

SPORT

What to WATCH

SONY SIX
England v Pakistan
Third Test, Day 1
Live from 4:00pm

TEN 2 UEFA Europa League
FINAL
Sevilla v Inter Milan
Live from 1:00am (Saturday)



Bayern Munich forward Serge Gnabry (L) scored twice while Robert Lewandowski took his tally in this season's Champions League to 15 goals in a 3-0 win over a wasteful Lyon in their semifinal on Wednesday. The result brought their fans worldwide great joy as the Bavarians set up a final showdown with PSG on Sunday. PHOTO: TWITTER



Unstoppable Bayern ride on 'outstanding Gnabry, bit of luck'

AGENCIES

Bayern Munich head into Sunday's Champions League final against Paris St Germain in extraordinarily dominant form and with a real chance to become the first team to win the competition with a 100 percent record.

Bayern coach Hansi Flick admitted after their 3-0 win that his side needed a bit of luck and the quality of Serge Gnabry to survive early Olympique Lyonnais pressure and book their spot in the final. Winger Gnabry scored twice before Robert Lewandowski added a late third goal but the Bavarians had to survive early



Lyon forward Memphis Depay surprised everyone as he squandered a golden chance to get the lead in the fourth minute, firing into the side-netting from an awkward angle. PHOTO: COLLECTED



"A physio told me before the game that a ball can't go in if you don't shoot it. Luckily, I shot it and it went in."

SERGE GNABRY

pressure from the French side who hit the post.

"It was an intense game and we knew it would be like that. Lyon had a great performance, pressured us and we survived it with a bit of luck especially at the start," Flick said.

"Serge's individual performance settled our nerves. The 1-0 was outstanding. His finish and his run, just outstanding," he added.

There were just 58 seconds between Lyon's Karl Toko Ekambi hitting the post and Serge Gnabry unleashing a rocket into the top corner. It was a goal of the highest quality from one of Europe's finest and a brutal lesson in finishing.

It's a hallmark of this edition of Bayern to play with freedom and creativity, to also be ruthlessly efficient in front of goal. The eight they scored against Barcelona told its own story, and while this was a different performance against Rudi Garcia's more organized Lyon, the same traits were visible.

In fact, 'doubt' is a word that hardly seems applicable to Bayern -- at least since they replaced Niko Kovac with Flick in November.

"In the past 30 years they have never played at such a high level tactically as they are at the moment under Hansi Flick," Ralf Rangnick, the experienced former Bundesliga coach, told Kicker magazine after the game.

Olympique Lyonnais were left ruing missed chances as the French side, who finished seventh in Ligue 1 after it was cut short amid the COVID-19 crisis and will therefore not play in Europe next season, had the first two opportunities to score at the Estadio da Luz. But Memphis Depay shot just wide and Karl Toko

Ekambi hit the post as Lyon dominated Bayern in midfield and found space in the back of the German team's defenders.

Cameroon forward Ekambi also missed a sitter after the break. "We're all very sad. It's not easy to lose in a Champions League semi-final but we exit the competition with our heads high," said Lyon sports director Juninho.

"We knew that we were up against a better team but we stuck to our game plan but to beat such a team, you need to score when you have the chance. Maybe it would have been different if we had converted our early chances."

Bayern will bid for their sixth European Cup triumph when they come up against Neymar and Kylian Mbappe on Sunday and after convincingly beating Chelsea, Barcelona and now Lyon, Hansi Flick's side will surely start as favourites.

But Lyon forward Ekambi issued a warning as he said he didn't think Bayern were "unbeatable" despite 3-0 loss.

'Main prep will be in SL'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Chief Selector Minhajul Abedin hinted yesterday that the most important aspects of the team's training following the long coronavirus-induced break will take place in Sri Lanka.

"We have a few practice matches in Sri Lanka and we will be announcing the main squad after we go there. A preliminary squad is going there but the training sessions in Sri Lanka are going to be very important since the break of five months was a long one. How they can cope and get ready for international cricket will be evaluated," said Minhajul.

"We're taking 20 to 22 players and the squad will be ready by the first week of September. The main squad of 15 will be selected there. Three [Covid-19] tests will be done in the Bangladesh and then the players will be tested again in Sri Lanka," Minhajul added.

Meanwhile, BCB is still waiting for batting consultant Neil McKenzie's confirmation for the Tigers' upcoming tour of Sri Lanka.

"McKenzie has not yet confirmed to us if he will join the side. Everything will be clear within the next two-three days. And even if he cannot join Bangladesh on the Sri Lanka tour, we still have a few options in hand," informed cricket operations committee Chairman Akram Khan yesterday.

Clubs want payments resolved before committing to next season

SPORTS REPORTER

A majority of Bangladesh Premier League clubs have given the initial nod to start the new season, but they first want to settle last season's payment issues with players.

The Professional Football League Committee (PFLC), headed by BFF senior vice president Abdus Salam Murshedy, sat with the clubs at the BFF House yesterday in line with directives from the executive committee.

All clubs aside from Mohammedan and Brothers Union attended the meeting to give opinions in favour of starting the new season.

"The clubs want to play but the environment has to be created. It is true that all clubs are not ready to play within a few days. The clubs have to prepare for play as the situation is different this time around due to Covid-19," Abahani manager Satyjit Das Rupu said after the meeting.

"There is a pending issue with the players regarding last season's payments. What will happen to players who received more than 80 per cent payment of their contracts last season, which was closed due to the coronavirus pandemic," said Rupu, who is also a member of BFF executive committee, adding that it is very important that the players co-operate with clubs to start the new season.

Clubs were asked to send written opinions about the start of new seasons as well as the payment issue with the players before the next league PFLC meeting, which is likely to take place on August 26 and finalise issues.

It was also decided that they would sit with the representatives of the players by Tuesday and get their opinion on payments. Some players have received the maximum money as stipulated in their contracts while others received nominal payments from clubs as the season was cancelled.

The BFF has already sent a draft plan for next season, with the transfer window scheduled to open in late September and the season starting in November.



INTER'S FOURTH OR SEVILLA'S SIXTH?

Romelu Lukaku will look to continue his fine scoring run when Inter Milan meet Sevilla in the Europa League final tonight. The teams have never met in UEFA competition. Sevilla have lifted the title a record five times, including a 'three-peat' in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The Italians however know what it is like to win this title too, having won it three times (1991, 1994 and 1998).

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM



A different kind of TV series on RTV

This time, a completely new kind of TV series is going to be screened on RTV. Based on true stories, this TV series will give viewers a whole new experience. Stories of thirteen adolescent married girls are portrayed in this TV series, where they tell their own stories. Initiated by the IMAGE Plus project and produced by RedOrange Media and Communications, the 13-episode series titled Amio Achi (আমিও অঁচি) shows the life struggles of these thirteen victims of early marriage, and how they turned their lives around, while also playing a major role in preventing child marriage in their communities.

Regarding the naming of Amio Achi ('I am also there' in Bangla), the producers said that there are many like them

Advertorial

who do not have any identity, even though they are a part of society. Even when they are right in front of us, they are invisible! This is especially true for girls who are married at a very early age. They drop out of school, lose hope and their own individuality. Despite hundreds of obstacles faced by them, they did not disappear. They are still there. This is why the TV series is called Amio Achi.

The team of Amio Achi travelled day and night in all the remote districts of North Bengal to bring out these stories. The stories of change inspired them to feel encouraged and give their best effort. At the same time, they faced several challenges and new experiences.

For the last six years, the IMAGE Plus project, initially known as IMAGE, has been working to improve the lives of married adolescent girls in three districts in Bangladesh: Nilphamari, Galbandha and Kurigram. The project is funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and implemented by Terre des hommes Netherlands as the lead and RedOrange as the strategic partner. Other implementing partners are SKS Foundation, Terre des hommes Foundation, and Polissire. Presented by Farzana Ahsan Mhir, the series will be aired every Friday and Saturday at 7:10pm starting August 21, 2020 on RTV.

Furthermore, the episodes will be made available on YouTube and Facebook.

SHOOTING IN BANGLADESH

Dissolution the only solution to infighting

In the final part of a multi-part report by The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman, incumbent Bangladesh Shooting Sport Federation (BSSF) president Nazimuddin Chowdhury and general secretary Intekhabul Hamid explain what went on behind the scenes that led to a breakdown in their relationship. Meanwhile former shooters and officials lobby for the dissolution of the existing executive committee.

Asked why their relationship had suddenly deteriorated after running the federation in tandem for nearly six years, Nazimuddin and Intekhabul blamed each other.

"The fact is that Intekhabul wanted to do business with the federation but I interrupted him. That is why the relationship soured. He started this business in 2017 as per the probe committee report. I personally brought Tk 3.5 crore from the government to renovate the shooting range and install electric target changers. We later heard that his company provided each target changer for Tk 26 lakh but the federation itself changed each electronic target changer for only 6.33 lakh. That is a big difference," Nazimuddin told The Daily Star last month.

"The probe committee submitted their report on March 21 during the lockdown. At the time we could not do anything. However, we discussed the report through a Zoom meeting on June 6 and asked the secretary general for an explanation, which he placed in early July. We will decide on it at the next meeting," added Nazimuddin, who has been involved in shooting since 1986, barring a four-and-a-half-year period from 2009 to 2014.

Asked why general secretaries always faced allegations, Nazimuddin said: "I did not resign in face of allegations. I resigned following an argument with then-president [Major General Ashab Uddin]. The only allegation against me was when shooter Asif Ahmed was beaten by the police in 2006 and I was blamed because I could not protect him. Some vested groups provided false information to the media to spin the incident. At the moment, the NBR called on shooters but I am being blamed for not protecting them," said Nazimuddin.

Having termed Nazimuddin the instigator, Intekhabul provided a defence against the allegations he faces. "He [Nazimuddin] brought me into shooting because he needed a man against [former general secretary Isteaque Ahmed] Bablu bhai. Many people told me that he used me against Bablu bhai," Intekhabul told The Daily Star last month. "Nazim bhai doesn't spare anyone who goes against his opinions. That is his character. He never makes those persons understand and bring them back to work. Instead, he always chops those who go against him. He is now acting against me because I went against his opinions."

Asked about his business with the federation, Intekhabul said: "I'm not doing business with the NSC from today. Our company -- Delco -- has been involved in developing all the cricket stadiums in the country. Delco was awarded the work by the NSC as the lowest bidder," explained Intekhabul. "You can ask the NSC why they bought each electronic target changer at Tk 26 lakh instead of Tk 6 lakh."

Intekhabul further claimed: "The BSSF president actually brought the allegations against me after I did not agree to pay additional bills worth more than Tk 2 crore to a company that he is familiar with, which was awarded the works ahead of three companies recommended by the Tender Evaluation Company. It renovated the BSSF's four-storey building at an original agreement of Tk 2.72 crore."

"After being elected secretary general, I personally provided approximately Tk 40 to 50 lakh per year behind shooting. The

BSSF president is trying to convict me by bringing allegations to keep me away from the upcoming elections."

Both of them may have fierce arguments to defend themselves, but it would be better to see that zeal in answering why shooting has not progressed and in identifying obstacles in the development of shooting.

"We are using the older model air rifles and pistols during training, which are inaccurate. So how will the young shooters improve? I think the BSSF should persuade the government to allow the clubs to import guns and bullets, similar to what India is doing," said a former national coach seeking anonymity.

Often shooters have struggled to train properly due to a shortage of bullets. To solve the ongoing problems, former officials and shooters see no ways but to dissolve the existing committee and appoint an ad-hoc committee, comprising real organisers and former shooters.

"It is a master plan to destroy shooting and it is happening due to some old organisers," Commonwealth Games gold medalist Ateequr Rahman told The Daily Star. "We are ashamed by the present condition of shooting, which could not win a single gold medal in the SA Games in December. We once beat our Indian counterparts regularly."



"Bangladesh shooting has been suffering due to a battle of interest among officials, who never think about the country. We don't need this committee. It should be dissolved immediately," Ateequr said, demanding that former shooters be inserted into the ad-hoc committee so they can look after the interest of shooters.

Urging the dissolution of the existing committee, former general secretary Isteaque Ahmed said: "As it is a federation of arms and ammunition, the president needs to be an army official as they understand the use of the arms and bullets. The appointment of an army official as president will bring balance to the committee."

"It has been proven that shooting won't benefit from bureaucrats or businessmen. It needs real organisers and an army official as president. Shooting has all but vanished due to internal conflicts. A lot of money is being spent but there are no results," said another general secretary asking not to be named.

Although the youth and sports ministry's move to form an ad-hoc BSSF committee allegedly came to a halt after lobbying from some quarters, many believe it is high time to revive shooting by taking immediate steps as the national shooting team now depends heavily on BKSP and Bangladesh Army instead of rifle clubs across the country.