

## NZ squad hit by Covid

AFP, LONDON

Three of New Zealand's touring party have tested positive for coronavirus but their four-day warm-up match against English county Sussex will still go ahead, cricket chiefs said on Friday.

Batsman Henry Nicholls, seamer Blair Tickner and bowling coach Shane Jurgensen were flagged after a round of tests on the first morning in Hove and will undergo five days of isolation.

New Zealand Cricket confirmed the rest of the party had tested negative.

New Zealand are also currently missing captain Kane Williamson, who is at home awaiting the birth of his second child, and Indian Premier League contingent Tim Southee, Trent Boult and Daryl Mitchell.

The World Test champions are preparing for a three-Test series against England, starting at Lord's on June 2.

## Rose exits Dortmund

REUTERS

Borussia Dortmund coach Marco Rose has left the Bundesliga club by mutual consent, following a season in which they failed to win silverware, Dortmund said in a statement on Friday.

Dortmund finished second in the Bundesliga, eight points behind champions Bayern Munich.

They finished third in their Champions League group.

The club also suffered a shock exit from the German Cup at the hands of second-tier St Pauli in January, while they were beaten by Bayern in the German Super Cup final in August last year.

"This day is not an easy one for all of us, because the mutual respect among us was, is and remains great," club CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke said.

Rose, who joined Dortmund from Borussia Moenchengladbach in 2021, said, "Despite a difficult season ... I was convinced of our path."



Bangladesh's bowling unit has been severely affected as pacer Shoriful Islam and off-spinner Nayeem Hasan have been ruled out of the second Test. The Bangladesh team, who arrived in Dhaka yesterday after the first Test in Chattogram, will have to revisit their options before fielding the final eleven in the Dhaka Test. (Bottom) Sri Lanka, however, have no such concerns. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

# Tigers' bowling options decimated by injuries

SPORTS REPORTER

Following a draw in the first Test in Chattogram, the second Test against Sri Lanka will be a tough challenge for a Bangladesh team battling multiple injuries that may linger into next month's tour to West Indies.

Spin played a vital role for the hosts in the first Test. It was the medium that led to the fall of all 10 Sri Lankan wickets in their first innings, with off-spinner Nayeem Hasan bagging six wickets and left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan taking three. Another left-arm spinner, Taijul Islam, proved instrumental in the second innings as he scalped four of the six Sri Lankan wickets that fell in their second innings.

Unfortunately, Nayeem, who had come in as a replacement for injured off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz, fractured a finger while fielding on the fourth day of the first Test. Despite the injury, the right-arm spinner showed courage in bowling 14 overs on the fifth day to support Taijul and Shakib, the duo that did the bulk of the bowling.

Nayeem was spotted with his arm in a sling in Mirpur yesterday and dejectedly informed that he would miss the West Indies tour. "My finger is broken. It will take over a month to recover. I won't be available



for the upcoming West Indies tour," Nayeem told The Daily Star yesterday.

Selectors are yet to announce a replacement for Nayeem while Miraz is yet to recover from the finger injury that he sustained during the Dhaka Premier League in April. That poses a dilemma to the think-tank and their aim to form a settled playing eleven with the Mirpur pitch in mind.

Historically, the pitch at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium has always provided plenty of assistance to spinners. Sri Lankan all-rounder Dhananjaya de Silva was aware of that, claiming the visitors would have three spinners in the playing eleven for the second Test.

"There will definitely be one seamer and

three spinners in our team for the second Test because the pitch will favour spinners. If we bat first, we will try to post 275 to 300 runs and then try to bowl our opponents out for under 150 runs. That will give us a chance to win the match," Dhananjaya said after the end of the first Test in Chattogram on Thursday.

Mosaddek Hossain, who is mainly a batting all-rounder but also bowls off-spin, could be Nayeem's replacement for the second Test. Mosaddek, who has played just three Tests and has yet to pick up a wicket, made a comeback to the squad after playing his last Test back in 2019.

Questions may be raised about whether the team management can rely on Mosaddek as a third spinner for the Mirpur Test, especially given the Test series is part of the ICC World Test Championship.

Bangladesh's pace-bowling department is also a major concern for head coach Russell Domingo, with left-arm seamer Shoriful Islam also ruled out of the second Test and the West Indies tour after suffering a blow to his hand while batting on the fourth day of the first Test.

Pacer Taskin Ahmed is also uncertain for the West Indies tour, adding to the woes of the Bangladesh team management as they seek a way to strengthen the bowling department.

## What's still at stake in Europe

AFP, PARIS

Four of Europe's top five leagues come to a conclusion this weekend, with plenty still to be decided and the Premier League and Serie A titles still up for grabs. Here is a look at what's at stake in the Premier League and the Serie A.

PREMIER LEAGUE

**Title Race:** Manchester City lead Liverpool by a single point heading into Sunday's final round of matches and victory against Steven Gerrard's Aston Villa at the Etihad would give them a fourth title in five seasons. If they were to slip up, quadruple-chasing Liverpool could snatch the spoils with victory at home to Wolves.

**Race for Europe:** Fourth-placed Tottenham hold a two-point advantage over Arsenal after their north London rivals suffered back-to-back defeats. Due to their superior goal difference, even a draw at bottom club Norwich would secure a Champions League place. Arsenal need Spurs to lose and to win their home game with Everton. Chelsea have already joined City and Liverpool in wrapping up a top-four finish. Sixth-placed Manchester United need a win at Crystal Palace to cling on to their Europa League slot, with West Ham just two points adrift.

**Relegation/Promotion:** Watford and Norwich have already been relegated and Burnley and Leeds are battling to avoid joining them. They both have 35 points but Burnley have a vastly superior goal difference. On Sunday's final day, Burnley play Newcastle while Leeds visit Brentford. Fulham and Bournemouth have been automatically promoted from the Championship, with Huddersfield to take on Nottingham Forest in the play-off final on May 29.

SERIE A

**Title Race:** AC Milan are in pole position to win their first league title since 2011, needing just a draw at Sassuolo on Sunday to hold off defending champions Inter. If AC Milan did lose, Simone Inzaghi's Inter could grab the Scudetto with victory over Sampdoria at the San Siro.

**Race for Europe:** Napoli and Juventus have already joined the two Milan giants in qualifying for the Champions League group stage.

Fifth-placed Lazio will be in next season's Europa League. Only one point separates Roma, Fiorentina and Atalanta. One will qualify for the Europa League, another will have to settle for the Europa Conference League and the eighth-placed side will miss out altogether.



**Relegation/Promotion:** Genoa and Venezia have both already been relegated to Serie B. Salernitana, on a seven-match unbeaten run, are two points clear of 18th-placed Cagliari and host Udinese on Sunday. Lecce and Cremonese have been promoted to the top flight, with four other clubs still battling in the play-offs.

# Kings face stern test against wounded Mohun Bagan

SPORTS REPORTER

Fresh off a 1-0 win over Maziya S&RC in their opening match of the AFC Cup, Bangladesh Premier League champions Bashundhara Kings will look to keep rolling against group favourites Mohun Bagan FC in their Group D match at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata today.

Bashundhara Kings, despite having as many points as group leaders Gokulam Kerala FC after one game, are in second position in their four-team group by virtue of goal difference. The top team will advance to the zonal semifinals.

Before the start of the group matches, Indian Super League outfit Mohun Bagan hogged the limelight and were favourites to top the Group D after a 5-0 rout against Sri Lankan outfit Blue Star and an emphatic 3-1 win over Bangladesh outfit Abahani. But they suffered a massive blow in their tournament opener, losing 4-2 to I-League outfit Gokulam Kerala FC.

Bashundhara Kings coach Oscar Bruzon gave Mohun



Bagan their due, but did not consider them superior.

"Mohun Bagan have a squad with great players but we do not consider any club in this competition stronger than us. That is an important part of our mental preparation," Bruzon told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

"Tomorrow is a do-or-die

match for our opponents [Mohun Bagan]. They will have a full house cheering for them, but we hope we can manage that stress. We will go on the field with the intention to win in order to be closer to qualification," the Spanish coach added confidently.

Although Bashundhara Kings got off to a winning start against

Maziya S&RC and took a first-half lead, they lost momentum in the second half.

Right-back Tariq Kazi was exposed time and again by the Maldivian outfit's forward line and only the capable interventions of centre-backs Bishwanath Ghosh and Khaled Shafie ensured Kings kept a clean sheet.

Nevertheless, the pressure on their backline will likely be intensified against Mohun Bagan, who would face a group-stage exit with any result other than a win.

"The numbers say that our team has had more clean sheets and less goals conceded over the past 3 seasons. In the AFC Cup, we have conceded only two goals in five games. All that when we are an attacking team," said Bruzon, who will be hoping Brazilian forwards Robson Robinho and Miguel Ferreira can fire on all cylinders against Mohun Bagan, especially after their last encounter in last edition's AFC Cup ended in a 1-1 draw.



Despite a chronic foot issue, Rafael Nadal was in good mood in training ahead of the French Open, which starts in Paris on Sunday. The 13-time winner at Roland Garros would look to dethrone World No. 1 Novak Djokovic and take his record-breaking tally Grand Slams to 22.

PHOTO: TWITTER