

FACEBOOK

La Liga  
Eibar v Getafe  
Live from 7:00pm  
Cadiz v Real Sociedad  
Live from 9:15pm  
Granada v Real Sociedad  
Live from 11:30pm  
Alaves v Valencia

Live from 2:00am (Monday)  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**  
English Premier League  
Fulham v Everton  
Live from 6:00pm  
Sheffield Utd v West Ham  
Live from 8:00pm  
Leeds v Arsenal  
Live from 10:30pm

Liverpool v Leicester  
Live from 1:15am (Monday)  
Live from 8:00pm  
**TEN 2**  
Serie A  
Fiorentina v Benevento  
Live from 5:30pm  
Inter Milan v Torino  
Live from 8:00pm

Udinese v Genoa  
Live from 11:00pm  
Napoli v AC Milan  
Live from 1:45am (Monday)  
**SONY SIX**  
Serie A  
Roma v Parma  
Live from 8:00pm



"I am yet to play a competitive match [since being named the captain of Bangladesh ODI side]. At first, I would need to play a competitive match. Pressure of captaincy is actually something made up by you people [the media]. I have not yet played any international game [as a captain]. I even said that the success of a captain should be judged based on the performance of the team over a year or a period of six months. And that is true for any leader in the world."

Bangladesh ODI and Fortune Barishal captain Tamim Iqbal told the reporters yesterday.

SPORTS REPORTER



PHOTO: BCB

**BACKGROUND:** Minister Rajshahi are the only team that did not pick any Grade A cricketers during the players' draft. Rajshahi picked all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin with their first call, a decision that surprised many. With hardly any big names in the squad, they are being led by young Najmul Hossain Shanto. Rajshahi are apparently banking on experienced domestic performers during the players' draft. It seems Rajshahi wanted to take on the challenge with utility players lining their squad and are focused on their game plan. It will be interesting to see their approach as the tournament begins.

**NATIONAL STARS:** Although there are not many current national stars in the Rajshahi squad aside from Saifuddin and Najmul, they also have pacer Ebadot Hossain and wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan in the side. With no superstars as such in the line-up, Rajshahi are trying to keep a low profile and looking to play the role of a surprise package.

**LOCAL PERFORMERS:** Rajshahi's strength lies in their plethora of domestic stars and national discards. Former Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful is gearing up to make a statement in the upcoming tournament alongside the likes of left-arm

spinner Arafat Sunny, Sunzamul Islam, all-rounder Farhad Reza and batsmen Rony Talukdar, Rakibul Hasan and Fazle Mahmud. Rajshahi also has youth in the form of pacer Mukidul Islam Mugdho, who impressed in the BCB President's Cup last month, alongside Jaker Ali. Seaming all-rounder Anisul Emon also features and, according to head coach Sarwar Imran, he will provide the X-factor for his side.

**WHAT SETS RAJSHAHI APART:** According to Imran, although it is the shortest format of the game, experience will come into play. "I think we have a good bowling unit with three solid pacers in the side in the likes of Saifuddin, Ebadot, and Mukidul. We have left-arm spinners and also three all-rounders which will help us play an extra bowler or batsman which is a very good thing. We also have one of the best wicketkeepers in the form of Nurul

and I think we can be a strong force," said Imran. **KEY PLAYER:** His importance to the side was clear for all to see as he was drafted with Rajshahi's first call and young pace-bowling all-rounder Saifuddin will surely be their go-to man. The feisty character will be eager to showcase his worth as the next big thing and it will be a huge platform for the youngster to actually take responsibility both with bat and ball.

## Underdogs banking on domestic performers

With the Bangabandhu T20 Cup starting from November 24, cricket enthusiasts in Bangladesh are eager to watch local stars battle it out against each. In the lead-up to the tournament, The Daily Star tries to assess and analyse each of the five teams. Today, we present the fifth and final part, an overview of Minister Rajshahi.

## Everyone but Mahmudul tests negative

SPORTS REPORTER



Apart from the ICC Under-19 World Cup-winning member Mahmudul Hasan Joy and a Gazi Group Chattogram team boy, all players and support staff of the five teams tested negative for coronavirus ahead of the Bangabandhu T20 Cup, starting from November 24.

The young batsman has been kept in isolation at the National Academy complex and will join the side if he returns a negative test after completing his quarantine.

Meanwhile, all five teams had already checked into the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in the capital, where they are being kept in a bio-secure bubble maintained by

the Bangladesh Cricket Board's medical team yesterday. Teams have already started training sessions ahead of the start of the tournament.

Bangladesh Test skipper Mominul Haque and T20I captain Mahmudullah Riyad had tested positive for Covid-19 previously, but the duo joined up with their respective teams after testing negative.

Bangladesh ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal joined Barishal's training session yesterday.

According to the dashing left-hander, his team made a few mistakes during the players' draft and he believes they will need to play out-of-the-box cricket to make a mark in the tournament.

Beximco Dhaka will take on Minister Rajshahi in the opening game while Barishal will face Gemcon Khulna in the second match.



## Swimming in stagnant waters

ANISUR RAHMAN

The historical success stories of Bangladesh swimming and, by extrapolation, of Bangladesh sports, will remain incomplete without Mosharraf Hossain Khan, who is the country's lone sportsman to grab five gold (100m butterfly, 200m butterfly, 200m breast-stroke and two relay events) medals in a single edition of SAF Games [now SA Games] held in Dhaka in 1985. Rafiqul Islam added another gold medal (400m freestyle) as hosts Bangladesh won an impressive six gold, six silver and seven bronze medals in that edition.

The successes of Mosharraf and Rafiqul inspired the likes of Abdus Salam, Bazlur Rahman, Mokhlesur Rahman, Mizanur Rahman, Rubel Rana, Shahjahan Ali Rony and Mahfuza Khatun Shila, who went on to win several gold medals in the regional sports extravaganza. Bangladesh has so far won a grand total of 17 gold medals from swimming in SA Games, the second-best discipline for the country after shooting. Mokhlesur was another celebrated performer, who grabbed three gold medals in three separate editions in 1989, 1991 and 1993 while Mizanur picked up the baton to win two

gold medals in 1993 and 1995.

Golam Mostafa, former national swimmer-turned coach, has seen both the highs and lows of Bangladesh swimming: the 61-year-old had once swum along with superstar Mosharraf, successful swimmers Rafiqul, Abdus Salam, Bazlur Rahman and many more recognised swimmers before entering coaching profession, following a diploma from Patiala, India, sometime post-1987. It is interesting to note

permanent or contractual jobs and field them at national and international level later.

"I first swam at Mahananda River and some ponds in Chapainawabganj before availing pool facility at Rajshahi University for a few weeks ahead of national age-group championships. After winning the individual medley twice in 1995 and 1996, I got admitted at BKSP and gradually improved to win gold medal at 2006 SA Games in Colombo,"

Nikli are doing jobs in different services teams who also motivate others to aim for government jobs through good performance at the pool," said Karar Samedul Islam, a former national swimmer, who conducts a swimming academy with nearly 100 swimmers in Nikli alongside another academy run by veteran coach Abul Hashem.

Rony further recollected that he and his contemporaries engaged in swimming for the sheer love of the game but most of the

are more focused on grabbing positions at the federation instead of taking swimming forward. Only two national championships are not enough to develop swimmers, who need equipped pools at rural environment which will provide pure oxygen instead of Dhaka's filthy oxygen, for instance," said Mostafa.

Though both national and junior championships used to be held regularly, in the last six years the events have been held irregularly as the path of frequent display of performance and growth has come to a halt.

"Most participating districts, uninterested in aiding the growth of swimmers, hire swimmers from clubs just to ensure their councillorships. Clubs have all but lost their interest in producing swimmers at grassroots level following a set-time rule that allows only time-achieving swimmers to get transport and daily allowance from federation," said Aminul Islam, general secretary of Solaiman Swimming Club. "The federation is saving money by the set-time rule but is killing off the dreams of many budding swimmers," he said.

BSF general secretary BM Saif said that they could not hold age-group and national championships twice each year due to the training camp of 'Search for Best Swimmers' and that money was not the primary reason.

"We have a plan to hold a long-distance competition this month and stage national championships in March next year. In the upcoming meeting, we will also discuss about resumption of the national camp and the training camp of 'Search for Best Swimmer'," he said.

Earlier, physical punishment applied on juvenile swimmers at the training camp and allegation of misconduct with female swimmers hit the headlines, while the corona-induced break added heavily to the misery with no indication of resumption of sporting events yet, apparently.

Standing in 2020, the gold-hauls ushered by Mosharraf, Mokhlesur and Mizan seem like a distant past and it remains to be seen whether we can afford to continue our traditional ways or have to resort to swimming against the tide to revive the glory days.



## Klopp pins hopes on youngsters



REUTERS

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp has said he hopes the club's young centre backs can step up in the absence of injured regulars as the Premier League champions cope with an injury crisis.

Defenders Virgil van Dijk and Joe Gomez are both set to miss the rest of the campaign after undergoing knee surgeries, with Nat Phillips and teenager Rhys Williams expected to provide cover and partner with Joel Matip.

Klopp said, ahead of Sunday's game against Leicester City, he found himself in a similar situation at Borussia Dortmund, when Neven Subotic and Mats Hummels were played together as teenagers, gaining the experience to form the bedrock of his defensive line in two title-winning seasons.



**'NEYMAR WILL START AGAINST LEIPZIG'**  
Paris St Germain forward Neymar comes on as a substitute to replace Angel Di Maria during his side's 3-2 defeat at Monaco in Ligue 1 on Friday. Meanwhile, coach Thomas Tuchel said: "Neymar? He is determined. Yes, he will start against Leipzig (Tuesday's crucial Champions League game)."

PHOTO: TWITTER

Medals in swimming in SA Games from 1984 to 2019



Gold	Silver	Bronze
17	55	86

Domestic & International competitions

- 2010-2020 National Championships 7 times
- 2010-2020 Age-group Championships 8 times
- 2010-2020 Long-distance Competition 6 times
- 2010-2020 Participation in Int'l meets 40 times
- \*Only six swimmers received FINA-Olympic scholarships from 2010-20
- \*Only two coaches participated in courses from 2010-2020