

Star

DHAKA SUNDAY JULY 17, 2022, SRABAN 2, 1429 BS

SPORT

What to WATCH

SONY TEN 2
Sri Lanka vs Pakistan
1st Test, Day 2
Live from 10:30 am

SONY SIX
England vs India
3rd ODI
Live from 04:00 pm

Not the end of the world for Anamul

SPORTS REPORTER

There was talk that Bangladesh should test their bench strength in the third ODI against the West Indies on Saturday after they won the three-match series with a game to spare and Anamul Haque, who made a return to the national side after seven years during the tour of the Caribbean, was the frontrunner to get a nod in the game.

Anamul had a phenomenal season in the domestic 50-over Dhaka Premier League, registering a record 1,138 runs in the List A competition in the last season for Prime Bank, to force his way into the limited-overs side.

Despite scoring the bulk of his runs in the 50-over format, Anamul made his comeback through the longest format of the game after former Test skipper Mominul Haque was dropped for the second Test against the Windies due to a prolonged run of poor form.

Anamul failed to utilise that opportunity, scoring 23 in the first innings and managing just four runs in the second innings. The wicketkeeper-batter also featured in all the three matches of the T20I series against the hosts, but once again failed with scores of 16, three and 10 respectively.

To keep the 'selection process fair', ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal preferred Najmul Hossain Shanto ahead of Anamul during the first two ODIs, with the left-hander promoted to open the innings in the second game.

As Bangladesh had already won the series and Najmul had been unable to perform significantly in the first two ODIs with knocks of 37 and 20, there were speculations the team management would give Anamul an opportunity in the final ODI.

It would have also been the ideal platform for Anamul and, more importantly, could have provided him confidence after a disappointing comeback to international cricket.

Surprisingly, Anamul was not included for the third ODI and many believe it is another example of the lack of foresight in the selection process.

"I think it's the team management's call whether they pick Anamul or not. Obviously, the team management had their own plans and they did whatever they felt was best with the conditions and pitch in mind," chief selector Minhajul Abedin told The Daily Star.

"We are planning to have him for the upcoming Zimbabwe tour. I think we need to show some patience and have faith in the team management's decision. We have a long-term plan for Anamul. It's not the end of the world for Anamul because he didn't feature in the ODI series in the West Indies," he concluded.



Bangladesh batter Liton Das hit his sixth ODI fifty in chase of West Indies' 178 runs in the third and final ODI of the three-match series in Guyana on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Taijul roars back into ODIs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh continued their dominance over the West Indies in the three-match ODI series and once again it was the spinners who paved the way for the Tigers, with left-arm spinner Taijul Islam leading the charge.

Taijul registered his maiden five-wicket haul to bundle out West Indies for a small total of 178 in the third and final ODI at the Providence Stadium in Guyana yesterday.

Taijul, who was the only change in the playing eleven as he replaced Shoriful Islam to make a comeback to the ODI format after 28 months, picked up his first wicket off the very first ball that he bowled yesterday to dismiss opener Brandon King.

Interestingly, the 30-year-old cricketer, who over the years has been considered



As skipper Tamim Iqbal once again won the toss and opted to field, it was clear that Taijul would be brought into the attack soon on a pitch that had aided the visiting spinners throughout the series.

Introduced in the third over of the game, Taijul grabbed the opportunity instantly as his sharp turners had undone the Windies batters. He dismissed Shai Hope, the other Windies opener, with a classical left-armers' delivery -- a flighted ball enticing the right-hander to stretch forward only to turn away sharply and have the batter stumped. Stunned by the brilliant Taijul delivery, Hope walked back after scoring just two.

Before travelling to the West Indies,

Taijul had said during an exclusive interview with The Daily Star that his main target will be to assess the pitch away from home and adapt accordingly. And the left-arm spinner seems to have waited for his opportunity and once he got that, he latched onto it.

"It is difficult if you have a set plan. Instead, you have to be flexible. My initial goal is to help the seamers by bowling tight. If the spinners get purchase, it's a different ball game," Taijul had said.

The cricketer from Natore went on to remove Keemo Paul and Rovman Powell next as West Indies were left reeling. It was skipper Nicholas Pooran who held the key for his side and scored fifty. But Taijul got the wicket of Pooran as well, bagging his maiden fiver with the big fish.

