

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS
BANGLADESH PREMIER
League
Saif Sporting vs Rahmat-
ganj MFS
Live from 8:00 pm
SONY SIX & TEN 1

AUSTRALIA VS INDIA
Fourth Test (Day 3)
Live from 6:00 am (Sunday)
TEN 2
SRI LANKA VS ENGLAND
First Test (Day 3)
Live from 10:30 am

SERIE A
BOLOGNA VS VERONA
Live from 8:00 pm
Torino vs Spezia
Live from 11:00 pm
TEN 1
SERIE A

SAMPDORIA VS UDINESE
Live from 1:45 am (Sunday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
ENGLISH PREMIER
LEAGUE
Wolves vs West Brom
Live from 6:30 pm



(L-R) Mohammad Ismail and Shirin Akter motor along on their way to defending their 100m sprint titles during the Bangabandhu 44th National Athletics Championships at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. (Bottom) Ritu Akter clears 1.70 metres to set a new record in high jump event earlier in the day.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED/ COLLECTED

Ritu bowls them over in first try

SPORTS REPORTER

As a pace bowler, Ritu Akter could have used her height, extracted bounce from the pitch and work her way up to the national team, but she had to leave the sport due to a lack of support from her family. The 11th-grade student however did not leave sport altogether and made a big splash in another discipline with a record in the high jump event of the Bangabandhu 44th National Athletics Championships at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Ritu, from Bangladesh Army, cleared 1.7 metres to eclipse the previous record of 1.68 metres set by former footballer Umme Hafsa Rumki in 2019.

"Before the championships, I had cleared the national high jump thrice in training and [coach] Mehedi Hasan sir spurred me on to carry that into the national meet. My target was to win the gold along with a national record. I just repeated it [training] in the championships. With my height, I believe I can clear more than I did today," said the five-foot-nine-inches tall



height Ritu, who had won gold in the high jump in 2018 junior championships and won a bronze medal in the Summer Athletics Championships in 2019.

"I was worried about Umme Hafsa Rumki, but I was confident that I could overcome her after what I did in training," said Ritu.

"I started playing cricket in Gaibandha before being selected for Mirpur Boys Club [in the First Division Women's Cricket League] for two years in 2016 and 2017 and doing well but I was not getting support from my family

because I had to stay away from them. Later, I thought I could do better in athletics because of my height. I also participated in the high jump at school level and won a gold medal. One day, I came to the Bangabandhu Stadium here to watch the junior athletics and then decided to participate in athletics and I won the gold medal in my first meet," said Ritu.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Ismail and Shirin Akter defended their crowns in their respective 100m sprints. Ismail clocked 10.55 seconds to win his third

successive gold in national athletics championships while Shirin reached new heights to win her 11th consecutive gold medal in women's 100m sprint. She took 11.8 seconds to touch the line.

"I had to face a lot of obstacles during the pandemic and I am really happy to retain the title of fastest man. I am now looking forward to bettering my time in the upcoming Bangladesh Games," said Ismail who made a national record in 100m sprint in January 2019 with a timing of 10.2 seconds (hand-timing) before retaining the gold in next the national championships in Chattogram by clocking 10.4 seconds.

"It is possible to win gold from South Asian Games because those who competed in 100m sprint in the last SA Games were not extraordinary, they were ahead of us by only 0.2 seconds. If we are given training abroad, we can make up the gap."

"I am happy with my timing. The athletes of services teams have been in training during the pandemic, so everyone is trying and I am also trying in my way with Bangladesh Navy providing me all types of facilities," said Shirin.

Brothers pay for goalkeeping errors

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Sheikh Russel KC made a winning start to the Bangladesh Premier League with a hard-fought 2-1 win over Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, thanks to a couple of terrible blunders from Brothers goalkeeper Mohiuddin Ranu.

National discard Mohammad Abdullah and Brazilian Lopes Rodrigues scored the goals for Sheikh Russel before Congolese striker Siyo Zunapio pulled one back from the spot for the men in orange.

Sheikh Russel, the 2012 league champions, got off to a fine start and enjoyed better ball possession but lacked cutting edge. However, Brothers goalkeeper made the job easy for them by conceding the two goals within a space of four minutes.

Ranu conceded the lead in the 12th minute when he came out of the danger zone and handled the ball outside the box, giving away a free-kick, which was swung in by Abdullah.

The goalkeeper came out of his line again four minutes later, this time trying to clear a long ball from Bakhtyar Duishobekov but only managing to get the ball rebounded off his own defender Osagie Monday, with Rodrigues in position to nod it in.

Zunapio converted a spot-kick in the 32nd minute but that only reduced the margin of defeat for the club from Gopeebagh.

Root relieved with SL ton

REUTERS, Undated



Joe Root's 13-month wait for a Test century, the longest of his career, ended on Friday with a masterful unbeaten 168 on day two of the first Test against Sri Lanka as he revealed a change in mindset was behind his success.

Root dominated Sri Lanka's spin attack on a turning wicket in Galle to help his side to 320 for four, a commanding lead of 185 on the first innings that he will look to extend in search of a double-ton.

"In the last two years I have made too much of a big deal about it in my own mind, which has been to my detriment," Root told reporters in responding to a question about his failure to regularly turn half-centuries into three figures.

"So I tried to get it out of my mind and just get into one-on-one contests with each bowler and choose the right shots. "My shot selection was good today, I managed to pick the



right ball the majority of the time. It is about doing that more often."

Root has made a half-century on 67 occasions in Tests, and converted 18 of those into hundreds.

