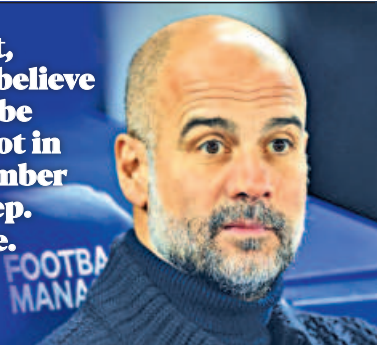


# Star DHAKA TUESDAY NOVEMBER 12, 2024, KARTIK 27, 1431 BS

# SPORT

**Don't be complacent when you win a lot, know how difficult it is. That makes us believe how difficult it was and how nice it will be when we win again. Right now we are not in our best, it's obvious. But still it's November so hopefully we'll come back step by step. We'll recover our best and then we'll see.**

**Pep Guardiola**  
Manchester City manager



## Miraz rues dew factor after Afghan defeat

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's stand-in skipper Mehedi Hasan Miraz hinted that dew might have played a big role in his team's failure to defend their score of 244-8 in the third ODI against Afghanistan and concede the three-match series 2-1 at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium in the UAE yesterday.

"We saw in the last two matches that the wicket was spinning and that is why we wanted to bat [first]. Some dew came in [tonight], so ball was coming on too easy [to the bat]," Miraz said after the match.

At the toss before the match, Miraz could hardly hold back his excitement after the coin fell in his favour and declared it to the match referee that he wanted to bat first even before the presenter Pakistan's Ramiz Raza could ask him the question.

The reason behind his excitement was understandable as winning the toss and batting first had been a precursor to winning the game in the first two ODIs as batting seemingly got harder at night.

But all those pre-match plans got blown away by Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who struck a dominating ton, and Azmatullah Omarzai, who hit an unbeaten 70, and their joint resilience ensured Afghanistan won their third ODI series in a row.

Miraz, although heartbroken, gave them their due credit.

"Credit goes to them, they played really

**SCORES IN BRIEF**

**BANGLADESH**  
244-8 in 50 overs (Tanzid 19, Soumya 24, Miraz 66, Mahmudullah 98; Omarzai 4-37)

**AFGHANISTAN**  
246-5 in 48.2 overs (Gurbaz 101, Omarzai 70, Nabi 34 not out; Rana 2-40, Mustafizur 2-50)

**RESULT**  
Afghanistan won by five wickets.

**PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH**  
Azmatullah Omarzai

**PLAYER-OF-THE-SERIES**  
Mohammad Nabi

well, especially Gurbaz and Omarzai," said the all-rounder.

The Afghan skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi was a bit more expressive in showering praises on his match-winning players.

"When we lost the toss, it was a little

disappointing. If you see the behaviour of the pitch in the second innings, batting is difficult. But the way our boys took responsibility, and the way Gurbaz, Omarzai and [Mohammad] Nabi did it, I am really proud of them," said the Afghan skipper.

Debutant Nahid Rana's raw pace kept Afghan batters on their toes and gave Bangladesh some hope of defending 244. But in the end, Gurbaz and Omarzai's resilience and a late cameo from the experience Nabi took the Afghans over the line.

Mahmudullah Riyad could have been the hero of the match with a run-a-ball 98, narrowly missing out on a ton. While he and Miraz persevered during a 145-run stand for the fifth wicket, Bangladesh ended up falling a few runs short.

Not being able to take wickets in the middle overs after Mustafizur Rahman and Nahid's early strikes, saw Afghanistan in the driving seat.

When Gurbaz and Gulbadin Naib fell in quick succession, Bangladesh felt they were in with a chance but Nabi and Omarzai, who looked determined to try and make up for two ducks in the first two games of the series, clinched the game in style together.

Gurbaz's 101 off 120, laced with seven sixes and five fours allowed Afghanistan to see off Bangladesh's pace challenge.

