

# What to WATCH

**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**  
Indian Premier League  
Hyderabad v Chennai  
Live from 8:30pm  
**TEN 1**  
UEFA Champions League

Porto v Liverpool  
Live from 1:00am (Thursday)  
**TEN 2**  
UEFA Champions League  
Man City v Tottenham  
Live from 1:00am (Thursday)

**DAY'S EVENT**

**Dhaka Premier League**  
Super League  
Time: 9:00am

Abahani v Mohammedan  
Venue: BKSP-3, Savar  
Legends of Rugganj v Sheikh

Jamal  
Venue: Khan Shaheb Osman  
Ali Stadium, Fatullah

Prime Bank v Prime Doleshwar  
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National  
Stadium, Dhaka



Abahani will bank on their two on-song strikers Nabib Newaz Jibon and Sunday Chizoba to deliver the goods in front of goal in their AFC Cup fixture against Minerva Punjab at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Abahani eye win against Minerva Punjab

SPORTS REPORTER



Fresh from a 4-3 win over Sheikh Jamal DC in a domestic league encounter, Abahani are looking forward to transferring their performance to the international stage when they host former I-League champions Minerva Punjab in their second AFC Cup encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

The match will get underway at 5:45pm.

The six-time Bangladesh Premier League champions lead Group E with three points and want to consolidate their lead by securing full points against Minerva Punjab, who, along with Indian Super League champions Chennaiyin FC, are in the second position with one point each.

Abahani are in superb form in the domestic league as they notched four straight wins, scoring 12 goals as well as registering a 1-0 win against Nepal's Manang Marshyangdi Club in their first AFC Cup match. However, the

Dhanmondi giants are a bit worried about playing with only two days' rest.

"We just played a match against Sheikh Jamal two days ago, so there is little time between the two matches. The most important thing for us is how we recover and rest the players because the players need to fully recover before the match against Minerva Punjab. However, we are looking forward to securing full points tomorrow [Wednesday]," Abahani's Portuguese coach Mario Lemos said at a pre-match conference at the BFF house yesterday.

According to Lemos, Minerva Punjab are a good team and strong in defence with two imposing foreigners in centre-back positions alongside a strong defensive midfielder and two technically good forwards.

But in the end it might turn out to be a battle between Abahani's on-song forwards against Minerva Punjab's strong defence. Lemos will bank on Sunday Chizoba and Nabib Newaz Jibon, who have scored eight goals each in 12 league matches so far this season.

"They [Minerva Punjab] are good in defence but we also have some good strikers. We have scored 13 goals in last

five matches. I think we need to play with intensity and if we can avoid those two big centre-backs and play accordingly, we can get goals. Not only Sunday and Jibon, players like [Kervens] Belfort, Rubel [Miah], Jewel [Rana] are good in scoring," explained Lemos, who must think about his vulnerable defence which conceded three goals against Sheikh Jamal despite leading 4-1 at one stage.

Abahani will have an edge in terms of experience as most of their players have experience of playing AFC-sanctioned tournaments before while Minerva Punjab are playing the AFC Cup for the first time. Minerva Punjab coach Sachin Badadhe is, however, confident about beating Abahani by defying all odds.

"We have prepared well and worked a lot on finishing which we lacked. We are targeting to score as many goals as we can to get full points," Badadhe said. "Abahani played well against Manang Marshyangdi, but to be honest, the Nepalese side were good yet they could not finish off their chances. We studied Abahani well and know each of their players."

## Punjab beat Rajasthan

AGENCIES, Mohali

Kings XI Punjab registered a comfortable 12-run win over Rajasthan Royals in an IPL 2019 encounter at Mohali on Tuesday, further reducing the Rajasthan's chances of making the play-offs.

Chasing 183 to win, Rajasthan could only muster 170-7 in reply as Punjab's spinners successfully stifled the batsmen in the middle overs before wickets fell in a heap towards the end of the innings.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**Kings XI Punjab:** 182 for 6 in 20 overs (Rahul 52, Gayle 30, Agarwal 26, Miller 40; Archer3-15)  
**Rajasthan Royals:** 170 for 7 in 20 overs (Tripathi 50, Buttler 23, Samson 27, Rahane 26; Arshdeep 2-43, Ashwin 2-24, Shami2-46)  
**Result:** Punjab won by 12 runs.

## ERRATUM

Due to a mistake, the article 'RCB punish hapless MI' published on April 16, 2019 erroneously stated that Royal Challengers Bangalore won the Indian Premier League match against Mumbai Indians. In fact, it was Mumbai Indians that won the encounter. We deeply regret any inconvenience this may have caused.

--SPORTS EDITOR

## KAHN TO TAKE ON BAYERN ROLE

Former Germany goalkeeper Oliver Kahn is expected to take on a boardroom role at Bayern Munich as early as January 2020, club president Uli Hoeness confirmed on Tuesday. Bayern CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, whose contract expires in 2021, confirmed last week that former club captain Kahn is in line to be his successor. Hoeness said that Kahn would return to Bayern at the beginning of next year, in order to ease him into the job ahead of Rummenigge's departure. "We are in very concrete discussions with Oliver, and the current plan is that he will get going on January 1 2020," Hoeness said in an interview with German agency DPA. "We are not under any time pressure because Karl-Heinz's contract runs until the end of 2021." Hoeness said that Kahn, who won a joint record eight Bundesliga titles and made 632 appearances for Bayern before retiring in 2008, would be well-suited to the role of CEO.

--AFP



## Booters to learn their fate today

*First round draw for FIFA WC 2022, Asian Cup 2023 to be held in KL*

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh national football team will get to know their fate today regarding which team they would face in the preliminary joint qualification for the 2022 FIFA World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup as the draw for the first round will be held at the AFC headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia today.

The draw will pit Bangladesh and the five other unseeded teams -- ranked 41st to 46th in Asia -- against the six seeded teams who are ranked 35th to 40th.

Bangladesh, currently ranked 41st, will get one of the six seeded teams -- Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos, Bhutan, Mongolia -- for double legged first round matches.

The first leg of the preliminary joint qualification (Round-1) will take place on June 6

with the return leg scheduled to kick off on June 11. The six winners will join Asia's top 34 teams in the group-based second round, which will commence in September.

If Bangladesh win the first round of qualifiers, they would be ensured of at least eight more matches in the second round of the qualifiers while a defeat would all but rob them of any more competitive football under the AFC/FIFA competitions for the next four years.

The latest FIFA ranking, published on April 4, and the resultant ranking in AFC zone, have been considered to decide the seeding and non-seeding for the first round of the qualifying campaign.

Bangladesh were ranked 157th in FIFA (30th in AFC zone) when the draw for the 2018 World Cup and the 2019 Asian Cup was made in 2015, which allowed them to avoid the first round, placing them directly in the second round of qualifiers.

## Porto plot a comeback

AFP, Porto



FC Porto coach Sergio Conceicao reckons Liverpool are "the best team in the world" on their day as the Portuguese side face up to the daunting prospect of overturning a two-goal deficit in their Champions League quarterfinal.

The teams meet at the Estadio do Dragao on Wednesday in the second leg of their last-eight tie, with Porto needing a historic comeback to go through after losing 2-0 at Anfield last week with Naby Keita and Roberto Firmino scoring.

While Porto have won all four home games in the Champions League this season, Liverpool travel to northern Portugal on top of the Premier League and unbeaten in 16 games.

"They are everything I like about football. I like the way they play, the way they are with the ball and without it," Conceicao said at an eve-of-game press conference on Tuesday.

"In my opinion, a lot of the time just now they are the best team in the world."

Porto lost 5-0 at home to Liverpool a year ago when the clubs met in the last 16.

Despite that, Conceicao, who also expressed solidarity towards Liverpool fans the day after the 30th anniversary of the "dark moment" of the Hillsborough disaster, was not giving up on turning the tie around.

However, he let slip that retaining the domestic title is Porto's priority during a lengthy rant at Portuguese authorities over match scheduling.

"We are two goals down against a side who we know are very strong going forward, and so keeping our balance when we are attacking will be fundamental to ensure we don't concede," said the coach, whose team are level on points with leaders Benfica at the top of the Portuguese league.

