

# Tigers get two practice games

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The Tigers will start their August-September Caribbean journey with a one-day practice match on August 17 at the Progress Park in Grenada.

Mushfiqur Rahim's men, who have experienced a turbulent year so far, losing one match after another, will leave the country on August 12 to play three ODIs, one T20I and two Tests during their 37-day stay.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday officially released the itinerary, in which a three-day practice match was also included before the two-match Test series, for the Tigers' third visit to the Caribbean to play a full series.

Bangladesh earlier visited the country in 2004 and 2009 for full series.

The national selectors already announced a preliminary squad, and the players are now going through fitness training with skill practice expected to start shortly as new head coach Chandika Hathurusingha was expected to arrive last night.

According to sources the new coach is yet

to give any clear planning for the training but there is a chance that the players will play two limited-overs practice matches before the Eid break, which is likely to start from July 24.

This series will be the first test for the Sri Lankan coach as he had only played an observing role during the three-match ODI series against India and everybody will looking to see how he handles the team without star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who has been banned for six months for breaching the players code of conduct.

The national selectors will announce a final team for the ODI and T20I series by first week of August and the Test team will be announced later.

**ITINERARY**

August 17: One-day match at Grenada.  
 August 20: First ODI at Grenada.  
 August 22: Second ODI at Grenada.  
 August 25: Third ODI at St. Kitts.  
 August 27: T20I at St. Kitts.  
 August 30-September 1: 3-day at St. Kitts.  
 September 5-9: First Test at St. Vincent.  
 September 13-17: Second Test at St. Lucia.



Argentina's national football team was still given a heroes' welcome when they reached Ezeiza, a province of capital Buenos Aires, on Monday. PHOTO: AFP

# Fours stars sold out in a whisker

**REUTERS, Berlin**

A new German football shirt bearing four stars for Germany's four World Cup wins has sold out on Monday within hours of the team's triumph in Brazil - showing the kind of boost retailers can expect from the feel-good factor among fans in coming days.

The German team snatched victory against Argentina late on Sunday with a goal in extra time in Rio de Janeiro. It was the first time Germany has been champion in the soccer tournament since the country reunified in late 1990.

German sportswear maker Adidas is already seeing the benefits, with customers flocking to its Frankfurt store on Monday in a bid to get one of the new white shirts, which cost 84.95 euros. Adidas had made a small batch ahead of the final in case Germany won.

Andre Langer was one of the customers lucky enough to get his hands on a replica of the number '19' shirt worn by Mario Goetze, who scored the winning goal.

"My son will get this shirt - which of course has four stars on it - for his 18th birthday. He's one-year-old now," he said.

On Monday morning Adidas' website was already displaying a "sold out" sign next to the new shirts. The company said it would fly in new ones from China to meet the urgent demand.

# Sk Russel go down to BJMC again

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Holders Sheikh Russel KC suffered another loss in the Nitol Tata Bangladesh Premier League when Team BJMC handed them a 2-1 defeat at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Guinean hitman Ismael Bangoura struck a brace to produce a repeat of the defeat they handed Sheikh Russel in their second meeting of the league, while Mithun Chowdhury reduced the arrears but could not avert Sheikh Russel's ninth defeat in 25 matches.

Their seventh win in 25 matches raises BJMC's points tally to 28 and keep them at seventh position, just four points behind sixth-placed Sheikh Russel KC.

Smarting from a huge 1-4 defeat at the hands of leaders Sheikh Jamal DC, Team BJMC looked set to return to winning ways and from the outset played with much confidence before taking a lead in the 17th minute.

Shahinur Rony and Mehdi Hasan Tapu built up a nice attack from the right to set up Ismael inside the danger zone and the tall striker drove the ball under the stretched legs of Sheikh Russel goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee to put BJMC ahead.

Seven minutes later, Ismael rose high to nod in a Khan Mohammad Tara free-kick to double the lead. Mithun Chowdhury pulled one back by heading an Anwar Hossain corner home in the 33rd minute.

Later, BJMC created a few more chances but could not cash in and had to be content with a second successive win over the holders.

# Sabella rues missed chances

**REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro**

Argentina coach Alejandro Sabella heaped praise on his team after Sunday's 1-0 World Cup final defeat by Germany on Sunday, saying they gave their all but lacked cutting edge in front of goal during an even game.

"They played a fantastic World Cup. There's nothing to blame them for," a drained-looking Sabella said at a news conference after Mario Goetze's extra time volley sunk his team.