"I think he is the match-winner player. Whenever he scores runs, he did a lot for our team. Very happy for him. He is very talented and hopefully he can take that momentum to the next series and also the Champions Trophy," Shahidi said as Afghanistan look to bigger challenges after Sharjah triumph.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Asif breaks 50m freestyle record

SPORTS REPORTER

Asif Reza became the fastest swimmer in the Max Group 33rd National Swimming Championship after winning gold in 50m freestyle event on the third day of the competition at the Syed Nazrul Islam Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

The Bangladesh Navy swimmer clocked 24.43 seconds beat Bangladesh Army's Nurul Islam, who took 24.94 second to finish. Sifat Ullah of Bangladesh Army and Amirul Islam Joy of Bangladesh Navy shared the bronze by clocking 24.95 seconds.

Asif was also part of a national record in 4X200m freestyle relay as Bangladesh Navy team comprising Asif, Samiul Islam Rafi, Kajal Mia and Mahamudunnabi Nahid broke their own record from last year.

Navy took 8:00.51 minutes to beat Bangladesh Army team, who clocked 8:07.76 minutes. The previous record was 8:06.01 minutes.

"It is a feel-good factor that I have contributed in team's success after having success in individual events where I broke a few records," said Rafi, who created three new records in four individual events.

A total of eight records were set over three days of the four-day championships, which will come to an end today.

At the end of the third day, Bangladesh Navy dominated the medals table with 24 gold, 19 silver and nine bronze, followed by Bangladesh Army who grabbed eight gold, 13 silver and 18 bronze. BKSP were in the third position with five bronze medals.

## Gambhir solely focused on winning Australia series

REUTERS, Mumbai

India's singular focus over the next two months is on winning the five-match series in Australia and the players will not be distracted by the race to reach the World Test Championship (WTC) final, head coach Gautam Gambhir said on Monday.

India were in pole position to make next year's WTC final until a 3-0 white-wash by New Zealand earlier this month allowed Australia to leapfrog them.

Captain Rohit Sharma must now guide his side to a 4-0 win in Australia to guarantee a spot in the final, though their path could become easier depending on the results of other series.

"We are not looking at what's going to happen in the World Test Championship, whether we are going to qualify (for the final)," Gambhir said in a pre-departure press conference.

"Every series is important, as simple as that, when you are playing for your country..."

"For us, it's two good teams playing each other and we are absolutely keen to go out there and perform and try and win the series."

India prevailed in their last two Australia

tour but their batting looks less than formidable this time as they look to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

The skipper is likely to miss the opening test in Perth beginning on Nov. 22 to attend the birth of his second child while stalwart Virat Kohli has been out of form.

The absence of the injured Mohammed Shami will also increase the workload on pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who will captain India should Rohit miss the match.

Rohit's absence would also mean Yashasvi Jaiswal would need a new opening partner and Gambhir was happy with his back-up options even though both Abhimanyu Easwaran and KL Rahul struggled in two unofficial tests against Australia A.

Former India opener Gambhir hinted that Rahul's 53-test experience and his ability to bat practically anywhere in the order could tilt the decision in his favour ahead of the uncapped Easwaran.

"There are times when you go with the experienced players," Gambhir said of Rahul.

"That is the quality of the man, that he can bat at the top of the order, he can bat at number three and he can actually bat at number six as well," he added.



## Maldives eye victory in both friendlies

SPORTS REPORTER

Maldives team arrived here yesterday to play two FIFA friendly matches against Bangladesh, with the hope of winning both matches following their return to international football after a year.

Since being eliminated by Bangladesh from the first round of World Cup Qualifiers with a 3-2 aggregate defeat in October last year, Maldives have not played an international fixture.

Besides, the provisional suspension of Football Association of Maldives president Basam Adeel Jaleel by FIFA in June last year saw the Maldives' Dhivehi Premier League not being held since the end of the last edition in December last year.

"You know that we have some problems back home, so we fell into a long gap of playing international matches," Maldives coach Ali Suzain told reporters following the team's arrival in the capital yesterday.

"So, we did not get much time to prepare, even though the players of Maziya SRC recently played in the AFC Challenge League," the 55-year-old coach added.

Despite a lack of preparation, the experienced coach expects to win both matches against Bangladesh, who are ranked 185th as opposed to 163rd-ranked Maldives.

"We will take to the ground to win both matches because we really need victory, especially since we are returning to



international matches," said Suzain, who held the team's first training session in Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

Both teams are scheduled to hold their final practice sessions today at the Bashundhara Kings Arena, which will host the two matches on November 13 and 16.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Football Federation informed that tickets for the first match will be available at Bashundhara branches of Social Islami Bank and Southeast Bank from today, with gallery tickets priced at Tk 300 and Tk 500 while VIP tickets are priced at Tk 800.

## Tigers leave for Windies without injured Shanto

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's all-format skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto will miss the upcoming two-match Test series in the West Indies - a series that is part of the World Test Championship - due to a groin injury, a Bangladesh Cricket Board press release confirmed yesterday.

Shanto, who missed the series-deciding third ODI against Afghanistan, suffered the injury while fielding in the second ODI against Afghanistan last week. An MRI report later suggested that the 26-year-old would need a few weeks to recover, ruling him out of the West Indies Tests which will run from November 22 to December 5.

"We have received the team physio's report and the scan report, which has confirmed a Grade II strain on his left groin. He has been ruled out of the third ODI against Afghanistan and will also be unavailable for the Test series in the West Indies," BCB's Senior Physician Dr. Debashis Chowdhury was quoted in a media release.

Meanwhile, several members of the Test squad, including Taijul Islam, left for the West Indies yesterday. During their transit in Dubai, they will be joined by the other members of the Test squad who were in the UAE for the ODI series against Afghanistan in Sharjah yesterday and left for the Caribbean.

The first Test will be played in Antigua from November 22 and the second match will take place in Jamaica from November 30.



PHOTO: STAR

## Chattogram earn season's first win

SPORTS REPORTER

Chattogram Division secured their first win in the ongoing National Cricket League (NCL), defeating Barisal Division by eight wickets at Cox's Bazar's Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

In a thrilling fourth-round match where 19 wickets fell on the third day, Chattogram's left-arm spinner Ashraful Hasan starred with a six-for in the second innings, totalling a career best 10-90. As a result, Barisal were bundled out for just 77 runs and in reply, Chattogram reached their 83-run target in just 11.3 overs.

Earlier, resuming on 202-3, Shahadat Hossain Dipu struck 116 for his third first-class century, while Yasir Ali (99) narrowly missed his ton, as Chattogram posted 313.

On day three in other matches, Sylhet Division gained a 223-run lead over Khulna Division at Cox's Bazar Academy Ground, with Anamul Haque Bijoy top scoring with 88.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi were reeling on 62-6 at stumps, chasing 263 against Rangpur Division at Rajshahi's Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium.

At Sylhet Academy Ground, Dhaka Metro ended the day on 186-6, holding a 175-run lead over Dhaka Division.



## Barca stumble at Real Sociedad

AFP, San Sebastian

La Liga leaders Barcelona fell to a 1-0 defeat at Real Sociedad on Sunday as they had a Robert Lewandowski goal controversially disallowed, with coach Hansi Flick labelling the decision a "big mistake".

Sheraldo Becker's 33rd-minute goal consigned Barcelona to their second league defeat of the season and brought an end to a seven-match winning streak in all competitions, leaving the Catalans six points clear of second-placed Real Madrid, having played an extra match.

Lewandowski's early disallowed strike led to furious debate over whether the Polish forward had been offside or not.

"It was the wrong decision, clearly, it's clear, but we have to accept it," Flick told the club's streaming platform Barca One.

"The referee, it was not his fault, we are humans, we make mistakes and today was a big mistake."

The Catalans failed to score in a match for the first time this season across all competitions as Real Sociedad, eighth, held firm, while Barcelona did not manage a single shot on target.

Despite scoring 40 goals in their first 12 league matches Barcelona were unable to find the net or even create any significant danger in the final stages.

