

TEN 1 HD
Pakistan v West Indies
First Test, Day 2 (D/N)
Live from 5:30pm

SONY SIX
Primera Liga
Las Palmas v Espanyol
Live from 12:45am (Saturday)

BCB XI v England XI
Two-day Warm-up Match
Time: 10:00am
Venue: MA Aziz Stadium, Chittagong

Bangladesh Premier League
Arambagh v Sk Russel
Time: 4:30pm
Mohammedan v SK Jamal
Time: 7:30pm
Venue: Sylhet District Stadium

DAY'S EVENT

Jeers or silence?

BPL resumes today

SPORTS REPORTER

When the JB Bangladesh Premier League resumes today after a 13-day break some players, especially who were part of the Bangladesh's humiliating 3-1 defeat against Bhutan in the Asian Cup Play-Off Qualifiers last week, might face the wrath of the fuming fans that have turned to the street to voice their utter disappointment.

Frustration has gripped the football loving people of the country following Bangladesh's failure against lightweights Bhutan in the Asia Cup match, culminating in a demonstration in front of the Bangladesh Football Federation's headquarters, which was going on for the second day yesterday. These kinds of demonstrations from agitated fans are a clear indication of the kind of turnout and could also lead to players underperforming.

"There may be an impact on domestic competitions as a bad reaction is being observed after the disappointing result of the national team. It is challenging for the players to perform better under such circumstance as the players are also being targeted and facing bad reactions from their relatives, friends and neighbours," said Arambagh coach Saiful Bari Titu.

In the first match of the day, a struggling Sheikh Russel will take on Arambagh before joint-leaders Sheikh Jamal play against an off-colour Mohammedan outfit under floodlights.

The Arambagh manager said he would shield his players from criticism, while also saying he would try to bring out their best as they step out for the club.

"There were two players from Arambagh in the national squad, so as a coach I want to protect them from such an adverse environment and bring out the best from them during the club match," said Titu.

Sheikh Russel KC coach Shafiqul Islam

Manik is also doubtful about whether new spectators -- who had started to return to stadiums this season -- will continue coming after being disappointed by the national team's result in Thimphu.

"It is now a big challenge to bring spectators to the Big Bowl as we have gradually been losing spectators due to the national team's consecutive failures. If the spectators presume that local football is more for us than international football, then they can come to the Big Bowl," said Manik, who added that domestic football was more attractive during his generation despite the national team having less success at the international level.

The former national defender believes that the onus is now on the footballers to perform in the domestic league.

"They took football to this stage and they will have to revive the popularity by displaying better performances at the club level and I think the players have already realised what they have to do in the domestic league," said Manik.

Rahmatganj coach Kamal Babu's statement however, completely contrasted with what Titu and Manik had said as he believes the national team and domestic league are completely different.

"Club teams and the national team are not comparable at all. The national team looked like a vulnerable side but the club teams are competing in a strong league. I think the national team would not be able to beat any team of the professional football league and I don't even want to term it as a national team," said Kamal, who however believed that spectators would gradually increase as the league progresses.

After the ninth round of professional league, lightweights Rahmatganj and a depleted Sheikh Jamal are jointly on top of the 12-team table with an equal 19 points, while big-spending Chittagong Abahani and national-players-studded Abahani are in the second and third positions with 18 and 17 points respectively.



Football fans holding banners expressing their frustration at the current state of the national team protest outside the BFF House yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

WORLD KABBADI Bangladesh's late stumble

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh squandered their chances to keep their hopes of a semifinal berth in the Kabbadi World Cup alive when they surrendered a comprehensive lead to South Korea, ultimately suffering a narrow 35-32 point defeat in their third match in Ahmadabad yesterday.

Bangladesh started brilliantly as they asserted their dominance by having their South Korean counterparts all out with the scoreboard reading 10-0. However, they lost momentum and finished the first half at 15-15.

After resumption, Bangladesh recovered from the sloppy performance and took the lead yet again by seven points, but with only a few minutes remaining they collapsed again and were all out with Jang Kun Lee turning the game upside down with a super raid. It gave Korea the advantage for the first time and they edged their way to victory.

The win means Korea remain unbeaten in the Pool A standings and jump over India with three wins in three matches to post 15 points.

Elsewhere, Thailand made light work of Kenya with a 53-21 points win.

IHF TROPHY HANDBALL Bangladesh second best to India

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's U-21 men's and U-19 women's national teams settled for the runners-up position in their respective categories of the IHF Trophy Handball Tournament as they both suffered massive defeats at the hands of their Indian counterparts, yesterday at the Shaheed (Capt) M Mansur Ali National Handball Stadium.