"Today we had our chances but we just lacked efficiency. In general terms, though, I am very proud. Beyond the pain of defeat they can look each other in the eye, and look in the mirror, and know they gave their all for Argentina."

Striker Gonzalo Higuain missed Argentina's best chance when a careless header towards his own goal by Germany's Tony Kroos put him put him clear with only Manuel Neuer to beat, but he dragged his shot wide.

Messi saw plenty of the ball but got few breakthroughs, only escaping his markers once but angling a shot wide.

"This was a very even match. They

(Germany) are a great team. The match had its ups and downs. Germany had greater command of play and possession. Our games are very similar and when there are chances, you have to convert," Sabella said.

"Then in these big games, if you make a mistake and let a goal in, it's very difficult to come back. But the only thing I can do is congratulate my players, they did an extraordinary job, and congratulate Germany for the title."

Sabella, whose agent has said he would stand down after the World Cup final, declined to discuss his future.

"The future for me in this moment is to be with the players, to be with the coaching staff, to be with my family, to rest a bit. About the future, I can't really say anything," he said.

Asked if Messi had missed a chance to join the world's greats by not winning the World Cup, Sabella said the Argentina captain and Barcelona forward had already answered that debate.

"I think Lionel reached the pantheon of the greats a while back," he said, adding that Messi fully deserved his "Golden Ball" award for best player. "He played a great World Cup to get us where he did. I think it's very deserved."

The coach described the mood among his charges in Argentina's dressing room as sombre.

"It is the silence of the warrior because they were warriors. They left their skin out there, their last drop of sweat on the pitch," he said.

"The players are very bitter. We had a great dream. We wanted to win the final. To be perfect, we had to be more efficient. I'm sad like the players. On the one hand, it's a normal pain to have not won. But on the other, I'm satisfied because the group gave their all, they're a marvellous group."

Argentina should be praised and remembered for reaching their first final since 1990, he said.

"I leave with a double feeling -- the frustration of not achieving the dream, but also the satisfaction of having fulfilled our duty to give 100 percent."

Midfielder Javier Mascherano summed up the players' disappointment.

"We gave what we could and we are sorry for the people who came and for the people in Argentina," he said.

"Unfortunately the pain is going to be for life because this was our opportunity. That's what we felt. Football is like that. We'll have to lift our heads to try and bear the pain."

# Jayawardene announces Test retirement

**AFP, Colombo**

Star Sri Lankan batsman Mahela Jayawardene said Monday he would retire from Test cricket after the series against Pakistan in August, drawing the curtain on an almost two decade-long Test career.

Jayawardene, 37, who has been a stalwart of the batting order since making his debut against India in 1997, said it was not an easy decision but ultimately he felt it was the right time to go.

"It was not an easy decision to make given that it has been a great privilege and honour representing my country during the past 18 years," Jayawardene said in a letter to Sri Lanka Cricket.

"But I believe this is the right time (to go)."

Jayawardene is Test cricket's sixth-highest run-getter, amassing 11,493 runs in his stellar career and ranking alongside fellow Sri Lanka stalwart Kumar Sangakkara.

# Fruit of 10 years

**REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro**

Germany's World Cup victory on Sunday was not just down to 50 days of good preparation for the tournament but was the culmination of a meticulously-planned long-term project, coach Joachim Loew said.

Loew, who took over from Juergen Klinsmann in 2006 after their third-place finish at the World Cup in Germany, said were it not for the team's first-round exits in earlier tournaments their fourth World Cup win may have been delayed.

"I think that we were 50 days together but this is a project we started 10 years ago," the 54-year-old said after his team Argentina 1-0 in the final.

"We started it with Juergen Klinsmann (after 2004) and then we continued it. Our biggest strength is that we improved

throughout the years even if we missed taking that last step at tournaments."

Germany made at least the semi-finals in the last two World Cups and European Championships after failing to get past the group stage at Euro 2000 and 2004.

"We knew we would take that last step and we believed in it and today it finally worked," he said.

Those setbacks led to the creation of a national plan to invest in youth centres for the sport with many players in Loew's current team, including 22-year-old Mario Goetze who scored the extra-time winner against Argentina.

"We were disappointed at times in the past but today there was only deserved winner. This team. It is a special moment because it was not just these days here but the entire 10 years," he said.

Loew said during that time German players had to learn not to rely only on

what he said were the traditional German virtues of working hard and battling until the very end.

Young players had to learn more skills to be able to compete with foreign clubs and national teams.

