

Star SPORT

DHAKA TUESDAY JULY 17, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Giggs ponders coaching career

Ryan Giggs, who will captain the British soccer team at the Olympic Games this month, says he is considering a career in management when he finally quits playing.

The 38-year-old, who made his debut for Manchester United in 1991 and has played more than 900 games for the club, is one of three over-age players in the British team at the Games, the first international tournament he has played in.

British media reported on Sunday that he wanted to learn from Stuart Pearce and his Olympic coaching staff in the



Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim lifts one for the maximum during their seven-wicket victory over Ireland XI in a Twenty20 practice match at the Green in Belfast yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Mashrafe scripts Tigers' win

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's three early wickets helped Bangladesh to an easy win over an Ireland XI by seven wickets at The Green in Belfast yesterday, their first practice match on tour.

Bangladesh easily chased down the home side's 103-6, reaching 107-3 in just 14.2 overs in the early afternoon game.

The Tigers were scheduled to play another practice match, against Northern Cricket Union President's XI, starting at 10pm Bangladesh time last night at the same venue.

The paceman removed opener Andrew Balbirnie and No 3 Andrew Poynter in the first over of the game, and went on to take the wicket of James Shannon at the end of the third over to put the home side in trouble after they had decided to bat first.

After a brief recovery, left-arm spinner Elias Sunny then had Lee Nelson and Andrew White stumped in the tenth and twelfth over while Mushfiqur Rahim completed a third stumping, that of Stuart Thompson off Mahmudullah Riyad, to further dent the Irish side.

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Nigel Jones and wicketkeeper Rory McCann added 45 runs for the unbeaten seventh wicket stand, with the all-rounder Jones hammering three sixes and a boundary in his 26-ball 41. McCann added 15 off 16 balls.

The Tigers lost Tamim Iqbal and Mohammad Ashraful by the Powerplay overs cheaply, before Shakib Al Hasan and captain Mushfiqur Rahim added 61 runs for the third wicket. The world's No 1 all-rounder made a run-a-ball 37 with four boundaries and a six while the skipper struck 40 off 25 balls with four boundaries and a couple of sixes.

Riyad struck the winning blow, hammering a six off the off-spin of White.

SCORES IN BRIEF

IRELAND XI: 103-6 in 20 overs (Shannon 7, Nelson 9, White 16, Jones 41 not out, Thompson 6, McCann 15 not out; Mashrafe 3-14, Shafiqul 0-29, Razzak 0-17, Shakib 0-13, Sunny 2-14, Riyad 1-11)

BANGLADESH: 107-3 in 14.2 overs (Tamim 7, Ashraful 9, Shakib 37 not out, Mushfiqur 40 not out, Riyad 11 not out; Eaglestone 0-9, Thompson 2-23, Jones 0-13, van der Merwe 0-25, Eakin 0-28, White 1-9)

Result: Bangladesh won by seven wickets.

The ice is melting down

India invite Pakistan for series after five years

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Indian cricket chiefs on Monday said they had invited Pakistan for a series later this year, their first in five years, in a further sign of improving ties between the neighbours.

If approved by the two governments, the series would comprise three one-day internationals and two Twenty20 games in December-January, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said.

"It was decided to resume cricketing ties with Pakistan by inviting the Pakistan cricket team for a short series in December 2012-January 2013," the BCCI said in a statement. "The modalities will be worked out shortly."

The rivals have not played a bilateral series since Pakistan's tour of India in 2007 after cricket ties were snapped following the 2008 terror attacks on Mumbai, which were carried out by militants from Pakistan.

The ODI matches will be played in Chennai, Kolkata and New Delhi and the Twenty20 games in Bangalore and Ahmedabad, BCCI spokesman Rajiv Shukla told reporters in New Delhi.

The series will be held when England, who are due to tour India

later this year, return home briefly for Christmas and New Year.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) swiftly welcomed the proposed series, which will now require approval from the Indian foreign affairs and home ministries.

PCB chairman Zaka Ashraf told local television channels that Pakistan was still waiting for a formal invitation, but said "it seems it

will surely be held later this year".

But former India captain Sunil Gavaskar slammed the decision to play cricket against Pakistan, saying Pakistan was still not cooperating in the Mumbai attacks probe.

"Being a Mumbaikar [hailing from Mumbai], I feel what is the urgency when there is no cooperation from the other side," the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency

Another blow for Tigers

Cricket

MOHAMMAD ISAM

Monday's news of renewed cricketing ties between India and Pakistan is immense for cricketers, fans, officials and broadcasters of the two countries. A first series in five years, albeit just three ODIs and two Twenty20s, in between India's full series against England during the Christmas break, the matches would work as thawing of icy political relations.

While it is definitely a positive for the sub-continental giants, yesterday's confirmation however bears yet another setback to Bangladesh's chances of touring India, which was in discussion for the past four months.

Back in April, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president AHM Mustafa Kamal said that he received assurance from N Srinivasan, his Indian counterpart, that India would host Bangladesh for a full tour later in the year. He told the board directors that discussions at that point were favourable when they met during the opening ceremony of IPL-5.

During the International Cricket Council annual meeting in June too, there was much discussions between the two board presidents. Kamal had said immediately afterwards that the ball was in India's court as far as the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

NBR inquires about BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has asked the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) governing council to provide all payment information the six franchises made. This was learned yesterday after the NBR officials last Thursday decided to squeeze the applicable tax payments out of the franchises.

So far the NBR has received close to Tk 2.5 crore from the six BPL franchises, but with news floating of players being paid their dues, it shook the NBR into action. It was also learned that the government agency was unhappy that the franchises were being so tardy at paying up.

They have also decided that in order to get the dues, they will apply all measures including freezing accounts,

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

Rickety structure can't help

BISHWAJIT ROY



The moment the concept of Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) was brought into public attention, a debate began over Bangladesh Cricket Board's ability to stage a tournament modelled on the Indian Premier League (IPL).

The first question was whether the BCB could strike a balance between the commercialisation of cricket and the development of players, especially when the country desperately needed to focus on improving the standard of first-class cricket to save face in the international arena. Most importantly, many also had doubts over the governing council's ability to properly observe all legal formalities related to undertaking and shaping such a massive financial venture.

But the board prioritised the staging of the BPL, seeing it as a necessary response to the demands of the times and were finally able to complete the first edition successfully on the field in

February this year. The Twenty20 tournament contained all the excitement and entertainment that the cricket crazy fans were craving with the big names of international cricket despite corruption controversies and a fiasco over the fourth semi-finalists.

But all on-field success seemed to have been marred by the non-payment of dues to contracted BPL players. The tug-of-war between the Federation of International Cricketers Association (FICA) and the BPL governing council over the players' outstanding payments is tarnishing the image of Bangladesh cricket in the international arena. In response to FICA CEO Tim May's various statements over the last two months, the BPL governing council officials came up with salvos threatening the various franchises with new payment deadlines.

It became a funny and ludicrous game which only served to damage the image of Bangladesh cricket even more. And interestingly enough, the franchises kept mum regarding the non-payment issue though it should not have happened if a professional

framework was in place at the onset.

While it is true that the governing council is solely responsible regarding the running of the tournament, the franchises are what makes the tournament what it is. The board is dreaming if they think that the BPL will be successful in the long run and find a strong footing without professionalism among the franchises.

So far the governing council could not provide the details of the payments because they are not getting enough support from the franchises. It is also curious why the franchises have maintained radio silence when board officials are defending them by saying that there only a minimal amount is unpaid mainly because of some technical problems. The non-payment issue is direr for the local players than the foreign players. It seems, astonishingly, that the franchises are vanishing from the scene.

The BPL is also facing another major issue with the National Board of Revenue (NBR), which has been chasing the involved parties to realise the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

India's invite delights PCB

AFP, Lahore

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday swiftly welcomed the first proposed cricket series with India in five years, saying millions of fans would be delighted.

"The decision is great and we welcome it. It seems that millions of cricket fans have their wishes fulfilled," PCB chairman Zaka Ashraf told reporters in Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore.

"We have received a letter with the BCCI invitation for the series in which they have confirmed the series, and the venues and other things will be decided later," said Ashraf. India's cricket chiefs said they had invited Pakistan for a tour later this year, which would be the first in five years if approved by their governments.

The working committee of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) proposed the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

Maiden win for Azad

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Azad SC tasted their first victory in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League when they defeated Bangladesh SC 3-2 at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Roman Sarkar struck twice while Shoaib Ali netted the other goal for Azad who stay at ninth position in the 11-team table with six points.

Bangladesh SC, who could have brightened their chances of qualifying for the Super Five had they beaten Azad SC, saw Rakib Uddin and Abdus Samad pull one goal each.

Despite the fourth loss in eight matches, Bangladesh SC still have a chance to be part of the Super Five as they have two matches against Shadharan Bima and Usha while their nearest rivals Mariner Youngs (10 points from seven matches) have to face three giants Abahani, Mohammedan and Usha KC in the remaining matches.

In the day's other match, Ajax SC posted their second victory with a 6-2 win over winless Bangladesh Police AC, thanks to four-goal haul including a hattrick from Imtiaz Ahmed Rubel. Taimur Malek and Faisal Hossain scored the other two for Ajax.

Rana Das and Jewel Mandal reduced the margin for Bangladesh Police, who have suffered defeats in all seven matches they played.



PHOTO: STAR

Fatematuz Zohra of Abahani serves the ball during her match of the Lotto Open Cup Table Tennis Competition at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium in Paltan yesterday.

LOTTO OPEN TT

Six progress

SPORTS REPORTER

Six players advanced to the next round of boys' U-15 unseeded group in the Lotto Open Table Tennis Competition beating their respective rivals at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

Swadhin of BKSP beat Rasik of Sunny Dale, Mrittunjoy of BKSP beat Ibtida Saqline of Siddique's International, Rubaiya Raf of Sunny Dale beat Emon of BKSP, Jayed of DPS beat Payongbom of Bandarban, Islam Solanki beat Abu Ayar of Siddique's International and Khaled of Armanitola beat Tamin of Sunny Dale, all by 2-0 sets.

In the women's team event, Youngs Club, Destiny TT Club and Eleven Star Club won their respective matches while Ping Pong TT Club, Narail District, Destiny Club and Ekota Sripur Samity posted wins in the respective men's team event.