

President's Cup
Mahmudullah XI v Najmul XI
Live from 1:30pm

La Liga
Celta Vigo v Atletico Madrid
Live from 8:00pm

Real Madrid v Cadiz
Live from 10:30pm

Getafe v Barcelona
Live from 1:00am
(Sunday)

Indian Premier League
Rajasthan v Bangalore
Live from 4:00pm

Delhi v Chennai
Live from 8:00pm

Premier League
Everton v Liverpool
Live from 5:30pm

Chelsea v Southampton
Live from 8:00pm

Man City v Arsenal
Live from 10:30pm

Newcastle v Man United
(Sunday)

Napoli v Atalanta
Live from 7:00pm

Inter Milan v AC Milan
Live from 10:00pm

Crotone v Juventus
Live from 12:45am
(Sunday)

Clubs get busy after int'l break

AFP, Paris

A resurgent AC Milan are looking to reclaim local bragging rights, while Hoffenheim target another big scalp in the Bundesliga and an awkward assignment awaits Barcelona. Here are some of the standout actions in Europe this weekend.

CAN EVERTON END LIVERPOOL HOODOO?

Everton have been rivals to Liverpool in name only for the past decade, without a win against their near-neighbours since 2010.

But the Goodison Park club are top of the table with four wins out of four and Jurgen Klopp will not be relishing the short trip across Stanley Park.

The champions are smarting from their pummeling at Villa, which followed impressive wins against Chelsea and Arsenal, and it will be the defence that is giving the German boss his biggest headache.

Liverpool have conceded 11 goals in the Premier League so far -- only West Brom have conceded more (13) -- and they are coming up against the Premier League's joint top-scorer in Dominic Calvert-Lewin, who has six goals.

The forward, who scored for England on his debut last week, is quick to praise fellow attackers James Rodriguez and Richarlison.

"I demand high standards from myself every day," he told Everton TV. "I continue to work hard, like I always have, to get into this position. I am just grateful the quality behind me is producing the opportunities for me to score the goals."

MILAN CONFIDENT AHEAD OF DERBY

AC Milan have not beaten Inter in Serie A in eight attempts since a 3-0 victory in January 2016. They have lost their last four meetings and have only finished above their local rivals once in seven years.

But there is belief among the Rossoneri that the tide might be turning in Milan ahead of Saturday's



(Clockwise from top) Having brushed aside coronavirus, AC Milan forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic returned to training and was seen jostling with Daniele Maldini ahead of their big match against city rivals Inter Milan. Lionel Messi, meanwhile, returned from Argentina's victory against Bolivia and might start on the bench in Barcelona's weekend fixture against Getafe but Sadio Mane will certainly start as Liverpool face off against league leaders Everton.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

"Derby della Madonnina"

Antonio Conte's Inter have started this campaign with seven points out of nine. However, Milan have won three out of three to sit joint-top with Atalanta. On Saturday they will have Zlatan Ibrahimovic back after coronavirus.

"The gap with Inter has been reduced, because the club did well in the transfer market, although Inter have also strengthened," Milan goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma told Sky Italia.

"(Coach Stefano) Pioli is doing great things and now we need to go out on the field and show that the gap has been reduced."

MESSI TO BE RESTED?

After helping Argentina to a World Cup qualifying win in Bolivia, and ahead of Barcelona's Champions League opener against Ferencvaros, Lionel Messi could start on the bench at Getafe in La Liga.

The game will be an awkward one for Ronald Koeman's side, who have taken seven points from a possible nine in La Liga and host Real Madrid in the first Clasico of the campaign next weekend.

Madrid are already three points ahead of Barca, albeit having played a game more, and they appear to have a more straightforward assignment against Cadiz.

CAN HOFFENHEIM DO IT AGAIN?

Hoffenheim made headlines last month when they beat Bayern Munich 4-1. On Saturday the side coached by ex-Bayern reserve boss Sebastian Hoernes are looking to get the better of Borussia Dortmund.

Both sides have taken six points from their first three games, and this match brings together two of the hottest strikers in Europe.

Erling Braut Haaland has been a sensation for Dortmund and scored twice in their 4-0 win over Freiburg last time out. But the Bundesliga's top scorer is Hoffenheim's Andrej Kramaric with six goals, plus two more in the German Cup.



