

Premier League: Yes, but when?

Sports Reporter

On a day marked by almost incessant spurning of rumours over the condition of a critically wounded opposition leader that in a sinister liaison with that naughty imp called fate almost beggared the country's sportswriters, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) made a belated announcement last night that hardly served any purpose for the rather bewildered news hunters.

Better a bit than nothing. After a deliberation of more than two hours the executive committee of the BFF agreed in principle to introduce a Premier Division football league. A feeling of deja vu on the part of some readers is understandable because the concept of a Premier League has by this time become a twee-told tale. The upshot of yesterday's meeting is that a

new tale is in the offing: at least one can keep one's fingers crossed in the hope of a new tale, no matter how late or when it is told.

For the BFF it was like the proverbial birth of a mole off a mountain in the grip of an excruciating labour pain for a long time. A change in the format of the Senior Division football league in the back drop of an alarming number of pre-arranged on fixed matches and the unhealthy imbalance in strength among the clubs has been in the air for quite some time. A sudden gust for semi-pro football fanned the smouldering embers of contemplation to the point of glowing and the BFF called for an 'all-party' palaver to find a way out. Most clubs agreed to the idea of a Premier League, proposed to be formed with the ten top clubs, with the rest ten playing in another league, also under the banner of Senior Division

football league. The top two clubs, who did not send their representatives to the meeting at first have apparently joined the bandwagon and the rather flimsy outlines of a Premier League began to become increasingly visible.

The meeting, which was presided over by BFF president Siddiqur Rahman, announced a committee headed by new BFF member Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, the veteran politician, to file a report within a month with recommendations for the improvement of football in the country.

The executive committee also decided to offer monetary assistance worth Taka 20,000 to unfortunate young footballer Shaheen. Shaheen, a promising defender who played for Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) last year, lost one of his legs following an amputation necessitated by the on set of gangrene caused by an injury received in a match last month in Narayanganj.

June 30, again, hopefully. The BFF has also decreed that players can play in any one league in the country during a season, thus bringing bad news for our untaxed moonshiners.

Inter-club transfers for the players within the vicinity of the metropolis will have to be completed in fifteen days' time — from December 1 to 15. Booters elsewhere in the country will have to make up their minds as regards retaining or renouncing their allegiances from December 16 to 31. The Senior Division football league will commence from January 1, most hopefully, and be through with by

Rani runner-up in British chess

International Woman Master Rani Hamid of Bangladesh finished runners-up in the British chess championship held in Plymouth, England, reports UNB.

Rani secured five points with two wins, six draws and one loss to finish second in the women's group of the just-concluded championship, according to a message received in Dhaka Tuesday.

Rani Hamid, who clinched the British women's chess title on three previous occasions in 1983, 1985 and 1989, had led the points table until the eighth round.

Woman Grandmaster Susan Arkel of England emerged champion with six points. Helen Miligan of Scotland placed third.

In the men's group, Grandmaster Julian, also from England, lifted the title collecting 10 points while Masten finished runners up.

Intikhab's tip for TCCB

LONDON, Aug 18: Pakistan team manager Intikhab Alam urged the Test and County Cricket Board to make more changes to the English game if they want England to become a Test force again, reports AFP.

The TCCB have voted to turn the County Championship, currently a mixture of both three-day and four-day matches, into a four-day competition only from next season.

But Alam, who guided Pakistan to a 2-1 victory in the Test series and nine wins out of 12 against the counties, believes they have not gone far enough.

The Pakistan boss, who played a decade of county cricket with Surrey, said: "There is clearly too much cricket played by the counties and it is not quantity, but quality cricket that you need to produce top players."

Gurusinha, Ranatunga put Lanka in driving seat

COLOMBO, Aug 18: Asanka Gurusinha and Arjuna Ranatunga shared an unbroken fourth wicket partnership of 128 as Sri Lanka took control of the first cricket Test against Australia Tuesday.

By the end of the second day Sri Lanka replying to Australia's 256 all out, had made 265 for three wickets — well placed to establish an imposing lead and set Australia the hard task of surviving on a pitch which is already encouraging spin.

