Star SPORT
DHAKA TUESDAY JUNE 28, 2022, ASHAR 14, 1429 BS

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
BPL (Football)
Dhaka Abahani vs
Chittagong Abahani
Live from 04:00 pm
West Indies vs
Bangladesh
2nd Test, Day 5
Live from 08:00 pm
SONY SIX
Ireland vs India
2nd T20I
Live from 09:30 pm
STAR SPORTS HD 1 & 2
Wimbledon
First Round
Live from 04:00 pm

Same old story, same old tune

SPORTS REPORTER

It was yet another below par performance as Bangladesh were on the verge of their 100th Test defeat after just 134 Tests in Saint Lucia.

After ushering in 2022 with a historic win over New Zealand in Mount Maunganui, Bangladesh have gone on to lose their next six Tests, managing only one draw so far this year.

There were high hopes after the win in New Zealand. Many believed a win against the top-ranked Test side in their backyard could not be chalked up as a fluke and that Bangladesh would find more direction when it came to emphasising the longest format of the game.

Disappointingly, things remain at a standstill, even compared to Bangladesh's start in the Test format 22 years ago. There have barely been any improvements in terms of mentality or creating a proper cricketing culture that prioritises the elite form of cricket in the country.

Interestingly, even after the crushing defeat in the two-match Test series under newly-appointed captain Shakib Al Hasan, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon hummed same old tune of finding positives in defeat. But Hassan was honest enough to admit that losing a Test was nothing new for Bangladesh.

"We have been losing our entire life. I would rather say that if I look at the first Test and compare it to when we travelled to the Caribbean in 2018, we did well this time around. From that aspect, I would say this is definitely improvement. If you look at the history of the teams who are doing well now, even their performances were not good for the first 20-22 years of playing Test cricket. But still we have a long way to go in Test cricket and we are working on it," Hassan told the media on Sunday.

There has been a clamour to reform the domestic structure ever since Bangladesh were granted Test status, but unfortunately there has hardly been any change. Demands to foster a healthy cricketing culture have also

been heard for many years, but even now very few realise what that means.

Despite 22 years in the Test arena, Hassan still feels that it will take more time to foster that cricketing culture and that there was no need to be disheartened.

Stakeholders have expressed a great deal of satisfaction over the few wins at home, such as victories over Australia and England in 2016 and 2017 on tailor-made pitches that suited the hosts. But there appears nobody willing to question the lack of consistency.

"It will take some time to build a Test culture. If I am not wrong, it took 26 years before India won their first Test. So don't get restless. New Zealand, despite being World Test Champions, managed to win only two out of eight Test series. They may have won Test matches, but couldn't win series. Even they are losing. Does that mean New Zealand are a bad side? Don't get so disappointed," an optimistic Hassan said.

With the white-ball series against the West Indies set to begin next week, a win or two in the shorter formats would certainly see all these concerns regarding Test cricket swept under the rug -- at least until the Tigers plays their next Tests later this year.

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal walks back to the pavilion after edging one to the wicketkeeper while recklessly playing away from his body on the third day of the second Test against West Indies in Saint Lucia on Monday. After yet another top order meltdown, Bangladesh were left 42 runs shy of West Indies' first innings total of 408 with four wickets in hand. Rain delaying the start of Day 4 only seemed to be delaying the inevitable.

PHOTO: AFP

England's World Cup-winning white-ball captain Eoin Morgan is set to announce his retirement from international cricket today, ending a career in which, he played more than 300 times across 50-over and Twenty20 formats. Morgan, who led England to 50-over World Cup glory in 2019, captained England in a record 126 ODIs and 72

T20s. His 118 wins as skipper across the two formats is also a record. The 35-year-old, who made his ODI debut as a 16-year-old with Ireland in 2006 before he was called up by England in 2009, has played 248 ODIs and 115 T20Is, scoring 10,159 runs in total. He has also played in 16 Tests, scoring 700 runs.

Batting leaves a lot to be desired yet again

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh batting disasters, which have become a regularity this year, was once again at display in the second Test at St Lucia as they lost six top-order batters inside 36 overs of their second innings. Plenty had been said about the mindset and the Test approach of the batters, but there appears to be no sign that the analysis from the team management or the coaches have sunk in after continuously falling prey to similar scenarios.

A lot has been made of technique, too, as batters failed to apply themselves over a long period of time. There is no mystery that Test cricket tests every bit of mental and technical ability that the game has to present and top-order failures suggest the team has not been able to identify a solution. Far from identifying it, the players have often resorted to what might be called their natural game.

The bowlers did well on Day 3, but Windies' first innings lead of 174 dictated maximum assurance from the top-order that they would survive well past the day in order to wipe out that lead.

In the end, it was rain which saw Bangladesh scrape through Day 3 three after losing six wickets. Opener Tamim Iqbal, who had prescribed to himself that he should have carried on for a bigger knock in the first innings, could not resist a full-blown cover drive wide from his off-stump to give Kemar Roach his 250th wicket in Tests. In the end it proved to be a loose shot with disastrous consequences and one that was completely opposite of what the team needed at the start of the second innings. When a senior player decides that is the way to go, chasing after a wide delivery that was perhaps meant as a bait, what message does it send to the rest?

Roach smelt blood and then picked up Mahmudul Hasan Joy, who pushed at a delivery outside off much similar to the way the majority of the batters perished. Anamul Haque was done by an in-dipper, having gotten out to a similar delivery. Rain came and took major portion of the second session away, giving way to an extended third session.

Najmul Hossain Shanto, who showed his merit during a 91-ball 42, undid all that good work by chasing another wide delivery and edging it behind in the process. Liton Das got one that seamed in and was unable to get his bat down to prevent an lbw decision.

Skipper Shakib Al Hasan's stay at the crease was pretty short and the left-hander played a few shots that did not fit the scenario Bangladesh were in at 104 for five. Like Shanto, he perished to Alzarri Joseph but in his case there was no foot movement as he wafted at a delivery angled towards the slip cordon. In the end, where application was key, Tigers failed to grab the challenge by the horn, and despite a few batters getting starts, could not capitalise.

Djokovic battles for 80th Wimbledon win

AFP, *London*

Defending champion Novak Djokovic overcame a scare to notch up his 80th Wimbledon win on Monday with a four-sets victory over Kwon Soon-woo of South Korea.

Six-time champion Djokovic triumphed 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 under the Centre Court roof.

But the top seed was made to work after falling a break down in the opening two sets against his 81st-ranked opponent -- losing the second of those.

Djokovic becomes the first player, man or woman, to record 80 singles wins at all four Grand Slam tournaments.

"Now we have got to 80, let's get to 100," said Djokovic, a 20-time Grand Slam title winner.

"I didn't play any lead-up tournaments before Wimbledon so you always feel less comfortable.

"Kwon stays close to the lines, hits clean forehands and backhands so I had to find a way to go through him. "That meant figuring out tactically how to get control of the points."

Djokovic will face either Australia's Thanasi Kokkinakis or Poland's Kamil Majchrzak for a place in the last 32.

Mohammedan beat bogey team after half a decade

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan defeated Sheikh Jamal for only the second time in 11 years with a 3-1 win over the three-time league champions in an exciting Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla yesterday.

The Black and Whites had to wait nearly six years for their first win against Sheikh Jamal since the Dhanmondi outfit started their top-flight journey in the 2010/11 season, winning 1-0 in the 9th edition of the professional league. Little did the Motijheel giants know that they would be made to wait another five-and-a-half years before tasting a second win.

Prior to the game, Mohammedan had suffered 13 defeats and managed six draws against Sheikh Jamal in 22 league matches. But the Motijheel outfit made the most of coming up against a struggling side that have now suffered three defeats in their past four league matches under coach Joseph Afusi, who had been instrumental in his previous terms in the role.

Their third defeat of the campaign also derailed any remaining hopes of a title challenge. Sheikh Jamal now have 30 points, 14 less than league leaders Bashundhara Kings and five less than second-placed Abahani.

Despite going unbeaten for the first 11 matches of the campaign, Sheikh Jamal replaced Spanish coach Juan Manuel Martinez and appointed Afusi, but the Nigerian has been struggling to deliver consistently, with his team winning three games and losing three.

Smarting from a 4-2 defeat at the hands of archrivals Abahani in their previous match,

Mohammedan put up a spirted performance against Sheikh Jamal in an entertaining match.

Mohammedan rattled the crossbar thrice while Sheikh Jamal were deprived by the post twice while there Mohammedan were awarded two penalties for handball.

Sheikh Morsalin, on loan from Bashundhara Kings, gave Mohammedan the lead in the 35th minute with a brilliant volley from inside the box, but Souleymane Diabate's own goal evened proceedings.

Diabate then made amends from the spot by scoring twice. He first restored the lead in the 43rd minute after defender Raihan Hasan handled the ball inside the box and then ensured the result in the 83rd minute after defender Ariful Islam stopped a low cross from Farhad Mia with an outstretched hand.

Bairstow bashing sees England to clean sweep

REUTERS, LEEDS

Jonny Bairstow hit the second fastest fifty for England in Test cricket as they made light work of a 113-run target on Monday to beat New Zealand by seven wickets in the third and final test at Headingley and ensure a 3-0 series victory.

Bairstow, whose batting heroics was key to ensuring England won the second Test, picked up where he left off from Trent Bridge as he brought up his half century in 30 balls and then took England to victory on the last day with an unbeaten 71, finishing it off with a six.

A 111-run partnership with Joe Root, who was 86 not out, saw England reach the competitive victory target of 296 as they completed their first clean sweep of a home series in over a decade under new captain Ben Stokes and red-ball coach Brendon McCullum.

England will not have long to rest on their laurels, however, with the Covid-delayed final Test of last year's series against India starting at Edgbaston on Friday.