

## WHAT TO WATCH

### FACEBOOK LA LIGA

Real Betis v Elche  
Live from 7:00pm  
Celta Vigo v Real Sociedad  
Live from 9:00pm  
Granada v Levante  
Live from 11:30pm  
Valencia v Getafe  
Live from 2:00am (Monday)  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**

### INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Chennai v Punjab  
Live from 4:00pm  
Kolkata v Rajasthan  
Live from 8:00pm  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
**ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE**  
Newcastle v Everton  
Live from 8:00pm  
Man United v Arsenal

Live from 10:30pm  
Tottenham v Brighton  
Live from 1:15am (Monday)  
**TEN 2 SERIE A**  
Udinese v AC Milan  
Live from 5:30pm  
Spezia v Juventus  
Live from 8:00pm  
Napoli v Sassuolo  
Live from 11:00pm

Sampdoria v Genoa  
Live from 1:45am (Monday)  
**SONY SIX**  
**SERIE A**  
Roma v Fiorentina  
Live from 11:00pm  
**PTV**  
**PAKISTAN V ZIMBABWE**  
Second ODI  
Live from 1:00pm



## SWEATING FOR A NEW MILESTONE?

Zahir Rayhan of Bangladesh Navy was seen sweating his toned body, this time under the tutelage of Farid Ahmed Khan, at the Bangabandhu National Stadium as part of preparations for the upcoming National Athletics Championship slated for January next year. Having broken a 32-year-old 400m sprint record at the age of 19 years in the last edition of the championship, Zahir must have his eyes set to surpass his previous best of 46.86 seconds. Zahir, a 400m sprinter also partakes in 200m sprint and is one of the nine Navy sprinters currently preparing for next year's National Athletics Championship.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Skill challenge for domestic cricketers

SPORTS REPORTER



While Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is making efforts to involve a bigger group of domestic cricketers in five-team Bangabandhu T20 Cup in mid-November with a bid to bringing competitive back cricket in the country in earnest, it could prove to be a huge challenge for local players to cope up instantly.

Following the successful completion of the three-team BCB President's Cup last month, the board had announced that it would gradually head towards competitive cricket with the upcoming T20 competition.

Although the cricketers of the national team, high performance squad and under-19 team had already resumed cricketing activities at least a couple of months ago, it is the domestic cricketers

same level of commitment to individual fitness and come prepared for the test," said Minhajul.

The schedule for the fitness test will be announced following finalisation of the players' list for the draft. According to top-order batsman Shamsur Rahman, currently out of the national team but a prolific performer in domestic circuit, matching the fitness standards will not be such a big challenge as it would be to match the skill part in such a short time.

"I don't think fitness will be an issue as we would be able to reach that standard by this time, but the challenge will be in the skill department. We were unable to do proper practise during the last seven or eight months, especially the players in Dhaka who mainly rely on facilities at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

"During other times, we could have used the centre wicket of the academy or the outer nets turf but during this lockdown, I



Ariful Haque and Shamsur Rahman, both out of national team reckoning currently, maintaining their fitness and form on their own -- at private gyms and on concrete pitches.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

outside these teams who will face the biggest challenge when they make a comeback after more than eight months out due to the pandemic.

Chief selector Minhajul Abedin on Friday informed that the players selected in the draft list for the upcoming T20 tournament in November-December will have to undergo mandatory fitness test before being considered eligible for the competition. The test has been planned to particularly assess fitness levels of cricketers outside the national team, high performance squad and the under-19 set-up.

"We have been encouraged by the individual fitness work done by the national team, HP team and under-19 players during the lockdown period and the effort they had put in helped them adjust quickly when group training and matches started.

"We expect the other cricketers, who may have been outside the setup, to show the

had to bat on concrete pitches. Obviously, there's a big difference compared to what the national players did, but that has always been the challenge for players outside the national team set-up and we have to accept it," Shamsur told The Daily Star.

While Shamsur focused on issues of players in the capital, things are not smooth for the players outside the capital either. All-rounder Ariful Haque, another national team discard who is currently in Rangpur, is planning to prepare at BKSP alongside Shakib Al Hasan and Test skipper Mominul Haque as the facilities at his hometown do not match top standard.

## Easy to theorise but hard to implement

REUTERS



Juventus coach Andrea Pirlo has bold ideas about how he wants to rebuild the Serie A champions but is facing huge challenges to put them into practice and is going to need time to do it -- a luxury that few big clubs allow.

The former World Cup winner, in his first season as coach, laid out his vision in a 30-page thesis he wrote to obtain his coaching license, entitled "the football I would like."

"The founding idea of my football is based on the will of a proactive football, of possession and attack," he wrote. "I would like to play a total and collective football, with eleven players active in offensive and defensive phase."

"By manipulating space and time, we have the ambition to control the game in both phases."

It sounds ambitious at the best of times but Pirlo has taken on the challenge amid a fixture pileup, plus the Covid-19 pandemic that has deprived him of the services of Cristiano Ronaldo for their last four games.

He has barely had a chance to train with his full squad since the season started, while also having



to blend in a number of new young signings including wingers Dejan Kulusevski and Federico Chiesa and midfielders Arthur Melo and Weston McKennie.

There have already been some examples of what Pirlo is trying to do. In last Sunday's match against Verona, central defender Leonardo Bonucci began popping up in midfield when Juve had possession while midfielder Adrien Rabiot dropped back into defence.

