

**T SPORTS**

Bangladesh Premier League  
Sheikh Jamal DC vs Arambagh KS  
Live from 3:30 pm  
Rahmatganj MFS vs Bashundhara Kings  
Live from 6:00 pm  
**TEN 2 & PTV SPORTS**

Pakistan vs South Africa

First Test (Day 2)  
Live from 11:00 am  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & T SPORTS**  
Chelsea vs Wolves  
Live from 12:00 am (Thursday)  
Manchester United vs Sheffield

United

Live from 2:15 am (Thursday)  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
Burnley vs Aston Villa  
Live from 12:00 am (Thursday)  
Everton vs Leicester City  
Live from 2:15 am (Thursday)

## Batting changes not yet bearing fruit

MAZHAR UDDIN from Chattogram

The buzzword in the Bangladesh camp before returning to international cricket after over 10 months with the ODI series against the West Indies was long-term planning keeping the 2023 ICC World Cup in mind.

The team management did try some tactical changes such as promoting young left-hander Nazmul Hossain Shanto to number three in place of Shakib Al Hasan, who had made the position his own during the 2019 ICC World Cup.

Shakib scored 606 runs, including five fifties and two centuries, in the flagship event but the champion all-rounder was out of cricket for a year due to the ban handed by the ICC for not reporting corrupt approaches from a bookie.

Nazmul's promotion was also to provide exposure to the youngster before the tough New Zealand tour



Having won the ODI series comfortably, Bangladesh quickly switched focus to the Test series against the West Indies, with Test skipper Mominul Haque (2nd from L) and some others of the preliminary Test squad involved in a training session at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

in March, especially since there was talk that Shakib may miss the tour to stay with his family for the birth of his third child.

But things did not work out for Nazmul in his new role as the 22-year-old could only muster scores of 1, 17, and 20 in the three ODIs against the West Indies. More importantly, there

was added pressure on the youngster to fill the huge shoes of Shakib when, ideally, a youngster should be given the license to express himself.

"I think looking into his batting he was still unsure about his approach," respected local coach Nazmul Abedin Fahim told The Daily Star. "No doubt he is a bright

prospect for Bangladesh but it's important for him to take some time especially when you are coming in at number three. I think as Shakib had already delivered at number three it's important for him to play where he feels comfortable.

"For Shanto, there was also the added pressure of rebuilding the

innings and at the same time people were watching him and expecting him to deliver and it is never easy for anyone to handle such pressure."

While many would agree with the tactical change of Nazmul coming in at number three, it came as surprise to see Soumya Sarkar -- primarily a top-order batsman throughout his career -- demoted to number seven with a new role to score some quick runs late in the innings.

Soumya however did not get the opportunity to bat in the first two ODIs, finally getting a shot at number seven for the second time in his career in the third and final ODI against West Indies.

The left-hander scored seven runs off eight balls, mainly handing over strike to Mahmudullah Riyad who was well set at that time. But for someone like Soumya, with a batting technique and style suited to the top order, it does not seem any way near to a long-term plan. Instead, it appears to be more of a stop-gap solution to bring in a top order batsman at number seven.

"Soumya is a good batsman but not for number seven and if he had to play, he should play at the top. Even if he plays well for a few games at number seven there is a huge risk for him since he will sacrifice his original batting position. I would rather want to see Afif Hossain in that position and I think his style of play would suit the team in that position," said Nazmul.

## Mominul and Co back in action

SPORTS REPORTER



Barring the members from the ODI team that played in the last of three ODIs against the West Indies on Monday, Test skipper Mominul Haque and others from the preliminary 20-member Test squad took part in a training session at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium (ZACS) in Chattogram yesterday.

Six players from the Test squad will take part in a three-day practice game, representing a BCB XI led by wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan against the visitors from January 29 at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chattogram.

Chief selector Minhajul Abedin said the final squad for the two-match Test series will be announced after the practice match. The first Test will begin in Chittagong on February 3.

