

Ribery best paid in Bundesliga

Bayern Munich's France midfielder Franck Ribery is the best paid player in the Bundesliga with a gross salary of 833,000 euros per month, German daily newspaper Bild reported on Saturday. Spain striker Raul who earns 600,000 euros per month is the second highest paid player. Third place is shared by the pair battling for the captaincy of the Germany squad, Bayern defender Philipp Lahm and Michael Ballack back in the Bundesliga with Bayer Leverkusen, whose salaries are



Academy building faulty

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY

The GP-BCB National Cricket Academy has so far been limited to being just a concrete structure, in every which way. It hasn't yet been furnished with all the components that will make it functional.

Unfortunately, that is not the only problem.

The elegant building beside the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur not only gives a false hope; the concrete building itself is faulty.

The three-storied dormitory that houses the best cricketers in the country has developed cracks, leaking water from the wall, damp plasters and there appears many other problems, which bring more frustration with the National Cricket Academy, supposed to be the heartbeat for a cricketing nation.

"It's hard to believe that we are staying in a newly-built building. You see the cracks, the damp walls and the low quality fittings. Nobody is there for the maintenance of this so-called modern building," a national player, who is staying at the dormitory of the establishment, expressed his frustration with the faulty structure on condition of anonymity.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is mainly using

this building for the last seven months as residence for the players and coaches. And everybody staying at this building has been complaining about the poor construction of the building and even worse maintenance.

It was a noble gesture from cellular phone operators Grameenphone to come up with the financial assistance to build this building for the Academy. And it was learnt that Tk 6.90 crore was spent on the facility.

Many even raised questions

about the faulty design of the building as rainwater seeps through inside the building.

"We are happy with the architectural view and structure. We know there have been some technical problems in the building and we are sorting out these problems. This kind of technical problems can happen," said BCB's acting CEO Nizamuddin Ahmed Chowdhury.

"We have significant amount of money which we are yet to pay and there is also the security money. So there is

no point to be scared with the faulty issues as we are safe. They definitely repaired all the faults," he added.

It was quite a startling experience to see the way this modern building has been maintained.

There is only one person who looks after everything with the help of three peons and it was learnt that he was crying to the concerned people for more staff to take care of cleaning and all other maintenance issues.

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A STYLISH BOOK COVER WITH WET PAGES: A damp develops on the wall in one of the players' rooms at the dormitory of the plush, only from the outside, GP-BCB National Cricket Academy in Mirpur.

PHOTO: STAR

Nobleness of Zimbabwe

REUTERS, Karachi

Zimbabwe's cricket team has offered to tour Pakistan to raise funds for the victims of the country's massive floods, despite the suspension of foreign visits following a militant attack last year.

An official of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) told Reuters the governing body of the Zimbabwe Cricket had made contact over a proposed tour.

"They are willing to come over and play a series as they want to help us raise funds for the flood victims. They have left it up to us to give dates and schedule for the tour," media manager Nadeem Sarwar said.

Pakistan has been banned from hosting international cricket tours since militants attacked the Sri Lankan team bus in Lahore last year. Six Pakistani policemen and a van driver were killed while five Sri Lankan players were wounded.

The International Cricket Council moved matches of the 2011 World Cup away from Pakistan because of security concerns.

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Pakistan make heavy weather of the task

Cricket

REUTERS, London

Pakistan beat England by four wickets in the third Test at The Oval on Saturday but not before some nervous moments as they lost three quick wickets in their pursuit of a modest winning target of 148.

The Pakistanis were earlier cruising at 124 for three after ending England's second innings for 222 in the first over of the day.

But in a spell that revived English hopes, Azhar Ali ran himself out for five, Mohammad Yousuf was yorked by James Anderson for 33 and Kamran Akmal was dismissed lbw for a duck without playing a shot.

With rain in the air and a capacity crowd cheering England on, Pakistan eventually survived the assault to win with more than a day to spare.

After appearing down and out after heavy

losses in the first two Tests, Pakistan now have a chance to square the four-match series at Lord's next week after drawing 1-1 with Australia earlier in the season.

Graeme Swann, who took four wickets in Pakistan's first innings, was again the mainstay of the attack when he was asked to bowl from the Vauxhall end after five overs of the new ball.

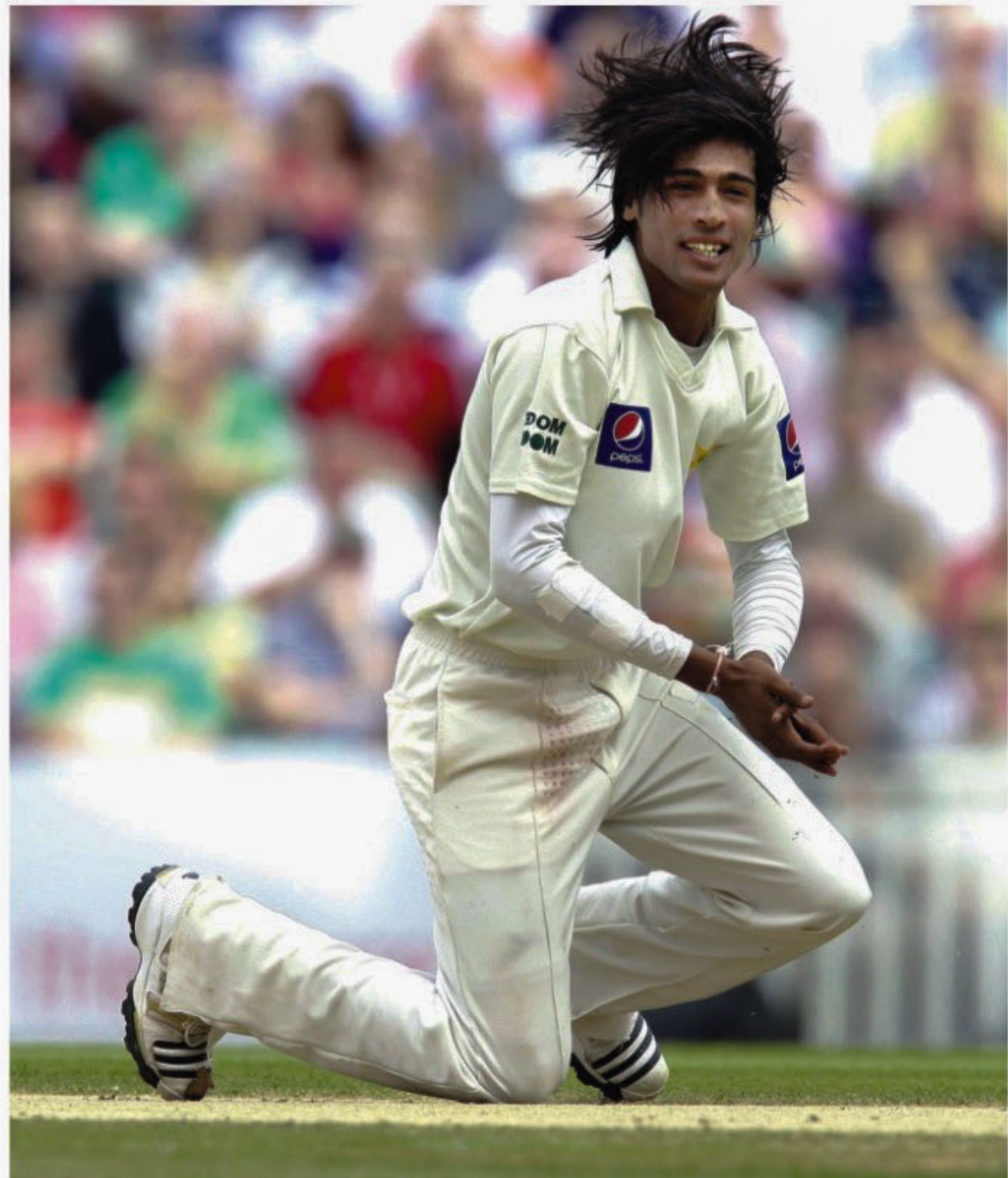
He bowled unchanged to take three for 50 from 18.4 overs.

Sensibly in view of an adverse weather forecast, Pakistan decided to attack from the start after Stuart Broad was dismissed for six in the opening over of the day.

Inran Farhat set the tone by slashing James Anderson's second ball over the slips for four on his way to his highest score of the series. He struck six boundaries before he was lbw to Swann for 33.

Captain Salman Butt, also short of runs this series, took over from Farhat with 48 in 64 balls, before he became Swann's second victim, 12 minutes before lunch.

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BOY WONDER: Mohammad Aamer gets up from the sajdah after completing his five-wicket haul with the scalp of England's Stuart Broad on the fourth day of the third Test at The Oval in London yesterday. Later, Aamer partnered Umar Akmal to seal Pakistan's six-wicket win in a tense finish.

PHOTO: AFP

Milon's run ends in quarters

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi archer Emdadul Hoque Milon's run in archery event of the Youth Olympic Games came to an end when he lost to a Russian opponent in the second stage of quarterfinal in Singapore yesterday.

Milon won the first stage of the quarterfinals in the Junior Men's Individual 6-0 points against Finnish competitor Joni Hautamaki but lost in the second stage to Bolot Tsybzhitov of Russia by the same scoreline.

In the first match against Hautamaki, Milon took the three sets 24-22, 25-24, 28-25 to take all six points and brightened his chances of claiming a medal. But the young archer disappointed in the next match as he lost to Tsybzhitov 26-28, 23-27, 28-29. The winner went on to claim the bronze medal in the event as the semifinals and the final were also decided on the day. Milon was ranked 12 among 32 competitors in the event.

The other competitor from Bangladesh Beauty Roy finished 29th among 32 competitors in the junior women's individual raking round earlier while Milon finished fourth in the mixed team event pairing with a Spanish archer.

Serena out of US Open

REUTERS, New York

Serena Williams has pulled out of the US Open because she is still recovering from surgery on her right foot, the American world number one said on Friday.