The men's team were drubbed 46-25 after trailing 10-20 during the first half and the women followed suit, conceding a 48-29 defeat.

The men's defeat to India was expected and could even be termed inevitable as they had already lost 45-31 in a group-stage fixture.

On the other hand, there was hope for the women's team who have claimed the IHF trophy title before during 2014 in Pakistan when India did not participate.

The girls in red and green trailed 7-26 during the first half but managed to show their might as they fought back during the second, scoring 22 goals.

However, that was not enough to surmount the Indians, who finished on a high note with a total of 48 goals.

"After the match, we realised that India were far ahead of Bangladesh as they are consistent performers who enjoy better facilities than we do. India have an academy from which loads of players join the national team but here we even can't practice regularly and you saw the difference between the sides on the field," said Bangladesh head coach Kamrul Islam Kiron.

Meanwhile, Pakistan finished third in both sections as their men's team beat Nepal 42-14, while the women's team beat Sri Lanka 34-16 in place-deciding matches.



England pace bowler Stuart Broad (L) and young opener Haseeb Hameed enjoy a bit of recess during the team training at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday as part of their preparations for the two-Test series that starts at this ground on October 20.

A gradual upward curve

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



Bangladesh had won six ODI series prior to England's arrival. It was only natural therefore that the country's cricketing fraternity was very excited for the limited overs series.

However, one may not see the same level of excitement with regards to the upcoming Tests. The stands at the stadiums were full in both Chittagong and Dhaka during the ODIs with frequent complaints regarding the unavailability of tickets.

The Test series is expected to be completely opposite with huge gaps in the galleries. It may be something that might surprise the visitors, coming from a region that witnesses packed stadiums during Tests.

When you compare Bangladesh's progress in Tests to ODIs in the last two years, you will obviously prefer the latter. In contrast to the ODIs, the Tigers have not managed to create that fervour by beating big teams in the longer version.

However, that does not mean that they have not improved at all.

Bangladesh have played eight Tests since October 2014 and have lost just once. They beat Zimbabwe thrice, drew twice against South Africa, once against India and once against

AURIER SAVES PLAYER'S LIFE

Controversial Paris Saint-Germain defender Serge Aurier has been praised after his quick-thinking helped save another player's life. Mali's French coach Alain Giresse thanked Aurier, who has made the headlines recently for all the wrong reasons, for helping a stricken Moussa Doumbia during an African World Cup qualifier in the Ivory Coast last Saturday. Doumbia "was swallowing his tongue and choking", Giresse told French radio station RMC. "That's when Serge Aurier, along with one of our players, had the presence of mind to quickly put him (Doumbia) on his side and to use his hand to pull his tongue out as he was dying. It was an incredible reaction from Aurier. I spoke to him afterwards and I even thanked him for his cool head."

—AFP



Pakistan. These are much better numbers than in previous years.

And one also has to understand that performance in Test cricket cannot be judged by just the win-loss ratio. There are after all, several landmarks to be achieved within a game and those achievements say a lot.

Take for example, Bangladesh's last series against South Africa, in July 2015. It was mired by rain and the teams could barely play three days of cricket in either Test. The series eventually resulted in a draw.

However, the positive aspect was that Bangladesh had managed to take a first innings lead against the South Africans in the first Test. That is something that does not happen that often with the Tigers.

And then there was the world record stand between Imrul Kayes and Tamim Iqbal in the first Test against Pakistan, which brought Bangladesh back from the dead and helped them draw that Test.

Ask the senior players in the side and they will tell you that they were in a similar position in the ODIs a couple of years ago, when the frequency of their wins against big teams was really low.

It is an aspect that Bangladesh can gradually improve by playing more

and more Tests; and that again is a problem. The very fact that Bangladesh have not played a Test since August 2015 can hurt them in the upcoming series.

When they lost their first ODI against Afghanistan, many of the players admitted that it was difficult to return to ODIs after a gap of 10 months. In this case, it has been 13 months since they played their last Test and they will be facing fourth-placed England; the equation is bound to be tough.

However, ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is hopeful that the hosts can end the series on a good note by doing well in the two Tests.

"We still have two Tests in which many of the one-day players will be playing and they will be more confident. A lot will depend on who does well in the first innings of the Test. My best wishes to the team. Although I can't be with them, I definitely believe in them," said Mashrafe following the third ODI on Wednesday.

England will play two two-day games against BCB XI in order to prepare for the Tests. The first one will begin today at the MA Aziz Stadium. Sabbir Rahman will lead BCB XI today. Apart from him, Soumya Sarkar, Rubel Hossain and Mosaddek Hossain are also present



BD-ENG SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH		R/B	45/66		
Tamim c Vince b Rashid	45/68	5/0			
Imrul c sub (Dawson) b Stokes	46/58	4/1			
Sabbir b Buttler b Rashid	49/46	5/0			
Mahmudullah c Bairstow b Rashid	6/7	0/1			
Mushfiqur not out	67/62	4/1			
Shakib b Buttler b Moeen	4/10	0/0			
Nasir c Vince b Rashid	4/10	0/0			
Mosaddek not out	38/39	4/0			
Extras: (D-4, lb-3, w-11)	18				
Total: (For 6 wickets in 50 overs)	277				
Did not bat: Mashrafe, Shafiqul, Taskin.					
Fall of wickets: 1-80, 2-106, 3-122, 4-176, 5-184, 6-192.					
ENGLAND		R/B	45/66		
Vince lbw b Nasir	32/37	5/0			
Billings c Imrul b Mosaddek	62/69	4/1			
Duckett c Mushfiqur b Shafiqul	63/68	4/1			
Bairstow b Shafiqul	15/18	1/0			
Stokes not out	47/48	1/2			
Buttler b Mashrafe	25/26	3/0			
Moeen b Mahmudullah b Mashrafe	1/3	0/0			
Mosaddek not out	27/18	3/1			
Extras: (w-6)	6				
Total: (For 6 wickets 47.5 overs)	278				
Did not bat: Rashid, Plumkett, Ball.					
Fall of wickets: 1-63, 2-127, 3-172, 4-179, 5-227, 6-236.					
Bowler		O	M	R	W
Woaikes	8	0	66	0	
Ball	8	0	44	0	
Plumkett	9	0	51	0	
Moeen	10	0	42	1	
Stokes	5	0	24	1	
Rashid	10	0	43	4	

Messi back in training

AFP, Barcelona



Global superstar Lionel Messi returned to training with Barcelona on Wednesday following three weeks out with a groin injury.

France international defender Samuel Umtiti also returned to training according to a statement on the Catalan giants' website.

"Both Leo Messi and Samuel Umtiti, despite neither yet being declared fit for selection as they battle to recover from injury, were able to join the rest of the team for the workout," said the statement accompanied by a photo showing Argentine Messi at training.



Action from the IHF Trophy men's final between Bangladesh and India at the Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali National Handball Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

MACAO OPEN Siddikur starts well

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace Bangladesh golfer Siddikur Rahman got off to an impressive start in the Macao Open when he finished the opening round with two-under par 69 at the Macao Golf and Country Club yesterday.

Siddikur hit four birdies against two bogeys in the US\$1.1 million Asian Tour tournament to stay in the top sixteen on a day when England's Ian Poulter marked his return from a four-month injury lay-off with a stylish seven-under-par 64 to share the first round lead with Spaniard Carlos Pígame.

The former Ryder Cup star birdied all the par five holes and did not drop a single shot while Pígame, who broke through for his first win in Asia in July, matched Poulter later in the day, thanks to an outstanding outward 28 which included five birdies and one eagle.

Thailand's Chaphai Nirat led the chasing pack, with two closing birdies giving him a 65 to trail by one while India's Anirban Lahiri, champion here in 2014, shot a bogey-free 66 to share fourth place with Australia's Marcus Fraser, who made two eagles after suffering an injury scare at the start of his round.

Azhar hits first D/N Test ton

AFP, Dubai

Pakistan closed the opening day of the day-night first Test, played with a pink ball, against West Indies on 279-1 in Dubai on Thursday.

Azhar Ali smashed an unbeaten 146 while Asad Shafiq was 33 not out in the second ever day-night Test in cricket history.

Azhar put on 215 for the opening wicket with Sami Aslam, who fell for 90 in a match which marked Pakistan's 400th Test.

It was Azhar's 50th Test and with this century, his 11th, the right-hander also became the first centurion in D-N Test. After Pakistan won the toss, he added 215 with Aslam, Pakistan's fourth-best opening stand. West Indies finally found a way past the pair when Chase had Aslam bottom-edging a sweep into his stumps for 90. Azhar then combined with Shafiq to drive Pakistan's assured progress.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 279 for one (Aslam 90, Azhar 146 not out, Shafiq 33 not out; Chase 1 for 63)