DHAKA FRIDAY NOVEMBER 22, 2024, AGRAHAYAN 7, 1431 BS

T SPORTS West Indies vs Bangladesh First Test, Day 1 Live from 8:00 pm **Challenge Cup** Bashundhara Kings vs

Mohammedan Live from 5:00 pm **STAR SPORTS 1** India vs Australia First Test, Day 1 Live from 8:20 am

Batting concerns dominate as Tigers tackle Windies

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh take on the West Indies in the first Test in Antigua today, hoping their slightly inexperienced batting line-up can weather the pace storm. Antigua has a strong recent record of making Bangladesh batters suffer.

In 2018, the Tigers were bowled out for their lowestever Test total at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua. This time, without the assuredness provided by their three top-calibre batters in Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan and skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto, the team management would be hoping the batting line-up

Bangladesh have played five Test series in West Indies to date, and the 2009 tour was the high point of their Windies trials so far, when they clinched the series 2–0. The two most recent Test series in Windies -- in 2018 and 2022 -- were swept 2–0 by the hosts.

Bangladesh are coming off the back of dismal Test series losses against India and South Africa, where even the presence of the more experienced batters did not help their cause. In this ICC World Test Championship, Bangladesh languish at eighth with three wins in 10 Tests, unable to carve out a draw this cycle.

Top-order batting issues have rarely seen Bangladesh batters survive an onslaught after the opposition has gotten a sniff. Thus, a big test of will and skill awaits the new recruits -- the likes of Shahadat Hossain Dipu or a Jaker Ali in the upcoming Tests.

Psychologically, it would be a relief to have their fullstrength pace-bowling line-up for the upcoming Tests, and the emergence of speedsters such as Nahid Rana or Hasan Mahmud gives the Tigers something to look forward to in terms of showcasing pace prowess.

The Windies pace attack, with Kemar Roach back in the fold and quicks such as Alzarri Joseph, Shamar Joseph and Jayden Seales, would look to give an apt response to Bangladesh's pace.

Both teams are coming off the back of red-ball series losses to South Africa. The Windies batting has some new

In 20 encounters, Bangladesh have four Test wins against

the West Indies' 14, with two matches ending in a draw.

The Tigers won two away from home — a 2-0 sweep in

It has been a constant slump for Bangladesh in the

Caribbeans since the 2009 triumph as they lost six

hammering defeats as it included two 10-wicket losses,

Nine members of the Bangladesh squad haven't played

whas struck a century in the West Indies since Mushfigur

Rahim's 116 in Kingstown in 2014. Mushfiqur, however, is

faces, and one win and five losses this year show they need

of the South Africa series, where we really put ourselves in a position to close out that series, we didn't, and we now have this opportunity against Bangladesh," Windies head

'It's very important. Coming off of the disappointment

"It's very important for us to come out with a winning

result on home soil before we head off to (Pakistan)," Coley

had remarked, underlining the confidence the hosts want

as many thrashings by 200-plus runs, and an innings

defeat. In 2018, the Tigers were bundled out for 43 –

matches across three separate visits. Those were

2009 - and clinched as many at home.

their lowest-ever total in the format.

unavailable for the series due to injury.

coach Andre Coley said ahead of the first Test.

to project in the Tests coming up.

in the West Indies.

their batting to fire.

The final frontier FOR CUMMINS

BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY BEGINS

Australia are yet to win the prestigious Border-Gavaskar trophy since claiming it in 2014/15 at

In fact, Australia have tasted defeats in their last four Test series against India — two of those in their own backyard, two away to India, and all by a 2-1 margin.

India also dominate in this particular series, winning 10 of the 16 Border-Gavaskar series played so far. One series was drawn while Australia have won five.

However, Australia boast a hundred percent record at the Perth Stadium, venue for the first of the five-match series. The Aussies have won all four of the Tests played so far at the stadium -- winning each of those games by a margin of more than 100 runs.