Gurusinha, playing the anchor role after the early dismissal of opener Chandika Hathurusinghe in the morning session, scored an unbeaten 87 in 204 minutes with 13 fours.

When he reached 43, he became only the seventh Sri Lanka batsman to pass 1,000 runs in Test cricket.

Ranatunga was the more enterprising batsman in his unbeaten knock of 69. He was severe on young leg spinner Shane Warne, hitting him for 29 runs in three overs which included three sixes. He also hit six fours in his innings which, like Gurusinha's, was chancesless.

Ranatunga opened his account with a smarting square cut boundary. His 50 came in 69 balls with 4 fours and 3 sixes: to long off, cover and square leg, all off Shane Warne.

Gurusinha and Ranatunga already hold the record for Sri Lanka's fourth wicket partnership — an unbeaten 240 against Pakistan in 1986.

Before they came together, Roshan Mahanama held centre-stage as Sri Lanka consolidated on the good work of their bowlers on the first day.

Resuming at nine without

loss, Sri Lanka reached 36 before Mark Waugh broke through for Australia in the 17th over, having Hathurusinghe caught at second slip by Mark Taylor.

Gurusinha and Mahanama added 92 for the second wicket seeing Sri Lanka to 128 before Waugh, in his second spell, broke through again, inducing Mahanama to edge a ball which wicket-keeper Healy held on to as he dived low to his right.

Mahanama scored 78 in 12 Tests — and Australia had another quick success before tea when off-spinner Greg Matthews trapped Aravinda de Silva leg before for six.

Mahanama, who opened the Sri Lanka innings missed his maiden century when he was caught behind by Ian Healy off Mark Waugh a little after lunch.

Before his dismissal, Mahanama had despatched

GURUSINHA...1000 Test runs

Test	Runs
1	100
2	100
3	100
4	100
5	100
6	100
7	100
8	100
9	100
10	100
11	100
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99	100
100	100

Waugh's previous two balls to the cover and point boundaries. But he half-jabbed a quicker third ball to give a low, one-handed catch to Healy in the first slip.

Mahanama, a 25-year-old public relations officer, made his Test debut in 1986. He has played 11 Tests but is yet to get a century despite consistent batting, which deserts him in the 70's and 80's. His highest is 85 against Australia.

However that was to be Australia's only joy, with the final session dominated by the Gurusinha-Ranatunga partnership.

Of the Australian spinners, Warne was hit for 55 runs off just 10 overs, while Matthews, who bowled with better control, conceded the same number of runs in 21 overs.

The dry pitch and stable weather condition provided no help to Australia's main strike bowlers McDermott and Whitney.

Waugh's gentle outswingers made a small dent.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the second day of the first Test between Sri Lanka and Australia in Colombo on Tuesday:

AUSTRALIA: First Innings 256 all out

Sri Lanka: First Innings

Mahanama c Healy b Waugh	78
Hathurusinghe c Taylor b Waugh	18
Gurusinha batting	78
De Silva lbw b Matthews	6
Ranatunga batting	69
Extras: (2 leg byes, 5 no-balls)	7
Total (for 3 wickets)	265
Fall of wickets: 1-36; 2-128; 3-137	

Bowling	O	M	R	W
McDermott	21	5	51	0
Whitney	19	6	44	0
Moody	12	3	27	0
Waugh	11	3	31	2
Warne	10	2	55	0
Matthews	21	5	51	1

Tour-best haul for Akram

BRISTOL, England, Aug 18: Pakistan's irresistible swing bowler Akram swept aside Gloucestershire to complete his tour-best match haul of 11-76 on Monday, then said his team would win the one-day series against England, reports Reuter.

Akram followed his five for 44 in the first innings by capturing six for 32 as Gloucestershire, facing the improbable task of making 419 to win, crumbled to 126 all out and lost by 292 runs on the third and final day.

Pakistan now travel to Nottingham to resume the five-match limited overs series at Trent Bridge on Thursday with England 2-0 up after victories at Lord's and the Oval in May.

Akram said: "I have no doubt that we shall win the (one-day) series 3-2.

"At the start of the season we had been off for a month following the World Cup and the boys were not really into gear for the first two games.

"But we are really confident now after winning the Test series (2-1) and I think we can take all three remaining one-day matches."

Pakistan declared at their overnight 184 for four — 418 ahead — and Gloucestershire collapsed from 66 for two to 126 all out with paceman Aaqib Javed (two for 49) and leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed (two for 17) supporting Akram.

Touring team manager Intikhab Alam said: "This is one of the best sides Pakistan have ever had, and certainly the best bowling side."

Wasim had been magnificent on this trip. He's not only a great bowler but a great team man. Look how he's performed even in a match like this. There are some fast bowlers

who would have been wanting to take it easy."

Akram added: "We had not played for nearly a week since the final Test and I wanted to work on my rhythm and make

AKRAM...11 for 76

sure I was not overstepping with no-balls before the (one-day) series."

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the final day of the three-day cricket match between Gloucestershire and Pakistan on Monday.

PAKISTAN: First Innings 357 for eight declared. (Rameez Raja 135, Shoaib Mohammad 66, Inzamamul Haq 65, R. Williams three for 44)

GLoucestershire: First Innings 123 (Aaqib Javed five for 34, Wasim Akram five for 44)

PAKISTAN: Second Innings (overnight 184 for four)

Aamir Sohail c and b Smith	30
Shoaib Mohammad c Alleyne b Babington	14
Ijaz Ahmed c Russell b Vaughan	31
Inzamamul Haq not out	54
Rashid Latif c Alleyne b Davies	42
Naved Anjum not out	6
Extras (lb-5, nb-2)	7
Total (for four wickets, declared)	184
Fall of wickets: 1-31, 2-77, 3-78, 4-163	

Bowling	O	M	R	W
Babington	10	1	50	1
Williams	11	0	47	0
Smith	7	0	32	1
Vaughan	6	1	26	1
Davies	5	1	24	1

GLoucestershire: Second Innings

Alleyne c Latif b Mushtaq	27
Wright lbw b Aaqib	13
Dawson c Latif b Akram	11
Vaughan c Inzamam b Aaqib	20
Russell b Akram	7
Hancock c Ijaz b Akram	29
Williams c Latif b Akram	0
Hodgson lbw b Akram	3
Smith b Akram	4
Davies c Latif b Mushtaq	4
Babington not out	4
Extras: (lb-5)	5
Total	126
Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-27, 3-66, 4-80, 5-80, 6-81, 7-105, 8-115, 9-118	

Bowling	O	M	R	W
Akram	24	12	32	6
Aaqib	13	5	49	2
Anjum	8	4	23	0
Mushtaq	15	1	17	2
Shoaib	1	1	0	0

Result: Pakistan won by 292 runs.

Soccer results

MEDELLIN, Colombia, Aug 18: Uruguay beat Chile 1-0 in a Group A match of the South American under-20 soccer championship while Ecuador and Paraguay drew 1-1 in a Group B match on Monday, reports Reuter.



A member of the Italian peace marathon group burns a symbolic flame for peace on the Red Square after his arrival in Moscow late 16 August. More than 250 athletes took part in the marathon between Italy and Russia to express solidarity with the peace movement in the world. — AFP photo

Napoli await Maradona's reply

NAPLES, Italy, Aug 18: Napoli were still waiting to hear if Diego Maradona was prepared to accept a return to Italian soccer after reports in Spanish newspapers on Tuesday that he was about to sign for Sevilla, reports Reuter.

The former Argentine captain was due to return to his Italian club Napoli after finishing a 15-month ban from world soccer imposed after he tested positive for cocaine.

But he is involved in a dispute over his contract with Napoli and the vice-chairman of the Spanish club Sevilla said in a newspaper interview he was confident Maradona would be joining them soon.