"It is difficult to prepare for this game because, incomprehensibly, we have another game on Saturday against Santa Clara.

"Why they don't protect teams like us? I have to ask what the main goal is for FC Porto, and it is the league."



Liverpool star Mohamed Salah (C) takes part in a team training session at Melwood yesterday on the eve of their Champions League quarterfinal second leg match against Porto.

PHOTO: AFP

BHF POLLS

## Sadeque, Mominul up for general secretary post

SPORTS REPORTER

Former hockey star Abdus Sadeque and Mohammed AKM Mominul Haque Shaheed are all set to contest the general secretary post of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation during the April 29 polls.

On the last to withdraw nominations Tuesday, nine candidates withdrew one of their two nomination papers while three candidates stood down from the election procedure, leaving 55 candidates out of 83 contesting 28 posts - five vice-presidents, one general secretary, two joint-secretaries, one treasurer and 19 executive members.

Mominul, who is also chairman of Dhaka Mariner Youngs' hockey committee, withdrew his nomination for vice-presidency while Usha KC president Abdur Rashid Shikdar withdrew his nomination for the post of general secretary. However, both are still contesting the polls.

The withdrawals meant 11 candidates will contest the five vice-president posts, two will fight for the general secretary post, four will battle for the two joint-secretary posts and 36 will compete for the 19 member posts, informed returning election officer Kabirul Islam yesterday.

The final list of candidates will be published on April 18.

### SHORT CORNER

#### 'Bayern won't exceed 100m euros for a player'

Bayern Munich president Uli Hoeness ruled out breaking the 100 million euros (\$113 million) mark this summer and said he would buy French striker Kylian Mbappe "immediately" if he had the money.

Bayern are planning a major squad overhaul this summer, and have already confirmed the signings of French World Cup winners Benjamin Pavard and Lucas Hernandez.

The Bayern president ruled out spending 100 million euros on a single player in the summer transfer window, but suggested that Bayern may break that figure in the future.

"There definitely won't be a 100 million euro transfer this year, but I have to admit that ten years ago, I couldn't have imagined spending 80 million," he said.

The sum of 80 million euros was what Bayern paid to sign Hernandez from Atletico Madrid, a figure nearly double that of their previous record transfer -- fellow Frenchman Corentin Tolisso.

#### Real disappoint again in dreary draw

Real Madrid took the Monday night slot reserved for La Liga's lower teams and never really looked out of place as Karim Benzema's goal was enough only for a 1-1 draw away to Leganes.

Madrid delivered another thoroughly underwhelming performance at Butarque to remain 13 points adrift of Barcelona, with Zinedine Zidane's second reign as coach now delivering three wins, one

defeat and a draw.

Leganes might even have won it after Jonathan Silva gave them the lead shortly before half-time and while Benzema scored his 26th goal of the season, Madrid never looked like finding a winner.

"It looks like we do not have much confidence," Zidane said. "We have to give a little bit more."

Instead, they sit four points behind Atletico Madrid and finishing second, and above their city rivals, appears unlikely. Leganes climb to 11th.

#### Pele leaves Brazil hospital after successful surgery

Pele was released from a Sao Paulo hospital on Monday, his Brazilian doctors said, two days after the football great had surgery to remove a kidney stone.

The three-time World Cup winner was admitted to the Albert Einstein hospital last Tuesday, after returning from France where he had received treatment for a urinary tract infection.

"The patient ... was discharged from hospital this morning," his doctors said in a statement.

Pele had an operation on Saturday to remove the "kidney stone," which the hospital had previously described as a "ureteral stone."

The procedure was "successful," the doctors had said.

Pele, who is widely considered to be the greatest footballer in history, spent almost a week in a Paris hospital after falling ill following an appearance at a promotional event with France striker Kylian Mbappe.



Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema celebrates his equalising goal against Leganes during their La Liga encounter at the Estadio Municipal Butarque on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

**OSH BANGLADESH**  
18-20 APRIL 2019 ICCB, HALL 2, DHAKA, BANGLADESH  
Preview

**IFSEC BANGLADESH**  
18-20 APRIL 2019 ICCB, HALL 2 DHAKA, Preview

UBM

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