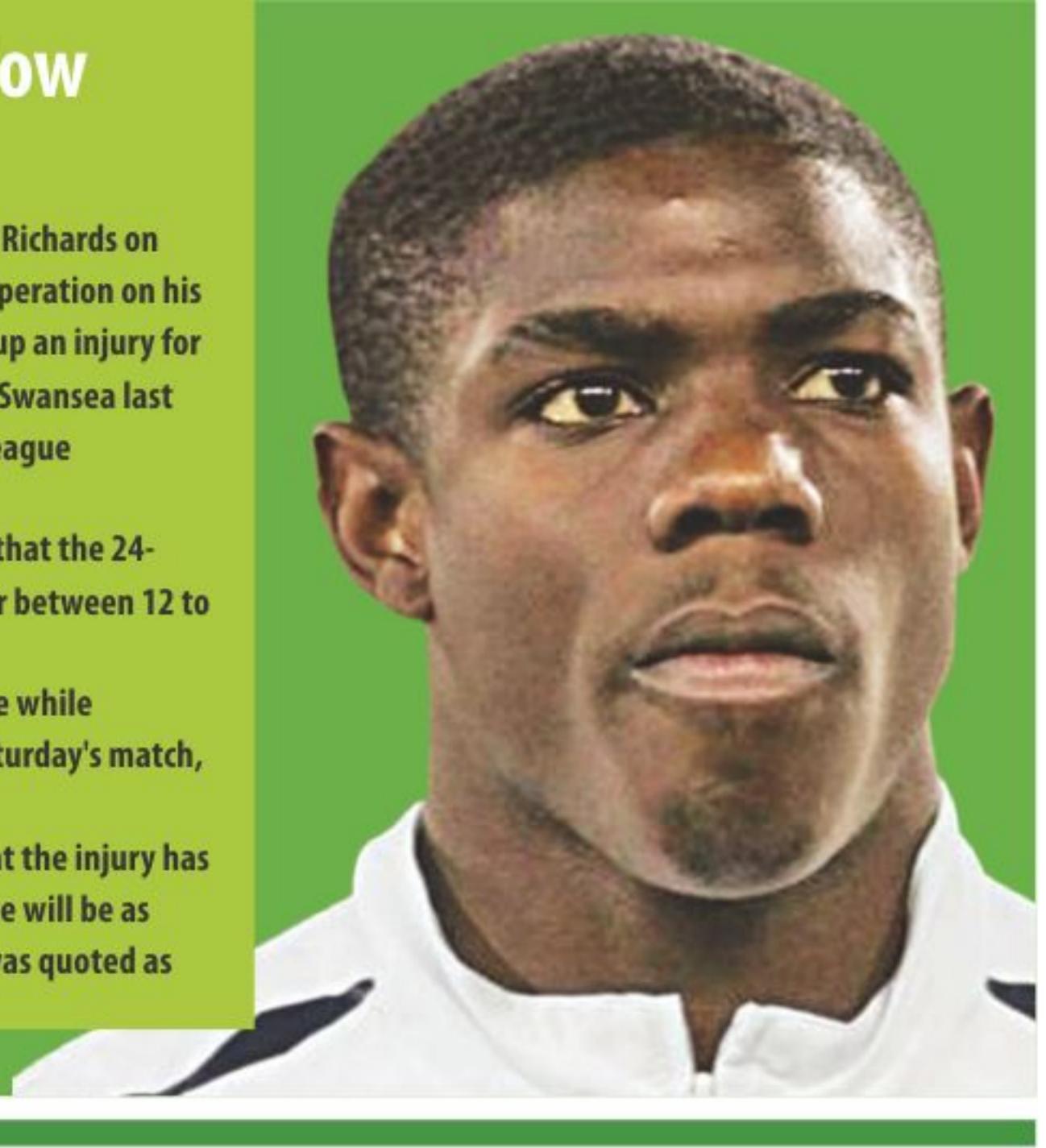


Richards blow for City

England defender Micah Richards on Tuesday underwent an operation on his right knee after picking up an injury for Manchester City against Swansea last weekend, the Premier League champions said. The northwest club said that the 24-year-old would be out for between 12 to 16 weeks. He damaged his cartilage while changing direction in Saturday's match, which City won 1-0. "The positive thing is that the injury has been repaired so the knee will be as good as new," Richards was quoted as



Reputation rather than performance!

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Chief selector Akram Khan has said that the selection committee is in a spot of bother regarding the selection of the Test team for the upcoming home series against West Indies as the Tigers are going to play longer-version cricket after almost a one-year break.

Bangladesh last played a Test match against Pakistan in December last year at home. The former national skipper said that they have to focus on the reputations of the players rather than performance when selecting the team for the coming series against the Caribbean.