"The Bundesliga has a big part in this with its training centres," he said.

"In 2000 and 2004, German football was at the very bottom. But we took action to invest in training, to become technically better."

"The German virtues were not enough anymore and we had to improve our skills."

The first signs were visible at the 2010 World Cup when Loew fielded their youngest team in 76 years and their attractive attacking style won over many fans.

"The clubs also have their share in this because they got younger and younger players into the first teams. They are doing great work and I have to thank them for that," he said.

# 'You are the Greatest'

**AFP, Berlin**

A jubilant German press on Monday celebrated the national side's fourth World Cup win and crowned striker "Super Mario" Goetze as a "football god" for his victory-clinching dream goal.

"It Is True", headlined conservative broadsheet Die Welt, with the three words printed in the national colours of black, red and gold. "What a match, what a fight, what drama," it exclaimed.

The top-selling Bild daily splashed "1:0" and "World Champions!" across its front page over a photo of Goetze and dedicated the next 16 pages to every detail of the team's triumph in Rio de Janeiro.

Online, the paper cheered: "Goetze, God of football" and heaped gratitude on the trainer and the rest of the team: "Thank you, Jogi (Loew)! Thank you guys! You have made us infinitely happy."

"We bow to coach Jogi Loew ... Concentrated, he led the team through the tournament. He remains quiet after big wins. He remains calm after tough matches," Bild said.

"You are the Greatest!" cheered the headline over a double-page lift-out poster inside the paper, showing Bastian Schweinsteiger lifting the trophy over his head and the ecstatic team punching the air.

Even the paper's health section offered advice to hardcore fans on how to deal with the withdrawal symptoms after weeks of football fever and on how to overcome the post-World Cup blues.

News website Spiegel Online cheered, "1954. 1974. 1990. 2014!", recalling the four times Germany has clinched the trophy.

"Goetze, the liberator," headlined the online edition of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. "For the first time a European team has won a world tournament in South America ... the title for Germany is well deserved."

"World Champion! Germany's national football team has delivered," cheered the Neue Osnabruecker Zeitung, predicting days of celebrations.

"What started with honking motorcades in the evening will only grow by the time the team comes home," it said, describing the massive impact the win has had on the football-crazed nation.

"Nothing can resist the pull of football. War in Israel? War in Ukraine? The (US-German) spying scandal? For many those didn't matter. Everyone came on board: politicians and companies, newspapers and TV stations, football fans and those who usually aren't."

The Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger noted that Germany, where patriotism has long been restrained by guilt over World War II and the Holocaust, has become a little more like other countries in its expressions of national joy.

"The tensions of the past have finally eased, but this hasn't been followed by a new nationalism, rather a new openness to the world," it said.

# Shooters carry hopes to Glasgow

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The first segment, comprising only shooters, of the 65-member Bangladesh contingent flew from Dhaka yesterday morning to take part in the 20th Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland with hopes of a better result in the 10m air rifle event.

Having identified shooting as a medal-hope discipline at international level, the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) roped in a high-profile Korean coach to provide a long five-month intensive training to the shooters for the first time and kept their hopes in 10m air rifle event.

"I can't make any guarantee of winning a medal but what I can say is that my preparation is

much better compared to any other competitions I have taken part. If I can transfer my present performance to the Commonwealth Games, I can hope for something better," said medal-hope Abdullah Hel Baki, who recently scored 621.9 out of 654 to finish 43rd in the 10m air rifle event in the ISSF World Cup in Munich last month.

Apart from Baki, Rabbi Hasan Munna, Syeda Sadia Sultana and Sharmin Akter Ratna will also be competing in the 10m air rifles event but there is not much hope on them, even though the women's 10m air rifles had once been the lone medal-hope event at the international level.

Ratna, gold medalist in the South Asian Games and Commonwealth Games Shooting,

has reportedly not been in prime form in the training and her 411 score out of 436 in the ISSF World Cup was evidence of that, and thus there are low expectations of her.

Bangladesh will also be taking part in the Skeet and Air Pistol categories, but there is virtually no hope in those events.

Meanwhile, weightlifters and cyclists will leave here on July 19 while swimmers, boxers, shuttlers and table tennis players will leave the next day. Wrestlers and sprinters are scheduled to fly out on July 24.

**SHOOTING SQUAD**

Baki, Rabbi, Iqbal Islam, Noor Uddin Salim, Sadia, Ratna, Armin Asha, Ardina Ferdous, coach Jong Hyun Lee and coach Anwar Karim.