He could join this club if

the negotiations are finalised within 48 hours," Jose Alvarez told the Spanish daily El Paris. "The Argentine will be ours."

Maradona last week offered to return from Buenos Aires to honour his contract with Napoli which runs until June 30, 1993.

But the offer was accompanied by a string of conditions with Maradona reportedly demanding 9 million dollars to play the coming season and asking Napoli to write off a 6.3 million advance they have already paid him.

"Napoli repeats that it is prepared to discuss the conditions relating to the player's welfare but will not negotiate on the financial aspects of the contract," Napoli's spokesman Luigi Amati said on Tuesday.

The 31-year-old World Cup

star, who inspired Napoli to the Italian title twice in his seven years with the club, has told the Argentine media he will not return to the club on Ferlaino's terms.

His manager Marcos Franchi is now expected to ask the International Football Federation (FIFA) to declare Maradona's contract invalid and allow him to seek another team.

Sevilla are reported to be willing to sign Maradona for 300 million pesetas (3 million) for two seasons and to pay a transfer fee of 1.5 billion pesetas (15 million) which would be met by a group of sponsors.

The southern Spanish club are managed by Carlos Bilardo, who took Argentina to World Cup victory in Mexico in 1986 with Maradona as captain.

Such, Childs enhance Essex's prospect

LONDON, Aug 18: Match-winning spin bowling on a helpful pitch by Peter Such and John Childs enhanced Essex's prospects of retaining the English county cricket championship on Monday, reports Reuter.

Off-spinner Such and left-arm spinner Childs took all 10 second innings wickets between them as champions and leaders Essex beat Nottinghamshire by an innings and 37 runs on the third and final day at Colchester.

Notts, needing 167 to avoid an innings defeat, succumbed for 130 with 8.1 overs left. Such snapping up six for 39 against his former county and Childs taking four for 59.

Such said: "We thought we were in with a chance because the pitch was always doing just enough to help us. It's a tremendous win and one brought about by magnificent close-to-the-wicket catching.

England paceman Derek Pringle (48) and Jonathan Lewis (53 not out) made a significant contribution by adding 96 in 18 overs which enabled captain Graham Gooch to declare his side's first innings on 416 for six just before lunch.

Essex are 32 points ahead of Leicestershire, who took second place after beating Surrey by 72 runs, and 37 points clear of Northamptonshire, whose 10-wicket trouncing of Hampshire lifted them into third spot.

Leicestershire snatched victory with three balls to spare at the Oval where Laurie Potter's left-arm spin claimed four for 73 as Surrey, chasing 266 to win, were dismissed for 193.

Northants' left-arm paceman Paul Taylor captured a career best seven for 23, including four wickets in an over, to rout Hampshire at Bournemouth.

Hampshire, 78 behind on first innings, were dismissed for 100 and Northants eased home at 23 without loss, though it was not the smoothest of days for their West Indian fast bowler Curtley Ambrose. He suffered a 13 ball over, including seven no-balls.

Middlesex comfortably reached a target of 231 in 95 minutes and 20 overs at Uxbridge to beat Yorkshire by six wickets with five balls to spare.

Mark Ramprakash, discarded by England for the last three one-day games against Pakistan, powered Middlesex home with 94 after India's Sachin Tendulkar hit an unbeaten 77 in his adopted county's 194 for four declared.

Pernfors' comeback campaign

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana, Aug 18: The comeback of Mikael Pernfors got a boost on Monday when the former top 20 player beat American Richey Reneberg 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 in the first round of the 1 million dollar RCA Championships, reports Reuter.

Pernfors was among the world's top players in 1986 after reaching the French Open final but is now no 279 in the world and only gained a spot in this weeklong tournament through the qualifying tournament.

"I don't think about it (the French Open) that much," said Pernfors, 29. "It was a tournament where I just couldn't miss a tennis ball."

Since, however, Pernfors has struggled through a series of leg injuries and operations. The most recent was Achilles tendon surgery two years ago.

The injuries have taken away much of the Swede's desire to play.