"Initially we will announce a long list within the next five days from where we will pick the squad for the tour opening three-day game. We are really in a difficult position regarding selection of the team because of the long gap between the Test matches. We have to rely on reputation rather than performance," said Akram.

"It would be fantastic for us if the players could play two to three more rounds in the National Cricket League

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PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona forward David Villa (L) scores the opening goal during their Copa del Rey first-leg match against Alaves at the Mendizorroza Stadium on Tuesday.

Siddikur up for bigger challenge

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman will be looking to turn round his flagging fortunes when he tees off at the prestigious WGC-HSBC Champions in Dongguan, China today. The 27-year old has had a torrid time of late as he finished 46th among 48 competitors in the CIMB Classic in Kuala Lumpur earlier this week.

Siddikur might put that bad performance to the back pain which ruled him out of the Hero Honda Indian Open last week, but things will not be any easier this time around as a host of international stars will be on display at the Mission Hills Golf Club from today.

Currently 10th in the rankings, the straight-shooting Siddikur, will be up against the likes of Martin Kaymer, Luke Donald, Lee Westwood, Ian Poulter, Justin Rose, Bubba Watson and Phil

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Shane relishing the big time

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Originally hired as a bowling coach last year, Shane Jurgensen now holds the reins of the Bangladesh National Team. The Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) tiff with former head coach Richard Pybus has paved the way for Jurgensen to be the head coach of the team for the series against the West Indies.

"I am very excited about the opportunity. I have enjoyed working with these boys for a year and they are quite a talented group. We hope to play some good, hard cricket in the upcoming series," said Jurgensen.

The Australian, who used to play for Queensland back in the early days, has said that picking a balanced side for the upcoming series would be a challenge for the selectors this time.

"We haven't played Test cricket for a long time. I think there is a possibility for a number of players to make their way into the team. There are some players who are performing well and it might be a tough call for the selectors," he said.



SHANE JURGENSEN

Despite a delay in the beginning of the National Cricket League (NCL), the 34-year-old coach believes that the players are preparing in the 'best possible way' for the series against the West Indies. "If you ask any cricketer in the world, they'd say that playing four-day cricket would be the best way to prepare for an international Test series. The players would have played two four-day games and a warm-up

match against the West Indies. That's good enough preparation for me," claimed Jurgensen.

Acknowledging the strength of the current West Indies line-up, Jurgensen was of the opinion that the Bangladeshi cricketers needed to stick to their basics in order to compete at the international level.

"They have got a good mix of

players such as Narin, Gayle -

they have played well and are very confident. So they'll definitely be a challenge.

But we can perform well at home. When we come together, I am sure we can play well. We did that in the Asia cup and we can do that again," said the coach, who also plans to begin the national camp for the series on November 8.

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Nannu also stiffed by BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20's financial irregularities has once again come under the scanner as national selector Minhajul Abedin Nannu, who was appointed as an advisor to the Chittagong Kings during the first season of the BPL, claimed to have not received any payments from the franchise.

"I have been in talks with the owners for a long time now. They have repeatedly assured me that they would pay me. I even contacted them before Eid. However, I haven't received any positive response as yet," said Nannu.

The former national player stated that he had only received the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) contractual salary from the Kings, a sum of money that was supposed to be paid to the employees of the BCB

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Shooting coach, daughter killed in car crash

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU from Pabna

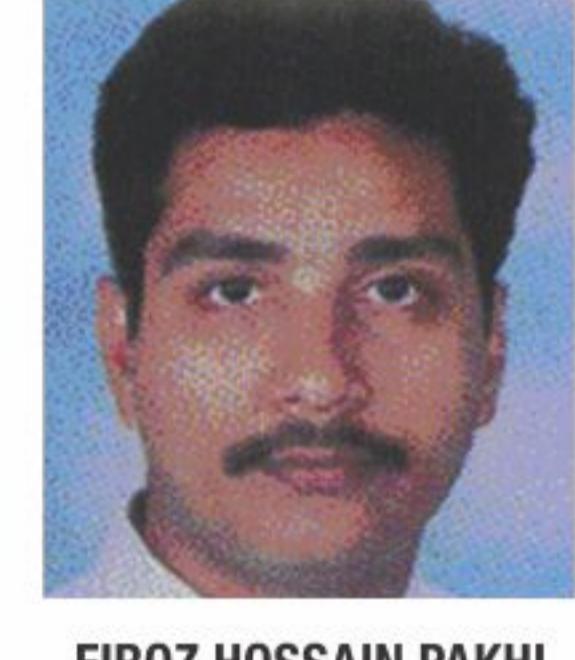
South Asian Games gold medalist shooter Firoz Hossain Pakhi died in a fatal road accident in Banpara upazila of Natore on Wednesday.

The 38-year-old shooter-turned coach was returning to Dhaka with his family members from hometown of Pabna after celebrating Eid vacation when a truck hit his private car leaving him, his three-year-old daughter Pushpita Ahmed and their household help Aina (20) dead on Wednesday morning.

Pakhi's wife and SA Games gold medalist shooter Lovely Chowdhury Ankhi was critically injured in the accident and is currently undergoing treatment at the Pabna Sadar Hospital.

The six-time best player of the National Shooting Championship won his first SA Games gold in the 10-meter Air Rifle team event in 1995 in Madras where he also won a silver medal in the individual event of 10-meter Air Rifle. Pakhi also won gold medal in 0.177 Air Rifle event in South Asian Shooting Championship in 1997 and in the Inter Club Shooting Championship's 0.177 Air Rifle event in 1990 and 1991 in Bangladesh.

Ankhi won her lone SA Games gold medal in the



FIROZ HOSSAIN PAKHI

Barca off to a flier

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona avoided any mishaps as they set out on the defence of their Spanish Cup title with a 3-0 first leg win away to lower league Alaves on Tuesday.

Despite resting several star names David Villa, Andres Iniesta and Cesc Fabregas were on target to continue the Catalan giants' majestic start to the campaign which has seen them only drop points in La Liga with their draw in the El Clasico with Real Madrid.

Lionel Messi, Xavi Hernandez and Pedro Rodriguez were among the players left at home in Barcelona but it made little difference as the visitors were always in control against an Alaves side which has seen better times.

The 2001 UEFA Cup finalists who lost to Liverpool are now in Segunda B, the Spanish third tier.

The Alaves keeper Urtiz Urrioz was kept busy by

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'Not about blaming BCB'

Bangladesh cricket is in the midst of controversy over the recent resignation of head coach Richard Pybus, who cited reasons of contractual disagreement with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for his decision. In the aftermath he alleged in an interview with ESPNcricinfo that the board had undermined his position as coach. The Daily Star Sport's Naimul Karim, in an email correspondence, attempted to acquire a clearer understanding behind Pybus's statements and his decision to quit.

Daily Star Sport (DSS): You had mentioned in your interview that two Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) directors had called the players at 1 am in the morning. Do you mind telling us who the directors were?

Richard Pybus (RP): It's not about naming and shaming BCB directors, the goal is for the organisation to move to world-class standards of operating. Standards that are the norm for the world's top sides. There is no elite side in the world that would do that to their players and neither would board members go over the heads of captain, coach and manager in the running of the team. That was the point.

DSS: Could you tell us the details of your proposed national camp?

BCB directors had termed your plan a 'makeshift arrangement' and also stated that you mainly based your camp on a single four-day game. Are these details true?

RP: There was no makeshift arrangement, I have been preparing players for first-class and international competition for over 15 years and it's produced some of the best players in the world. I don't think there is any reason to move away from that process. Initially, it (the plan for the camp) was to play two trial games of four days each. After discussions with the support staff it was felt that that would impact too much on the first-class programme. The aim was then to play a four-day game as a 'national trial' to put the

incumbent Test players on notice that no one was entitled to a starting spot and that there was opportunity

for the emerging players to fight for a place.

The goal was to create competition and intensity and to give our group of fast bowlers a workout in a controlled environment. This would also allow the batters to face the best fast bowling in Bangladesh prior to the West Indies series.

It was apparent to me that typically in first-class cricket in Bangladesh that the fast bowlers don't bowl enough, which also means the batters aren't getting exposed to high-quality seam bowling. Lack of bowling for the quicks makes them injury-prone as they haven't bowled enough overs to be test match ready for 20-plus overs a day.

The trial would allow the national

selectors to see who was match fit and ready, the national side would then convene for a camp after this and the emerging players were to play the West Indies in a warm-up game. Another opportunity for them to show form and fight for a place. I had sent the cricket operations director my plan. They decided that they didn't want it. There was no specific feedback on it.

DSS: Your claims of 'food poisoning' among the players in the camp created quite a frenzy here. Could you tell us if you had suggested an alternative to the board?

RP: Yes, to bring in food from one of Dhaka's top hotels like the Westin where there is high-quality hygiene control in the kitchen.

DSS: In the interview to cricinfo you said that you would stick to preparing the team in "camps and tour with them". As a professional coach, do you believe it's possible to coach an international team with these breaks?

RP: Firstly there are very few breaks! Most players are either playing with their first-class sides or training with them. The national selectors and captain know who the best players in the country are; you don't need to nursemaid them around the country whilst they are playing. The national coach doesn't need to be there 24/7 to hold their hands. The players need space to be accountable and responsible for

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