He concedes at being frustrated that he has not managed it more often, but now has a fourth double-ton in his sights.

"I have been desperate to convert the 50s into big scores, but when I do get a 100 I generally make it count," Root said. "It felt like a long time coming but the aim now is to try and make this one count and drive the first innings (total) as high as we can to bat once in this game."

Weather permitting, England look overwhelming favourites to win the first match of the two-Test series, but Root warned things can change quickly in Galle.

"There has already been prodigious turn, so this test is only going one way. We need to be ruthless and drive home the advantage," he said.

Murray, Keys test Covid-positive

AFP, London

Andy Murray's participation in the Australian Open has been thrown into doubt after it was revealed on Thursday he had tested positive for coronavirus.

The British former world number one was due to travel to Australia on one of a series of charter flights laid on by tournament organisers but is still isolating at home in London.

It is understood that Murray, apparently in good health, is hoping to be able to arrive in Australia at a later date.

Australian Open organisers wished the 33-year-old a speedy recovery but it was unclear whether he would still have a chance to take part.

The three-time major winner is hoping to make his first appearance in Melbourne since the emotional events of 2019, when he revealed the extent of his right hip problem and raised the possibility of imminent retirement.

In another blow, American world number 16 and former US Open runner-up Madison Keys said she too had tested positive for Covid-19.

"I am very disappointed not to be able to play in the coming weeks after training



Serena Williams and her daughter Alexis Olympia Ohanian Jr. arrive in Adelaide on Thursday before heading straight to two-week quarantine. PHOTO: AFP

hard in the off-season and knowing Tennis Australia and the tours did so much to make these events happen," said the 25-year-old.

"I am self-isolating at home. I look forward to being back on tour next month."

Keys made the semifinals of the Australian Open in 2015.

On Wednesday, Rafael Nadal's coach Carlos Moya said he will not attend the Australian Open due to coronavirus travel restrictions.

LABUSCHAGNE PUTS AUSTRALIA IN CHARGE

Marnus Labuschagne rode his luck to a home-ground century as Australia exploited India's injury woes and punished their poor fielding to reach 274 for five at the close of a steamy day one of the fourth Test decider in Brisbane on Friday. The 26-year-old had two reprieves on way to scoring 108 off 204 deliveries, his fourth century in 17 Tests. Captain Tim Paine was 38 not out and all-rounder Cameron Green on 28 at stumps, with Australia holding sway after winning the toss.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Natarajan continues fairytale journey

REUTERS, Undated



T Natarajan's fairytale trip to Australia continued on Friday when the left-arm quick, who arrived as a net bowler, became the first Indian player to make his international debut in all three formats during the same tour.

Known for his pinpoint yorkers, which troubled batsmen in the Indian Premier League (IPL), Natarajan made his international Twenty20 and one-day debut last month.

And the 29-year-old became India's 300th Test player on Friday, essentially because the injury-ravaged tourists had run out of options to fill the holes in their depleted pace attack.

India had already lost the services of quicks Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav, and spearhead Jasprit Bumrah joined the lengthy injury



list after hurting his abdomen in the drawn third Test in Sydney.

Natarajan would have had his maiden Test wicket earlier in the match had Cheteshwar Pujara not dropped Marnus Labuschagne but after the tea break he delivered a two-wicket burst to end Australia's only century-plus partnership of the first innings.

Natarajan cramped Matthew Wade for room and the batsman still went

for a pull shot only to scoop it behind the bowler.

Three players, including Natarajan, gathered under the ball and nearly collided before Shardul Thakur took the catch.

In his next over, Natarajan induced another mistimed pull shot to see off centurion Labuschagne.

"I think 'Nattu' bowled really well today," said fellow Tamil Nadu player Washington Sundar, who also made his Test debut in the match replacing injured spinner Ravichandran Ashwin.

"It feels really good to make test debut alongside him."

"He is a champion bowler and I hope he does really well in this test and we can win this game," added the spin-bowling all-rounder.

Australia finished opening day of the final test on 274-5 with the engrossing four-match series level at 1-1.

Rooney named Derby manager

AGENCIES

Manchester United legend Wayne Rooney has been appointed Derby manager on a permanent basis, with the 35-year-old agreeing a contract through to the summer of 2023.

The former England captain has been in temporary charge of the Rams since November, when Phillip Cocu was dismissed with the East Midlands outfit struggling towards the wrong end of the Championship table.

Rooney oversaw three wins and four draws across nine games as interim boss, but is now committed to the first managerial post of his career to date and will be looking to steer Derby clear of trouble.

He will be assisted by Liam Rosenior, Shay Given and Justin Walker, while Steve McClaren is to continue in a role as technical director and advisor to the board.

Rooney, who had been filling a player-coach role with the Rams since returning to England from a spell in MLS with D.C. United, said of his appointment, "When I first arrived back in the United Kingdom I was completely blown away by the potential of Derby County Football Club. The stadium, training ground, the quality of the playing staff and the young players coming through and of course the fan base that has remained loyal and supportive."

"Despite other offers I knew instinctively Derby County was the place for me."

"I can promise everyone involved in the club and all our fans, my staff and I will leave no stone unturned in achieving the potential I have witnessed over the last 12 months of this historic football club."



Athletic Bilbao players celebrate their victory over Real Madrid in the semifinal of the Spanish Super Cup at La Rosaleda stadium in Malaga on Thursday. Two goals from Raul Garcia in the first half helped the Basque side to a 2-1 win, setting up Sunday's final against Barcelona. PHOTO: REUTERS