India, meanwhile, have lost the only game played at the Perth Stadium — suffering a 146-run defeat in 2018 against Australia.

I love responsibility. I've wanted to do the tough job since I was a child. So you always want to be in the thick of things. You want to be thrown into tough scenarios. This is one of them as well. This adds a new challenge to me. INDIA PACER JASPRIT BUMRAH, captain for first Test against Australia

REUTERS, Melbourne

Captain Pat Cummins has hoisted just about every trophy in cricket as part of dominant Australian teams but wants to tick the last box with a Test series win against India over the next two months.

While celebrating a slew of World Cup wins and Ashes triumphs in recent years, Cummins and a number of his teammates have known only defeat in the last four Test series against India, at home and away.

"I think for about half the changeroom, we haven't won the Border-Gavaskar (trophy)," the fast bowler told reporters at Perth Stadium on Thursday on the eve of the seriesopening Test.

"So (it's) kind of one of the last things to tick off for a lot of us.

"Almost every challenge that we've had thrown at us over the last few years, we've stepped up and done well.

"To do that for another year, another home summer would kind of cement this. Rather than it's been a two-orthree season thing, it's suddenly into a half-generation thing."



India will have a different look in this five-Test series to the injuryravaged squad who claimed a stunning 2-1 win over Australia in the last tour in 2020-21.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah regular skipper Rohit Sharma takes leave to care for his newborn baby.

Left-handed batter Devdutt Padikkal is among several new faces in the squad.

Cummins said Australia had made plans for the whole India squad.

"Most of us have played IPL (Indian will captain India in Perth while Premier League) and seen how many newcomers come in and kind of step up straight away," he said.

Kings-Mohammedan face off in inaugural Challenge Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

arena in Dhaka.

The 2024-25 football season in Bangladesh will kick off today with the newly-introduced one-off tournament, Bangladesh Challenge Cup, in which current Bangladesh Premier League champions Bashundhara Kings and runners-up Mohammedan SC will square off for the title at the Bashundhara Kings

The tournament is modelled after England's Community Shield, where the league champions take on the FA Cup winners in a oneoff game to decide the title.

As Bashundhara Kings had emerged as champions in both the league and the Federation Cup last season, Mohammedan, who had finished as runners-up in both competitions, have been chosen as their opponents in the Challenge Cup.

Kings had also won the Independence Cup last season, in which Mohammedan had finished second.

Kings and Mohammedan were neck and neck in all four matches they played last season, with the Kings coming out on top three times and Mohammedan winning once.

This time, however, Mohammedan will come across a Kings side which looks vulnerable after the departures of Brazilian forwards Robson Robinho and Dorielton

 $Three \, successive \, defeats \, in \, the \, AFC \, Challenge \, League \,$ last month in Bhutan showed the decline in strength of the Kings, however, the five-time BPL champions are still strong enough to thump any local outfits.

"Tomorrow's [today] match is very important for me because the players produced bad results in Bhutan. I have never suffered three successive defeats in my life," Kings' Romanian coach Valeriu Tita said at the pre-final briefing at the Kings arena

"After the Bhutan tournament [AFC Challenge League], I prepared the team for tomorrow's [today] match which is going to be a

> tough game. "I have confidence in my players who will give their maximum to win the match but it is not an easy job because of the absence of some players," said the veteran coach.

Starting the season with a final is a unique occurrence in Bangladesh football as the local domestic season usually begins with the Independence Cup, which the BFF has decided not to run this season.

Mohammedan SC's coach Alfaz Ahmed was cautiously excited about playing a final against the Kings to begin the season, saying, "We are not used to starting the season with a final because it is going to happen here for the first time. We are looking forward."

Mohammedan SC defender Mehdi Hasan said, "Challenge Cup is a new thing and we are ready to take the new challenge tomorrow [today] because we want to bring the inaugural trophy to the traditional powerhouse Mohammedan SC.'

