

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

GAZI TV & STAR SPORTS1

Bangladesh v India

One-off Test, Day 2

Live from 9:30am

CHANNEL 9

World Cup/Asian Cup Qualifier

Bangladesh v Kyrgyzstan

Live from 5:00pm

TEN CRICKET

West Indies v Australia

Second Test, Day 1

Live from 8:45pm

Bangladesh v India

Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

One-off Test, Day 2

Time: 9:30am

World Cup/Asian Cup Qualifier

Venue: BNS

MESSI TO BE TRIED?

Lionel Messi has moved a step closer to being tried for tax evasion after a Spanish high court rejected his latest appeal. The court ruled that Messi should not be granted impunity for not knowing what was happening with his finances. The pair, who deny the charges, are alleged to have withheld the money between 2007 and 2009. Messi and his father made a voluntary €5m "corrective payment", equal to the alleged unpaid tax plus interest, in August 2013, although both



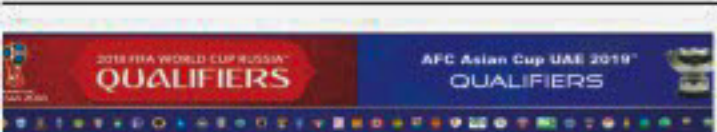


Bangladesh booters (L) sweated it out at the Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club ground while their Kyrgyzstan counterparts warmed up at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, ahead of today's fixture of the Joint Qualifiers.

Time to start delivering

Bangladesh take on Kyrgyzstan at the BNS today

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh national football team begin a new journey when they take on Kyrgyzstan in the first fixture of the Joint Qualifiers for the 2018 Russia World Cup and 2019 UAE Asian Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today. The men in red and green, who have shown unmistakable signs of improvement under Dutch coach Lodewijk de Kruif over the past two years, have had the opportunity to rub shoulders against some of the big names of world and Asian football, thanks to the new qualification format. Pitted in Group B alongside Australia, Jordan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan gives them unique chance to play these teams both at home and away, but it is also a test towards their stated aim of finishing third in the group, which would see them avoid play-

offs for the final round of Asian Cup qualification. The team has had close to three weeks of preparation and played two warm-up matches, with mixed results. Now is the time for them to show the improvement and deliver the results.

Today's opponents Kyrgyzstan are a relatively unknown quantity to Bangladesh even though these two teams have faced each other in 2007 and 2008. However, this Kyrgyzstan team, comprising a number of players plying their trade in foreign leagues and with a new Russian coach in charge, have not played a single match this year. As a result they have slipped below Bangladesh in the recent FIFA rankings. Bangladesh coach, though, is not willing to read too much into the rankings; rather he is keeping faith on his charges to deliver the goods in front of home crowd.

"What information we have gathered about Kyrgyzstan has been shared with the players and

we have done what we had to in the practice sessions on the pitch. With everything in good spot, everybody is in good health, and good form, we do have a chance tomorrow (Thursday)," said a cautious de Kruif at the pre-match

FIFA RANKING	BANGLADESH 166	KYRGYZSTAN 177
PREVIOUS MEETINGS		
2007 (Nehru Cup)		
Kyrgyzstan 3 – 0 Bangladesh		
2008 (AFC Challenge Cup Qualifiers)		
Kyrgyzstan 2 – 1 Bangladesh		

briefing at the BFF House yesterday. Skipper Mamunul Islam shared his coach's confidence and vowed to not repeat the mistakes they made in the most recent friendly matches.

"We all gave our full effort because June 11 and June 16 is the

most important thing for us. We did a lot of classes on mistakes (against Singapore and Afghanistan). Kyrgyzstan are a very good side but we want to produce something good as we will be playing on our home ground," said the midfielder adding that they will take the field with the aim of collecting full points against the Central Asian opponents.

Bangladesh took the lead against both Singapore and Afghanistan, but failed to retain that lead, eventually losing against Singapore and being held by Afghanistan through a last minute equaliser. But Mamunul claimed they will try not to surrender the lead and go into the shell, rather try to kill off the game by going for a second and a third goal.

However, that is not going to be an easy task. Kyrgyzstan may not have acclimatised to the weather conditions of Dhaka, being here for less than 48 hours and having had

just a single practice session, but they are superior both in physical and technical aspects, as admitted by the Bangladesh team management. But Bangladesh coach and his deputies believe that they have all the bases covered this time including the weakness in defending set-pieces which has dogged them for the last couple of years.

Kyrgyzstan coach Alexander Krestinin believes their lack of match experience in recent times will not be a problem as they have played a few practice matches and trained a week in the United Arab Emirates before coming to Bangladesh.

"They (Bangladesh) are the home team and will play at their own ground which is why they will have a bit of extra motivation, but I think it will not have any impact on our performance. We understand that tomorrow (Thursday) will be a tough fight," said Alexander.



