

WHAT TO WATCH

FACEBOOK
LA LIGA
Barcelona vs Real Sociedad
Live from 2:00 am (Thursday)

TEN 1
SERIE A
Genoa vs AC Milan
Live from 1:45 am (Thursday)

TEN 2 SERIE A
Juventus vs Atalanta
Live from 11:30 pm
Inter Milan vs Napoli
Live from 1:45 am (Thursday)

SONY SIX
T20 BIG BASH LEAGUE
Perth Scorchers vs Melbourne

Stars
Live from 2:15 pm
Lanka Premier League Final
Galle vs Jaffna
Live from 7:30 pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE
Arsenal vs Southampton

Live from 12:00 am (Thursday)
Liverpool vs Tottenham
Live from 2:00 am (Thursday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE
West Ham United vs Crystal Palace
Live from 2:00 am (Thursday)



Gazi Group Chattogram's left-arm seamer Shoriful Islam jumps in the air to celebrate one of his two wickets against Beximco Dhaka in the second qualifier of the Bangabandhu T20 Cup at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Shoriful conceded only 17 runs as Dhaka were bowled out for 116, a total Chattogram chased down comfortably.

PHOTO: BCB

Chattogram ease into final

Will face Gemcon Khulna on Friday

SPORTS REPORTER



After conceding 210 runs in the first qualifier against Gemcon Khulna, Gazi Group Chattogram's bowlers bounced back and dismissed Beximco Dhaka for just 116 to set up a comfortable seven-wicket win and reach the final of the Bangabandhu T20 Cup yesterday.

It was a walk in the park for in-form Chattogram batsmen as Liton Das continued his fine form and top-scored with 40. Soumya Sarkar also got a start and added 44 with Liton for the opening wicket, but the left-hander was run out after scoring 27.

Skipper Mohammad Mithun added 34 as Chattogram reached the target in the last over of the innings. Chattogram will face Gemcon Khulna in the final on December 18.

It was rather a disappointing show from Dhaka's point of view as Mushfiqur Rahim's men were unable to put up any sort of fight to defend the small total.

Dhaka had come up with a different approach after electing to bat and surprisingly opted for Muktar Ali to open the innings as a pinch-hitter alongside Sabbir Rahman. That man Naim Sheikh, who struck a hundred at the top few games back, had to drop down.

But the ploy did not work and Dhaka lost both openers, Muktar (7) and Sabbir (11), early and were left struggling on 19 for two inside four overs.

Naim, who came at number three, also failed after scoring twelve as Nadif Chowdhury took a brilliant catch while running forward followed by a miscued slog off the bowling of left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan.

Once again, the pressure was on skipper Mushfiqur Rahim (25) and Yasir Ali to re-build the innings. But that would not prove to be the case yesterday as Mushfiqur fell victim to yet another brilliant piece of fielding, this time by Rakibul at the deep.

Dhaka never looked capable of a comeback since then, losing wickets at regular intervals as Mustafizur Rahman at his very best made life difficult for the batting side.

The left-arm seamer even broke the stumps when he bowled Nasum Ahmed with a fiery delivery and ended with figures of three for 32 from four overs. He now sits comfortably top of the wicket-takers' list with 21 scalps.

Yasir and Al Amin scored twenties but it was never going to be enough to help Dhaka post a fighting total. Apart from Mustafizur, another left-arm seamer, Shoriful, bagged two wickets for Dhaka.

Mohammedan enliven final day of registration

SPORTS REPORTER



While most Bangladesh Premier League clubs sent over their documents to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) officials, falling giants Mohammedan turned up to the BFF headquarters with all their players to complete formalities on the final day of players' registration yesterday.

There were no surprises in the month-long players' transfer window, with teams retaining most of their players from the previous season, which was cancelled due to Covid-19.

However, the Black and White went a different direction and sought blessings from former players and honoured them at the club premises before going to the

Mohammedan coach Sean Lane said after completing the registration formalities.

The Brit added: "I think the biggest difference will be the local players who understand what I want. I think my foreign players will also be good. One of the foreign players [Nigeria's Abiola Nurat] has been training under my assistant, Jean Maclin, in Vietnam for the past six months. I think he will be able to reach his level and the difficult thing is to ensure he plays the way I want to play and settles into Bangladesh."

Lane came to Bangladesh to take charge of Mohammedan in the middle of the 2018-19 season and saved the Black and Whites from relegation. He then took them to the semifinals of last season's Federation Cup. This time around, he wants to finish in the top four in the Bangladesh Premier League.

"Bashundhara Kings, Abahani,



BFF headquarters.

The club management also invited late Mohammedan great Badal Roy's wife, daughter and son. They were joined by club legends like Jakaria Pintu, Pratap Sankar Hazra, Imtiaz Sultan Jonny, Rummon Bin Wali Sabiir, Kaiser Hamid, Riaz, Kanon, Ata, Gorgy and many others to inspire a new generation of players.

Mohammedan, whose biggest regret is not winning the professional football league since its introduction in 2007, have retained the services of old guns and strengthened their squad with eight new local players and two new foreign players from Nigeria and Burkina Faso. They retained Japanese midfielder Uryu Nagata and Malian striker Souleymane Diabate.

"Most of the eight new signing players are young. They signed one or two years for a professional team and maybe one or two will play in the regular eleven. I have different types of players this time,"

Chattogram Abahani and Sheikh Russel have spent a lot of money, so if I want to surpass any of those clubs and finish among the top four, it will be a massive achievement," said Lane. "In the Federation Cup, I first want to get out of the group and then anything can happen in the knockout stages. I think we can beat any team on any day."

Chattogram Abahani completed their registration formalities and retained most of last season's local and foreign players, but Sheikh Russel made changes to their foreign quota by signing foreigners who have experience in Bangladesh.

Saif SC also completed their players' registration formalities, retaining most of their squad -- which has an average age of just 22. Belgian coach Paul Put can also field four new foreign players from Nigeria and Uzbekistan.

All 13 teams registered for the upcoming season, including Muktiyodhha Sangsad -- who completed the procedures despite a financial crisis.

Long-term view imperative as international cricket set to return

MAZHAR UDDIN



With international cricket already having resumed in various parts of the world amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is also now gearing up to get back on the international stage by hosting West Indies in January 2021.

The BCB confirmed yesterday that the West Indies side will arrive on January 10 for three ODIs and two Tests.

After such a long gap -- Bangladesh last played international cricket in March this year -- the time has come for the national selectors to plan with a long-term view when forming the national team across three formats.

Bangladesh cricket is nearing a transition period with the likes of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad all into their mid- to late-thirties. Now is the time to prepare for the vacuum that will be created when these stalwarts, inevitably, leave the scene.

Apart from Mashrafe, the four others are still expected to go on playing till the 2023 World Cup as well as in the longest format, fitness and performance permitting.

There was talk of selectors bleeding some youngsters in the



shortest format and, to a lesser extent in the ODIs, to prepare a fresh batch before the next World Cup.

Mashrafe retired from T20s in 2017 and quit the ODI captaincy in March this year, with the board handing over the baton to Tamim.

However, the 37-year-old pacer has not announced his retirement from ODIs yet, even though there were murmurs that Mashrafe may retire from ODI cricket as early as at the end of the 2019 World Cup.

But that did not happen and technically, Mashrafe is still available for national selection in the fifty-over format. The pacer made a strong statement coming back from a long gap of eight months after battling with injuries as he was roped in by Gemcon

Khulna in the middle of the ongoing Bangabandhu T20 Cup.

The veteran pacer bowled a great line and length and his clever variations of pace managed to undo the batsmen. But it was his five-wicket haul against Gazi Group Chattogram, that too in the crucial first qualifier on Monday, which once again bring him back in the limelight.

With three ODIs in the West Indies series, the question now is whether the selectors will consider Mashrafe for based on his performances in the Bangabandhu T20 Cup? Or will they move on from Mashrafe to look forward and give opportunities to youngsters like Hasan Mahmud, Shoriful Islam, Shohidul Islam, Mukidul

Islam or Sumon Khan, all of whom have shown a lot of talent in the pace bowling department recently?

Although T20s are not part of West Indies' schedule in Bangladesh, there may be hard decisions for the selectors to make on that front as well. Tamim's approach in T20s has raised questions of late as the left-hander's strike rate in the shortest format of the game has not set the world alight.

Despite being the most successful batsman for Bangladesh across all formats, perhaps Tamim needs to assess his game when it comes to the shortest format and it would not be surprising if he makes way to allow youngsters to settle in.

T20 cricket requires energy

ITINERARY

January 10: West Indies arrive in Dhaka
January 18: One-day warm-up match, BKSP, Savar.
January 20: 1st ODI, SBNCs, Mirpur.
January 22: 2nd ODI, SBNCs, Mirpur.
January 25: 3rd ODI, ZACS, Chattogram.
January 28-31: 4-day warm-up match in Chattogram
February 3-7: 1st Test, ZACS, Chattogram
February 11-15: 2nd Test, SBNCs, Dhaka

and excitement and the likes of Naim Sheikh, Nazmul Hossain Shanto, Soumya Sarkar and Liton Das have got the potential, which has been reflected in the Bangabandhu T20 Cup.

Green to make Test debut?

REUTERS

All-rounder Cameron Green will make his Test debut against India in the first game of the series in Adelaide on Thursday if he comes through concussion protocols, Australia coach Justin Langer said on Tuesday.

Green was struck on the head when bowling to Jasprit Bumrah last week in an Australia 'A' game and replaced under the sport's concussion rules.

THE DREAM TEAM

AGENCIES

Lionel Messi, Ronaldo Nazario and Cristiano Ronaldo have found place in the greatest team of all time announced by France Football -- Ballon d'Or Dream Team.

Having cancelled its annual Ballon d'Or award for the world's best footballer because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the weekly magazine instead has announced its best XI in history, as voted by journalists from 170 countries and regions.

The esteemed line-up includes Brazil's three-time World Cup winner Pele and legendary Argentinian Diego Maradona as well as goalkeeper Lev Yashin; defenders Cafu, Franz Beckenbauer and Paolo Maldini; and mid-fielders Xavi and Lothar Matthaus.



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