Tamim Iqbal (bottom) and Mushfiqur Rahim (top) were the most experienced batsmen in their respective teams, but their dismissals came at very inopportune times.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Seniors need to set the tone for tougher challenges

NABID YEASIN



What was missing in the BCB President's Cup in the first two matches was found to some extent in the third match of the 50-over tournament between Najmul XI and Tamim XI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Thursday. The bats of Mahedi Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim did some talking, bringing some welcome runs to a tournament that had till then been starving for substantial scores.

The reliable Mushfiqur is supposed to score runs-- that is what is considered normal by fans of Bangladesh cricket. And hence, seeing Mushfiqur, the only wicketkeeper-batsman in the world with two Test double hundreds, notch the first century of the tournament was not an unexpected outcome for fans who often see the seasoned batsman coming up with match-winning knocks against much tougher opponents at international level. It was however also expected that the 33-year-old would play till the end and see Najmul XI through. But that he could not would bug the experienced campaigner more than anyone else.

When Mushfiqur decided to scoop Mustafizur Rahman in the 45th over only to be caught by Mahedi at backward point, he had as many as 34 balls to help his team get the rest of the 49 runs. And with Mushfiqur set on 103, there would not have been many who would bet against him getting those runs.

But the defeat that followed Mushfiqur's decision to scoop Mustafizur would not have been as agonising as it would have been if it were a high voltage international match, and that too is to be expected given that this is an intra-squad tournament. Fans and selectors were probably happy that the batsmen have finally started getting runs and begun to shed the rust accumulated over the seven-month halt from cricket.

However, would the scenes be similar had this happened during an international match with much more than just a defeat at a local tournament

at stake? The answer is probably known better to Mushfiqur, whose choice of shot once saw Bangladesh suffer a one-run defeat against India in a 2016 World T20 encounter in Bengaluru -- a defeat that was later labelled by Mushfiqur as one of his 'biggest disappointments' in his long cricketing career.

The tournament is meant as a way back to cricket for players who had been out of action since the coronavirus-enforced halt back in March. In that sense, the tournament also serves as a means for players to amend mistakes and work on those so that they do not repeat those when the stakes will be higher and the repercussions will be much more costly.



Sheikh Russel Online Shooting

Disha, Baki earn spots

SPORTS REPORTER



Commonwealth Games silver medalist Abdullah Hel Baki and promising Syeda Atika Hasan Disha have been selected to represent hosts Bangladesh in the Sheikh Russel International Air Rifle Competition (Online) after finishing top among four shooters as the final of three selection competitions concluded at the Gulshan Shooting Complex yesterday.

The shooter will now have pre-tournament practice before the competition on Sunday. Baki outperformed Risalatul Islam in all three competitions, scoring an average of 623.2 to Risalatul's average of 620.2, to secure a place in the online competition for the first time.

On the same day, Baki is supposed to take part in another online competition, arranged by Indonesia. That will be staged in the morning before he takes part in the Sheikh Russel tournament at 2:00pm tomorrow.

Disha surprised by beating Umme Zakia Sultana Tumpa in the third competition after Tumpa had finished top in the first two competitions. In the third competition, Disha scored 615.8, 5.5 more than Tumpa. That performance put Disha on top with an average of 614.7 to Tumpa's 613.7.

One male and one female shooter from seven countries -- Japan, India, Bhutan, Pakistan, South Korea, Indonesia and Bangladesh -- are scheduled to take part in the tournament, which is being held to mark the 56th birthday of Sheikh Russel.



Novak bent on keeping top spot

AFP, Visoko

World number one Novak Djokovic said Thursday he planned to play two more tournaments until the end of the season -- in Vienna and London -- and keep his top ATP ranking.

"I'm going to play the Vienna tournament that wasn't originally on my schedule," Djokovic told AFP. He was speaking on the sidelines of a visit to a wellness park in Bosnia where he came to recuperate after losing Sunday's French Open final to Rafael Nadal.

"I haven't played in Vienna for 15 years so I'm happy about that," Djokovic added.

The 33-year-old said that the London Masters, starting on November 15, is the second and final tournament that he still intended to play for the remainder of the season.

"This season, which was very intermittent, different and weird, at the same time brought me a lot of success and I'm very satisfied with my game, points, ranking."