"We will announce the Test team on January 31 after the practice game. We are considering 17 to 18 players for the Test squad, similar to the ODI squad, to keep some as back up," Abedin told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, Mominul has recovered after undergoing surgery on a fractured right thumb and is set to lead the team.

Pacer Abu Jayed and off-spinner Nayeem Hasan, who are regular members of the Test side, have also recovered from their injuries and are set to return.

## Gomez 'sad and happy' to leave Atalanta

AFP, Milan

Out-of-favour Atalanta captain Alejandro 'Papu' Gomez described his mixed emotions on Tuesday as he prepares to leave the Serie A club he helped take to the Champions League for the first time.

The Bergamo outfit have reportedly reached an agreement with La Liga's Sevilla for the sale of the attacker who has fallen out with coach Gian Piero Gasperini.

"It's a mixture of feelings, after so many years in this city," the 32-year-old Argentine told Sky Sport Italia.

"I'm sad, and also happy. Sometimes things happen and go a certain way, but I would do it all again because we wrote the history of this club. I leave Atalanta at the top in Europe."

"The fans? I'll miss them a lot, Bergamo is in my heart. We will surely see each other again soon," added Gomez, who has scored one goal in five appearances for Argentina.

## Nadal takes veiled swipe at Djokovic

AFP, Melbourne

Rafael Nadal has taken an apparent swipe at Novak Djokovic over his requests for quarantined players preparing for the Australian Open, saying not everyone felt the need to "advertise" how they were trying to help.

The Serbian world number one issued a list of suggestions to Tennis Australia last week on behalf of 72 players unable to leave their Melbourne hotel rooms after Covid-19 cases were detected on their planes to Australia.

They reportedly included moving players into private homes with tennis courts and getting them better meals.

But his requests fell on deaf ears, while Australian media portrayed players as petulant and selfish and fellow star Nick Kyrgios called Djokovic a "tool".

Djokovic later issued an open letter to say his "good intentions for my fellow competitors in Melbourne have been misconstrued".

"We all try to help each other," Spanish great Nadal told ESPN Tuesday from Adelaide, where he and Djokovic are quarantining ahead of the year's opening Grand Slam in Melbourne on February 8.

"Some need to make public everything they do to help others," he added, in remarks widely seen as referring to Djokovic. "Others... do it in a more private way without having to publish or advertise everything we're doing."



While most players are undergoing a mandatory 14 days of quarantine in Melbourne, Nadal, Djokovic and other superstars of the game including Serena Williams and Naomi Osaka jetted into Adelaide, where they are due to play an exhibition on Friday.

It sparked mutterings about preferential treatment, and Nadal admitted it had been smoother sailing.

"In Adelaide, conditions have been better than most players in Melbourne," he said.

"But there are players in Melbourne who have larger rooms where they can develop physical activities, others have smaller rooms and can't have contact with their coach and their physical trainer.

"Where's the line? It's an ethical issue. Everyone has their own opinion and they are all respectable."

## Foreign coaches tasked with rekindling BKSP

ANISUR RAHMAN

Although athletes from Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) have dominated the domestic circuit in most disciplines, only a handful have delivered expected performances at the international level.

But it was not so long ago that BSKP's athletes were bringing laurels for Bangladesh. Commonwealth Games gold medalist Asif Hossain Khan, South Asia's fastest man Bimal Chandra Tarafder, footballer Hasan Al Mamun and cricketer Shakib Al Hasan are all products of the country's lone sporting institution.

More recently, however, it has been struggling to produce athletes that are up to those standards and has consequently come in for a bit of criticism in the sporting fraternity.

With a hope of closing the gap of athletes' standard of international and domestic level, BKSP recently appointed four foreign coaches for cricket, football, hockey and archery. Another good initiative came from steps towards using those coaches for the development of local coaches.

