

# SPORT



Real Madrid's Welsh forward Gareth Bale (C) finishes after a wonderful 58-metre run that started behind the halfway line against archrivals Barcelona during the Copa del Rey final at the Mestalla on Wednesday. Bale's effort proved to be the difference between the two sides. (INSET) Real Madrid players celebrate with Copa del Rey trophy, their first of the season, on the pitch at the end of the match.

PHOTOS: AFP

## ROLL OF HONOUR

Season	Champions
2009-10	Sevilla
2010-11	Real Madrid
2011-12	Barcelona
2012-13	Atl. Madrid

## BCB ponders revamped BPL

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is planning to revamp the trouble-hit Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) by reining it back into a realistic financial structure.

The so-called money-spinning tournament, designed like the Indian Premier League (IPL), was put on hold after completion of the second edition in February 2013 as it was beset by all kinds of off-field controversies ranging from non-payment of players to the spot-fixing scandal.

But it was successful as far as on-field affairs went, which is why the board is considering continuing with the venture as a quality T20 domestic tournament is the need of the hour.

"Unofficially we are working to revamp the tournament but we are actually waiting for the verdict of the anti-corruption tribunal. We are thinking of staging the third edition of the competition between November this year to January next year," said BCB director IH Mallick, who is also a member secretary of the governing council of the BPL.

"We want to go with a new structure with a practical revenue projection. Previously the main problem lied with the wrong and impractical financial projection. The financial structure will be 30 to 40 per cent less than the previous ones because we have to go with our own market reality," he added.

The question remained how the BCB will solve the previous financial issues and complications with Game On, the event management company, and the franchises.

"The board will get Tk 19 crore from Game On and they have given us a cheque of Tk 10 crore. We already cashed Tk 2.50 crore and another Tk 2.50 crore we will get within the next three days and the rest of the money we will also receive accordingly. Regarding the remaining Tk 9 crore, they have some claims and we hope we can reach a settlement very soon," informed Mallick.

"On the other hand almost all the franchises are defaulters and we already sent them termination letters. BCB paid 80 to 90 per cent of the players' payments. Still some of the foreign and local players have not yet been paid. But they (franchises) are interested to talk with the board and we want to keep the door open for them," said Mallick.

"The board felt that we must continue with the tournament because we need it for reasons ranging from the financial aspect to the interest of the players and providing them the platform to gain experience in the shortest format of the game," he continued.

## Local coach to replace McInnes?

SPORTS REPORTER

The development committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is no longer interested in replacing Richard McInnes with another foreign head coach at the National Cricket Academy.

Former national coach Sarwar Imran has a good chance of getting the job though the development committee chairman Khaled Mahmud said yesterday that he will give a new plan within a short time.

McInnes will quit the post by the end of this month to bring an end to his second tenure in Bangladesh so that he can join a sports software company in Brisbane.

"We have different plans this time. We may appoint a local head coach and then hire specialist coaches from time to time," informed Mahmud.

## Zia returns for Asian Games

SPORTS REPORTER

Ziaur Rahman, the best raider of Bangladesh and arguably Asia too, got a call back to the national fold after six years by being selected for the 16-member preliminary squad for upcoming Asian Games which will be held in South Korea in September.

Zia last represented Bangladesh in the Asian Beach Games in Bali in 2008 before missing out on Dhaka South Asian Games and Guangzhou Asian Games in 2010 due to knee injury.

However, Zia returned to the domestic circuit and is optimistic about bringing something good for the country from the Asian Games.

"I'm giving all attention for the preparation for Asian Games. We want to forget Guangzhou by winning a medal in Incheon," said Zia.

# Copa del Rey Real's

AFP, Valencia



Gareth Bale scored a stunning individual goal five minutes from time to win the Copa del Rey for Real Madrid as they overcame Barcelona 2-1 at the Mestalla in Valencia on Wednesday.

The Welshman had previously been wayward with a series of efforts on goal, but he finally made his mark as he galloped through on goal from inside his own half before prodding the ball past Jose Manuel Pinto.

Madrid had gone in front after just 10 minutes as Angel di Maria raced onto Karim Benzema's through ball and fired low into the corner.

Marc Bartra levelled for Barca 22 minutes from time when he headed home Xavi's corner, but it was the young defender who was left in Bale's wake as he sealed his first trophy as a Madrid player.

Without the injured Cristiano Ronaldo much was expected of Bale to fill the World Player of the Year's shoes and he had the first two chances of the game as he dragged a shot across goal before Javier Mascherano deflected his next effort just wide.

Madrid were soon in front though

as a flowing counter-attack involving Isco, Bale, Benzema and finally Di Maria set the Argentine free and his low shot just squeezed under Pinto's outstretched hand.

Neymar and Pepe were then booked by referee Mateu Lahoz as tempers flared after the Barca man had a penalty appeal turned down.

Barca pressed for an equaliser for the rest of the half as Cesc Fabregas' low cross was just too strong for Neymar to connect at the back post, whilst Jordi Alba saw a header comfortably saved by Iker Casillas.

However, Madrid still looked the more dangerous on the break and only a great challenge from Alba prevented Isco from turning home Bale's cut-back to double his side's advantage.

Lionel Messi was kept quiet for the majority of the game, but he had Barca's best opening of the half when his snap shot from the edge of the area flew wide.

Bale was first to threaten again at the start of the second half as he waltzed past two weak Barca challenges and fired into the side-netting.

And the former Tottenham man was close again moments later as his volley from the edge of the area flew just over.

The chances continued to come for

Madrid as Sergio Ramos' powerful header from a corner was straight at Pinto before the 'keeper turned another effort from Benzema wide.

Barca's first effort on target didn't come until 25 minutes from time when Bartra sauntered forward from central defence and stung the palms of Iker Casillas.

Bale had the ball in the net soon after but the goal was ruled out for a foul as he challenged with Pinto for a high ball.

Within seconds Barca were level as Bartra directed a perfectly weighted header from Xavi's corner just inside the far post.

Both sides then had chances to win it in normal time, but it was Bale who got the winner as he escaped the attentions of Bartra down Madrid's left and raced in on goal to slot home his 20th and most important goal of the season.

There was still late drama to come as Neymar latched onto Xavi's through ball and smacked a shot off the inside of the post with Casillas beaten.

However, there was to be no late reprieve for Barca as they slumped to a third consecutive defeat for the first time in more than 10 years and now look certain to end the season without winning a major trophy.

## League resumes with double-header

### Venue inspection team quietly satisfied

SPORTS REPORTER



League leaders Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi will be looking to increase their lead at the top of the Bangladesh Premier League when they host Chittagong Abahani in their respective first match of the second phase at the

Bangabandhu National Stadium today. Second-placed Abahani will however have the chance to reduce the arrears as they will take on Brothers Union in the second match of the day.

Sheikh Jamal lead the table with 21 points from nine outings while Abahani are just two points behind. Chittagong Abahani and Brothers Union are at the opposite end of the spectrum with the port city club lying in ninth position with five points and Brothers in seventh with 10 points.

The league resumes after two days' break due to the inspection of three venues outside Dhaka by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) team on Wednesday. The inspection team led by BFF's senior vice president Salam Murshedy decided to give a few weeks' time to the clubs outside of

Dhaka to improve their respective home venues, it was announced in a press conference yesterday.

The committee found few problems in all the three venues -- Muktiyoddha Sangsad's home ground of Gopalganj Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni Stadium, Chittagong Abahani's home venue of M A Aziz Stadium and Feni Soccer's home venue of Bhasha Shaheed Salam Stadium -- and they are of the opinion that the host clubs will be able to resolve the problems within two to three weeks.

"I want to make one thing clear; the rest of the league will be on a home-and-away basis and no venue will be withdrawn in the ongoing season," said Murshedy, who explained the committee's findings in the press conference.

"The Gopalganj Stadium underwent notable development where the only problem is the size of the pitch, while the MA Aziz Stadium has only one problem which is that there is a cricket pitch in the middle of the field. It's an international football venue and we want to utilise this stadium on a regular basis. The dressing room and other facilities in the Feni stadium are not up to the mark," observed

## 300 on clay for Rafa

AFP, Monte Carlo



World number one Rafael Nadal finished with an ace on match point to seal his 300th career victory on clay and advance into the quarterfinals of the Monte Carlo Masters on Thursday.

Meanwhile seven-time Wimbledon champion Roger Federer spent just 57 minutes in going past Czech Lukas Rosol 6-4, 6-1 to next line up against ninth seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga.

Nadal, the eight-time winner here, became just the 11th man to crack 300 wins on the dirt: the last to do so was Spaniard Carlos Moya, who ended his career in 2007 with 337 victories.

The Spaniard said he felt an improvement in his play against Seppi, with the win taking him into another meeting with compatriot David Ferrer. Spanish sixth seed Ferrer booked his place by beating Bulgarian number 12 Grigor Dimitrov 6-4, 6-2.

Nadal still has ground to cover on clay before approaching the all-time top winner

on the surface: Argentine Guillermo Vilas compiled a record of 644-183 on the surface three decades ago.

"I did what I had to in order to get where I am," the top seed said of his third-round win.

Nadal had a few spots of bother against Italy's Seppi, with the world number one forced to save five break points in the sixth game of the opening set for a 5-1 lead.

"At 4-1 I just stopped moving my legs, it was mental, not physical," he explained.

In the second set, Nadal dropped serve to love while leading 4-2. But he got it straight back for 5-3 and finished off the victory in 93 minutes.

Swiss fourth seed Federer, the record 17-time Grand Slam winner, came back from a break down in the first set before crushing his opponent to win an ATP-leading 26th match this season.

Second seed and holder Novak Djokovic, who beat Nadal for the 2013 title, was facing Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta.

Frenchman Tsonga celebrated his 29th birthday with a win in controversial circumstances over flamboyant Italian Fabio Fognini, who went into meltdown in a 5-7, 6-3, 6-0 defeat.



World number one Rafael Nadal of Spain plays a forehand return to Andreas Seppi of Italy during the Monte Carlo Masters in Monaco yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP