

What to WATCH

GTV & STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

Bangladesh v West Indies

First Test, Day Three

Live from 9:30am

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

English Premier League

Man United v Crystal Palace

Live from 9:00pm

Tottenham v Chelsea

Live from 11:30pm

SONY ESPN

Sri Lanka v England

Third Test, Day Two

Live from 10:30am

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

English Premier League

West Ham v Man City

Live from 9:00pm

SONY ESPN

Serie A

Inter Milan v Frosinone

Live from 1:30am (Sunday)

TEN 2

Pakistan v New Zealand

Second Test, Day One

Live from 12:00pm

Serie A

Udinese v Roma

Live from 8:00pm

Juventus v SPAL

Live from 11:00pm

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh v West Indies

First Test, Day Three

Time: 9:30am

Venue: Zahur Ahmed

Chowdhury Stadium

Bangladesh Cricket League

Four-day match

Day Three

Prime Bank v Walton

Time: 9:30am

Venue: SICs, Sylhet

BCB v Islami Bank

Time: 9:30am

Venue: SKS, Rajshahi

(Clockwise from top) Abahani players and officials celebrate with the Walton Federation Cup trophy after their 3-1 win in the final against Bashundhara Kings at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The high-scoring match, however, had its fair share of unwanted incidents as Abahani's two-goal scorer Sunday Chizoba had to be taken to hospital following a brutal foul from Kings' Nasir Chowdhury while two players of each side were sent off late in the game following an ugly brawl.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# Abahani seal hattrick title

## Sunday double denies Bashundhara Kings in tempestuous final

SPORTS REPORTER

Established giants Abahani denied newcomers Bashundhara Kings history by sealing their hattrick title of the Federation Cup with a come-from-behind 3-1 win in an eventful final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Abahani's Nigerian and Haitian forwards Sunday Chizoba and Kervens Belfort outshone Bashundhara's Costa Rican marksman Daniel Colindres to deliver the Sky Blues their second hattrick title as well as a record 11th Federation Cup trophy, keeping intact the practice of not allowing newcomers to become champions in debut appearances.

Sunday cancelled out a 21st-minute strike from Colindres five minutes into the second half with a tap-in before giving Abahani the lead in the 79th minute with a clinical finish. Belfort then wrapped up the victory in the 81st minute of the final, which was however marred by an ugly brawl between the two sets of players during the final moments after an entertaining 90 minutes of football.

Referee Mizanur Rahman was forced to send off Bashundhara Kings' Sushanta Tripura, Towhidul Alam Sabuz and Abahani's Mamun Mia and Nabib Newaj Jibon -- the latter three substitutes -- as they got engaged in an ugly scuffle following a foul. The eventful final also saw Sunday being taken to hospital following Bashundhara Kings' defender Nasir Chowdhury's merciless elbowing on the tournament's top-scorer and best player. The Nigerian was, however, later released from the hospital as there was no serious injury.

Despite the sending off of four players, the game was completed smoothly before spectators flocked into the ground to put the security of the players at risk following the final whistle.

**ABAHANI 3 - 1 BASHUNDHARA KINGS**  
SUNDAY 50', 69', BELFORT 81'  
COLINDRES 21'

### HIGHLIGHTS

- This is Abahani's record 11th Federation Cup title and second hattrick title
- The result maintained the tradition of newcomers not winning the final
- The win earns Abahani the right to represent Bangladesh in next year's AFC Cup
- Two players of each side were sent off during this high-octane final
- Abahani striker Sunday Chizoba became the top scorer (6 goals) and most valuable player of the tournament

At the atmosphere was electric as half of the

23,000-capacity stadium was filled up by the fans of the two sides, with the reds of Bashundhara Kings being the more vibrant and far outnumbering the Dhanmondi faithful.

The players of both sides looked excited and engaged in heated exchanges following each foul while imposing the physical side of their game instead of concentrating on smooth build-up play, resulting in a lot of erratic passes in midfield. However, Abahani dominated the proceedings initially to shake Bashundhara Kings, with Raihan Hasan's long throw-ins causing trouble to the Kings' defence quite a few times.

Bashundhara Kings, playing with a compact midfield and defence by deploying Colindres as the lone striker, got rid of the initial pressure to launch attacks. Colindres did not disappoint the crowd as he gave his side the lead with a grounder from inside the box after Abahani goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Soheli made a feeble clearance.

After conceding the lead, Abahani players lost temperament before regrouping in the second half to bounce back with Sunday tapping in a long throw-in from Raihan in the 50th minute before the Nigerian gave his side the lead with a side-volley on Soheli Rana's forward pass in the 69th minute. Belfort, who had a trial with Bashundhara Kings before being signed by Abahani, wrapped up the victory, heading home Wali Faisal's corner in the 81st minute.

# The joy of a hattrick

SPORTS REPORTER

Hundreds of spectators surrounded and hugged Jakaria Babu as the Abahani coach kept crying following his side's hattrick title of the Federation Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

"I don't know why I am crying. May be I'm crying out of happiness," said the AFC A license-holder coach as he wiped his tears. It was not only the coach, but all of the players, officials and fans were living the joy as the Sky Blues came back strongly to beat Bashundhara Kings 3-1 in the eventful final, earning the right to represent Bangladesh in the upcoming AFC Cup.

"I have always said that we have the ability to reimburse goals and win matches because the players were really confident about it," Babu said after the victory. "At the interval, I briefed the players to keep believing in themselves. The players were a bit nervous after conceding the lead in the first half but they really showed their character to come back strongly."

"All the credit goes to the players, not just Sunday or Belfort. Every player is equal for me and they collectively played their best. I also must admit that the club management and manager Satyajit Das Rupu played a tremendous role in building the team," Babu said, adding the last-moment incident was unexpected and Sunday was hit intentionally.

Abahani captain Shahidul Alam Shohel said, "We were excited because it was a big match with both teams wanting to win the final. During the interval, the coach told us not to hurry, rather keeping cool as we have the ability to reimburse the goal and score more."

"Sunday is one of the best foreign players I have seen in my career. Today he had a great contribution but all the players and club management gave a great effort to make our dream true," explained Soheli.

Bashundhara Kings coach Oscar Bruzon explained his side's defeat by saying, "We failed to keep momentum in the second half where Abahani were better side, however, some of the decisions by the referee went against us. Besides, we also gave away some scoring opportunities and failed to hold the lead."

### SHORT CORNER

#### Xavi plans to retire at season's end

Former Spain and Barcelona midfielder Xavi Hernandez has indicated he will retire from playing at the end of the season.

Xavi has played for Qatari club Al Sadd since 2015 but is best known for his glittering career at Barca, where he won eight La Liga and four Champions League titles.

"It's going to be my last year, in January I'll turn 39 and I think it's time to say goodbye," Xavi said in an interview with Spanish radio station Cadena Ser on Thursday night.

#### Agüero credits knee surgery for form boost

Manchester City striker Sergio Agüero believes the absence of knee pain after his recovery from surgery has helped the Argentine marksman extend his impressive goal-scoring run in the Premier League this season.

The 30-year-old, who underwent an arthroscopic procedure on his knee in April, tops the league scoring charts with eight goals in 12 appearances in the ongoing campaign.

Playing in peak physical condition for the first time in years, City's record scorer Agüero reckons he is now able to carry out manager Pep Guardiola's pressing instructions more thoroughly.

"Luckily, things are going well for me. Pep Guardiola is happy. I try to help the team and be the first one who starts the pressing. Now I feel much better, I can do it more consistently."

#### 'Griezmann prefers Atletico Madrid'

Former Brazilian Barcelona player Rivaldo says Antoine Griezmann preferred to stay at Atletico Madrid instead of going to Barcelona because he will remain the star with the Rojiblancos, while with

the Blaugrana he would have been in the "shadow" of Messi.

"Messi continues to play so well that no one can challenge his status," Rivaldo said in an interview with Belfair. "I think Griezmann chose to stay where he was instead of coming into the shadow of Messi."

Atletico Madrid and Barcelona will face off next Saturday at the Wanda Metropolitano, where the hosts, third in La Liga with 23 points, will seek to overtake their opponents who have 24 and are top.

#### Ramos two shy of 100 goals

Real Madrid captain Sergio Ramos is about to reach 100 career goals for Sevilla, Real Madrid and the Spanish national team. After 787 games the 32-year-old has sent the ball into the back of the net 98 times - a spectacular figure for a centre-back.

At the age of 18 he had already shown his scoring skills, striking his last Sevilla goal against his current team, three months before departing to the capital. At Los Blancos, he scored the first of his 78 goals in the Champions League, on December 6 against Olympiacos.

At the moment, Ramos has 57 goals in LaLiga, 11 in the Champions League, four in the Copa del Rey, two in the Spanish Super Cup, two in the Club World Cup and two in the European Super Cup.

#### Dhumketu beat Rangers

Dhumketu Club notched a 60-56 point victory over Rangers Club in their match of the Unimed Unihealth Premier Division basketball League at the Dhanmondi Indoor Gymnasium yesterday.

The winning team trailed by 31-30 points after the second quarter of the match. Tarek scored highest 18 points while Akash netted 11 points for Dhumketu Club. Earlier on Thursday night, Rangers Club had beaten Flame Boys by 62-53 points, with Mizan scoring 24 points for Rangers Club.

--SPORTS REPORTER

# Barca face Atletico test SL fight back despite Bairstow ton

AFP, Madrid

Atletico Madrid will have to overcome an eight-year winless streak if they are to beat Barcelona and jump above their rivals in La Liga on Saturday.

Atletico have finished in La Liga's top three for the past six years running but have not beaten Barcelona in the league since 2010, with 16 games going by without a victory for Diego Simeone's side.

Perhaps their cautious approach is well-suited to their opponents, although they

have beaten Barca twice in the Champions League knockout stage, or perhaps there is a psychological barrier and a lack of belief they can go toe-to-toe with them.

They have a great chance this weekend. Ernesto Valverde's team are coming off the back of a bad defeat by Real Betis. Their defence is vulnerable while Philippe Coutinho, Ivan Rakitic and Marc-Andre ter Stegen are all struggling for fitness.

After 12 games, Barcelona have already conceded 18 goals in La Liga, more than 13 of the other 19 teams in the table, including Leganes who sit in the relegation zone.

Barcelona players take part in a training session at the club's training ground yesterday ahead of their La Liga encounter against Atletico Madrid tonight.

PHOTO: TWITTER

AFP, Colombo

Jonny Bairstow laid down a marker to be England's permanent Test number three on Friday but Sri

Lanka clawed their way back into their final match with late wickets.

At stumps on day one England, hunting a 3-0 whitewash, were 312-7, Bairstow having made 110 after partnerships of 100 with Joe Root and 99 with Ben Stokes.

"I was obviously pleased with it. There's only a few times you get to score a hundred for England, so it's a special time to be out there in the middle," Bairstow, 29, said afterwards.

"The emotion and hard work that has gone into getting back out on the field is massive."

Left-arm wrist spinner Lakshan Sandakan was Sri Lanka's most penetrative - and expensive -- bowler of the day, taking 4 for 91 off his 21 overs.

Finger spinners Malinda Pushpakumara and Dilruwan Perera shared the other three wickets between them.

Batting after Root won his eighth straight toss, England lost both openers cheaply in the morning.

Rory Burns disappointed again, bowled by Perera for 14 as he tried to cut. Keaton Jennings fell three overs later, caught at leg slip off Pushpakumara for 13.

But Root and Bairstow, England's fourth

different number three in the series, steadied the ship, surviving one review each to steer the visitors to 102-2 at lunch.

Bairstow and Root put on a 100-run stand before the captain fell to Sandakan after lunch, top-edging an attempted slog sweep on 46.

Sri Lanka should have had Stokes as well, with umpire Chris Gaffaney incorrectly turning down Perera's lbw appeal when the Durham all-rounder was yet to get off the mark.

Stokes and Bairstow then made hay, Stokes hitting five fours and two sixes before Sandakan got the Durham all-rounder to edge to slip, his 57 scored off 88 balls.

Bairstow then passed his century, removing his helmet and celebrating with gusto.

But he fell for 110, another Sandakan scalp, and was soon followed by Buttler for 16, caught and bowled by the same man, and by Ben Foakes who nicked Pushpakumara on 13.

Moeen Ali, who has had a woeful tour with the bat -- in contrast to with ball in hand -- then survived an lbw review. He ended on 23 and Adil Rashid not out on 13.

Sri Lanka also dropped two straightforward chances off Ali, who edged to wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella on two and to slip Dimuth Karunaratne on 17.

#### SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: 312 for 7 (Bairstow 110, Root 46, Stokes 57, Moeen 23 not out; Malinda 2-64, Sandakan 4-91)

England's Jonny Bairstow celebrates his century against Sri Lanka during the first day of the third Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club International Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP