

What to WATCH

GTV & MAASRANGA
BBPL
 Rangpur v Chattogram
 Live from 1:30pm
 Dhaka v Sylhet
 Live from 7:00pm
SONY ESPN

Pakistan v Sri Lanka
 First Test, Day Four
 Live from 10:30pm
SONY SIX
 Australia v New Zealand
 First Test, Day Three
 Live from 11:00pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
 English Premier League
 Liverpool v Watford
 Live from 6:30pm
 Chelsea v Bournemouth
 Live from 9:00pm
 Southampton v West Ham

Live from 11:30pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
 Bundesliga
 Bayern Munich v Werder Bremen
 Live from 8:30pm
 Dusseldorf v Leipzig
 Live from 11:30pm

TEN 2
 Serie A
 Brescia v Lecce
 Live from 8:00pm
 Napoli v Parma
 Live from 11:00pm
 Genoa v Sampdoria

Live from 1:45am (Sunday)

DAY'S EVENT

Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League
 Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium
 Rangpur v Chattogram
 Time: 1:30pm
 Dhaka v Sylhet
 Time: 7:00pm



Australia's Steven Smith (3rd from L) is mobbed by teammates after completing a sensational catch to send New Zealand's Kane Williamson back to the dressing room on 34 on the second day of the first Test in Perth yesterday. However, it was (Inset) Mitchell Starc who proved pivotal, tearing through the Kiwi innings with four wickets.

Starc tears thru' NZ's innings

AFP, Perth



A stunning catch by Steve Smith snared the prized wicket of Kane Williamson as Mitchell Starc tore through the New Zealand top order on the second day of the first Test in Perth yesterday.

Smith dived horizontally to his right at second slip to take the catch to remove Williamson for 34 from the bowling of Starc, just when it appeared New Zealand were fighting back well after losing their two openers with only one run on the board.

After Australia posted 416 in extreme heat on the back of a third successive Test century for Marnus Labuschagne the Kiwis were struggling at 109 for five in reply at stumps, still 307 runs in arrears.

Ross Taylor, who put on 76 for the third wicket with Williamson and made 290 in his previous Test in Perth, was on 66 and BJ Watling was yet to score.

Smith's freak catch was a key moment, as the Kiwis slumped to 97 for five by losing three wickets for just 20 runs.

Starc (4-31) did the damage with four wickets, including those of Henry Nicholls (7) and night watchman Neil Wagner (0) in successive balls.

However, Australia had also lost opening bowler Josh Hazlewood (1-0) with a left hamstring injury.

Hazlewood bowled opener Jeet Raval for a duck in his first over, but managed just two balls in his second before pulling up short during his run up.

The wicket of Raval followed the dismissal of Tom Latham in the very first over, easily caught and bowled by Starc in his follow through.

Having claimed the two openers in quick time in favourable bowling conditions Australia looked in total control, but Williamson and Taylor rode their luck early and then settled in as the home side was forced to turn to former wicketkeeper Matthew Wade to send down a couple of overs of erratic medium pace.

Earlier, Labuschagne's 143 was the foundation of an Australian innings that lasted just a few balls shy of five full sessions.

Labuschagne looked set for his third successive innings over 150 until he was bowled by the determined Neil Wagner (4-92).

The 25-year-old hadn't given a chance in reaching 143, but walked a little far across his stumps and the ball crashed into his leg stump to reward Wagner for a spirited spell.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: First Innings 416 all out in 146.2 overs (Labuschagne 143, Head 56, Warner 43; Southee 4-93, Wagner 4-92)
NEW ZEALAND: First Innings 109 for 5 in 32 overs (Taylor 66 not out, Williamson 34, Nicholls 7; Starc 4-31, Hazlewood 1-0)

Former champions face group of death

SPORTS REPORTER

The upcoming TVS Federation Cup will feature a group of death as three former champions were placed in the same group at a draw ceremony for the season opening tournament at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) House yesterday.

10-time champions Mohammedan SC, three-time champions Muktiyoddha Sangsad and one-time champions Sheikh Russel were drawn in Group D alongside the promoted Uttar Baridhara Club.

11-time champions and title holders Abahani and last edition's runners-up, Bashundhara Kings, were pit in a separate group during the draw, which was held in line with the standings of the last edition of the Bangladesh Premier League.

The league is set to get underway on Wednesday with two group stage matches taking place every day at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

GROUPS

GROUP A: Abahani, Arambagh KS, Bangladesh Police SC
GROUP B: Bashundhara Kings, Chattogram Abahani, Brothers Union
GROUP C: Saif SC, Sheikh Jamal SC, Rahmatganj MFS
GROUP D: Sheikh Russel KC, Muktiyoddha Sangsad, Mohammedan, Uttar Baridhara Club

"You can't judge any of the groups by only seeing the names of the teams because every match will be tough and hard compared to last season," Sheikh Russel coach Saiful Bari Titu said. "I don't want to term our group as a death one rather Group D is a strong one, which is good for me because we get one match more than the others since it's a four-team group."

"As our target is to become champions, our aim is to first emerge as group champions," said Titu, whose side clinched Federation Cup title for the first and last time in 2012.

"We are happy to be placed in this group. We have a good chance to advance to the second round because our youthful squad is very confident of getting out of the group stage," Mohammedan SC manager Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib, whose side last became champions in 2009.

Meanwhile, the once popular black and whites were made to quit from the group stage of the last two Federation Cups successively, however, this time around they have formed a youthful side with a few quality foreigners following an intervention from former players and officials.

"In Group D, Sheikh Russel are ahead of other teams and we are hoping to finish behind them though we have been lagging behind a bit in training but we are confident of playing well when the tournament gets underway," said Muktiyoddha Sangsad coach Abdul Kaiyum Sentu, whose side last emerged champions in 2004-05 season.

The top two teams from each group will advance to the quarterfinals.

Cricket mourns Arnab's passing

SPORTS REPORTER

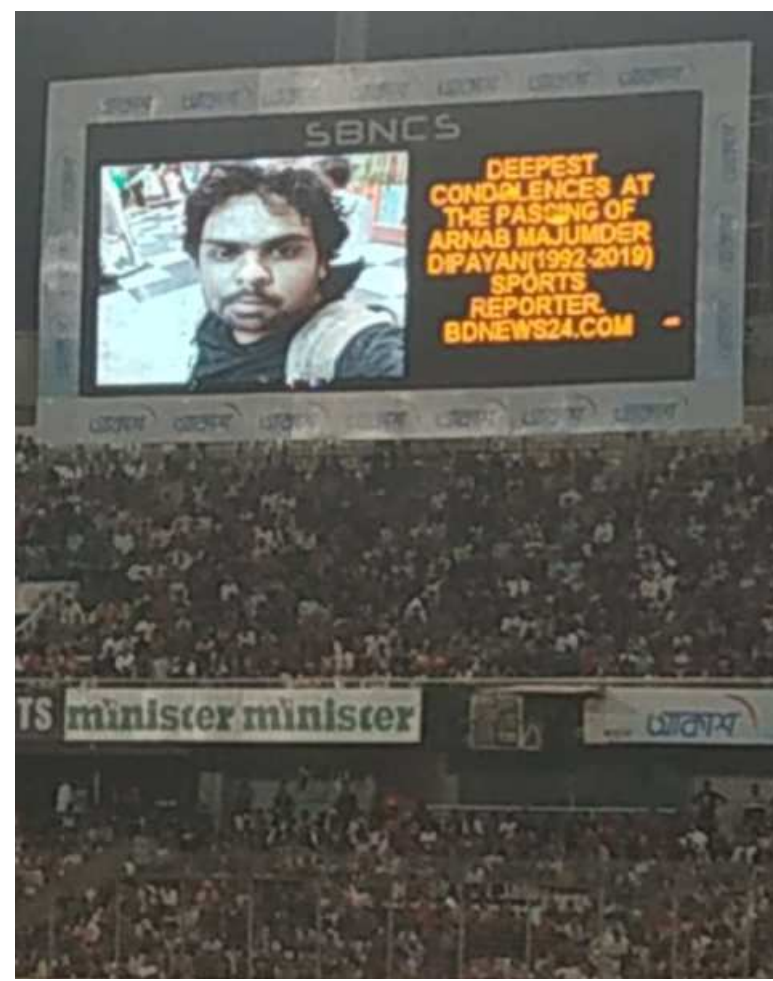
The Bangladesh cricket fraternity was shaken and shocked by news yesterday of the passing of Arnab Majumder Dipayan, a promising sports reporter of bdnews24.com.

Arnab breathed his last yesterday morning at the age of 27. An ever-present, soft-spoken presence at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Arnab was a popular and devoted reporter.

His knowledge of sport, and especially cricket, was extensive and he was generous to a fault. An example of his knowledge and generosity came a day before his premature demise when he was the one who announced to everyone -- his joy at a rare cricket stat trumping the need to be the first to report it -- in the press box that Shahid Afridi had just been dismissed for his 100th duck.

The news of Arnab's death was put up on the big screen at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur during the evening BPL match between Cumilla Warriors and Dhaka Platoon.

He will be deeply missed by his family, friends and colleagues.



Klopp extends L'pool contract

AFP, London

Jurgen Klopp has agreed a contract extension with Liverpool until 2024, the runaway Premier League leaders announced yesterday. Klopp, who moved to Anfield in 2015, guided Liverpool to Champions League glory in June and they are currently eight points clear at the top of the Premier League.

"For me personally this is a statement of intent, one which is built on my knowledge of what we as a partnership have achieved so far and what is still there for us to achieve," the 52-year-old Klopp told Liverpool's official website.

"When I see the development of the club and the collaborative work that continues to take place, I feel my contribution can only grow."

A statement from owners the Fenway Sports Group (FSG) said Liverpool had taken "giant strides in re-establishing themselves as one of world football's powerhouses" under the German.

During Klopp's first campaign at Anfield, Liverpool reached the finals of both the League Cup and Europa League but ended the season empty-handed.

They lost 3-1 to Real Madrid in the 2018 Champions League final but regrouped and became European champions for a sixth time after a 2-0 win against Tottenham in Madrid this year.

Reds to face The Hornets

AFP, London

Liverpool will seek sign off their pre-Christmas Premier League duties in style against their whipping boys Watford today while Leicester attempt to stay in touch before a summit meeting later this month.

Jurgen Klopp's men are eight points clear of their nearest pursuers as they prepare to jet out to Qatar for the Club World Cup.

Watford, with new manager Nigel Pearson at the helm, will not be relishing the trip to Anfield, where they have lost 6-1, 5-0 and 5-0 on their past three visits.

Pep Guardiola takes his stumbling Manchester City team to face Arsenal while Manchester United look to keep up their push for a top-four spot at home to Everton.

In an ordinary season, Brendan Rodgers' side might be top of the league but they are doggedly pursuing a Liverpool team who have won 15 of their 16 games.

If Jamie Vardy nets against Norwich and Manchester City in Leicester's next two games, he would give himself the chance to equal his own Premier League record of goals in 11 straight games against Liverpool on December 26.

Messi not the best ever: Ronaldinho

AGENCIES, Brasilia



Barcelona ace Lionel Messi can only be qualified as the best player of his generation, Ronaldinho has said.

The 39-year-old is a former Camp Nou team-mate of the Argentine, having played with the Catalans while Messi was just starting to make his breakthrough into the starting XI.

Since then, Messi has flourished into one of the undoubted superstars of the game, claiming a record sixth Ballon d'Or title recently while setting a slew of records that are unlikely to be touched for years to come.

But, while Ronaldinho believes

that his former cohort deserves all the accolades that come his way, he is unwilling to place him above the likes of Pele and Diego Maradona, who have gone before him.

"I can't say that Messi is the best ever, but he is the best in his time," he told the EFE news agency while in Mexico to play a couple of exhibition matches with former stars of the Mexican league.

"I don't like comparisons because it's hard to identify who the best in history is, there's Diego Maradona, Pele, Ronaldo."

On Saturday, the Catalans meet Real Sociedad in La Liga as they aim to pick up a win that will guarantee they do not go into Wednesday's Clasico against Real Madrid trailing their great rivals in the table.



SHORT CORNER

Gerrard extends stay

Steven Gerrard has signed a contract extension at Scottish Premiership giants Rangers that will keep him at Ibrox until 2024, the club announced yesterday.

The former Liverpool and England player, appointed in May 2018, led the club to a runners-up spot in the league in his first season.

On Thursday the 39-year-old guided Rangers into the last 32 of the Europa League.

"Rangers Football Club is today delighted to announce manager Steven Gerrard has agreed a two-year extension which will keep him at Ibrox until the summer of 2024," it said in a statement. —AFP

Stringent security for Clasico

Security measures being prepared for Barcelona's La Liga clash with rivals Real Madrid on December 18 will guarantee the match in the Catalan city is not disrupted in any way by a pro-independence protest on the same day, police said yesterday.

About 3,000 public and private security officers will be dispatched inside and outside Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium to protect both teams, fans and match officials for the game, known as "El Clasico", Catalan regional police head Eduard Sallent told reporters.

The match was originally scheduled for Oct. 26 but it was postponed at the request of the league's organising over security concerns following demonstrations in Catalonia after the jailing of nine Catalan separatist leaders. —REUTERS

Pep denies contract 'break clause'

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has denied reports that his contract contains a 'break clause' that could allow him to leave at the end of the season.

The Spaniard signed an extension last year until 2021 but with City's hopes of a third successive Premier League title now looking remote, questions have been raised about his future.

Asked whether he could be released from his contract at the end of the season, Guardiola said: "No it's not true. I already spoke about that, about my intentions with the club." —REUTERS