

# Law, Jaffer to focus on red-ball cricket initially

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Stuart Law, who had served as head coach of the Bangladesh national team in 2011-2012, was appointed as under-19 team's head coach, and yesterday he spoke to the media during a press conference.

The Australian said he wanted to make contributions to grassroots cricket to help cricketers' overall growth.

"I have done some jobs as head coach around the world and as head coach of an international team; you don't do a lot of coaching. It's mainly a lot of talking and administration work. This gives me the opportunity to get back and work on the grassroots, an area I believe I can help make a difference. Not just cricketing abilities but help them grow as a young person and as a person. When the opportunity came, it was pretty easy to say yes," Law said on his return, having also served as consultant for the under-19 side in 2016.

The ICC U-19 World Cup will be Law's major priority with the team.

"We have a lot of games before the World Cup, which is 18 months away. We will understand how to play once we understand our squad better. It's about managing expectations of the players too," Law said.

While the focus was on white-ball cricket for the U-19 World Cup, Law believes that improvement in the longer format should be the top priority.

"I think it's critical for the young players' development to play the long format. I believe the best players come



PSG's Kylian Mbappe greets a jubilant young fan during a press conference in Tokyo on Sunday. The Ligue 1 champions are slated for three games with local Japanese clubs as part of their pre-season tour.

PHOTO: AFP

# Dates for next three BPL fixed

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon yesterday informed that the dates of the next three editions of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) were fixed.

The BCB are expected to host the tournament with seven team. According to BCB's scheduling, the 2023 BPL is slated for January 5 till February 16 next year while the 2024 edition of the tournament is slated to be played between January 6 till February 2024.

The 2025 edition of the tournament will be played from January 1 till February 11, 2025.

"As the date is finalised the other procedures like terms and condition with the franchise will be decided within next one week. There might be some changes in terms and conditions in BPL and after clearing everything we will give advertisements.

"It will be a seven-team tournament and previous teams are expected to take part in it as I am seeing no reason why that won't be the case."



from learning how to play that game and from there it's about developing their skill level and mindset to kick on and play the fifty-over format and twenty-over format. I am a traditionalist and love red-ball cricket. Test cricket is the toughest to play and if you don't understand early, it's very difficult to pick up as you go. We're trying to give these players as much opportunity to show what they can in every facet of cricket. If we can play one or two four-day game in every series, that would be awesome for the young fellows," he said.

BCB's game development manager for the U-19 team, Abu Emam Mohammad Kawsar, informed that in every series till June, one four-day game has been included.

Wasm Jaffer, appointed as batting consultant having previously worked here as game development consultant in 2020, said his focus, too, would be on red-ball cricket.

"India have a lot of cricketers playing first-class cricket. Slowly things are happening in Bangladesh cricket as well and the more they play red-ball cricket in different conditions, the more they will improve. For the U-19s, the focus will be on red-ball cricket as well. We will be playing few red-ball matches against other countries but the closer we get to the World Cup, the focus will shift more towards white-ball. However, in the meantime, the focus will be on red-ball cricket," Jaffer said.

Law has worked with the likes of Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Nazmul Hossain Shanto during his stint with the U-19s previously. He wanted to work on building not just good players but personalities.

The U-19 camp under the new coaching staff began in Mirpur yesterday. The team will return to competitive cricket with the tour of Pakistan in November where they will play five one-dayers and one four-day game.

# BCB 'expected' Tamim's retirement, unsure of Mahmudullah's tenure

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Although the Tamim Iqbal-led Bangladesh side managed to whitewash the West Indies in the three-match ODI series with a four-wicket win in the final ODI in Guyana, his announcement to retire from T20I format for the Tigers grabbed all the spotlight in the cricket fraternity.

"Please consider me retired from T20Is from today. Thank you, everyone," Tamim wrote on his official Facebook page on Saturday.

However, Tamim's decision was nothing unexpected, considering the fact that the cricketer had previously requested a six-month break from the T20 format in January this year. Since then, the topic of Tamim's availability for the format, especially with the next T20 World Cup scheduled to be played in October-November this year in Australia, has been brought up multiple times, often in a negative way.

"That I know [Tamim Iqbal's retirement from T20I format], this is nothing new. You heard it after he announced it yesterday? Who doesn't know the news? We knew it quite a while ago," Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan told the media during a press conference in Mirpur yesterday.

But still the question remains whether Tamim's resignation is official or not. In the recent past, it was Mahmudullah Riyad who retired from the Test format in dramatic fashion – receiving a guard of honour from teammates – in the tour of Zimbabwe last year. However, it took a long time for the board to officially make a statement regarding Riyad's retirement.



