

Bangladesh Premier League (Football)
Sheikh Jamal v Muktijoddha
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National

Stadium, Dhaka
Ctg Abahani v Rahmatganj MFS
Time: 7:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

Saif SC v Team BJMC
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Rafique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium, Mymensingh
Sheikh Russel v Brothers Union

Time: 7:00pm
Venue: Sylhet District Stadium, Sylhet

PEP EDGES OUT KLOPP AGAIN

Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola edged out Jurgen Klopp to a trophy for the second time in three days as the Catalan claimed the League Managers' Association manager of the year on Tuesday. Guardiola's City retained the Premier League title on Sunday, beating Klopp's Liverpool by a single point at the end of a thrilling title race. Guardiola topped the vote ahead of Jurgen Klopp, Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino, who has led Spurs to their first ever Champions League final, and Nuno Espirito Santo of Wolves, who finished seventh in their first season back in the top flight.

--AFP



Mamunul bares his joy and sorrow

SPORTS REPORTER



Former national captain Mamunul Islam dedicated the winning strike to his new-born son after helping Abahani win their crucial AFC Cup encounter 3-2 against Chennaiyin FC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

"I have been waiting for last four months to get an opportunity because I was bearing a grief. I have been waiting to surprise all. I dedicate my winning goal to my son Azlan, who was born four month ago," said Mamunul, who was adjudged the most valuable player of the match.

"I have scored such goals before but you all forget it," said Mamunul, who also scored a stunning goal against Afghanistan during the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon, Korea.

"As no one remembers the past, I will say it was my best match and best goal. I gave hundred percent whenever I played for the national team or club side," Mamunul said. "We had a great team feeling before the match because of injury problems. We just supported the team in the absence of Tapu, Fahad."

Abahani coach Mario Lemos gave special thanks to Mamunul and Jewel Rana – two of the players he gave opportunity in such a crucial match.

"If we lost tonight, then the chance of going to the next round would have vanished, but we are now in race with Chennaiyin FC with seven points each. We have a match against Manang Marshyangdi at home and then an away match against Minerva Punjab. I think we are in good position and can put pressure on other teams," added Lemos.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Abahani midfielder Mamunul Islam (2nd from L) watches his powerful drive sail into the Chennaiyin FC net during their AFC Cup fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. (Inset) Masih Saighani (L) is ecstatic after scoring the second goal for Abahani.

Superb Abahani down Chennaiyin

SPORTS REPORTER



Injury-hit Abahani put up a brilliant fightback to beat Chennaiyin FC 3-2 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, reigniting their challenge for qualification for the next round of the AFC Cup.

The second victory in four matches took the Sky Blues to seven points, level with Chennaiyin FC, who however lead Group E due to a superior goal difference.

I-League champions Minerva Punjab are in third position with four points while Nepalese outfit Manang Marshyangdi are bottom of the table with two points.

Abahani will play their next against Manang Marshyangdi in Dhaka on June 19.

Needing victory to stay in the race, the Sky Blues looked short of confidence as Portuguese coach Mario Lemos was forced to keep three key players – Wellington Piori, Atiqur Rahman Fahad and Rubel Miya – out of the squad which played the away match against Chennaiyin FC two weeks ago.

There was also a shuffle in defence, with right-back Raihan Hassan playing as a centre-back and fit-again Saad Uddin playing in right-back position. The shortage of confidence appeared in the movements of the hosts as they conceded the lead in the very sixth minute. The makeshift

defence failed to negotiate with a regulation corner-kick from Isaac Vanmalsawma before forward Vineeth drove home from inside the six-yard box.

But Abahani soon started playing better, with Kervens Belfort working hard in attack, keeping the opposition defenders on their toes throughout the first half. The six-time Bangladesh Premier League champions came close to levelling the margin four times, but they were denied either by poor finishing from the strikers or the brilliance of Chennaiyin FC

Abahani 3 - 2 Chennaiyin FC
Belfort 64', Saighani 69', Mamunul 88'

goalkeeper Karanjit Singh.

After resumption, Chennaiyin FC counter-attacked quickly in every transition, with Isaac rattling the crossbar before Nabib Newaj Jibon and Sunday Chizoba combined to squander an easy chance on the hour-mark.

Four minutes later, Belfort levelled the margin with a right-footed shot after controlling a long free-kick from Masih Saighani, who then gave Abahani the lead in the 69th minute with a curving free-kick from the right side of the box.

