

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS & SONY SIX
Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka
Second Test (Day 3)
Live from 10:00 am
PTV SPORTS
Pakistan vs Zimbabwe
First Test (Day 3)
Live from 1:30 pm

STAR SPORTS 1 & STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE
Mumbai Indians vs Chennai Super Kings
Live from 8:00 pm
TEN 2 SERIE A
Crotone vs Inter Milan

Live from 10:00 pm
AC Milan vs Benevento
Live from 12:45 am (Sunday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
PREMIER LEAGUE
Crystal Palace vs Manchester City
Live from 5:30 pm

Chelsea vs Fulham
Live from 10:30 pm
FACEBOOK LA LIGA
Elche vs Atletico Madrid
Live from 8:15 pm
Real Madrid vs Osasuna
Live from 1:00 am (Sunday)

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA FIRST INNINGS:

469 for 6 in 155.5 overs
(Karunaratne 118, Thirimanne 140, Fernando 81, Dickwella 64 not out; Taskin 3-119, Taijul 1-83, Shoriful 1-91, Miraz 1-102)

Taskin Ahmed bowled with a lot of venom as Bangladesh pulled back things a bit on the second day of the second Test at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium in Kandy yesterday.

PHOTO: SLC



Butterfingers cost bowlers again

SPORTS REPORTER

If bad luck in the Bangladesh team had a face, it would probably be Taskin Ahmed's. The pacer, who is making a comeback to the Test side after four years against Sri Lanka, has been repeatedly denied deserved wickets by his teammates.

Even during the limited-overs series in New Zealand ahead of the Sri Lanka tour, Bangladeshi fielders were regularly guilty of dropping catches and unfortunately, most of those were off Taskin's bowling.

The tall pacer's hard work has been reflected in his bowling right from the first Test and that continued in the second Test on a Pallekele pitch which offered very little to seamers.

On the first day, Najmul Hossain had dropped a straightforward catch at second slip when Dimuth Karunaratne, who went on to score a century, was on 28 and the youngster dropped another easy chance to send back Ramesh Mendis from the same position and off the same bowler: Taskin.

Even when the fielders did manage to take catches, they were interestingly not keen on appealing. The curious incident occurred when Angelo Matthews edged a ball from Taskin going away from his body to wicketkeeper Liton Das but both bowler and keeper did not appeal although replay showed the batsman had edged the ball.

It was not just about dropped catches,

but the field placements from skipper Mominul Haque also raised questions as left-arm spinner Taijul Islam was stationed at a specialist point region and failed to grab a catch. This time, Pathum Nissanka gave a straightforward catch at point to Taijul off the bowling of Abu Jayed.

According to Taijul, who normally fields at point or gully region which the likes of Jonty Rhodes and AB de Villiers have made famous, said that dropped catches were part of the game.

"Normally I field at the point or short gully region in Tests, depending on the situation. Dropped catches are part of the game but that drop may have forced our team to go on the back foot. If I was able to take that catch, we could have been in a very good position. But it's not like I don't field at point," said Taijul yesterday.

Bangladesh's fielding, especially catching, has remained below par over the past few series due to a lack of specialist fielders, whether it be at slip or even in the important point region.

Bangladesh fielding coach Ryan Cook has been with the team for the past three years, with the Bangladesh Cricket Board even extending his contract after the 2019 World Cup. But as things have been shaping up for Bangladeshi fielders recently, the team management and Cook will both have to come up with a better approach. Or else the likes of Taskin and others will keep suffering despite giving their best with the ball in the coming days as well.

Tigers seize advantage, fumble it away

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh made a good comeback as Taskin Ahmed scalped three wickets following a dismal showing on the first day, but Niroshan Dickwella's run-a-ball 64 in the latter stages of the second day helped hosts Sri Lanka counterattack and end the day on 469 for 6 at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Dickwella and Ramesh Mendis added a brisk unbeaten 87-run seventh-wicket stand to keep the hosts on top despite the visiting bowlers managing to pick wickets at regular intervals on the second day.

Dropped catches and missed opportunities remained a feature for Bangladesh for the second consecutive day. Najmul Hossain dropped yet another catch at second slip after Mendis edged a delivery from Taskin, missing the chance to break the partnership before bad light forced an early end to the days' play.

Najmul had previously dropped an easy catch at slip off Taskin's bowling on the first day, giving Sri Lankan skipper Dimuth



Karunaratne a reprieve on 28 that the left-hander cashed in on by scoring 118.

But it was a good start to the day by the Bangladesh bowlers, especially Taskin, who has shown vast improvements on his comeback to the Test format in Sri Lanka. The tall pacer kept things tight alongside pacers Shoriful Islam and Abu Jayed in the first session, when the hosts managed to score just 43 runs at the cost of three wickets.

Taskin picked up his first wicket by getting centurion Lahiru Thirimanne caught down le side for 140. Angelo Matthews survived off Taskin's bowling early on when none of the Bangladeshi fielders heard the ball take the edge, but Taskin managed to dismiss Matthews as Liton Das took a sharp diving catch to his right behind the stumps.

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam dismissed Dhananjaya de Silva just before lunch, denting the hosts further as they

lost three wickets for 15 runs. Oshanda Fernando and Pathum Nissanka then steadied the ship in the post-lunch session, adding 54 runs before Taskin once again brought the visitors back in the game.

Nissanka, who also got a lifeline through yet another dropped catch when he was on ten, was bowled for thirty by a sharp incoming Taskin delivery.

At the other end, a solid Fernando was eyeing his second Test ton before Liton displayed great presence of mind to dismiss him. The wicketkeeper anticipated that the batsman would go for a sweep to off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz and caught a catch down the leg side to send the right-hander back to the pavilion for 81.

The hosts staged a good comeback afterwards, riding on Dickwella and Mendis. The two batters accelerated the run rate, with Dickwella especially manufacturing shots and playing all along the ground to keep the visiting bowlers thinking.

Bangladesh will be looking to bundle out Sri Lanka early on the third day while the hosts will be eyeing some quick runs to ramp up the pressure on the Tigers when they come to bat.



Niroshan Dickwella remained unbeaten on 64 off 64 deliveries as Sri Lanka looked for quick runs in the latter part of the day. PHOTO: SLC



Edinson Cavani scored twice to spark a goalfest as Manchester United beat AS Roma 6-2 in the first leg of the Europa League semifinals on Thursday. In the other semifinal, Unai Emery's Villarreal registered a 2-1 first-leg win over Arsenal. PHOTO: TWITTER

Abahani disappointed by AFC Cup exclusion

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani have expressed their displeasure and disappointment at not being able to participate in this year's AFC Cup.

The six-time Bangladesh Premier League champions were scheduled to play in the playoff stage of the AFC Cup against Club Eagles of Maldives but the Dhanmondi-based outfit's continued inability to host the Maldivians prompted AFC to award the tie to Club Eagles, deeming it as Abahani's withdrawal from the event.

"Taking into careful consideration the exceptional circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular the lockdown and travel restrictions in Bangladesh, the (AFC Covid-19) sub-committee decided that Abahani Limited Dhaka are considered to have withdrawn from the AFC Cup 2021 and that the situation constituted an event of force majeure," AFC said in a press release yesterday.

The sub-committee agreed to award the playoff stage slot to Club Eagles, who

will face India's Bengaluru FC for a place in the AFC Cup Group D on May 11, 2021 in Maldives. The group stages begins in Maldives on May 14, with Bangladesh's Bashundhara Kings one of the four participants.

Abahani's director-in-charge Kazi Nabil Ahmed reacted with dismay at the news of the exclusion of the side from Asia's second-tier club competition.

"We have not withdrawn....AFC has deemed us as withdrawn. We were happy to go to Maldives, but they refused to host nor agreed to come here. We find this situation unjust," Nabil said in a message sent to reporters.

Abahani were originally scheduled to host Club Eagles on April 14 but the countrywide lockdown forced them to look for a neutral venue. The Dhanmondi outfit chose Kathmandu as host for the match on April 21 before looking for a venue in India later, but extended travel restrictions put paid to those plans. Eventually Abahani had expressed desire to host Club Eagles between May 5 and 7 in Dhaka, but that plan did not materialise either due to travel restrictions.

South American trio powers Kings

SPORTS REPORTER



Bashundhara Kings resumed their Bangladesh Premier League campaign in style, registering their biggest victory of the season with a 6-0 thrashing of Uttar Baridhara Club in the first match of the second phase at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

A brace each from Raul Becerra, Jonathan Fernandes and Robson Robinho took the defending champions to 37 points from 13 matches, 11 ahead of second-placed Sheikh Jamal DC who played a match less than the leaders.

Kings came into the match following a two-month gap since outplaying Abahani 4-1 in the last match of the first leg on February 28, and the defending champions began from where they left off despite some injury issues.

From the outset, Kings maintained their usual attacking approach to take

the lead in the third minute when Becerra headed home a long throw-in from Iranian defender Khaled Shafiei before Fernandes, availing a cutback from Robinho, doubled the lead with a drive inside the box in the 11th minute.

The Brazilian midfielder then turned provider for his compatriot Robinho, who coolly placed a cutback home in the 34th minute while defender Tariq Kazi was denied by the woodwork in the 38th minute.

After resumption, Uttar Baridhara looked a bit better on movements but they could hardly expose the defence of Kings, who added three more goals to better their season's biggest victory of the season till that point, a 6-1 win over Arambagh.

Sujan Biswas found a clear chance to reduce the margin for Baridhara, who had 2-0 against the Kings in their first meeting, but the winger saw his polio drive blocked by defender Tapu Barman in the 50th minute before Fernandes scored his second goal with a grounder which Baridhara's substitute keeper Jashim

Uddin failed grip in the 55th minute.

Becerra made it 5-0 in the 63rd minute with a soft left-footer after Mohammad Ibrahim entered the box from the right side to make space for the Argentine, who improved his goal tally to 13, just one less than top-scorer Robinho, who completed the rout in stoppage time by converting a spot-kick.

KOUAKOU DENIES ABAHANI
Abahani surrendered the lead twice to play out a 2-2 draw against Bangladesh Police, a team they had beaten 1-0 defeat in their first meeting of the league.

The Sky Blues looked a bit depressed with the news of their ineligibility for the AFC Cup but drew the blood first through Jewel Rana in the 35th-minute. Christian Kouakou equalised six minutes later before new-signing Sunday Chizoba restored Abahani's lead, only for Kouakou to level again in the 60th minute, leaving the Sky Blues with their fifth draw in 13 matches and in third position with 26 points.



Bashundhara Kings' South American trio - Robson Robinho, Jonathan Fernandes and Raul Becerra - scored two goals apiece as the defending champions thrashed Uttar Baridhara Club 6-0 in the first match of the second phase of Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

World T20 could be moved to UAE

REUTERS, New Delhi

This year's Twenty20 World Cup could be moved to the United Arab Emirates if the COVID-19 crisis does not subside in India, the country's cricket board said.

Six months before the showpiece's scheduled start, India reported a record 386,452 new cases on Friday, though medical experts believe actual numbers may be five to 10 times greater.

The governing International Cricket Council (ICC) said this month it was sticking to hosting the event in India but had back-up plans, without specifying an alternative location.

"It would be the UAE," Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) general manager Dhiraj Malhotra told the BBC on Thursday.

"...We'll take the tournament there, but it'll still be done by the BCCI," added Malhotra, also the tournament director.

He did not respond to Reuters calls and messages to elaborate, but an ICC spokesman confirmed the plan.

The governing body is monitoring the progress of the Indian Premier League, which is continuing in the midst of the epidemic. "It is too early to make a call," the spokesman told Reuters.

The pandemic forced the Indian board to stage last year's IPL in the UAE.

The BCCI last year signed a hosting agreement with the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB).