



The Europa League final on May 22 will be an all-English affair as the 15th and 16th placed sides in the Premier League, Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur, will fight it out to salvage their dreadful seasons with a chance to seal a spot in the Champions League next season. United, 3-0 up after the first leg last week, won 4-1 at Old Trafford, thanks to a brace from substitute Mason Mount. Meanwhile, Tottenham eased past Bodo/Glimt with a 2-0 away win after gaining a comfortable 3-1 victory in the first-leg. Dominic Solanke and Pedro Porro found the net for Spurs.

## What to WATCH



**T Sports**  
BPL football  
Police vs Abahani  
Live from 4:00 pm  
Bangladesh A vs  
New Zealand A  
3rd one-day

Live from 9:00 am  
**Star Sports**  
**Select HD1**  
Premier League  
Southampton vs  
Man City  
Live from 8:00 pm

Bournemouth vs Aston Villa  
Live from 10:30 pm  
**Sony Sports 2**  
Bundesliga  
Bayern vs Borussia  
Monchengladbach  
Live from 10:30 pm

## SAFF U-19 C'SHIP Bangladesh held by Maldives

SPORTS REPORTER

Favourites Bangladesh began their SAFF Under 19 Championship campaign on a disappointing note, surrendering a two-goal lead to settle for a 2-2 draw against Maldives in their Group A opener at the Golden Jubilee Stadium in Arunachal Pradesh, India, yesterday.

Captain Nazmul Huda Faysal and Rifat Kazi each found the net in the first half, giving Bangladesh a promising advantage. However, Maldives struck back through Anoof Abdulla and Ethan Ibrahim, who scored in the second-half to deny Golam Rabbani Choton's side a winning start.

Bangladesh dominated possession from the outset and created numerous scoring opportunities. They went ahead in the 13th minute when Faysal unleashed a powerful strike from outside the box, shortly after Samuel Raksan missed an open net.

Rifat, who had earlier driven a shot wide after nutmegging a defender in the 25th minute, doubled the lead with a header on the stroke of half-time.

The second half, however, was a different story. The Bangladeshi defence struggled to cope with Maldives' incisive forward passes. Abdulla reduced the deficit in the 57th minute, and Ibrahim equalised with a low left-footed effort in the 73rd.

Bangladesh will face Bhutan in their second and final group match on Sunday.

## Kings' Saad, Roxy suspended

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF) disciplinary committee fined Bashundhara Kings and Abahani Tk 100,000 each for unruly behavior by their fans during a recent Bangladesh Premier League match.

The committee also decided to issue a show-cause notice to Kings, asking why their next home matches should not be held behind closed doors at the Bashundhara Kings Arena due to their supporters' misconduct.

Additionally, Kings' assistant coach Mahbub Hossain Roxy and defender Saad Uddin have been barred from all BFF-sanctioned tournaments pending further decisions. Roxy was found guilty of making an indecent gesture, while Saad Uddin engaged in unsporting behavior and pushed the match commissioner after being sent off following the match against Abahani.

According to BFF, show-cause notices were to be served to Kings, Roxy, and Saad within two days of the committee's decision, which had come on Wednesday. However, no specific timeline has been given for final verdicts. Committee chairman Mejbahuddin Ahmed said a second meeting will be held shortly to finalise pending actions.

In other disciplinary decisions, Kings' support staff Tamim Shikari received a six-month stadium ban for verbally attacking Abahani officials. Mohammadan fan Awlad Hossain was banned for a year after chasing a Brazilian player from Bangladesh Police FC in Cumilla.

The BFF has fined Mohammadan a total of Tk 2.75 lakh for three separate incidents involving fans and officials, while Bashundhara Kings were fined Tk 2.25 lakh for three incidents. Abahani were fined Tk 1.1 lakh for a single event. Although Mohammadan were fined Tk 100,000 for a smoke flare incident during a league match against Bashundhara Kings, no decision was made regarding a similar incident caused by the Kings fans during the Challenge Cup final in November last year.

## Draw with Fortis extends MSC's title wait

SPORTS REPORTER

Leaders Mohammadan SC came from behind to secure a 1-1 draw against Fortis FC at the Bashundhara Kings arena yesterday, a result that has potentially extended their wait of winning this season's Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

Before the game, Mohammadan needed nine points from five matches to secure their maiden professional league title.

But after earning one point against Fortis, Mohammadan now could have to wait for their penultimate match or the last match to take the coveted trophy home if second-placed Abahani Limited don't slip up.

Mohammadan are at the top of the 10-team table with 35 points, eight clear of Abahani, who have played one match fewer and have a chance to close the gap with the leaders if they win today against Bangladesh Police FC.

In yesterday's match, both teams struggled under the scorching sun but hosts Fortis FC fared a little better. Fortis took the lead in the 23rd minute, with Piash Ahmed Nova capitalising on a defensive error.

Gambian Essa Jallow snatched a ball from a Mohammadan midfielder and ran into the danger zone before getting intercepted by Mohammadan defender Jahid Hasan Shanto. But the ball fell to



unmarked Piash who made no mistake.

After resumption, Mohammadan equalised in the 73rd minute courtesy of a stunning goal from substitute Mahbub Alam.

The opportunity arose from a corner kick, which the Fortis defenders had initially cleared before Mahbub's spectacular left footer from 30 yards found its mark.

In the day's other two matches, hosts Brothers Union held third-placed Bashundhara Kings to a goalless draw in Munshiganj while Dhaka Wanderers Club notched up their third victory of the season, a 2-1 win over bottom-placed Chittagong Abahani, and are now breathing down the necks eighth-placed Fakirpore Young Mens Club.

Meanwhile, there were also some uncertainty over the three league matches yesterday, as the referee panel had initially announced that they would not conduct the games until their unpaid wages were cleared by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF).

It has been learnt that the referees returned to their jobs after the BFF cleared Tk 18.86 lakh of their dues for the just concluded Federation Cup and promised to clear the rest of their unpaid wages in the BPL before Eid Ul-Adha.

The BFF has so far cleared the dues of 25 of the 68 completed matches in BPL till yesterday.



Scholastica Mirpur celebrate winning the U14 title of Dhaka's Rising Stars school football tournament after a 3-0 victory over Sir John Wilson, with Bangladesh Football Federation president Tabith Awal joining the celebration at Fortis Jalshiri Ground, Purbachal, on Friday. [Inset] Sir John Wilson celebrate a goal during their 3-1 win over Scholastica Mirpur in the U12 final, exacting revenge for their senior side. The tournament, sponsored by Prime Bank, featured eight English-medium schools from Dhaka.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## INDIA-PAKISTAN CONFLICT

# Tigers' calendar, Asia Cup in limbo

STAR SPORTS DESK

The ongoing edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) has been suspended while the Pakistan Super League (PSL) has been postponed as the conflict between India and Pakistan rages on. These decisions could end up disrupting Bangladesh's cricket calendar in the coming months and this year's Asia Cup.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) yesterday announced that the ongoing season of IPL was suspended "with immediate effect for one week," a day after the match between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals was called off midway in Dharamsala, which is less than 200 kilometres away from Jammu where both sides are exchanging heavy artillery.

A total of 16 matches are left in the season, and although BCCI has not announced an official resumption date, it is reportedly exploring a window later in the year.

According to Times of India, India is unlikely to participate in the Asia Cup or send the Indian team for their scheduled tour of Bangladesh, opening up the August-September window which they would then use to complete the IPL season if the need arises.

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Meanwhile, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Friday night announced that the remaining eight games of the 10th edition of the PSL have been postponed, a day after relaying that these matches would be played in the UAE.

As per ESPNcricinfo, PCB began the process of flying players to the UAE on Thursday. Nahid Rana and

Rishad Hossain, the two Bangladeshi players taking part in the PSL, left for the UAE yesterday alongside other overseas cricketers. Nahid and Rishad will then board a chartered flight to Bangladesh from the UAE.

"In this situation, a collective effort is being made to find a solution. A meeting was held yesterday [Thursday] and they will try to ensure that at some point today [Friday] all the cricketers are moved from Pakistan to a safe place," BCB president Faruque Ahmed said in a video message yesterday.

Also, PSL's postponement was based on the situation in the country worsening, according to PCB's press release yesterday, and the five-match T20 series between Pakistan and Bangladesh, originally slated to begin on May 25 in Faisalabad may also not see the light of day.

The Tigers were supposed to land in Pakistan on May 21. The BCB, however, is not keen on making any decisions on the series yet given the fact that Pakistan are the hosts and any postponement or cancellation call will come from their side. The main priority for BCB is moving Nahid and Rishad out of Pakistan alongside two Bangladeshi journalists covering the PSL.

## SHORT CORNER

### Xabi Alonso confirms exit from Bayer Leverkusen at end of season

Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso confirmed Friday he will leave the club at the end of the season, amid reports linking him to Spanish giants Real Madrid. Alonso, however, did not confirm his next post. Spanish and German media reported Friday the 43-year-old has already agreed to join Real and will link up with the club after the Club World Cup, replacing Carlo Ancelotti.

### Bangladesh to participate in Futsal Asian Cup Qualifiers

Bangladesh will send a futsal team to the upcoming AFC Futsal Asian Cup Qualifiers, Bangladesh Football Federation president Tabith Awal confirmed on Friday. The 16-team 2026 AFC Futsal Asian Cup will be held in Jakarta in May next year and Bangladesh will be vying for a spot in that tournament through a qualifying round, which is scheduled to be held in September this year.

### Chelsea and Betis to face off in Conference League final

Abde Ezzalouzi emerged as Real Betis' hero on Thursday after he netted an extra-time winner to make them the first Spanish side to reach the Conference League final with a 4-3 aggregate victory over Fiorentina after it ended 2-2 at full-time in the second-leg, setting up a showdown with Premier League side Chelsea. Earlier, Favourites Chelsea, fielding a second-string team, cantered into the final with a regulation 1-0 second-leg win over Swedish side Djurgarden, thanks to a first-half goal from Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall.

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