However, the lead lasted only five minutes, thanks to another misunderstanding in the Abahani defence, with Isaac driving home from inside the box.

Abahani came close to restoring their lead in the 84th minute but Karanjit incredibly palmed away a close-range header from Belfort before Mamunul Islam struck the winner with a powerful right-footed drive when a long throw-in from Raihan came his way following a poor clearance from Chennaiyin FC defence.

During the five minutes of stoppage time, the visitors put huge pressure as Abahani went to a defensive shell and goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohail had to make a brilliant save to steer Abahani to victory.

"It was a great match for Bangladesh, great match for Abahani. It was 2-2 at one stage and then Mamunul finished brilliantly. The team really put up outstanding performance and the boys showed unbelievable performance," said a delighted Lemos at the end of the match.

His opposite number, however, was disappointed with the defeat. "It was a disappointing match for me because we took the lead once. The match was 2-2 at one stage and there was no reasons to lose the match. I think the winning goal was incredible and that guy would not be able to score such a goal again," said Chennaiyin FC coach John Gregory.

Police secure BPL promotion

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Police FC qualified for next season's Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) with two matches in hand when they played out a 2-2 draw against bottom-placed Swadhinata KS in a Bangladesh Championship League (BCL) encounter at the Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

However, Police, who needed a single point from yesterday's match to ensure their place in the top-flight domestic league, still need two more points from their remaining two outings if they are to clinch the BCL title. The second-placed Uttar Baridhara have 27 points from 18 matches, six points less than leaders Police, who have 33 points from 18 matches.

The top two teams from the 11-team BCL table will advance to next year's BPL while the bottom two teams will be demoted to a lower division.

In the match, Police went ahead in the seventh minute with a strike from Rasel but Swadhinata hit back with two goals within three minutes. Isa eventually scored an equaliser in stoppage time to level the margin for Police.

In the day's other match, Agrani Bank handed Feni Soccer a 3-0 defeat to leapfrog to fourth position with 26 points from 18 matches while Feni and Swadhinata remained on the bottom with 19 and 13 points respectively.

Villa reach playoff final

AFP, London

Aston Villa progressed to within one game of a return to the Premier League after edging West Midlands rivals West Bromwich Albion 4-3 on penalties in the Championship playoff semi-finals on Tuesday.

West Brom won 1-0 on the night at the Hawthorns to level the tie at 2-2 on aggregate thanks to Craig Dawson's first-half header.

However, the Baggies' hopes of an immediate return to the top-flight were dented when captain Chris Brunt was sent off 10 minutes from the end of normal time.

The hosts held out manfully during extra-time, but Villa goalkeeper Jed Steer saved West Brom's first two penalties of the shootout from Mason Holgate and Ahmed Hegazi.

SHORT CORNER

Wilmots to coach Iran

Former Ivory Coast and Belgium manager Marc Wilmots has arrived in Tehran and is set to sign a three-year deal as national coach, state news agency IRNA reported.

The official agency said Iran football federation president Mehdi Taj had confirmed the deal and the former Belgian striker would sign a contract later Wednesday.

It said the 50-year-old who was capped 70 times for his country was expected to sign on until the end of the 2022 World Cup for a fee of \$1.2 million (1 million euros) a year.

He replaces Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz who stepped down after eight years in charge in January following Iran's semifinal exit in the Asian Cup when they went down



3-0 to Japan.

He led Iran to two World Cup finals and extended his contract to 2019 after the 2018 tournament in Russia.

Stimac named India coach

Former Croatia coach Igor Stimac was named India manager on Wednesday, replacing Englishman Stephen Constantine who quit following the Asian Cup exit.

"Igor is the right candidate to coach the Blue Tigers... Indian football is going through a transition, and I am confident his vast experience will guide us to higher echelons," All India Football Federation president Praful Patel said in a statement.

A former centre-back who won 53 caps, Stimac was in charge of Croatia during qualification for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. He was sacked after Croatia took only

one point from their last four group games meaning they only just scraped into a playoff. Niko Kovac was in caretaker charge as they overcame Iceland to reach the finals.

Stimac's last job was with Al-Shahania club in Qatar.

--AFP

China's Hebei sack Coleman

Former Wales's manager Chris Coleman was sacked as coach of struggling Hebei China Fortune on Wednesday after the club's fans demanded his firing.

The 48-year-old's side have won only once in nine Chinese Super League (CSL) games this season and languish one place off the bottom of the table.

A Hebei team containing former Barcelona star Javier Mascherano lost 3-2 at home to mid-table Henan Jianye at the weekend and had a player sent off for the fourth time in all competitions this year.

Coleman, who took Sunderland down into England's third tier in his previous job, was appointed as a replacement for West Ham United-bound Manuel Pellegrini in June last year.

After a decent start, he came under intense pressure from disgruntled Hebei supporters.

--AFP

Genoa put up for sale

One of Italy's oldest football clubs Genoa has been put up for sale, the Serie A side announced on Tuesday.

The clubs said in a statement that "a mandate has been given to Assietta S.p.A., a financial consultancy company, specialising in corporate finance, as an advisor for the sale of the club".

Italian businessman Enrico Preziosi, who controls one of the country's biggest toy manufacturers, took over the club in 2003, when they were in the second tier.

The club returned to Serie A in 2007.

Genoa -- founded in 1893 -- are just one point above the relegation zone with two games left this season.

The club have won nine Serie A titles, all during the late 19th and early 20th century, the last in 1924.

--AFP

Liverpool deserves a trophy: Wijnaldum

AFP, LONDON

Georginio Wijnaldum says Liverpool's "wonderful" season deserves to be rewarded with a trophy as they prepare to face Tottenham in the Champions League final after falling agonisingly short in the Premier League.

Jurgen Klopp's men missed out on a first league title in 29 years after being edged out by defending champions Manchester City by just one point but will travel to Madrid for the June 1 European final as favourites.

Midfielder Wijnaldum told liverpoolfc.com that the club wanted silverware to show for a stunning season in which they finished with 97 points -- the third-highest total in Premier League history.

"Overall, I think we had a good season and now is the challenge to finish with a title to make the season complete," said the 28-year-old, who scored twice in Liverpool's jaw-dropping 4-0 victory against Barcelona in the second leg of the Champions League semifinal.

"It would be really sad if we finish the season without a title, especially because I think we were quite consistent this season and we did so good. I think this season deserves one."

Wijnaldum said Liverpool did not have matters in their own hands at the end of the thrilling title race but are back in control with just the Champions League final to come against rivals Spurs.

ECB made mistakes as Hundred draft announced

AFP, London



English cricket bosses have accepted they made mistakes in promoting "The Hundred", their controversial new short-form tournament that is due to start next year.

The England and Wales Cricket Board faced huge public criticism for suggesting the 100-balls-per-side competition was aimed at attracting a new audience as opposed to existing fans.

Questions have also been raised about whether there is a need for another short-form event in an already congested calendar, given the success of Twenty20 matches and the new competition's potential impact on English cricket's existing 18 first-class counties.

On Wednesday, the ECB confirmed

that a televised player draft for The Hundred would be held on October 20, ahead of the inaugural competition, starting in July 2020.

Yet more than two years on from when county bosses first discussed the eight-team city-based concept, the ECB has still to confirm team names and venues for the five-week event.

"We've definitely made mistakes in the build-up, but this is about the future of the game. This is about growing cricket," said ECB chief executive Tom Harrison.

The ECB have long insisted The Hundred is essential in attracting the next generation of cricket supporters.

According to their research, just five percent of British children aged six to 15 list cricket in their top two favourite sports.

"We have the ability to extend our fanbase into young families, diverse communities and young people

to give them an experience they potentially haven't felt through the current offerings," said Harrison.

In 2005, the ECB controversially abandoned terrestrial television coverage of international cricket in England following that year's Ashes series.

But 11 Hundred matches will be broadcast free to air on the BBC, with satellite channel Sky screening all the games in the tournament.

England director of cricket Ashley Giles likened the hostility to The Hundred to concerns surrounding the advent of Twenty20.

"When I was a player back in 2003 and Twenty20 came in, we hated it," the former England spinner recalled.

"To the point where my side Warwickshire were in the first finals day, and I didn't go and play in it because it was seen as some sort of sideshow. It certainly isn't that now."



A wheelchair cricketer from Bangladesh plays a shot during the Asia Cup Wheelchair T-20 match against Pakistan at the Kirtipur Cricket Ground in Kathmandu yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP