

Star SPORT

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Jose roasts critics

After Real Madrid celebrated their record 32nd La Liga title coach Jose Mourinho decided to take the opportunity to respond to critics who say his team plays too defensive and describe his style as "anti-football" compared to Barcelona's tiki-taka approach.

Said Mourinho to Portuguese TV station SIC (via Sky Sports):

"My team played some of the best football in history.

"But there are some luminaries who believe that only one type of football exists on earth. But these people only know football through Google. They



Newell's name comes to the fore

SPORTS REPORTER

Mick Newell, the Nottinghamshire director of cricket, has emerged as a possible candidate for the position of Tigers head coach.

But the Bangladesh Cricket Board wants to see out the May 15 deadline before making any comments regarding the next coach or the applicants.

"Many coaches have applied while some of them who have shown interest, haven't applied yet. We still have till May 15 for the submission of coaches' CVs so we want to wait till then," said BCB media committee chairman Jalal Yunus, adding that they have also begun initiating contacts with a few applicants.

Meanwhile, ESPNcricinfo understands that 47-year-old Newell, who has twice led Nottinghamshire to the County Championship title, is a frontrunner for the role.

Newell enjoyed a long career as a batsman with Nottinghamshire, helping the club win the County Championship in 1987. He then moved into coaching at Trent Bridge - first as Clive Rice's assistant - and oversaw the side's County Championship success in 2005 - the county's first championship title since 1987 - and again in 2010. He has won praise from former New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming, among others, for his fine man management and his ability to coax the best out of his players.

Dean Jones, who suggested he was considering an offer from the Bangladesh cricket board, is thought to be most unlikely to be offered the position.

Stuart Law stepped down as Bangladesh coach last month and will leave Dhaka today to take up a role at Australia's Centre of Excellence.

Law urges more cricket

'Anamul impressive'

SPORTS REPORTER

Stuart Law will be leaving the country today, nearly two months ahead of schedule and a year before his contract expired with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

The decision to leave the job of head coach of the Tigers came a couple of weeks ago after he resigned on March 30 citing personal reasons, but the reason behind leaving on May 5 rather than June 30 is simply the lack of cricket.

In all likelihood, the Tigers' next assignment will be in September where they will take part in the T20 World Cup in Sri Lanka. More alarmingly, the national team will next play Test cricket in November, a full eleven months after their last one.

Though taking his leave at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, Law harped on the need to play more longer-version cricket even if the opponents are not of international quality.

"What the [Tigers] need to do is to play more. Let's target playing against West Indies and New Zealand and



oblige Associate nations like Ireland and Scotland to play four-dayers whenever we get time between international commitments," he said.

What was sad about Law's departure was the absolute lack of cricket even in the domestic scene with the Dhaka Premier League being held up due to a clearance controversy since March 28.

"The domestic cricket here is a structure of which there's no blueprint anywhere else in the world. It stops, it

starts; it would be nice to see that these games taking place in these days, rather than two teams have a fall-out and the whole tournament is suspended," he said.

"This is not good for cricket in the country. It's a different culture and maybe I am out of line in saying this but as an outsider looking in, it can't be good for cricket. We are all trying to say that domestic cricket is where we want our cricketers to learn so this is not helping them at all," he added.

Despite all the domestic trouble, Law remained impressed with the talent present in the country, particularly the uncapped trio of Anamul Haque, Mominul Haque and Abul Hasan.

"Young [Anamul Haque] Bijoy is a quality player. During the BPL he looked like he was born to perform. The one thing he said to me which I will never forget. I asked him where would you like to bat, he said, "I want to be No 3, I want to be the best player in the world." If that comes across, good on you," he said.

"I've been trying to see Mominul

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BFF's apathy towards AFC U-22 Asian Cup

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

While other participating teams are considering inaugural AFC U-22 Asian Cup as a platform for youth development, Bangladesh are indifferent about the importance of the second highest competition in Asia.

Groupings of 41-nation tournament was completed back in February 14, when Bangladesh were placed in Group D alongside Uzbekistan, Jordan, Yemen and hosts Nepal and the tournament is scheduled to get underway from June 2 in Kathmandu. However, with less than a month to go for the start of the tournament, Bangladesh haven't yet started their preparation.

Bangladesh football's governing body has only just sent a 50-member players' list to the AFC on Thursday and is still undecided as to the start of the training camp.

The members of the BFF were busy for the last few months with the election and could not pay attention to the preparation of the youth team. But there is a professional setup in BFF, and it beggars questioning what they

were doing regarding the preparation?

In the AFC website, Australia's Football Federation's technical director Han Berger has termed the tournament as a great opportunity for young players to gain invaluable experience in international arena while Malaysian coach Ong Kim Swee sees the tournament as the development pathway for young players who will get a platform to showcase their talent. But BFF's technical director BA Jubair Nipui is seemingly pessimistic about Bangladesh's chances in the tournament.

"We have little chance of progress to the next round as we can only win against Nepal while the other opponents are much stronger," said Nipui.

He also admitted that there was less attention paid to the youth team due to the BFF elections but said he would meet with the BFF president Kazi Salahuddin today to discuss the matter.

"FIFA and AFC informed its member associations about their programme at least a year ago and we should have taken preparation accordingly but no one listened to me. However, I have been given the charge of the

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Essex eye Shakib

Cricket

CRICINFO, London

Shakib Al Hasan, currently ranked as the world's best all-rounder in Test and ODI cricket, is poised to make a return to the county game.