U-19 squad announced for **Asia Cup**

SPORTS REPORTER

All-rounder Azizul Hakim Tamim will lead the Bangladesh Under-19 team in the upcoming ACC U-19 Men's Asia Cup 2024 in the UAE as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday named a 14-member squad for the eight-team event.

Top-order batter Kalam Siddiki Aleen, who was one of the two skippers during Bangladesh's home series against the UAE, missed the cut due to team combination, said selector Ehsanul Haque, but will travel with the team in the UAE.

BANGLADESH SQUAD: Azizul Hakim Tamim (c) Zawad Abrar (vc), Rifat Beg, Samiun Basir Ratul, Debashish Sarker, Rizan Hossan, Mohammad Al Fahad, Igbal Hasan Emon, Rafi Uzzaman, Farid Hasan, Maruf Mridha, Shihab James, Ashrafuzzaman Barenaya and Saad Islam

The team will depart for the tournament on November 24. They will have a pre-tournament camp in the UAE and will also play a warm-up match against India at Sharjah on November 26.

Bangladesh, who are in Group B alongside Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Nepal, will begin their campaign against Afghanistan on November 29 in Dubai before they face Nepal and Sri Lanka on December 1 and 3 respectively, both in Dubai.

Group A comprises of India, Pakistan, UAE and Japan. Top two teams from each group will qualify for the semifinals, scheduled on December 6 and the final will be held on December 8 in Dubai. Bangladesh are the defending champions,

having won the competition last year in the UAE.

Akbar suspended for two games

SPORTS REPORTER

Rangpur Division skipper Akbar Ali has been handed a two-match suspension for a level two offence during his side's fifth-round match of the ongoing 26th National Cricket League (NCL) against Barishal in Rajshahi last week.

Akbar was charged for showing dissent at an decision during umpire's Barishal's second innings on the final day of the contest on September 19.

"When the appeal of behind during caught over 60.4 was turned down, he showed excessive, obvious disappointment with an umpire's decision. He was unhappy and had a prolonged argument with the umpire in an inappropriate manner. After lunch, when he came to the dressing room, he kicked a few chairs and one chair was broken," match referee Akhtar Ahmad wrote in his report.

As Akbar's behaviour was deemed as a breach of Article 2.8 of the BCB Code of Conduct, he was imposed a fine of 75 percent of the match fee and a one-match suspension with four demerit points.

Four demerit points mean Akbar will be suspended from another game, in addition to the one he received for the offences.

> The suspension will see Akbar miss the remainder of the ongoing NCL -- a blow for Rangpur, who are currently placed second in the points table with 21 points from five

The ongoing NCL has witnessed a rise in Code of Conduct breaches at an alarming rate as, according to the BCB tournament committee, the current edition has already seen a total of 19 violations after the end of the fifth round. Last year's NCL and the Bangladesh Cricket League saw 12 Code of Conduct breaches altogether.

LeBron taking break from social media

AFP, Los Angeles

NBA superstar LeBron James said Wednesday he was taking an indefinite hiatus from social media.

James announced his break after sharing a post by Rich Kleiman, the longtime agent of NBA star Kevin Durant.

"With so much hate and negativity in the world today, it confuses me why some of the national sports media still think that the best way to cover sports is through negative takes," Kleiman wrote on X.

James shared the post with a one word comment: "AMEN!!" and followed it up with a post that read: "With that said, I'll holla at y'all! Getting off social media for the time being."



Jasmine Paolini, alongside her teammates, hoists the trophy after putting on a tennis masterclass to steer Italy to a fifth Billie Jean King Cup title as she beat Rebecca Sramkova 6-2, 6-1 in the second singles rubber to wrap up a 2-0 win over Slovakia in the final on Wednesday. This was the first title since 2013 for Italy, who suffered a heartbreaking defeat to Canada in the decider last year.