Meanwhile, there were also talks over the probable change in the T20I captaincy and rumour surfaced that Mahmudullah might be replaced by Shakib Al Hasan before the upcoming T20 World Cup.

Mahmudullah's performance, both as a batter and also as the captain of the Bangladesh T20I side, has been under the radar for some time but there was confusion whether Mahmudullah could go on to face similar fate as Mominul Haque in the Test format.

Under Mahmudullah, Bangladesh had a terrible outing in the latest ICC T20 World Cup last year, where the Tigers lost to Scotland in the qualifying stage and went on to lose all the games in the group stage matches.

The 36-year-old looked below par with the bat, scoring eight, 11 and 22 in the three-match T20I series as Bangladesh were whitewashed by the West Indies convincingly under new captain Nicholas Pooran.

"We don't have much time and it's difficult to make the decision [changing T20 captain]. We never had any dissatisfaction over Mominul's captaincy and Mahmudullah's name is coming often because he is unable to score runs. Let him return but I don't think there won't be too much of a difference," Hasan said.

Going back to Tamim's retirement from the shortest format, once again it highlights Bangladesh's need to find a settled opening pair – the search which has lingered in Bangladesh cricket for a long time now.

It will be interesting to see whether the team management could solve the issue with the T20 World Cup knocking at the door or will the Tigers go with the motions and continue their dismal run in the T20 format.

# Yousuf 'speechless' seeing Babar's knock

**AFP, GALLE**

Azam made a defiant 119 to thwart a Sri Lankan spin attack led by Prabath Jayasuriya on day two of an evenly poised first Test on Sunday.

Azam single-handedly took the tourists to just four runs short of Sri Lanka's 222 as he put on a 70-run tenth-wicket stand with Naseem Shah, who made five not out from 52 balls, in Galle.

Sri Lanka were 36 for one at stumps after skipper Dimuth Karunaratne fell lbw to left-arm spinner Mohammad Nawaz, for 16.

"I have not seen an innings like that for a long time," batting coach Mohammed Yousuf said of Azam's knock.

"To be under so much pressure and the ball turning a lot, he played with a lot of patience and took the tailenders along.

"A knock with so much patience, on a difficult track and especially the way he handled Jayasuriya. I am speechless."

Azam got help from the lower-order batters including Yasir Shah (18), Hasan Ali (17) and Naseem, as Pakistan managed 133 runs from the final three wickets.

# Bangladesh contingents for CWG, ISG fixed

**SPORTS REPORTER**

A 50-member Bangladesh contingent is set to take part in the 22nd edition multi-disciplinary extravaganza, scheduled to be held from July 28 to August 8 in England, informed speakers at a press conference at BOA auditorium on Sunday.

Bangladesh contingent will gradually depart for Birmingham from July 20 to take part in seven disciplines – athletics, boxing, gymnastics, swimming, weightlifting, wrestling and table tennis.

After the Commonwealth Games, a mega 84-member Bangladesh contingent will take part in the 5th Islamic Solidarity Games, to be held in Turkey from August 9 to 18.

Bangladesh will participate in 11 disciplines – athletics, archery, fencing, gymnastics, handball, karate, shooting, swimming, table tennis, weightlifting and wrestling – with the expectation of good results from archery, athletics and gymnastics.

# Silverwood lauds 'fantastic' Jayasuriya

**AFP, Galle**

Sri Lanka coach Chris Silverwood on Sunday said there were lessons to be learnt from the team's new spin hero Prabath Jayasuriya after his third successive five-wicket Test haul.

Jayasuriya remained Sri Lanka's go-to bowler as he returned figures of 5-82 with his left-arm spin to help bowl out Pakistan for 218 after skipper Babar Azam's defiant century.

The 30-year-old took 12 wickets on debut in a series-levelling Test win over Australia last week at the same venue, six in each innings.

Sunday's performance made him the first Sri Lankan bowler and only eighth overall to claim three five-wicket hauls in his first two Tests.

"I think he has been absolutely fantastic so far," Silverwood told reporters. "I think the one thing that he does really well is his line and length and I think that's the one thing that we need to improve."

"He asks lots of good questions to the batsman, he gets lot of balls in the good areas and when there is turn he finds it, hence why so successful."

Jayasuriya rattled the Pakistan batting – which slipped to 85-7 – with his turners and sliders and was on a hat-trick before Azam, who made 118, hit back with help from the lower-order.

"It's a lesson for the rest of our bowlers of how to do that (bowl consistently in right areas)," said Silverwood.

# Iran reinstate Skocic as head coach

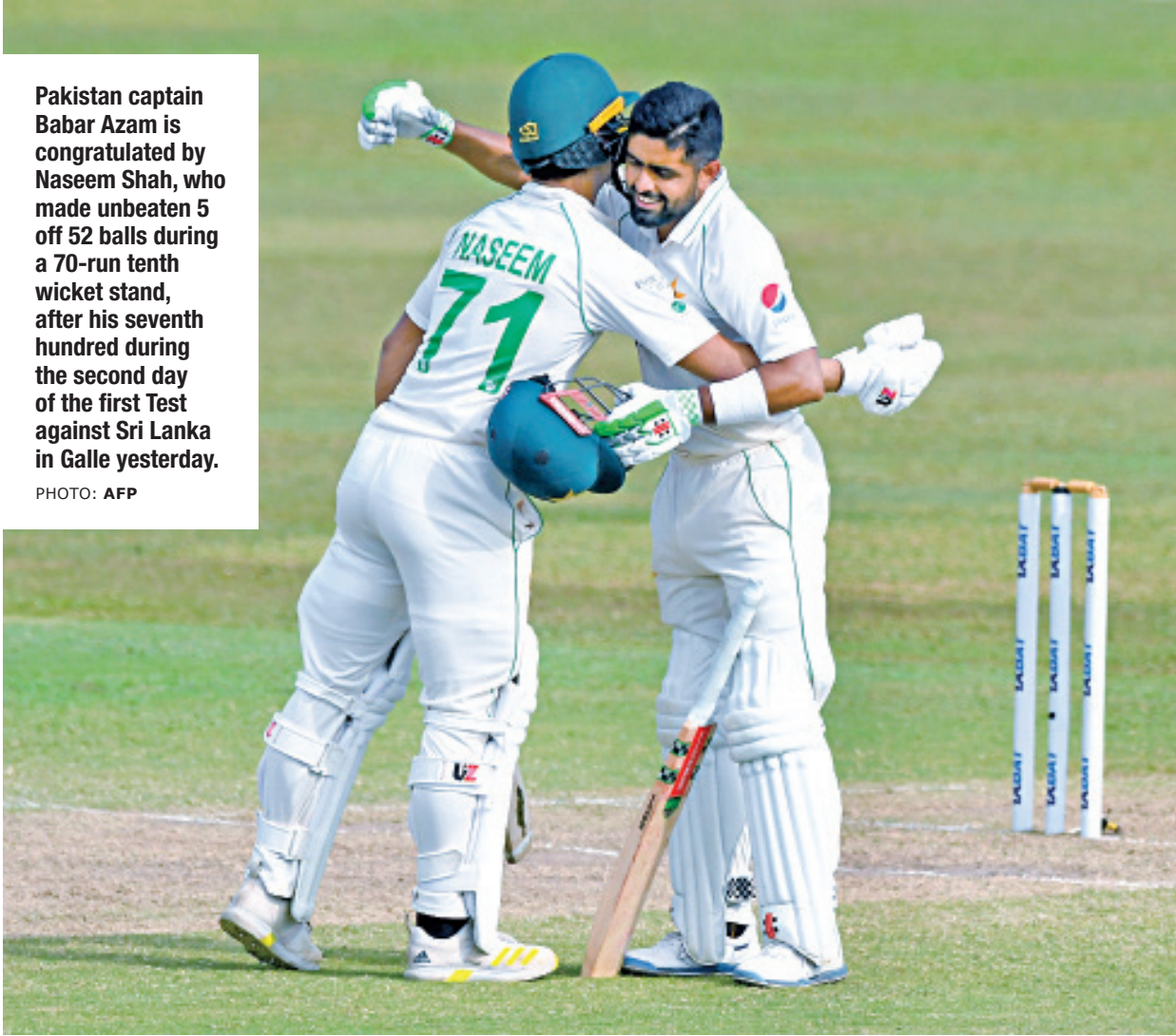
**REUTERS, Dubai**

Dragan Skocic has been reinstated as head coach of Iran after a meeting between the board of directors of the Iranian Football Federation and its technical committee, semi-official Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday.

Skocic's dismissal had been reported on Monday, prompting widespread criticism among the public just four months ahead of the World Cup finals in Qatar. Read full story

The 53-year-old Croatian will now continue to train Iran for their sixth appearance and third consecutive participation at the World Cup.

Iran have been drawn in Group B and will kick off their campaign against England on Nov. 21 before taking on Wales and the United States.



Pakistan captain Babar Azam is congratulated by Naseem Shah, who made unbeaten 5 off 52 balls during a 70-run tenth wicket stand, after his seventh hundred during the second day of the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP