T SPORTS
BPL (Football)
Rahmatganj vs Muktijoddha Sangsad
Live from 04:00 pm
SONY SIX
England vs India

5th Test, Day 4 Live from 03:30 pm STAR SPORTS HD 1 & 2 Wimbledon Round of 16 Live from 04:00 pm

Rajshahi reminds value of green tops

SPORTS REPORTER

Cricketers outside the national set-up, who are being groomed to enrich the pipeline of the Bangladesh national team, had a fruitful outing in Rajshahi during a four-day match between the Bangla Tigers and High-Performance Unit (HP) at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium

Bangla Tigers won the contest by nine wickets yesterday with national team selector Habibul Bashar keeping a close eye on the players throughout the four days ahead of the Bangladesh A team's upcoming West Indies tour later this month.

Apart from the performances of the players, it was the Rajshahi pitch that garnered attention the past four days as it generated good bounce and swing, encouraging the aspiring seamers in the pipeline. Young pacers including the likes Mukidul Islam Mugdho, Mrittunjoy Chowdhury, Hasan Mahmud, and Ripon Mondol alongside the experienced Abu Jayed showed great promise and hints of improvement, giving a lot of hope for the coming days.

The selectors will name the squad for Bangladesh A team from the lot that played in Rajshahi after the Eid break before the training camp from July 16 in Khulna. They are scheduled to play three one-dayers and a four-day game in the Caribbean.

Before the tour, the A team will also play two onedayers and a four-day game against the HP side.

"I think our HP seamers showed great promise. It was pretty hot in Rajshahi. But the pitch was very good for the pacers, providing extra bounce and swing. This type of game does not have such high intensity but the players really showed their urge. It was nice to see Hasan Mahmud getting his rhythm back and more importantly, his fitness is also improving," Bashar told The Daily Star.

Young seamer Hasan, who has impressed with his pace and made his white-ball debut in 2020, has been struggling with fitness. The pacer impressed in the four-day match, picking up three wickets for Bangla Tigers in the first innings. "It was a good sporting pitch. There was something for the seamers and I tried to utilise that. At the moment, my fitness is getting better and my pace is also improving. The four-day game was really helpful for all the seamers and such pitches surely encourage pacers," said Hasan.

With the likes of Ebadot Hossain, Khaled Ahmed, Taskin Ahmed and Shoriful Islam making impacts at the international level, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) should consider providing more such pacer-friendly surfaces at home for the promising fast bowlers to



In-form England batter Jonny Bairstow jumps in the air after completing his third successive Test century during the third day of the fifth Test against India at Edgbaston yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Bairstow continues rich vein of form

AFP, BIRMINGHAM

Jonny Bairstow completed his third hundred in successive Tests before falling for 106 at Edgbaston on Sunday to leave England's series-decider against India intriguingly poised.

Bairstow, 91 not out when rain forced an early lunch on the third day of the Covid-delayed fifth Test, went to three figures when a push off seamer Shardul Thakur was misfielded on the cover rope to give the Yorkshireman his 14th four in 119 balls. He also hit two sixes.

His exit left England 227-6 and they were eventually dismissed for 284 in reply to India'a firstinnings 416, a deficit of 132 runs.

But that represented a major recovery after England had resumed on 84-5 in a match they have to win to end this fivematch series level at 2-2.

The 32-year-old Bairstow's latest century followed scores of 136 at Trent Bridge and 162 at his Headingley home ground, where he also made an unbeaten 71 in the second innings, in England's recent 3-0 whitewash of Test world champions New Zealand.

In England's first series under their new leadership duo of Stokes and red-ball coach Brendon McCullum, the team had several times hit its way out of trouble.

But for all the talk of the new 'Bazball' approach, a reference to former New Zealand captain McCullum's nickname, Bairstow did still play himself in against India's impressive pace attack in a match England have to win to square this five-match series at 2-2.

2. India were 37 for 1 at Tea.

Federer hopes to play Wimbledon 'one more time'

AFP, LONDON

Roger Federer said Sunday he hopes to play Wimbledon "one more time" despite being sidelined for a year with a knee injury.

"I hope I can come back one more time. I've missed it here," said the eight-time champion as he attended a special ceremony to mark the 100th anniversary of Centre

> "This court has given me my biggest wins and my biggest losses,"

said Federer.
Federer was joined at the ceremony
by two men responsible for some

of those highs and lows – six-time champion Novak Djokovic and two-time winner Rafael Nadal. The 40-year-old winner of 20 Grand Slam titles has been out of action since a quarter-final loss at the tournament in 2021 before undergoing another bout of knee surgery.

He plans to return to action at the Laver Cup in London in September and then take part in his home tournament at Basel.



"[Shakib Al Hasan] was positive. But Shakib got out at the wrong time. He knows that. We needed someone to get big scores. We need those in this format. We needed good partnerships, but as soon as partnerships were developing, we lost wickets."

Bangladesh head coach **Russell Domingo** after first T20l against West Indies in Dominica, which was abandoned due to rain.



Unseeded Czech Marie Bouzkova snapped Frenchwoman Caroline Garcia's eight-match winning run on grass with a 7-5, 6-2 victory in the Wimbledon fourth round on Sunday to reach her first Grand Slam quarter-final. Since knocking out American seventh seed Danielle Collins in the opening round, the 23-year-old Bouzkova has grown from strength to strength at the grass court Grand Slam where she had never previously got past the second round.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Abahani's title hopes all but over

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani's hopes of regaining the title of the Bangladesh Premier League all but evaporated following a dismal 4-2 defeat against hosts Saif Sporting Club at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj yesterday.

Although Abahani won the Independence Cup and the Federation Cup with impressive performances, they have been inconsistent in league so far, having dropped points against Bangladesh Police, Chittagong Abahani, Swadhinata KS and struggling Sheikh Russel KC to fall behind in the title race.

behind in the title race.
And their misery was
compounded when they suffered
their second defeat in 18 matches
yesterday, falling seven points
behind league leaders Bashundhara
Kings, who need only six points

from their four remaining matches to ensure a third consecutive title. Abahani remained on 38 points while Kings have 45 points from 18 outings.

Abahani, however, made a good start with Daniel Colindres rattling the crossbar in the eighth minute before Mehdi Hasan Royal drove wide from a goalmouth scramble.

The Sky Blues, though, lost their rhythm as Saif exposed their sloppy high-line defence, with Sunday Udoh, Emeka Ogbough and Asror Gafurov creating a number of chances. A couple of fumbles from goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel added to Abahani's misery.

Sunday tapped in after collecting a cutback from Emeka to give Saif a 13th-minute lead with Sohel failing to gather the ball in his first attempt.

Abahani came back into the match through a superb overhead kick from Dorielton Gomes

off a Colindres corner in the 35th minute but Saif restored the lead five minutes later following another fumble from Sohel, who failed to clear a corner despite having the ball within his reach. Defender Monir Hossain put the ball into his own net while attempting to clear the ball.

Sohel made amends with some brilliant saves but failed to stop Rahim Uddin, who headed home a corner from Sunday in the 65th minute. Emery Bayisenge killed off the contest from the spot in the 73rd minute before Colindres scored a consolation goal for Abahani, converting a spot kick in stoppage time.

Meanwhile, a brace from Vali Jonov Otabek powered Sheikh Jamal to a 2-0 win over Chittagong Abahani in Cumilla while Sheikh Russel KC defeated Uttar Baridhara 5-3 at the Bashundhara Kings arena.

