

# What to WATCH

**SONY SIX**  
Sri Lanka v Bangladesh  
First ODI  
Live from 3:00pm

**SONY ESPN**  
England v Ireland  
Solitary Test  
Day Three  
Live from 4:00pm

## MARADONA'S KNEE SURGERY SUCCESSFUL

Former Argentina world cup winning captain Diego Maradona underwent a successful knee operation at a clinic in Buenos Aires on Wednesday, his lawyer revealed. The former coach of the Argentine national team quit his job at Mexican second division outfit Dorados last month for health reasons after just nine months in charge. His lawyer, Matias Morla revealed then that Maradona needed to undergo surgery on his knee and shoulder. "Everything went perfectly," said Morla on his Twitter account, in reference to the operation on Maradona's right knee. Maradona previously underwent a successful operation on his left shoulder in 2017 in Dubai, while he was coaching second division Emirati side Fujairah.

-Afp



## Eng-Ireland Test on a knife's edge

AFP, London

Ireland have the chance to pull off one of the biggest upsets in Test history after another England batting collapse on Thursday set the scene for a thrilling finish at Lord's.

When lightning flashes and rain cut short the second day's play at 6:10 pm local time (17:10 GMT) in a match scheduled for four days rather than the usual five for a Test, England were 303-9 in their second innings, a lead of 181 runs.

That represented a colossal improvement on their humiliating first-innings 85 all out but once again their batsmen struggled ahead of next week's first Ashes Test.

England had been well-placed at 171-1 second time around, a score built on a second-wicket stand of 145 between nightwatchman Jack Leach, who made 92, and Test debutant Jason Roy (72).

But England's top-order let them down again, with seven wickets falling for 77 runs either side of tea as they slumped to 248-8 on a ground where just 11 days earlier they had won the World Cup.

Sam Curran, not for the first time in his short career, then added valuable lower order runs with a brisk 37 featuring two sixes before he holed out and Stuart Broad was 21 not out at stumps.

Ireland are playing in just their third Test, with the visitors losing on debut to Pakistan last year and against fellow newcomers Afghanistan in March.

But that did not stop them routing England on Wednesday, with seamer Tim Murtagh taking a superb 5-13 on his Middlesex home ground.

England resumed Thursday on their

overnight 0-0 after Ireland had made 207, featuring Andrew Balbirnie's 55.

Unexpected opener Leach, who survived a Murtagh maiden on Wednesday, played watchfully but made the most of any loose deliveries.

Left-hander Rory Burns fell for six when he pushed hard at a Boyd Rankin delivery and edged a simple catch to wicketkeeper Gary Wilson.

Roy, looking to make England's problem position of Test opener his own after starring in their World Cup triumph, off-drove a four off paceman Mark Adair and hoisted off-spinner Andy McBrine for six.

Leach went to 47 with a straight-driven four off Stuart Thompson before his edged boundary through third man off the medium-pace saw the Somerset left-arm spinner, playing his first Test at home, to his fifty.

Roy cut Thompson for his seventh four to complete a 47-ball fifty in just his second Test innings but the attacking batsman was denied a century on debut by a Thompson in-ducker that bowled him.

The bespectacled Leach, having surpassed his previous first-class best of 66, was dropped twice until eventually a defensive edge was held by Adair off the bowling of Murtagh. Leach, who had been in sight of an achievement that eluded batting greats Brian Lara, Ricky Ponting and Sachin Tendulkar -- a Test hundred at Lord's -- walked slowly off to a standing ovation after batting for 220 minutes and facing 162 balls, hitting 16 fours.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**

**ENGLAND:** First innings 85

**IRELAND:** First innings 207

**ENGLAND:** Second innings 303 for 9

(Leach 92, Roy 72, Root 31, Curran 37, Broad 21 not out; Adair 3-66, Rankin 2-86, Thompson 2-44)



Bashundhara Kings' players celebrate after becoming the new Bangladesh Premier League champions following a 1-1 draw against Mohammedan at the Sheikh Kamal Stadium in Nilphamari yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

## Bashundhara crowned new champions

SPORTS REPORTER



The evening sky was lit with fireworks and the home crowd applauded loudly when the final whistle saw Bashundhara Kings become new Bangladesh Premier League champions with two matches left after a come-from-behind 1-1 draw against Mohammedan SC at the Sheikh Kamal Stadium in Nilphamari yesterday.

From the sidelines, players and officials ran onto the pitch amid the drizzle to embrace the on-field players for clinching the prestigious professional football league title. Clad in special jerseys, the players locked shoulders and started to celebrate the special occasion in the centre of the ground by jumping in the air repeatedly and later posed in front of a banner with 'Champions' written in large letters.

Their first draw in 22 matches meant newcomers Bashundhara Kings took an unassailable lead with 59 points, four ahead of nearest rivals and six-time champions Abahani, who have 55 points and one match left. And, they are the second side to clinch the Bangladesh Premier League title in their debut season after Sheikh Jamal DC, who also surprised all to win the professional football league in their debut season in 2010.

Bashundhara Kings could have ensured the league title in the previous match against Sheikh Russel KC in Sylhet with an outright win and they were also prepared to celebrate their

### ROLL OF HONOUR

SEASON	CHAMPIONS	RUNNERS-UP
2006-07	Abahani	Mohammedan
2008	Abahani	Mohammedan
2009	Abahani	Mohammedan
2010	Sheikh Jamal	Muktijoddha
2011-12	Abahani	Muktijoddha
2012-13	Sheikh Russel	Sheikh Jamal
2013-14	Sheikh Jamal	Abahani
2015	Sheikh Jamal	Sheikh Russel
2016	Abahani	Ctg Abahani
2017-18	Abahani	Sheikh Jamal
<b>2019</b>	<b>Bashundhara Kings</b>	<b>Abahani</b>

triumph but hosts Sheikh Russel KC delayed their party by handing them their first defeat to end their 20-match unbeaten run.

Then, the celebration was delayed once again at their home ground when heavy showers on Wednesday forced their match against Mohammedan SC to be shifted to Thursday. The stage was set for Bashundhara Kings to celebrate the triumph on their home ground as they needed a single point to clinch the title after rivals Abahani played out a 2-2 draw against Chittagong Abahani on Wednesday.

Having resumed the match from where it was stopped on Wednesday, the charges of Spanish coach Oscar Bruzon were on the back

foot on the rain-soaked ground as a rejuvenated Mohammedan gave their superior rivals a run for their money with striking pair Toklish Ahmed and Malian Souleymane Diabate threatening Bashundhara with their pace up front on the slippery pitch.

Mohammedan finally broke the deadlock in the 16th minute as Toklish ran down the right flank to enter the box but his angular shot was parried by goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Ziko, who however could not stop the rebounder taken by Souleymane inside the box.

After going down, Bashundhara Kings regrouped to press hard on Mohammedan with Costa Rican Daniel Colindres, Brazilian Marco Vinicius and Martin Mia keeping Mohammedan defenders on their toes to clear their attempts.

Independence Cup champions Bashundhara finally levelled the margin in the 37th minute when Vinicius rose high to nod a Colindres corner kick home, his 13th league goal. Before the break, Bashundhara Kings also came close twice to taking the lead but the forward misfired.

After resumption, Mohammedan looked more determined to restore the lead but they lost momentum as the match progressed. However, both sides fought equally but could hardly create any notable opportunities. Both outfits looked happy with the results with Bashundhara Kings confirming their maiden title while Mohammedan SC raised hopes of finishing in the upper half after avoiding relegation.

## Kings over the moon

SPORTS REPORTER



Bashundhara Kings coach Oscar Bruzon, the foreign recruits and local players were over the moon after securing the side's first Bangladesh Premier League title in their debut season through a 1-1 draw against Mohammedan in Nilphamari yesterday. The single point ensured that the newcomers attained an unassailable lead on top of the league table with two matches in hand.

"It was too long and too hard for us to win the Bangladesh Premier League because it was very tough to play such long season. The boys have been consistent throughout the season though it was not easy to show such performance, especially in Nilphamari. The boys showed how to deliver possession football and keep consistency. I thanked the players, officials and supporting staff for this achievement," Oscar told reporters after the match in Nilphamari.

"The match against Mohammedan was too tough because Mohammedan are among the top three teams in the second leg and I am really impressed with their performance from the starting. We were under pressure after conceding the lead but our boys understood the match and kept cool to control the game. We had more talented players, who knew one point is enough to ensure the title and they did it successfully," continued the Spaniard.

"To be honest, we concentrated on this match from last night and played accordingly," Bashundhara forward Colindres said. "I'm feeling good and very very happy because Bashundhara became champions in their debut season."

As is the case for the club, it was the first taste of glory in the professional football league for many of the players, who were ecstatic with being a part of Bashundhara Kings' history.

"I tasted the league title for the first time and I can't really express my feelings," goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Ziko said. "I tried my best to help Bashundhara become champions."

"It is first time that I became a part of a champion team. Bashundhara did not leave any stone unturned for me and it could have been failure for us if we could not deliver the title. Today we took to the field for a victory but Mohammedan really played well in the first half before we came back," expressed winger Mohammad Ibrahim.

Winning the league is not something new for Hemanta Vincent Biswas, who was part of Abahani's unbeaten title triumph in 2016, however, the national discard was happy to win the title a second time with different club.

"Winning any title is always joyful for the players and it is my second trophy. Our club did everything that was required and it was our responsibility to deliver the title. We are happy to do it," said Hemanta.

## Clyne faces more injury woe

AFP, London

Liverpool defender Nathaniel Clyne faces a lengthy spell on the sidelines after sustaining an anterior cruciate ligament injury during the club's pre-season tour of the United States.

Clyne suffered the injury in Liverpool's friendly with Borussia Dortmund in Indiana on Friday.

The 28-year-old right-back, who spent most of last season on loan at fellow Premier League side Bournemouth, was sidelined for most of the 2017/18 season with a back injury.

He has not travelled with his teammates to New York for the final stop on the club's US tour and has instead returned to the club's Melwood training ground to begin his rehabilitation programme.

"What can I say other than how gutted we all are for Clyne," Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp told Liverpool's website. "He was training and playing so well -- he was in outstanding shape."

"Clearly an injury of this nature isn't a happy moment for any player, but the silver lining for him is that, according to the medical guys, it's a straightforward ACL injury."

## I'm very happy to leave at this time: Malinga

AFP, COLOMBO



Veteran Sri Lankan star Lasith Malinga said Thursday he was "very happy" to make way for younger players as he calls time on his illustrious

15-year career in the 50-over format. Malinga will play his final one-day international in Colombo Friday in the first of three ODIs against Bangladesh, but hopes to continue playing in the shorter T20 format.

"I am very happy to leave at this time. This is an opportunity for new players to prove themselves and prepare for the next World Cup," Malinga, 35, told reporters Thursday at the team's final training session.

"We may have had some setbacks, but we have the capability to win another World Cup," he added, pointing to Sri Lanka's success at the 1996 World Cup and 2014 T20 World Cup.

Malinga -- known for his trademark blond-highlighted mop and piercings -- called on cricket administrators to be patient with up-and-coming stars and let them develop ahead of the next ODI World Cup.

"The young players need to believe that they can deliver. They need to be dedicated and develop to a level that they can decide for themselves when they go to the middle," Malinga said.

Two days ago, Malinga posted a video message on his wife's Facebook page saying he felt no ill will towards officials and players who may have tried to push him out of the ODI team.

He said he was sidelined by selectors two years ago but was able to prove his value at the recent World Cup, where he took four for 43 in Sri Lanka's group-stage win over eventual champions England.

Malinga has his sights on next year's T20 World Cup in Australia, and Sri Lanka's cricket board confirmed he would be available for selection for the T20 squad.



England opener Jack Leach scored 92 runs on the second day of the one-off Test against Ireland at Lord's in London yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Brazil climb to second place

AFP, Paris

Copa America winners Brazil have leapfrogged World Champions France, climbing to second place in the latest FIFA rankings, released on Thursday.

Brazil beat Peru 3-1 at the Maracana stadium earlier this month to collect their ninth continental title.

Belgium still top the rankings while France slip to number three.

Algeria are the biggest movers, climbing 28 places to number 40 following their victory over Senegal in the final of the Africa Cup of Nations.

In spite of winning their first continental title in 29 years, the Algerians are only the fourth-ranked team in Africa behind Senegal (20), Tunisia (29) and Nigeria (33), another team they beat in the semifinals.

### TOP 10

1. Belgium
2. Brazil (+1)
3. France (-1)
4. England
5. Uruguay (+3)
6. Portugal (-1)
7. Croatia (-1)
8. Colombia (+5)
9. Spain (+2)
10. Argentina (+1)



Malinga is leaving as Sri Lanka's third-highest wicket-taker in ODI cricket with 335 wickets in 219 innings so far since his first ODI against the United Arab Emirates in 2014. Only Muttiah Muralidaran (523) and Chaminda Vaas (399) have taken more wickets than Malinga in ODIs for Sri Lanka.

He was Sri Lanka's highest wicket-taker at the World Cup, claiming 13 scalps in seven innings. Malinga retired from Test cricket in 2011 but continued to remain available in other formats.