Pooran was beaten by yet another turning delivery from Taijul, which came into the left-handed batter as he tried to play across the line. With Pooran making no connection, the ball went on to hit the timber as the Windies skipper had to depart after a team-high 73 off 109 balls.

Taijul's experience played a crucial role in adapting to the condition and the pitch as he tried to give more air to the ball to get purchase from the surface. He ended up with career-best ODI figures of 28 for five in 10 overs that included two maidens.

Apart from Taijul, another left-arm spinner Nasum also played a vital role with the ball for the Tigers. He bagged two wickets alongside Mustafizur Rahman.

Robinho staying at Kings

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Premier League champions Bashundhara Kings have extended contract with their talismanic Brazilian forward Robson Robinho by two more years.

The 26-year-old signed the contract extension in presence of the club's chairman Imrul Hasan at the club headquarters on Saturday afternoon.

The attacking midfielder joined Bashundhara Kings in August, 2020, on loan from Brazil's Fluminense before making the move permanent at the end of the season. He scored 24 goals in his first season. This season the Brazilian has scored 13 goals in the league so far as the Bashundhara-based club are on the verge of winning a third consecutive BPL title.

Bernardeschi signs for Toronto

REUTERS

Toronto FC have signed Italy international and free agent Federico Bernardeschi, the Major League Soccer side said, adding to its Italian lineup after it signed Bernardeschi's Italy teammate Lorenzo Insigne and former Italy international Domenico Criscito. Bernardeschi spent five seasons with Serie A side Juventus but his contract expired in June, paving the way for a move to the MLS side as a Designated Player on a four-year contract.

"We are thrilled to add Federico to our team. As a player and a person, we believe he's exactly what we need right now, both on the field and in the locker room," Toronto FC President Bill Manning said in a statement.

"Federico has proven himself to be a champion and a leader at Juventus and for the Italian national team and brings a pedigree to Toronto that's second to none."

Bernardeschi won three league titles and two Coppa Italia trophies with Juventus.



Xavi denied US visa

AFP, BARCELONA

Coach Xavi was not allowed to board Barcelona's flight to the United States on Saturday because of his history of visits to Iran.

Sports daily El Mundo Deportivo reported Xavi went to Iran three times while he was playing for Qatari club Al Sadd, and so needed to apply for special permission to visit the United States.

Xavi played the last game of his career in Tehran. Barca only realised they had a problem on Friday. They thought they had found a solution, but when they arrived at the airport, Xavi was not allowed on the plane and the team had to travel without him.

Reports said Xavi should be able to fly on Monday and arrive in Miami in time to lead the final training session before the friendly against Inter Miami on Tuesday evening. Barcelona's recent signings Raphinha, Andreas Christensen and Franck Kessie all travelled with the squad.

Barcelona close in on Lewandowski

REUTERS

Poland striker Robert Lewandowski is set to join Barcelona after Bayern Munich reached a verbal agreement with the LaLiga side on a transfer, the Bundesliga champions said on Saturday.

The 33-year-old has 12 months remaining on his Bayern contract and multiple media reports had said he was expected to sign a three-year deal with the 26-times Spanish champions.

"We have come to a verbal agreement with Barcelona," Bayern president Herbert Hainer said in a statement.

"It's good to have clarity for all parties. Robert is an incredible player and he won everything with us. We are incredibly grateful to him."

Spanish media reported that Barcelona would pay around 45 million euros (\$45.4 million) plus another 5 million in add-ons for the striker.



Lewandowski joined Bayern in 2014 from Borussia Dortmund and has won the Bundesliga every year since then, as well as the Champions League in 2020.

Named FIFA Best Men's Player for the second straight year in January,

Lewandowski said in May that his story with Bayern was over and he could not imagine staying on with the German champions. Read full story

The club were not eager to let the Bundesliga's second-highest all-time scorer go, but Bayern sports director Hasan Salihamidzic had confirmed Lewandowski did not accept an offer to extend his contract and was looking for new experience elsewhere.

Bayern also announced that German international Serge Gnabry, who had been linked by the British media with a return to the Premier League, had extended his contract until 2026.



Shaheen Afridi spreads his arms as his teammates join him in celebration after one of four wickets for the Pakistan pacer during their first Test against Sri Lanka at the Galle National Stadium yesterday. Pakistan bowled out the opposition for 222 runs before losing two wickets for 24 runs at the end of the first day's play.

PHOTO: AFP