Shakib, 24, a former Bangladesh captain, has enjoyed previous stints in county cricket with Worcestershire, but will not be returning to New Road. Essex are one of the leading candidates for his signature. "He is one of the names we are considering," Paul Grayson, the Essex head coach said, "but nothing is finalised."

Shakib had originally planned to take a break after the IPL, where he is playing for Kolkata Knight Riders, but writing in Prothom Alo, the Bangladesh newspaper, he said his renewed appetite for the game had convinced him to return for another stint of county duty.

"Before I came to IPL, I had thought that I won't be playing country cricket," Shakib wrote. "I have played a lot of cricket in the last year, so I needed a bit of rest. But that rest which I had craved seems to be going away from me once again. I have a call-up from county cricket. I hope it will be finalised in two to four days, but not for Worcestershire, if I play this year it will be for a new team.

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'Bangladeshi' chess champ faces exit

AFP, Paris

French Prime Minister Francois Fillon said Friday he would review the case of a Bangladeshi boy who is France's under-12 chess champion and is threatened with expulsion because he lives here illegally.

"Naturally this young man, if he is a chess champion, merits that his case be examined with the greatest attention," Fillon told France Inter radio when asked about the status of 11-year-old Fahim Alam.

Alam arrived illegally in France in October 2008 with his father and in 2010 was issued with an order to leave the country.

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The world waits for WI

Cricket

AFP, London

It is a measure of how much things have changed since the West Indies' glory days that the overwhelming feeling amongst home cricket fans ahead of their tour of England is sympathy.

From the mid 1970s through the 1980s the West Indies dominated world cricket with as fearsome a battery of fast bowlers as the game has known and dynamic, hard-hitting batsmen.

They seemed to reserve their most pulverising displays for England, the old colonial power.

Yet the English crowds, while they feared for the safety of their own batsmen and the figures of their bowlers, had no trouble relishing the exuberant skill of the West Indies.

Fast forward a generation, and this seems scarcely credible: the West Indies arrive in England having won just two out of their last 30 Tests.

For what was once a world-beating side to

be reduced to a three-Test series, mostly in May, ahead of world number one England's showpiece encounter with South Africa is undeniably sad.

Whether it is a lack of planning, inconsistent selection and questionable administration, many of the West Indies' wounds are self-inflicted.

But certain developments in world cricket have been unkind to their cause.

For example the cash-rich Indian Premier League Twenty20 tournament cuts across the West Indies' domestic season. And that offers players a financial lifeline if, they are in dispute with the West Indies Cricket Board.

And that of course is just what happened with the hard-hitting opener, former captain Chris Gayle.

That may be good for Gayle -- and indeed any other players who have fallen out with a WICB, whose "general incompetence" was criticised recently by former Wisden editor Scyld Berry.

But the West Indies have missed Gayle's runs during an international exile of more

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Cycling Fed committee re-elected

SPORTS REPORTER

The executive committee of Bangladesh Cycling Federation has been elected unopposed on Thursday after the election commission found no additional candidates against 21 posts including the president.

Incumbent president Mizanur Rahman Manu, also a vice president of Bangladesh Olympic Association, and incumbent general secretary SM Intiaz Khan Babul have been re-elected in the committee which will run the federation for next four years.

Among the other office bearers are vice presidents Golam Mostafa, Tareq Iqbal

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West Indies captain Darren Sammy speaks during a press conference in Hove, England on Thursday. West Indies' tour of England officially starts today with a three-day match against Sussex.

PHOTO: INTERNET

Asif pleads innocence

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Asif on Friday said there had been no evidence for his conviction in Britain for corruption and spot-fixing, a day after he was released following six months in prison.

"I spent the six months under difficult circumstances," Asif told Pakistan's Geo television in London, in his first public remarks since being freed from Canterbury jail on Thursday after serving half his 12-month prison term.

"But despite the difficulties, I kept my fitness and I am thankful to my fans and family for supporting me during this difficult phase," he said.

The 29-year-old was jailed by a London court in November after being found guilty of conspiring to cheat and conspiring to accept corrupt payments over deliberate no-balls during the Lord's Test against England in August 2010.

Teammate Mohammad Aamer was released in February, while former Test captain Salman Butt is still serving his 30-month term in the same prison from which Asif was released.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) separately banned the trio from playing

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Gayle welcome to return

Cricket

AFP, London

West Indies coach Ottis Gibson and captain Darren Sammy said Thursday they would have no problems with Chris Gayle returning to the squad after he promised to end his international exile on Thursday.

Former West Indies captain Gayle, renowned as a big-hitting batsman, has not played international cricket for more than a year following a dispute with the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) sparked by critical comments he made about officials in a radio interview.

But on Thursday the 32-year-old Jamaican left-hander, currently starring in the Indian Premier League (IPL), announced Thursday he would not be honouring his contract with county side Somerset so as to make himself available to the West Indies during their tour of England, even though he'd received no guarantees about selection.

Although he was not chosen in the West Indies Test squad for a three-match series starting at Lord's on May 17, Gayle could now return to the side for the subsequent one-day series, which gets underway in Southampton on June 16.

Gibson, speaking at Hove where West Indies begin their tour of England

with a three-day match against Sussex starting on Saturday, said: "It's great to hear that Chris is available again. I'm sure the selectors will pick him, because he's world-class...He's the best one-day batsman in the world."

Meanwhile Sammy said Gayle would be welcomed back so long as he accepted the team's work ethic.

"The Chris Gayle issue has been going on for a while. But we as a team have moved on," said Sammy.

"When Chris joins the set-up, he will be coming into a very hard-working environment -- which he has to fit into," the all-rounder added.



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