"Since the (Achilles) surgery, whenever, I've played tennis I'm angry at myself from the first point," Pernfors said.

Eubank fined

LONDON, Aug 18: British boxer Chris Eubank was fined 250 pounds (480 dollars) on Monday for driving without due care and attention in an accident in which a man was killed, reports Reuter.

Eubank, who had dented the charge against him, was also ordered to pay 1,450 pounds (2,800 dollars) in court costs.

Vialli fails to charm eager Japanese crowd

TOKYO, Aug 17: Costly Juventus striker Gianluca Vialli barely touched the ball and was pulled off in the second half of a 1-1 draw against Japan on Monday, reports Reuter.

The match was the Italian club's second friendly against the host nation in four days and was again inconclusive. The previous encounter in Kobe on Friday ended 2-2.

Then, German Andreas Moller saved Juventus with a last minute header. On Monday, roared on by 62,000 fans, Japan's captain Masamichi Ihara did likewise off a corner.

Midfielder Roberto Baggio, the world's most expensive player, put Juventus ahead in the 15th minute from the penalty spot after Paolo di Canio had been brought down.

Much was expected of Vialli, the world's second most expensive player, who was transferred from Sampdoria in the close season for a reported 25 million dollars.

But he disappointed and Juventus coach Giovanni Trapattoni said the striker was not on top form at the moment.

Japanese coach, Dutchman Hans Ooft, praised his side. "Every foreign team is a challenge for us. To reach a higher level, we have to play better teams," he said.

Juventus finished second in the Italian league last season, behind champions AC Milan who were unbeaten.

Japan hope to qualify for the 1994 World Cup finals and then host them in 2002. Next May Japan will start their first professional soccer league with 10 teams, featuring England's Gary Lineker and Brazil's Zico.

Div III soccer falls through

Sports Reporter

The Progoti Insurance Third Division football league fixtures fell through on the very second day since its commencement yesterday due to the lack of adequate security measure at the venues around the city.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police could not detail enough of their men for the football grounds in the wake of the law and order situation in the city following the assassination attempt on Rashed Khan Menon, an opposition leader and member of parliament.

Although all three matches of the Group B of the 18-team meet could not be held, today's fixture will remain unchanged. Accordingly, Nabanur Sangsard will meet Basabo Tarun Sangha at the Outer Stadium at 3 pm while East End Boys Club will take on Dilkusha SC at the same venue at 4:30 pm.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka Metropolitan Football Association (DMFA) in a press release invited each zonal authority of the Pioneer Football 1991 to send the list of 50 promising players to DMFA for a coaching stint by August 25. DMFA will launch a coaching programme soon to hone the skills of the young footballers.

Walk-over mars youth hockey

Comilla DSA got a walkover against Sylhet DSA in the 12th national youth hockey championship when the latter failed to turn up for their match yesterday, reports UNB.

Comilla will now face Narayanganj in the Group A quarter-final today at the Hockey Stadium.

According to the bye-laws of the tournament Sylhet DSA will also be fined Tk 5000 for their non-participation.

Soccer result

Kashmitola Shaheen Smriti Sangsard moved into the semi-finals of the third Shah Sports Cup football competition defeating Mora Boys Club by 2-1 goals at the Hazaribagh ground in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Allahma soccer

Sylhet Power Development Board beat Dhaka Dakshin Degree College 2-1 in the opening match of the second leg of the Mustafa Allahma Gold Cup football tournament played at the Dhaka Dakshin School Stadium in Golapganj yesterday, said a press release.

Sylhet PDB went ahead through a 14th-minute goal by Amy but a suicidal goal by Sagar in the 24th minute levelled the score. The first half score remained 1-1.

Kamrul netted the match-winner in the 36th minute of the second half.

Ctg soccer

CHITTAGONG, Aug 18: Bakolia Ekadash beat Jalalabad Krira Sanghata 2-1 in the opening match of the Chattogram Jila Krira Parishad (CJRP) Second Division football league at the Chittagong Stadium yesterday afternoon, reports BSS.

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