LODEWIJK DE KRUIF
Bangladesh coach

"We have 12 to 14 players who can compete and be compared with Kyrgyzstan. We have a good squad now compared to what we



MAMUNUL ISLAM
Bangladesh captain

"Kyrgyzstan are a very good side. But since we are going to play on our home ground, we can do something good and we are



ALEXANDER KRESTININ
Kyrgyzstan coach

"We are not concerned about the rankings and it doesn't affect our team. We are looking forward to starting the qualifiers on



AZAMAT BAIMATOV
Kyrgyzstan captain

"We may face some trouble with weather conditions, but we are ready to overcome that. We respect Bangladesh but we have

Mariner win handball league

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club emerged champions in the Cute Women's Handball League after beating Mohammedan SC by 28-18 goals in the last match of the super four stage at the Shaheed (capt) M Mansur Ali National Handball Stadium yesterday.

Mariner Youngs Club, who previously won the title back in 2005, dominated over their illustrious opponents from the beginning and ended the first half with a comfortable 15-10 lead, before extending the lead in the second half to take sweet revenge for their defeat in last edition's final.

Gurmil scored 14 goals while Sanjida netted seven goals for Dhaka Mariners Youngs. Dalia and Nishi scored seven goals each for Mohammedan SC.

Tamim extends Kaymu deal

SPORTS REPORTER

Kaymu.com.bd, the leading online shopping community in Bangladesh, has decided to extend their bat sponsorship deal with Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal. According to the deal, the southpaw will sport a blue Kaymu sticker on his bat throughout the series against India.

The deal was extended at the capital's Hotel Pan Pacific Sonargaon and was attended by Quazi Zulquarnain Islam, Deputy Country Manager, and Georg Wolff, Head of Partnerships, Kaymu Bangladesh.

This will be Tamim's second partnership with Kaymu Bangladesh, after they sponsored his bat previously during the recently concluded series against Pakistan in Bangladesh.

FIFA suspends 2026 World Cup bidding

AFP, Lausanne



FIFA announced on Wednesday it had suspended the bidding process to host the 2026 World Cup amid the furore surrounding corruption probes at the organisation.

"It was decided to place the administrative process on hold for the 2026 FIFA World Cup bidding due to the current situation," a FIFA statement said.

"Further decisions regarding the 2026 FIFA World Cup bidding process will be discussed by the FIFA Executive Committee at a later date."

FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke had announced in March that the host country for the 2026 tournament would be decided at a FIFA congress in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur in 2017.

But football's world governing body was then plunged into a crisis at the end of last month when 14 current or former FIFA

officials and sports marketing executives were arrested in Zurich, Switzerland as part of an investigation into alleged corruption by US authorities.

The fallout led to the resignation last week of FIFA president Sepp Blatter, but his replacement will not be known until December at the earliest, leaving the organisation in limbo in the meantime.

"Due to the situation, I think it's nonsense to start any bidding process for the time being. It will be postponed," Valcke said at a news conference in the Russian 2018 World Cup host city of Samara on Wednesday after meeting local officials for a scheduled check on preparations there.

Meanwhile, speaking at a press conference in Paris exactly a year before the start of Euro 2016, UEFA president Michel Platini admitted the news did not come as a surprise.

"There was due to be a vote in 2017 but there is no leadership at FIFA so it's a good thing," said Platini.

'Near-perfect' Eng excites Morgan

AFP, Birmingham



England one-day captain Eoin Morgan said his side had come close to perfection after their record-breaking 210-run win over World Cup finalists New Zealand at Edgbaston on Tuesday.

It was England's biggest victory, in terms of runs, in all ODI cricket, beating their 202-run margin against India at Lord's way back during the inaugural 1975 World Cup.

Quickfire hundreds by Joe Root (104) and Jos Buttler (129) took England to 408 for nine -- the first time they had made 400 in an ODI and topping their previous best of 391 for four against Bangladesh at Trent Bridge in 2005.

Buttler's stand of 177 with Adil Rashid (69) was also a new seventh-wicket record in all one-day internationals, overtaking the 130 shared by Zimbabwe's Andy Flower and Heath Streak against England in Harare in 2001.

England dismissed World Cup finalists New Zealand for 198 with more than 18 overs to spare.

"It was as close to the perfect performance in a one-day game as you'll find," said Morgan, who showed signs of his old form with a 46-ball fifty.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: 408 for 9 in 50 overs (Root 104, Morgan 50, Buttler 129, Rashid 69; Boult 4-55, McClenaghan 2-93, Elliot 2-57)

NEW ZEALAND: 198 all out in 31.1 overs (Williamson 45, Taylor 57, Elliott 24; Finn 4-35, Rashid 4-55)

Result: England won by 210 runs

Player-of-the-match: Jos Buttler.

India to tour Zim in July

REUTERS, Harare

India will play three one-day internationals and two Twenty20 matches in Zimbabwe during a two-week limited overs tour next month, the managing director of Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) said on Wednesday.

That will be followed before September by tours to Zimbabwe from New Zealand, Pakistan and West Indies, as the African country enjoys a dramatic upturn in their international exposure.

ZC's managing director Alistair Campbell says the exact dates of the India matches will be released shortly, but confirmed all games will be played in Harare.

"I can confirm that it's now a done deal. India are arriving on July 7 and will leave on the 20th after playing three ODIs and two T20s," Campbell told Zimbabwe publication NewsDay.

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