

What to WATCH

T SPORTS & GTV

Bangladesh vs West Indies
Live from 04:00 pm
Afghanistan vs Pakistan
Live from 08:00 pm

MTV INDIA

La Liga
Levante vs Atletico Madrid
Live from 01:30 am
(Saturday)



PHOTO: AFP

THE MARK OF
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'Zampa was terrific'

REUTERS, Dubai

David Warner's return to form was the icing on the cake as Australia thumped Sri Lanka by seven wickets on Thursday for their second successive victory at the Twenty20 World Cup.

Chasing the only major global trophy to elude them, Australia restricted Sri Lanka to 154-6 at the Dubai International Stadium.

When they returned, Warner, aided by some luck, made 65 as Australia chased down the target with three overs to spare to join Ashes rivals England as the only two teams in Group I with a perfect record.

Earlier, Finch won the toss and elected to field against 2014 world champions Sri Lanka.

Pat Cummins dismissed opener Pathum Nissanka early but Sri Lanka finished the six powerplay overs at 53-1 looking on course for a big total on a batting-friendly

track. For Australia, Adam Zampa (2-12) and Mitchell Starc (2-27) applied the brakes by claiming four wickets between them.

"Sri Lanka got away to a flyer with the bat and the way that Adam Zampa, in particular, was able to drag that back through the middle,

"As a batter, I love batters getting [Player-of-the-Match] but I think when you're looking at the impact on a game, Zampa was terrific tonight. On the back of a really good Powerplay from Sri Lanka, the way that he controlled the game, especially from that bottom end where the right-handers had a short boundary to hit to, he was fantastic. He got big wickets," added Finch.

"I think it was quite slow in the first innings and spun a bit more than it did in the second innings. I think the moisture and dew took effect in the second innings. I find [Sri Lanka] really challenging, very good players of spin so I'm glad to have the night I did," said Zampa.

"We got the start that we really needed but in the middle phase we were not able to capitalise," Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka said. "I felt we were 25-30 runs short on that wicket."

Finch made 37 while Steve Smith, unbeaten on 28, also manoeuvred the ball around with characteristic deftness to frustrate Sri Lanka.

and then Mitchell Starc to have a real impact ... he was fantastic," Australia captain Aaron Finch said.

Zampa was adjudged player-of-the-match for his tidy four overs which included 12 dot balls.

SCORES IN BRIEF	
SRI LANKA	154 for 6 in 20 overs (Asalanka 35, Perera 35, Rajapaksa 33 not out; Starc 2-27, Zampa 2-12, Cummins 2-34)
AUSTRALIA	155 for 3 in 17 overs (Warner 65, Finch 37, Smith 28 not out, Stoinis 16 not out; Hasaranga 2-22)
RESULT	Australia won by 7 wickets.
PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH	Adam Zampa.

'I can help my second home'

Margarita Mamun, gold medalist at the 2016 Rio Olympics, inaugurated the opening ceremony of the Bangabandhu 5th Central South Asian Artistic Gymnastics event as Bangladesh Gymnastics Federation's goodwill ambassador on Wednesday at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur. She met with gymnasts from the six nations that are participating in the event and spoke at great length in an interview with The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman about her spectacular professional journey and also about her special bond with Bangladesh among other things.

The Daily Star (DS): Welcome to Bangladesh. How do you feel after coming to your second home after such a long period?

Margarita Mamun (MM): It is my first visit after the Rio Olympic Games and I'm really happy and amazed to have received such a warm welcome from Bangladeshi people. I'm really happy to be here with my family. My mother is here, after 15 years, as well as my husband and our two-year-old son, who are here for the first time.

DS: You were 10 when you came to visit your grandfather's home in Rajshahi? Can you recall memories from that trip which took place 15 years ago?

MM: I can remember in flashbacks but I have a lot of pictures and videos from that trip. I think I will visit the beautiful Rajshahi next time when I come back with more time in hand. Of course, this will not be our last visit here.

DS: Take us to the beginning of your gymnastics career. What made you choose the sport?

MM: After seeing rhythmic gymnastics on television, I just liked it so much that my mother had to take me out to play the sport.

DS: We know your mother was also a rhythmic gymnast, who perhaps inspired you but what about the role of your father -- Abdullah Al Mamun -- in your career?

MM: My mother was an aspiring gymnast. Unfortunately, she only had a couple of

held in Germany but not recognised by FIG [International Gymnastics Federation]. I think Bangladeshi people are happy to know that I once competed for Bangladesh. My father had also brought the Bangladeshi press when I became world champion in 2013 and he showed me how to celebrate with the people.

DS: You have been known as the Bengal Tiger. Can you tell the story behind it?

MM: After the London Olympics 2020, I became the Russian national team's number one and had the spotlight from the press. Coach Irina knew my background. She told the journalists that they can call me Bengal Tiger as I'm half Bengali and the journalists picked it up from there.

DS: Why did you call time after winning gold at Rio at the age of 20, whereas most athletes usually take part in the Olympics for more than one occasion?

MM: Among many reasons, I had some injury concerns and health-related issues, so I decided before the Rio Olympics that it would be my first and last Olympics. I had already been a world champion at the age of 17 by then.

DS: What keeps you occupied these days?

MM: I am now a full-time mom who prioritises the family because I didn't often see my family when I was in training. But now, I think that after this trip when I go back



months of training because her parents couldn't take her to the training every day. My father was always supportive and was proud of me, starting from when I achieved medals at the age-level to the ones at European Championships and World Cup.

DS: How challenging was your experience as a rhythmic gymnast in Russia?

MM: I practiced every day, almost 24 hours (big laugh) I think. In Russia, as there are too many talented girls, it was extremely hard to pursue a place in the national team. There was a time when I almost competed for Bangladesh, even though there was no rhythmic gymnastics in Bangladesh at that time. My father knew Mamun [Bashir Ahmed], who was the president of the Bangladesh Gymnastic Federation at that time but then my head coach Irina Viner intervened and gave me the opportunity to feature for the Russian national team.

DS: But you once represented Bangladesh during your childhood.

MM: Yes, it was an international competition

home, I will discuss with Mr. Mamun [Bashir Ahmed] how I can help my second home.

DS: What advice do you have for Bangladeshi athletes who are trying to improve their standard to compete at the world-class level?

MM: I know Bangladesh is still waiting to win an Olympic medal. The big question is: How Bangladeshi athletes can achieve the highest results? I think I can assist, maybe not as a coach but maybe as a United Nations ambassador where I can inspire aspiring athletes to become bold dreamers. I think the impact has to be in all walks of life, not just on the sporting or the professional front.

DS: Finally, do you know the Bengali language, and if so, would you like to say something in Bengali to the readers of The Daily Star?

MM: Of course! When I was young, my father taught me the numbers: Ek, dui, tin, char, paach, chhoy, shat, aat, noy and dosh. I know some Bengali words like Shundor [beautiful] and one phrase, which is: Aami Bangladesh ke bhalobashi [I love Bangladesh].

'A disgrace'

AFP, BERLIN

Bayern Munich veteran Thomas Mueller has apologised to their fans and admitted the 5-0 thrashing at Moenchengladbach in the German Cup was the worst defeat he has experienced during 13 years playing in the famous red shirt.

"We were picked apart from A to Z in the first half," the 32-year-old Mueller, who made his Bayern debut in 2008 and is approaching 600 appearances for the Bavarian giants, told ARD.

"I don't know if I've ever experienced anything like that before in an FC Bayern shirt. We have to apologise to our fans."

Furious Bayern sports director Hasan Salihamidzic described the visitors' performance as "a collective blackout -- we simply didn't turn up".

Gladbach fans started celebrating long before the final whistle as the song 'Oh, wie ist das schoen' (Oh, how beautiful this is) echoed around the stands.

"Of course, this was a disgrace for us," added Mueller.

Booters kickstart training under Lemos

SPORTS REPORTER



Interim head coach of Bangladesh national team Mario Lemos began training his charges today, a couple of days late from the scheduled time, for November's invitational Four Nations tournament in Sri Lanka with only 15 available players out of 24.

Of the preliminary squad, captain Jamal Bhuiyan and Tariq Raihan Kazi, who are currently in Finland and Sweden, respectively, are expected to join the camp by this month while defender Bishwanath Ghosh, forward Matin Mia and midfielder Sohel Rana are still on vacation, citing personal reasons.

Bashundhara Kings' midfielders Biplu Ahmed and Masuk Mia Jonny are unavailable due to injuries while defenders Yeasin Khan and Mohammad Atiquzzaman have not yet been released by their club Sheikh Jamal DC, prompting the local game's governing body to write to both Kings and Sheikh Jamal to release their aforementioned players for national interest.

"I want to play to win. I think the national team is performing well but they need to play a winning brand of football," said the Portuguese coach after training.

"The past is past and the future is Sri Lanka's tournament," added the 35-year-old coach, who will go back to being the head coach of Dhaka Abahani once the national team's assignment ends.

Anastasiya stars as Uzbeks ooze with delight

SPORTS REPORTER

Miroshnichenko Anastasiya led from the front to help Uzbekistan win both golds in women's all-around team and individual events on the first day of the Bangabandhu 5th Central South Asian Artistic Gymnastics Championship at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Uzbekistan, comprising Aripova, Dildora, Kahlilova Ominakhon, Jumabekova Giunaz and Anastasiya, displayed stellar performances in all events -- Vault, Uneven Bar, Beam and Floor -- to ensure their gold medal triumph with a score of 189.55 points.

India featuring Karishma, Papiya Das, Surabhi Prasanna Pasaria and Soumyashree Das ended up with a score of 163.60 points to win the silver while Sri Lankan gymnasts grabbed the bronze with 109.55 points.

Star performer Anastasiya bagged the gold medal in women's individual all-around event with a score of 48.75, which surpassed her compatriot Ominakhon's score of 47.80. Indian gymnast Karishma won bronze with a score of 41.85 points.



Barcelona sack Koeman, closing in on Xavi

AGENCIES



Barcelona are close to finalising Xavi Hernandez's long-anticipated return as coach, according to various reports in the Catalan press on Thursday.

Barcelona have named their 'B' side coach Sergi Barjuan as interim manager following the departure of Ronald Koeman, the LaLiga club said in a statement on Thursday.

Dutchman Koeman was sacked after Barca's 1-0 loss to Rayo Vallecano on Wednesday, their fourth defeat in six games in all competitions.

"(Barjuan) shall be taking provisional charge of the technical management of the senior squad. His interim position as first team head coach shall end as soon as the club has hired full-time head coach to replace the dismissed Ronald Koeman," the club said in a statement.

Former midfielder Xavi, who enjoyed a trophy-laden 17-year career at the club and is currently head coach of Qatari side Al Sadd, is widely tipped to take over on a permanent basis.

Barcelona are ninth in the standings with 15 points from 10 games while in the Champions League they face a crucial match away to Dynamo Kiev on Nov. 2 when defeat would leave them in serious danger of failing to reach the knockout phase.

Barca president Joan Laporta was reportedly in talks with Xavi about the vacant position.