrative post.

These men don't seem to care too. There has been intense criticism on the way the appointments have been made, but they have carried on regardless and the authorities seem to have given them a blank cheque to do whatever they want.

And it is with these men like Nishantha Ranatunga, D.S. de Silva, Suraj Dandeniya and Kapila Dandeniya (the two nephews of D.S. de Silva), SLC is speaking of corporate governance. It's good enough to win an award for joke of the year!

## What is the role of the Additional CEO?

The rather inglorious and depressing manner in which Duleep Mendis, a colourful personality with an illustrious and an enviable record both as a cricketer and administrator was required to relinquish his duties as CEO of SLC has been subject to much comments and acute criticism. The reasons given by SLC have been contradictory, amusing and totally unacceptable.

A matter directly intervened, consequent to the departure of Duleep Mendis is the role and responsibilities of the Additional CEO. It is timely and relevant to inquire from SLC as to the functions and responsibilities of the additional CEO, particularly in the context of reports of various officials

attempting to usurp the powers of the CEO.

While the appointment of Air Commodore Ajit Jayasekera as the Additional CEO was commended by the cricket loving Sri Lankans, regrettably, he is not permitted to make a mean-

### Letter

ingful contribution to the administration of the cricket board. The Air Commodore has maintained an excellent record as a cricketer and also excelled as an effective administrator; above all he is a gentleman par excellence.

Strangely, the cricket board keeps him out of the limelight. It is quite appropriate to

inquire from the board what are the expected duties and specific responsibilities of the Additional CEO? Surely, when the board decided to create this position it would have at least prepared a 'Job Description' setting out the primary duties, the 'Chain of Command', the aspect of answerability, authority, accountability and terms and conditions of employment. What is confusing is that while having created an important senior executive position, Air Commodore Ajith Jayasekera is not given the essential authority to make a meaningful contribution to Sri Lanka cricket. Why?

Sqn. Ldr. J. T. Rex Fernando, SLAF (Retd)

## Why is SLC silent?

Questions have been asked as to why Sri Lanka Cricket has maintained complete silence over the alleged misbehavior of three Sri Lankan cricketers during a tour of Zimbabwe more than three months ago? Speculation is rife that the three players allegedly brought serious disrepute to the country during the tour, but SLC seems to have turned a blind eye on the whole issue.

The board belatedly said that they will look into the matter and punish the offenders, but there seem to have been no inquiry made into

the allegations. By delaying an inquiry, SLC is only leaving room for speculation, which is increasing by the day.

It has to be also noted that it was the same board that was quick to punish players for comparatively to a less serious offence, within 48 hours of the no ball fiasco. Was the board trying to be in the good books of the Indian board by immediately punishing the players at that instance? And why are they still keeping the whole Zimbabwe issue under the carpet?

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