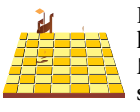
"I hope that, after the month and a half that's left in this season, I will finish it as world number one. That's my professional goal and I'm going to work on it. It's mostly up to me," he added.

After the straight sets defeat in Paris, the Serb went with his wife to the park in Bosnia to recuperate.

"I have played a lot of games for two and a half months... I could not go out because of the restrictions and rules (due to the coronavirus pandemic) and it has mentally exhausted me a lot," said the 17-time Grand Slam champion.

ASIAN NATIONS ONLINE CHESS Bangladesh fall to fifth after debacle against Kyrgyzstan

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh suffered a huge 1-3 defeat at the hands of lightweights Kyrgyzstan in the Asian Nations (Region) Men Online Chess Cup and slipped to fifth position at the close of the sixth round of matches yesterday.

Bangladesh, who started the day joint-second on the back of two wins and one draw in the first three rounds held last Saturday, are now tied with four teams, who each have seven points.

Iran are first with 10 points, followed by Australia and Kazakhstan with 10 points each.

Bangladesh started the day on the back foot, lose the fourth round 0.5-3.5 against a strong Australia, with only GM Ziaur Rahman managing a draw against GM Max Illingworth. GM Niaz Murshed, GM Reefat Bin Sattar and IM Fahad Rahman lost to their respective opponents.

They bounced back in the next round with a 2.5-0.5 win over Tajikistan but were humiliated by 10th-ranked Kyrgyzstan, who are playing with two International Masters and two Candidate Masters. GM Niaz Murshed and Zia drew their boards against IMs Mikhail Markov and Asyl Abdyljapar while GM Reefat and IM Minhaz Uddin lost to CM Sezdebe and CM Eldiar Orazbaev respectively.

Swiatek still adjusting to celebrity status

REUTERS



French Open champion Iga Swiatek says she is trying to adjust to her new celebrity status after becoming the first Polish player to win a Grand Slam singles title.

The 19-year-old beat American Sofia Kenin 6-4, 6-1 in Saturday's final to become the youngest winner of the claycourt Grand Slam at Roland Garros since Monica Seles in 1992.

"It's pretty crazy here," Swiatek told the BBC after returning to Poland.

"I feel like my life changed completely and I'm trying to get used to that. I left a different Poland that I came back to, because right now I'm kind of popular here."

Swiatek's life has been turned upside down by her victory but she says she can always call on Japan's three-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka for support.

"I'm doing pretty well, but if I'm going to have any problems, then Naomi texted me that I can always ask her for advice or for support," she added. "We had a quick chat on social media right after the final. I feel like I am supported, so it is great."

Swiatek was the first Polish woman to reach the Roland Garros final in 81



Poland's Iga Swiatek, the French Open winner, walks after a news conference in Warsaw, Poland on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

years and the first at any major since Agnieszka Radwanska at Wimbledon eight years ago.

"Basically I was in shock for the next three days," Swiatek said.

"I couldn't tell you my emotions, because even I don't understand

them.

"I always wanted to win all four Grand Slams and to have an Olympic medal, and I always thought of it as a dream. But right now, when I actually won French Open, it stopped like being so distant for me."

Wimbledon without fans?

AFP, London

Wimbledon is set to go ahead next year even if the Grand Slam tournament has to be staged behind closed doors, organisers announced on Friday.

The grass-court championships were cancelled this year for the first time since World War II because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The All England Club is planning for several scenarios in 2021 -- a full-capacity Wimbledon, reduced numbers of fans or holding the tournament with no spectators present.

"Staging the championships in 2021 is our number-one priority and we are actively engaged in scenario-planning in order to deliver on that priority," said chief executive Sally Bolton.

Wimbledon's statement read: "Our overriding priority will continue to be the health and safety of all of our stakeholders, in particular our guests, our staff, and our competitors."



Chris Gayle's introduction to this year's IPL was delayed by a stomach bug, but once fit and selected, the 'Universe Boss' showed his prowess with a quick-fire fifty against Royal Challengers Bangalore on Thursday night, helping the beleaguered Kings XI Punjab to a much-needed victory. "It is the Universe Boss batting, how can I be nervous?" the left-hander said after the win, referring to the last-ball victory.

PHOTO: IPL