

SHORT CORNER

A minute's silence observed for Asim Jawad

A minute's silence was observed before the fourth T20I between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium on Friday as a mark of respect for the tragic demise of Bangladesh Air Force Squadron Leader Asim Jawad in an air crash in Chattogram yesterday.

Italy, Germany to have five clubs in 2024-25 CL

Italy and Germany have earned an extra spot in the Champions League next season after their clubs performed well in European competitions this season, Europe's soccer governing body UEFA said on Friday.

Namibia name T20 WC squad

Talented all-rounder Gerhard Erasmus has been named captain as Namibia revealed their squad for next month's ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Squad: Gerhard Erasmus (c), Zane Green, Michael Van Lingen, Dylan Leicher, Ruben Trimpelmann, Jack Brassell, Ben Shikongo, Tangeni Lungameni, Niko Davin, JJ Smit, Jan Frylinck, JP Kotze, David Wiese, Bernard Scholtz, Malan Kruger, PD Bignaut

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Tanzid Tamim smashed his second half-century in T20Is to give Bangladesh a flying start in the fourth game of the five-match series against Zimbabwe in Mirpur yesterday. Tanzid made 52 off 37 balls and formed a stellar 101-run opening stand with Soumya Sarkar. However, the innings fell apart once Tanzid departed as the Tigers lost wickets in clusters and eventually got bundled out for 143. Shakib Al Hasan and Mustafizur Rahman then bailed out the hosts with the ball, ensuring a nervy five-run win for the Tigers.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Fahad's second GM norm dream extended

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Fahad Rahman held yet another Grandmaster, Sanap Vahap of Turkey, in the sixth-round match of the Dubai Police Global Chess Challenge in the UAE but his dream to achieve the second GM norm following this tournament got shattered on Thursday.

Fahad, with black pieces, drew with Vahap in the 75th move to raise his point tally to 3.5 from six matches and shared fourth place along with 31 other players. Indian GMs NR Visakh and Aravindh Chithambaram jointly shared the lead with five points each.

Fahad's draw against Vahap means he will have to wait longer for getting his second GM norm as he needed seven points from nine matches to do so this tournament. Now, the 20-year-old can amass a maximum of 6.5 points, subject to three straight wins in the last three matches.

Fahad was playing against Indian GM Subramaniam Bharath in the seventh round on Friday.

Tigers' batting frailty exposed again

SPORTS REPORTER

Before Zimbabwe's medium pacer Luke Jongwe strolled in to deliver the second ball of the 12th over, Bangladesh were well and truly in command of the fourth Twenty20 International in Mirpur yesterday, with both openers still at the middle and 101 runs already on the board. With that delivery, Jongwe broke the opening stand by getting opener Tanzid Tamim caught at point after a well made 52 off 37 balls.

After that, thousands of home fans at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur looked on bewildered as in the next 51 deliveries, Bangladesh lost their remaining nine wickets for just 42 to be bundled out for a meagre 143 in 19.5 overs – a display that highlights the frailty of the Tiger's batting in T20Is.

Before everything went awry, the innings had started swimmingly for the hosts as their fresh opening pair of Tanzid and Soumya Sarkar gave them their best start in the series by far.

Soumya, who returned to action for the first time since hurting his knee mid-March, replaced the out-of-form Liton Das.

The left-hander looked jittery and struggled to time the ball on most occasions. However, he picked his spots well as he hit a six and a four against Brain Bennet from reverse sweeps and also hit Jongwe for a six with a lofted cover drive.

At the other end, Tanzid was seemingly batting on a different surface as he was in command from the start, bringing up his second T20I half-century off 34 balls.

At the halfway point of the innings, the Zimbabwean shoulders on the field had slumped, especially after Bennet dropped

Tanzid on 51 in the penultimate ball of the 10th over from Sikandar Raza.

But things changed dramatically from the 12th over when Jongwe first dismissed Tanzid and then removed his opening partner Soumya, getting him trapped LBW with a fuller-length delivery.

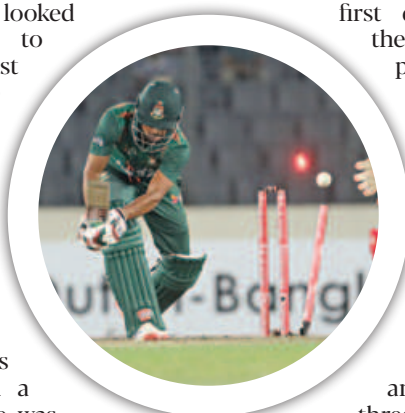
From then on, the Bangladesh batters had no answers to the Zimbabwean attack as spinners Bennet and Raza dried up the boundaries and collectively took three wickets, exposing Bangladesh's long tail with bowling all-rounder Rishad Hossain coming at No.7 in the match.

The Tigers couldn't hit a boundary for 36 balls, from 12.1 to 18.2 overs, after Tanzid and Soumya had collectively hit

BRIEF SCORES

Bangladesh: 143 all out in 19.5 overs (Tanzid 52, Soumya 41; Jongwe 3-20, Bennet 2-20)
Zimbabwe: 138 all out in 19.4 overs (Campbell 31, Masakadza 19 not out; Shakib 4-35, Mustafizur 3-19)
Result: Bangladesh won by five runs
Player of the match: Mustafizur Rahman

nine fours and three sixes in their opening stand. Zimbabwean pacers, who were finding life difficult against Tanzid, suddenly found their rhythm as the Bangladesh innings crumbled. Even with a five-run win, this sorry batting display from Bangladesh against a team that couldn't even qualify for the ICC T20 World Cup will remain as a terrible sign for the Tigers with the tournament less than a month away.



Abahani trip as Kings on brink of history

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani's turbulent journey in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) continued as they squandered an early advantage to settle for a 1-1 draw against Bangladesh Police Football Club in Gopalganj yesterday.

In their last five matches, the six-time BPL champions managed only two wins and two draws, highlighting their inconsistent performance in the league, which they have failed to clinch in the past four seasons.

- With a win against Mohammedan today, Bashundhara Kings can surpass Dhaka Wanderers Club and become the first team to win five top-flight leagues on the trot in Bangladesh. Wanderers had won four in a row between 1953-1956.
- Abahani and Mohammedan possess a record of hat-trick league titles each.

At Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni Stadium, forward Stewart Cornelius of St Vincent gave Abahani a nine-minute lead, only to be cancelled out by substitute MS Bablu in the 88th minute. An unforgivable fumble by goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Shohel – who allowed a harmless drive from Bablu to slip past between his legs after his butterfly fingers failed to thwart a low shot taken outside the box – compounded Abahani's woes.

With seven wins, five draws, and three defeats in 15 matches, the Sky Blues currently sit two points behind second-placed Mohammedan Sporting Club and 11 points adrift of league leaders Bashundhara Kings, who are on the verge of a historic achievement.

If Kings prevail over Mohammedan today with three more fixtures left to play, they will secure their fifth consecutive BPL silverware – a milestone unprecedented in the history of Bangladesh football, before or after the country's liberation.

This feat would surpass the previous record held by Dhaka Wanderers Club, who claimed four straight titles from 1953 to 1956. In contrast, traditional powerhouses Abahani and Mohammedan have managed three successive titles, with Abahani achieving this feat twice.



It was another magical night for Bayer Leverkusen, who staged yet another remarkable late comeback to move into the Europa League final with a 2-2 draw at home against AS Roma on Thursday as they won 4-2 on aggregate and set the record for the longest unbeaten run in all competitions. Leverkusen, unbeaten in 49 matches now, were 2-0 down on the night till the 82nd minute when Roma defender Gianluca Mancini put through his own goal before late substitute Joseph Stanicic pulled the hosts level after Leandro Paredes netted two penalties for the visitors.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Atalanta's 'moment to celebrate'

AGENCIES

Atalanta reached their maiden Europa League final in emphatic fashion, claiming their biggest win in the history of the tournament to beat Olympique de Marseille 3-0 in the second leg of the semifinal in front of their home crowd on Thursday.

Ademola Lookman, academy product Matteo Ruggeri, and El Bilal Toure all got their names on the scoresheet as Atalanta roared to a 4-1 aggregate win in front of delirious fans in Bergamo.

The Italians will meet Bayer Leverkusen, who overcame AS Roma, in their first European final in Dublin on May 22.

"My first goal in Bergamo is a very big emotion," said Ruggeri, who scored the second goal after Lookman put Atalanta ahead. "Now we can dream with our eyes open that we're in the final. It's a moment to celebrate with our people."

City's chance to put the squeeze on Arsenal

REUTERS, London

After being forced to play catch up for the last month, Manchester City have the chance to exert some added pressure on Arsenal in the Premier League title race when they kick off the weekend's action at Fulham on Saturday.

City's last three Premier League wins against Wolverhampton Wanderers, Nottingham Forest, and Brighton and Hove Albion all came after Arsenal had already gathered three points to temporarily open up a four-point lead over Pep Guardiola's side in the table.

This weekend, however, City go first and victory at Craven Cottage on Saturday lunchtime would see them move two points clear of Arsenal with two games left.

Arsenal would then have to beat a woefully out-of-form Manchester United on Sunday to regain top spot.

The last time Arsenal kicked off after City it did not work out too well as they lost 2-0 at home to Aston Villa, the day

after City thrashed Luton Town 5-1 to go top.

Since then Arsenal have regained the lead but only because City were in FA Cup semifinal action and have played one game less than the Gunners.

Should both City and Arsenal win at the weekend, the focus will switch to City's game in hand at Tottenham Hotspur on Tuesday when victory for Guardiola's side would put an unprecedented fourth successive title in their grasp.

For City, the scenario is nothing new. They are proven masters at churning out wins down the finishing line straight of a Premier League campaign. They are unbeaten in their last 20 league games and few would bet against them earning the nine points they require to be crowned champions.

Arsenal can only win their last two games and hope for the best although Fulham's dismal record against City – they have lost last 15 games against City – will not exactly make them optimistic.



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