"We usually bring foreign coaches to develop athletes because we think they will develop a bit better under them. We are also thinking whether those foreign coaches can be used in developing local coaches at the

institution," Brigadier General Md Rashidul Hasan, BKSP's Director General, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Irish football coach Ray Power, Malaysian hockey coach Iman Gobinathan Krishnamurthy and South Korean archery coach Lee Hang Ho have already joined while a cricket coach from New Zealand is expected to further bolster the ranks. Hasan also informed that another Portuguese football coach, who is now in Dhaka, would soon join BKSP



Ray Power



G Krishnamurthy

as part-time coach.

Explaining the spate of appointments, Hasan said: "We have been in limbo in sports. We are 186th in the FIFA Rankings. BKSP is a place where athletes grow up, but they grow up lacking technique and then fail to deliver expected performances at the top level. I want to close those gaps by appointing European coaches for younger students. If they can adopt the European style from a tender age,

then the standard of football will certainly improve in future."

Former BKSP student and national footballer Firoz Mahmud Titu hailed the initiative to appoint foreign coaches and urged the concerned authorities to use the coaches properly and shielding them from politics inside BKSP.

"I must appreciate the initiative of appointing the foreign coaches," Titu said. "Students are bored with the monotonous training under local coaches. It is the right time to make changes to training schedules and it is possible by including foreign coaches."

However, Titu also urged that coaches be used properly instead of what he saw during his time there, when he says they would only develop less-gifted students.

The BKSP DG ensured that foreign coaches would be used in the best possible way during their one-year tenure.

"Those coaches will first look after the High Performance units, comprising U-15, U-17 and U-18 athletes. Then other students will get an opportunity to train under them," Hasan said, adding that the youth and sports ministry was positive about increasing funding for foreign coaches.

## Proteas fight back after being spun out cheaply

REUTERS, Undated

Pakistan spinners Yasir Shah and Nauman Ali took five wickets between them to restrict South Africa to 220 all out, but the home side faltered in reply to close on 33 for four on day one of a fast-moving first Test in Karachi on Tuesday.

Azhar Ali and Fawad Alam were both not out on 5 and will resume on the second morning on a wicket already producing both turn and variable bounce, suggesting the visitors' modest first innings score could be par.

In a major blow for the home side, captain Babar Azam (7) was trapped leg before wicket by spinner Keshav Maharaj just before the close of play.

South African fast bowler Kagiso Rabada (2-8) removed both Pakistan opening batsmen when he bowled Abid Ali (4) and then had debutant Imran Butt (9) caught



Debutant Nauman Ali (C) took two wickets as Pakistan bowled out South Africa for 220 in the first innings of the first Test at the Karachi National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: PCB

at short leg from a vicious rising delivery.

Anrich Nortje then grabbed the wicket of Shaheen Shah Afridi (0) with a full delivery, only the fourth ball the hapless nightwatchman had faced.

South Africa were in many ways the architects of their own downfall with the bat, however, having won the toss in their first Test in Pakistan since 2007.

They had two run outs in their top six, while captain Quinton de

Kock (15) gave his wicket away with a wild swing across the line off left-arm spinner Nauman (2-38), who is playing in his first Test at the age of 34.

Opener Dean Elgar (58) was the top scorer and looked in control until he drove at a wide delivery from Nauman and was caught at slip.

Rassie van der Dussen and Temba Bavuma were both run out on 17, while Yasir (3-54) picked up the key scalp of Faf du Plessis (23), who edged the ball to wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan.

Babar is captaining Pakistan in the Test format for the first time having missed their recent series defeat in New Zealand with a thumb injury.

South Africa had initially included Tabraiz Shamsi as a third spinner in their line-up but he suffered lower back pain in the warm-up and was replaced by seamer Lungi Ngidi.



## BALE GETS RARE PRAISE FROM MOURINHO

Gareth Bale scored a first-half equaliser as Tottenham Hotspur came from a goal down to beat Wycombe Wanderers 4-1 in the fourth round of the FA Cup on Monday. The performance of the Welsh winger, who missed a few chances earlier, somewhat pleased manager Jose Mourinho, who said, "It was good. Some good movement. Some one against one, beating people, attacking people, creating chances. Of course scoring a goal."

PHOTO: TWITTER