

What to WATCH

GTV & STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
Bangladesh v Zimbabwe
 Third ODI (D/N)
 Live from 2:00pm
SONY SIX
Sri Lanka v West Indies

Second T20I (N)
 Live from 7:30pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
Bundesliga
Paderborn v FC Coln
 Live from 1:00am (Saturday)

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh v Zimbabwe
 Third ODI (D/N)
 Time: 2:00pm

Venue: Sylhet Int'l Cricket Stadium
Bangladesh Premier League
 Brothers Union v Bangladesh Police

Time: 6:30pm
 Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

RONALDINHO ACCUSED OF USING FAKE PASSPORT

Ronaldinho and his brother have been detained in Paraguay after allegedly using fake passports to enter the South American country, authorities said Wednesday. "Ronaldinho will be heard at eight in the morning on Thursday at the prosecutor's office," Interior Minister Euclides Acevedo told reporters. Paraguayan police raided the hotel in Asuncion where the 2005 Ballon d'Or winner was staying during a trip to promote a book and found the false documents, the minister said. "We are also investigating the responsibility of the authorities who allowed them to enter the country with falsified documents," Acevedo said. Ronaldinho and his brother had their Brazilian passports withdrawn in November 2018 after failing to pay a \$2.3 million fine for environmental damage.

— AFP



Kylian Mbappe (R) hit the seventh hattrick of his career as Paris Saint-Germain cruised into the final of the French Cup with a thumping 5-1 win at Lyon on Wednesday. The World Cup winner took his tally to 30 goals in all competitions during a win that was eased by Fernando Marcal being sent off just before Neymar put the French champions ahead in the 64th minute from the penalty spot. Paris coach Thomas Tuchel hoped that Mbappe could maintain his form for the Champions League second leg against Dortmund and praised him, saying: "Mbappe is very strong, he uses his speed very well, he's very decisive. He's really in good shape."

PHOTO: PSG TWITTER

Aussies to face India in final

AFP, Sydney



Four-time champions Australia will meet India in the women's Twenty20 World Cup final after rain-marred semi-finals Thursday sparked calls for reserve days to be included in future events.

The title holders stormed into their sixth final with a five-run win over South Africa in a tense battle that saw the last overs played in drizzle.

Unbeaten India were due to face 2009 champions England at the Sydney Cricket Ground in the first semifinal, but heavy showers began early in the day and barely let up.

A minimum of 10 overs per side were needed for a result and the umpires called it off without a ball being bowled. With no reserve day, the highest-ranked teams from the two groups moved into the final if play was not possible, putting India through to their first-ever decider.

"From day one, we knew we had to win all the games in case the semis didn't happen," said Indian captain Harmanpreet Kaur. "First T20 World Cup final means a lot for us. But as a team, we just want to play our best cricket in the final."

The rain eased for the second semi and defending champions Australia hit 134 for five off their 20 overs, with skipper Meg Lanning top-scoring on 49 and Nadine de Klerk taking 3-19. But rain briefly returned at the interval, and the Proteas were set 98 from 13 overs under the DLS method, but could only manage 92 for five.

"It was extremely tense. Even in the last couple of balls it just wasn't safe. We felt we had a good total, without it being great," said Lanning. "India are a class side, they have been playing excellent cricket. But we have been improving each day."

Big-hitting opener Lizelle Lee smacked a huge six to get the South African run chase underway but, tempted into another, holed out to Ashleigh Gardner on the boundary.

"It was very emotional to see the ladies like that. To come short every time is difficult," van Niekerk said of her devastated team.

A reserve day is allowed for the final and the lack of one for the semis was criticised by some players, with Kaur among those calling for change.

"Having reserve days in the future will be a great idea," she said.

BANGABANDHU BANGLADESH GAMES

BOA promises a good show

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) yesterday promised to present a good Bangladesh Games after unveiling the logo of the ninth edition, which has been named after Bangabandhu to mark his 100th birth anniversary.

The Bangabandhu Bangladesh Games are scheduled to take place from April 1, featuring 10,600 athletes vying for 396 gold medals across 31 disciplines in the 10-day multi-sports carnival which is being held seven years after the completion of the eighth edition in 2013. The Games' mascot, a pigeon holding a torch, was also revealed.

"With initiatives from the BOA and the help of national sports federations, hosting the Bangladesh Games, which has been named after Bangabandhu, is very important for us on the 100th birth year of the Father of the Nation. Through the biggest sports carnival, the overall scenario of the country's sport will be exposed and we can learn the overall state of the country's sports," said BOA secretary general Syed Shahed Reza at the press conference at Kurmitola Golf Club in Cantonment yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to open the Games on April 1 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium after a colourful opening ceremony while the torch of the Games will come to Dhaka from Gopalganj on March 31.

Although the BOA promised to a good showing from athletes, there are doubts over the athletes' performances as they hardly have any opportunity to train before the Games.

"After the completion of the South Asian Games, we sat with all the federations and associations and fixed the date after getting their consent. So far, we know the federations are taking preparation from mid-February and they will get the full month of March to prepare," Games steering committee chairman Sheikh Bashir Ahmed told the reporters.

The outbreak of coronavirus was also discussed in the press conference and Ahmed said that they would discuss with it with their medical committee if any emergency emerges during the Games.

Kings decimate Nasrin SA

Title contenders Bashundhara Kings extended their winning streak in the Tricortex Women's Football League by handing a 9-0 defeat to Nasrin Sports Academy at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

The tie was expected to be competitive as both teams came into the match on the back of two successive wins but national-player-studded Kings toyed with Nasrin SC, who also had some national players but could not contain national forwards Sabina Khatun, Krishna Rani Sarker and Tahura Khatun.

Kings dominated the game and took a 3-0 lead in the first half before adding six more in the second to raise their total goals tally to 34 in three matches.

Sabina slotted a hattrick, Krishna and Tahura struck a brace each while Munni Akter and Sanjida Khatun netted one goal each to give Kings a third win in as many matches and take them to the top of the seven-team table with nine points, three more than Nasrin SC.

In the day's other match, Jamalpur Kacharipara Akadosh and FC Uttar Bango played out a goalless draw.

— SPORTS REPORTER

Ilias Ahmed Chowdhury SS win Pioneer League

Ilias Ahmed Chowdhury Smriti Sangsad emerged as champions in the Dhaka South and North City Corporation Pioneer (U-15) Football League after defeating FC Uttar Bango 2-1 in the final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Jafar Ullah Sharafat provided the lead in the 20th minute before Leon Pradhan



The final day of the players' transfer for the upcoming Dhaka Premier League was held in Sylhet yesterday and defending champions Abahani securing the services of Mushfiqur Rahim was the biggest moment.

PHOTO: STAR

equalised for Kurigram-based FC Uttar Bango eight minutes later.

However, man-of-the-match Jonny hit the winning goal six minutes from time. He said afterwards: "Almost all of us are from Shibchar and we have been playing together for a long time, so we have a good understanding." -- SPORTS REPORTER

World Cup and AFC Cup qualifiers to be postponed?

FIFA and AFC are likely to postpone the upcoming fixtures of the 2020 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers and AFC Cup 2023 following the outbreak of the coronavirus.

"For both FIFA and the AFC, the well-being and health of all individuals

involved in football matches remains the highest priority, and as such, a formal proposal to postpone upcoming matches in the Asian FIFA World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023 qualifiers will now be shared with the relevant member associations," AFC stated on its website after high-ups of FIFA and AFC met at FIFA headquarters in Zurich yesterday.

"FIFA and the AFC will provide an update on these fixtures in the coming days following consultation with the AFC member associations," it added.

Bangladesh are scheduled to face Afghanistan in Sylhet in the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers on March 26 while Bashundhara Kings are scheduled to take on TC Sports of Maldives in Dhaka in an AFC Cup fixture on March 11.

"We are prepared to host Afghanistan,

who have obtained Bangladeshi visas. The names of match officials have also been declared. We are aware of the meeting in Zurich but we haven't received official communication. As soon as we receive a message from AFC, we let them know our position after discussing the matter with our medical team, team management and executive committees," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shahag. -- SPORTS REPORTER

Friendly matches held to raise awareness against stalking, child marriage

Two friendly football matches were held between four teams in Dhanbari upazila on Thursday to raise awareness against child marriage and stalking.

Nijera Kori, a non-governmental rights and development organisation, arranged the event at Nawab Institution



ground in the upazila.

Female students of local schools competed and Orange team, an under-10 team, won one game while Green team, an under-12 team, won the other.

Organisers said that despite taking various initiatives, child marriage and stalking were increasing at an alarming rate. -- OUR CORRESPONDENT, TANGAIL

La Real make Copa final

AFP, Madrid

Real Sociedad ended the Copa del Rey hopes of second division Mirandes on Wednesday with a 1-0 win which moved them into the final for the first time in 32 years.

Sociedad had already won the first leg 2-1 and cemented their spot when striker Mikel Oyarzabal scored a 41st-minute penalty after a handball.

The April 18 final in Seville could be an all-Basque affair with Athletic Bilbao defending a 1-0 lead against Granada in their semifinal second leg on Thursday.

Mirandes were attempting to become the first second division club to reach the final since 1980.

Uncapped Nasum in for Zim T20Is

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board announced a 15-member squad for the two-match T20I series against Zimbabwe, scheduled to begin from March 9 in Dhaka, featuring left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed, who played for Chattogram in the BBPL earlier this year.

Mushfiqur Rahim, who had opted out of the Pakistan tour due to security concerns and did not feature in the two T20Is in Pakistan last month, was also included.

Mohammad Saifuddin, who returned from injury and played the first ODI against Zimbabwe, has also made a comeback. Nazmul Hossain Shanto and Rubel Hossain have been dropped.

SQUAD: Mahmudullah Riyad (C), Tamim Iqbal, Soumya Sarkar, Mohammad Naim, Liton Das, Mushfiqur Rahim, Afif Hossain, Mohammad Saifuddin, Mahadi Hasan, Aminul Islam Biplob, Mustafizur Rahman, Shafiul Islam, Al-Amin Hossain, Hasan Mahmud, Nasum Ahmed.



Dier blows his top as Spurs stumble

AFP, LONDON



Tottenham manager Jose Mourinho defended Eric Dier after the England international stormed into the stands following his side's FA Cup exit to Norwich on Wednesday.

Dier climbed over rows of seats to confront a fan, who had allegedly been involved in an altercation with the player's brother.

The incident rounded off a terrible night for Tottenham, who saw another chance of silverware slip away 3-2 on penalties after a 1-1 draw against the side bottom of the Premier League.

"When someone insults you and your family is there and your family gets involved with somebody who is insulting you, in this case a younger brother, I think Eric did what we professionals cannot do but, I repeat, probably everyone of us would do," said Mourinho.

"I am with the player and I understand the player."



Eric Dier ran into the crowd to confront a fan before Tim Krul, aided by his 'cheatsheet', denied Tottenham on penalties.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Dier scored his penalty in the shootout, but Erik Lamela, Troy Parrott and Gedson Fernandes missed from the spot to condemn

Spurs to a fourth straight defeat in all competitions.

On the prospect of the club taking disciplinary action against Dier, Mourinho added: "If the club

does that I will not agree, but he did wrong."

Jan Vertonghen headed Tottenham into an early lead, but Mourinho's decision to hand 36-year-old goalkeeper Michel Vorm his first appearance of the season backfired.

The Dutchman spilt a long-range effort from Kenny McLean and Josip Drmic bundled home the rebound to level 12 minutes from time.

Both sides then tired badly in extra-time, but neither could find a winner and Mourinho again blamed his stretched resources without the injured Harry Kane and Son Heung-min to injury for defeat.

"Some of my players were really in trouble and they made an incredible effort to try," said Mourinho.

"I don't have one single negative feeling towards my players. I can cope with negative moments in football, but I feel really sorry for my players."