

Junayna hogs limelight

SPORTS REPORTER



Junayna Ahmed, an English-born Bangladeshi swimmer, was the centre of the attention on the third and final day of the Saif PowerTec 32nd National Age-Group Swimming Championship as she grabbed two more gold medals as the competition came to a close at Syed Nazrul Islam Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

In the men's section, Jahidul Islam of BKSP was adjudged as the best male swimmer of the tournament after winning eight gold, one silver and two bronze medals which helped BKSP finish on the top with a tally of 42 gold medals, 40 silver and 42 bronze.

Bangladesh Ansar became the runners-up with 28 gold medals, 19 silver and 20 bronze while Junayna's Gopalganj Swimming Club came in third.

Junayna was named the best female swimmer as the 15-year-old grabbed a total of 10 gold medals from 11 events and set eight national records (hand-timing). Junayna, the eldest daughter of Jubayer Ahmed, was brought to Bangladesh by her father to get a taste of the competitiveness in this part of the world.

"I have only taken one weak preparation for this tournament and won 10 gold medals with a few national records. It is a really happy moment for me," said Junayna, before adding that she wants to represent Bangladesh at an international level like the Olympics and win a medal for her motherland.

"I want her to represent Bangladesh at different international meets, so I am trying to provide all the facilities in my capacity to make her a good swimmer," said Jubayer.

Bangladesh national swim team coach Park Tae Gun has apparently welcomed Junayna to come to the side but the the Korean coach is not so

optimistic about her prospects outside the country.

"She is good in the context of Bangladesh's competition but her performance is nothing mentionable compared to her age-group swimmers in Japan and Korea. She still needs more improvement to compete at international tournaments and I want to see how much she improves in the next couple of years," opined Park, who however reserved praise for his own swimmers who have been training for the last three months.

"I am really surprised to see the improvement of the boys and girls who have trained for only three months but the training has not been uninterrupted because of different holidays, exams of the students and illnesses.

"This group of swimmers are getting sound in terms of techniques and improving their timing day by day because an individual swimmer swam 12000 meter on average per day. If the federation can continue the uninterrupted training for this group of swimmers up to 2019, then we can expect to

groom up a bunch of good swimmers who can win gold medals at international meets," said Park, who guided Bangladesh to two gold medals in the 2016 SA Games.

Approximately 59 swimmers, who were selected through the 'search for the best swimmers' programme, also participated in the age-group championships and some of them outshone swimmers from BKSP and Bangladesh Ansar to win gold medals this time around even though they could barely cross the tournament's set-mark timing during the last edition.

"I didn't get any medal last time but this time I have won three gold, two silver and one bronze medal," said nine-year-old Ani Khatun from Kushthia, the youngest swimmer in the swimming federation's training programme.

Like Ani, Rabiul Awal from Pabna also had better luck this time as he bagged two gold medals, one silver and three bronze after training for only three months under Park although he did manage a bronze in the last edition as well.



English-born Junayna Ahmed (L) and BKSP's Jahidul Islam show their respective medals during the final day of National Age-Group Swimming Championship at the Syed Nazrul Islam Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



PHOTO: AFP

Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo (L) and coach Zinedine Zidane pose with their trophies during The Best FIFA Awards ceremony in London on Monday.

Ronaldo wants seven

AFP, London



Year award on Monday.

Ronaldo's Real Madrid side, who won both La Liga and the Champions League last season, dominated the 2017 Best FIFA football awards at a star-studded ceremony in London on Monday.

The Portuguese ace has scored 44 goals in just 48 games for club and country so far this calendar year, including two in a 4-1 Champions League final win over Juventus in Cardiff on June 3.

Ronaldo saw off competition from longstanding Barcelona rival Lionel Messi and Paris Saint-Germain's Neymar, the world's most expensive player.

But, typical of a footballer who has enjoyed huge success at both Manchester United and Real, Ronaldo was not satisfied. "I want seven. Five is good but seven is my lucky number so seven would be great."

Real boss Zinedine Zidane took the corresponding manager of the year award,

with the Spanish giants providing five players in the FIFPro team of the year.

Ronaldo won the inaugural Best FIFA men's player of the year award last year following the end of a six-year merger between the FIFA honour and France Football's Ballon D'Or.

The 32-year-old previously won the FIFA World Player of the Year award, the precursor to the Best FIFA award, in 2008.

He has now won the last two FIFA men's trophies as well as three of the last four Ballon D'Or awards.

"Thanks a lot for voting for me," said Ronaldo after receiving his trophy from Argentina great Diego Maradona and Brazil's Ronaldo at the London Palladium theatre.

"We are in England for the first time and I win consecutive awards," he added. "This is a great moment for me. I have fans all over the world."

Zidane won out ahead of Chelsea's Antonio Conte and Juventus's Massimiliano Allegri to be crowned men's coach of the year after becoming the first man to oversee a successful defence of the European Cup in the Champions League era.

"I'd like to thank all of the players for making this possible," said Zidane.

QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

Little fan's letter motivates Tamim

Tamim Iqbal posts a photo of a letter sent to him by a fan on his official facebook page. The cricketer felt humble gratitude for the letter and thanked the young fan.

Ex-Test umpire Hair admits to stealing cash

Former Australian Test umpire Darrell Hair has admitted stealing cash from the liquor shop where he was working, in a dramatic fall from grace for a man who enjoyed a successful but controversial career in cricket.

Who did Messi, Ronaldo vote for in the FIFA awards?

Cristiano Ronaldo won his second FIFA Best men's player of the year award in a star-studded ceremony in London.

Bishoo bowls WI to 117-run win

Leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo finished with nine wickets in the match as the West Indies swept to a 117-run victory over Zimbabwe in the first Test on Tuesday.

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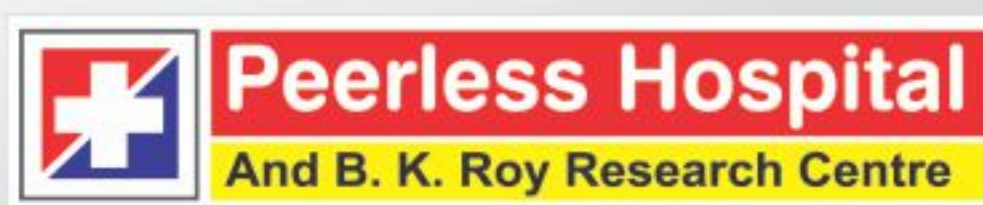
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