Pirlo also talked about players taking on different roles after the 2-0 win at Dynamo Kiev in the Champions League 10 days ago.

"What I wanted was to have many players going into attack. Chiesa can play on either flank, Kulusevski or Aaron Ramsey can

play as a 'trequartista' behind a striker," he said.

"Chiesa is suited to what we wanted to do. He isn't meant to be a fifth midfielder, but a wide attacker, while when defending he becomes a fourth midfielder. He can play on either side and does it very well."

### DISAPPOINTING RESULTS

However, results and performance so far have generally been disappointing. Juventus have drawn their last three Serie A matches on the pitch and on Tuesday were outplayed in the Champions League by a Barcelona side themselves in transition when they lacked creativity and failed to get a shot on goal.

Italian media have complained that Juventus "lack identity."

Pirlo, in his defence, points out after every match that his team are under construction and that he has just embarked on a long-term project.

For the coach of a smaller club, that would not be so much of a problem. But Juventus have become so dominant in Italy, that winning the Serie A is seen almost as an obligation.

Allowing Pirlo to get on with his experiments may mean sacrificing a tenth successive Serie A title.

He might also be asking too much of the players.

Earlier this year, defender Giorgio Chiellini remembered how he was once coached by Roberto Donadoni at Livorno and the players simply could not understand what was being asked of them.

"The things he asked us to do were fundamentally sound, but for us at that time, they were impossible," he said. "Roberto took a while to realise that and the same could happen to Andrea when he becomes a coach."

"(Pirlo) is a Martian who makes everything special. Of course, as a coach Andrea will have to return to Earth because he will not be able to expect his players to have eyes behind their heads as he did."

## Gayle is 'Still The Boss'

AGENCIES



Chris Gayle achieved another milestone in his illustrious career as the 'Universe Boss' became the first player to hit 1,000 sixes in T20 cricket.

The Kings XI Punjab opener went to the wicket with 993 sixes and then smashed eight maximums against Rajasthan Royals at Sheikh Zayed Stadium on Friday as he played a knock of 99 of just 63 balls.

"A thousand maximums - another record? Oh, man," he made a witty remark when asked about the achievement after the match.

"I don't know; I just have to give thanks. Have to give thanks for hitting it well at age 41. A lot of dedication and hard work has paid off over the years. Still here, still doing it, the same way. Very grateful."

"I am still feeling good. It's all about the mental aspect of my game, I think that's what's keeping me going. I am still enjoying my cricket the same way and I still want to do well. I'd love an IPL trophy under my belt," he added.

Gayle was just a single away from his seventh IPL hundred but was denied by Royals pacer Jofra Archer in the final over.

However, the England quickie mentioned Gayle afterward by tweeting "Still The Boss", and almost all the bowlers around the world might share the same thought.

Indian batting legend, Virender Sehwag, joined the group of the admirers of Gayle, labeling him the 'Bradman of T20' cricket. He tweeted, "Without a doubt, the greatest that there has ever been. He is the boss of entertainment."

"Get your head around this, Chris Gayle has hit 1000 sixes in T20 cricket. crazystat #UniverseBoss #KXIPvRRR #IPL2020," Tom Moody twitted.



## 'THANKS FOR YOUR LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP'

Diego Maradona celebrated his 60th birthday on Friday with a comprehensive league victory for Gimnasia y Esgrima, the club he coaches, with a cake presented to him inside a shuttered stadium and a 100-metre long billboard erected in his honour in the centre of Buenos Aires. Although he had been reported to be self-isolating after coming into contact with someone who displayed Covid-19 symptoms, Maradona appeared at his club's stadium on Friday evening. "I start my 60th with these marvellous messages that you've all sent me. Thanks for your love and your friendship. This is the best present you could have given me," said Maradona.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## 'MU forwards are a threat'

REUTERS

Manchester United's forwards have forged a strong understanding that makes them a real threat in the Premier League, according to Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta who will take his team to Old Trafford on Sunday. "Since the lockdown, Ole has managed to improve that a lot and you can see that at the end of (last) season, the amount of goals and types of goals they were scoring. They're a threat," said Arteta. United are unbeaten in their last 13 home games against Arsenal.

## Number one Barty back in the groove

REUTERS



World number one Ash Barty feels refreshed after a lengthy break from tennis due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the 24-year-old hopes the interval would prove a blessing as she returned to training to get ready for the home Australian summer.

The Queenslander did not play a match since February and opted not to defend her French Open title after also skipping the U.S. Open Grand Slam in New York.

She, however, will start the 2021 season as the top-ranked women's player after the WTA rankings system was adjusted due to the pandemic.

Barty recently reunited with her coach

Craig Tyzzer, who was stranded in Victoria due to state border closures in Australia aimed at curbing the spread of Covid-19, to begin preparations for the Australian Open in January.

"For me, it is a continuation of what we have been working on for the last two years," Barty told The Australian, adding that the training felt like Tyzzer "had never left."

"(Covid-19 has been) a massive punch in the face to think about your perspective and to think about the things that really matter to you on a personal level.

"The most challenging part (of tennis) is that we are never home for more than two or three weeks at a time, so to actually be able to have two or three months off at home (in a) forced break that hopefully becomes a blessing."

