

What to WATCH

T Sports and GTV

Indian Premier League

Delhi vs Chennai

Live from 4:00 pm

Kolkata vs Lucknow

Live from 8:00 pm

Star Sports Select HD2

English Premier League

Tottenham Hotspurs vs Brentford

Live from 5:30 pm

Bournemouth vs Manchester United

Live from 8:00 pm

Nottingham Forest vs Arsenal

Live from 10:30 pm

BD A salvage draw in rain-hit affair

SPORTS REPORTER

The first of the three-match unofficial Test between Bangladesh A and their West Indian counterparts ended in a draw at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday after rain, which played a significant role throughout the match, again came to the Afif Hossain-led side's rescue.

Trailing by 192 runs in their second innings in reply to the visitors' 417-run first-innings total, Bangladesh ended the final day on 187 for seven when play was called off due to bad light, with only 49.1 overs completed on the day.

Shadman Islam top-scored with 64 off 90 deliveries while Jaker Ali was unbeaten on 36. Player of the match Jair McAllister, who bagged a fiver in the first innings, scalped two more in the second innings.

The result notwithstanding, the visitors dominated all four days, totally outplaying the visitors in all the departments. The second four-day is scheduled from May 23 at the same venue.



Erik Lamela came off the bench and scored a fabulous header five minutes into extra time to help Europa League thoroughbreds Sevilla to a gritty 2-1 win in a pulsating semifinal second leg against Juventus on Thursday, securing a 3-2 aggregate victory. The Spaniards will bid for a record-extending seventh Europa League title when they face AS Roma in the final in Budapest on May 31, after Jose Mourinho's side drew 0-0 at Bayer Leverkusen to secure a 1-0 aggregate victory in their semifinal.

PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS

‘Not thinking of World Cup yet’

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh chief selector Minhajul Abedin Nannu feels that it is too soon to talk about the ODI World Cup squad with a few more assignments left before the showpiece event.

Talks regarding who will make the World Cup squad have been the rage in the media with Mahmudullah Riyad, Afif Hossain and a few other names in the mix.

“We will not make any decisions in a hurry. We are playing back-to-back series and the best possible side will be built. We still have four months before the World Cup and we have Afghanistan coming up for a series including all three formats, so, we are thinking of organising the sides [for that series],” Minhajul told the media yesterday. “I feel like we are the only Test-playing side where the World Cup discussion is taking place so early. However, we are not thinking of the World Cup but about the Afghanistan series.”

Test captain Shakib Al Hasan is currently out with injury and is expected to miss the one-off Test against Afghanistan, starting from June 14. Minhajul was hoping the all-rounder would be fit for the ODI series, set to begin from July 5. “There is a long gap before the ODI series due to Eid-ul Adha and I hope he will be able to return to the ODI squad,” Minhajul said.

The Tigers will not be experimenting against Afghanistan in the Test, Minhajul opined, given their bitter experience when they suffered a 224-run hammering in their first Test against Afghanistan in 2019 in Chattogram.

‘Everything is about mindset’

Bangladesh's fast-bowling department has been a revelation, with the Tigers enjoying the luxury of an extended crop of promising pacers that have started to win games for Bangladesh at home and, most noticeably, in foreign conditions. Overseeing the pace-bowling brigade is legendary South Africa pacer Allan Donald, who spoke with *The Daily Star's Ekush Tapader* about the changes he has seen in the pacers' skillset as well as mindset while giving inside into what had done the trick for over the past 12 months. The excerpts are below:

The Daily Star (DS): Bangladesh's pacers have been performing very impressively. What is the main reason behind this development of pacers?

Allan Donald (AD): I'm extremely proud of how everyone's moved forward in the past 12 months and I think our biggest improvement has been in a mental capacity. When I first came in, the first thing that I looked at and stood back and watched was our skill level. The second thing I looked at was what our mindset was like in a competitive environment. For me, everything at this level is about mindset. Skill will take over but if we are ferociously competitive as a group and not just as individuals... that was my biggest mission. To make this group competitive in every way.

From a bowling point of view, I'm so proud of how everyone has embraced this new way not worrying about getting hit for a six, not worrying about what it might look like if I get it wrong. In terms of strike rates, I think we've improved in all formats, especially in white ball because that's a given, that's what it should be. If you don't go at the batters and don't take risks,



you're not going anywhere. It's all about aggression versus aggression.

DS: Do you think Bangladesh will have one of the best pace attacks in this year's World Cup?

AD: There will be very good wickets, there's no question about it. In 2011, I was there with New Zealand and experienced that first hand. All the pitches were just sublime. So, there's going to be really tough moments and that's when we have to be at our best. It's going to come down to how

cool can we be under pressure in those moments when we need to close a game out.

DS: Hasan Mahmood is bowling well. He seems very mature, especially for his age. What do you think his specialty is?

AD: Hasan Mahmud is an extremely talented young man. I just love his personality, his character. He doesn't seem to be fazed by pressure although it's still early in his career. I think the impact he's had, especially with the new

ball, was significant because he's always broken partnerships very quickly with high-class fast bowling. I think he always asks very good questions and simplifies everything. He doesn't really overthink things. Whenever he's come on, he's had an impact almost immediately. He's not going to get it right all the time but so far he's been superb under pressure.

DS: There are many pacers in the pipeline now. Does that motivate everyone?

AD: The competition among all the pacers for places is great to see. It's obviously going to be a very difficult choice for selectors. For the Asia Cup, I think you probably see what direction the selectors may go for. Having to pick five seamers for the World Cup, or six, we don't know.

I think just looking around and how hard everyone's working is terrific. How everyone is punching the door down to get into the final selection places for the World Cup is what we want. That's what we spoke about six months ago. Not that everyone works against each other, but work for each other. The closeness that has been created in this group vastly has been nothing but complementary.



Not going to bottle it, says Arteta

REUTERS, London

Arsenal may have handed Manchester City a huge advantage going into a decisive weekend in the Premier League title race but they will keep their wits about them in the final two games despite their slim chances, manager Mikel Arteta said on Friday.

City are on 85 points and have a four-point lead with a game in hand over Arsenal, who must win at Nottingham Forest on Saturday to realistically stay in the title race at least until Pep Guardiola's side face Chelsea a day later.

“Two games to go and we can still be champions against arguably the best team in the history of the Premier League. We are still there and we're not going to bottle that, that's for sure,” Arteta told reporters.

“It shows the level of this league. That team (City) has the capacity to win 105 to 110 points. They haven't done that this season because of the level of the league and we've been there toe-to-toe

for 10 months.”

Arteta said Arsenal's 3-0 home loss to Brighton & Hove Albion last weekend was a difficult pill to swallow but he looked to gain perspective on what his young squad had achieved this season.

“We discussed in the following days about where we are, what we've done, the remaining two games -- what the possibilities are, what is in our hands and what we can deliver,” he added.

“We want to continue to be at the level that we've been for 10 months... We can't lose sight of what happened in moments where we weren't at our best or at the level required to be champions and we have to acknowledge that.

“But obviously the team, the players, the club deserve huge credit for how far we've come in the season. There are still two very important games to play.”

Arteta said his side will be without the injured Gabriel Martinelli and Oleksandr Zinchenko for the rest of the season. Martinelli was taken off against Brighton with an ankle injury.

Kings one win away from title

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Bashundhara Kings ensured they would need just a solitary win from their remaining four matches to retain the title of Bangladesh Premier League as they notched a 2-0 win against Chittagong Abahani at the Bashundhara Kings Arena yesterday.

The three-time champions now have 43 points from 16 matches, 10 points more than nearest rivals Abahani, who yesterday thrashed Sheikh Russel KC 3-1 at Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla.

Kings will now aim to complete a fourth straight league triumph and take an unassailable lead when they face Sheikh Russel in their next game.

In Mohammedan defeated Sheikh Jamal to jump into third position in the 11-team table, with 22 points from 15 matches. Sheikh Russel and Sheikh Jamal slipped to the fourth and fifth position respectively, with 22 and 21 points. However, Sheikh Russel have played a match less than Sheikh Jamal.

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A GAME OF
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