Williams, who won her 13th grand slam at Wimbledon earlier this year, cut her foot on broken glass at a restaurant in July and has not played since.

"It is with much frustration and deep sadness that I am having to pull out of the US Open," Williams said on the tournament's website (<http://www.usopen.org/>). "My doctors have advised against my playing so that my foot can heal."

A three-time winner at Flushing Meadows, Williams absence will be a blow to US title hopes with her sister Venus, the world number five, the only other American ranked in the top 40.

With Belgian Justine Henin announcing on Wednesday she would not be fit to play in the US Open and defending champion Kim Clijsters losing in Montreal after an injury scare, the year's final grand slam is shaping up as a wide open affair.

"There are still so many other big names out there who can do well," said Clijsters, who promised to be in Flushing Meadows to defend her crown despite a nagging hip injury that will require an MRI next week. "Serena and Justine are two big names but there are plenty more out there."

"I don't look at the draw in that kind of way, I just focus on my matches and obviously now I am trying to be in the best shape possible to compete."

A fan favourite and television ratings grabber, Williams is sure to be missed especially after her explosive and controversial exit from last year's event.

Called for a foot fault in her semifinal against Clijsters, Williams exploded in an ugly outburst threatening a line judge during a confrontation that ultimately cost her the match.

"It doesn't change much," said Russian Vera Zvonareva, who lost to Williams in the Wimbledon final in early July.

"Serena is a great player and is great to watch but there are so many great players."

"It's still going to be very tough for everyone."



Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R) greets teammate Tamim Iqbal outside the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday after their meeting with coach Jamie Siddons.

PHOTO: STAR

Win Tigers' tonic: Mashrafe

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza said that his team will try their best to win at least two games in the upcoming five-match one-day series against New Zealand.

"The win always works as a tonic for any team. Look at our performance in the last World Cup. We had an impressive performance in 2007 because we went into the tournament on the back of a number of wins," said Mashrafe while talking to the gathered journalists after he reported to coach Jamie Siddons at the GP-BCB National Academy yesterday.

Under the leadership of Habibur Bashar, Bangladesh made a spectacular start in the last World Cup when they beat India in the first match. They take on the same opponent in the upcoming World Cup's opening match at Mirpur on February 19 next year.

The Tigers' immediate mission is to play

good cricket during the home series against New Zealand in October, but they are chalking out everything for the challenge of the 2011 World Cup where Bangladesh is one of co-hosts along with India and Sri Lanka.

"Nothing is better than to win two or three games against New Zealand before the World Cup. I think it's very much possible. The confidence would be high if we go into the showcase event with some wins under our belt," added the 'Narail Express'.

The cricketers will start their training for the series today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur with a target to develop some special skills before the mega event.

"Our batting looked consistent in the last few series but we struggled with our fielding and bowling. We recently lost some matches because of poor performance in those two areas," said Mashrafe.

"We must improve our fielding and bowling if we want to win the match. What Jamie (Siddons) told us during today's meeting was

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Rach puts pen to paper

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

"We have been able to achieve only a part of what I had hoped with the team. Our performance has been up and down in the time I have been at the helm. After the tour of Europe last year, our performance graph went up, but then it again came down. I hope it will go up once again after the tour this time."

This was how Bangladesh's German hockey coach Gerhard Peter Rach evaluated his 18-month unofficial tenure of coaching Bangladesh's national hockey team while putting pen to paper on an official agreement as head coach of the national team for the next four months at the Bangladesh Hockey Federation conference room yesterday.

During his coaching so far, Bangladesh took part in three international assignments -- first they played in a 4-team tournament in Russia where they finished fourth, then the SA Games at home where they finished third and lastly in Asian Games qualifying where they ended disappointing fifth at home.

Rach pointed out the organisational problem as a

chief obstacle towards achieving his targets.

"There is organisational problems in the federation which halts our progress. Whereas I want to take the team at the speed of jet, the

German will be expected to deliver better results in his first assignment.

The agreement may be extended depending on the performance of the coach in guiding the team in the Asian



Bangladesh national hockey team coach Gerhard Peter Rach (L) speaks to the media during his official agreement signing ceremony at the hockey federation conference room yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

federation takes it to a speed of rickshaw."

But now that he is appointed officially as the coach running up to the Asian Games in Guangzhou, China in November, the stocky

Games. The coach will be paid a monthly remuneration of 4,000 US dollars as part of the agreement apart from other facilities which will be borne by the federation.

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SPORTS POLL
Do you think Fountain can make a difference with the Tigers?
Yes 65.7%
No 34.3%
TOTAL VOTES: 535
TODAY'S QUESTION
Which European league do you enjoy the most?
Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote
Follow The Daily Star Sport on **twitter**
www.twitter.com/dssport

What to WATCH
TEN Sports
Sri Lanka v India
Micromax Cup
Live from 3:00pm
ESPN
English Premiership
Newcastle v Aston Villa
Live from 6:25pm
Fulham v Man United
Live from 8:55pm