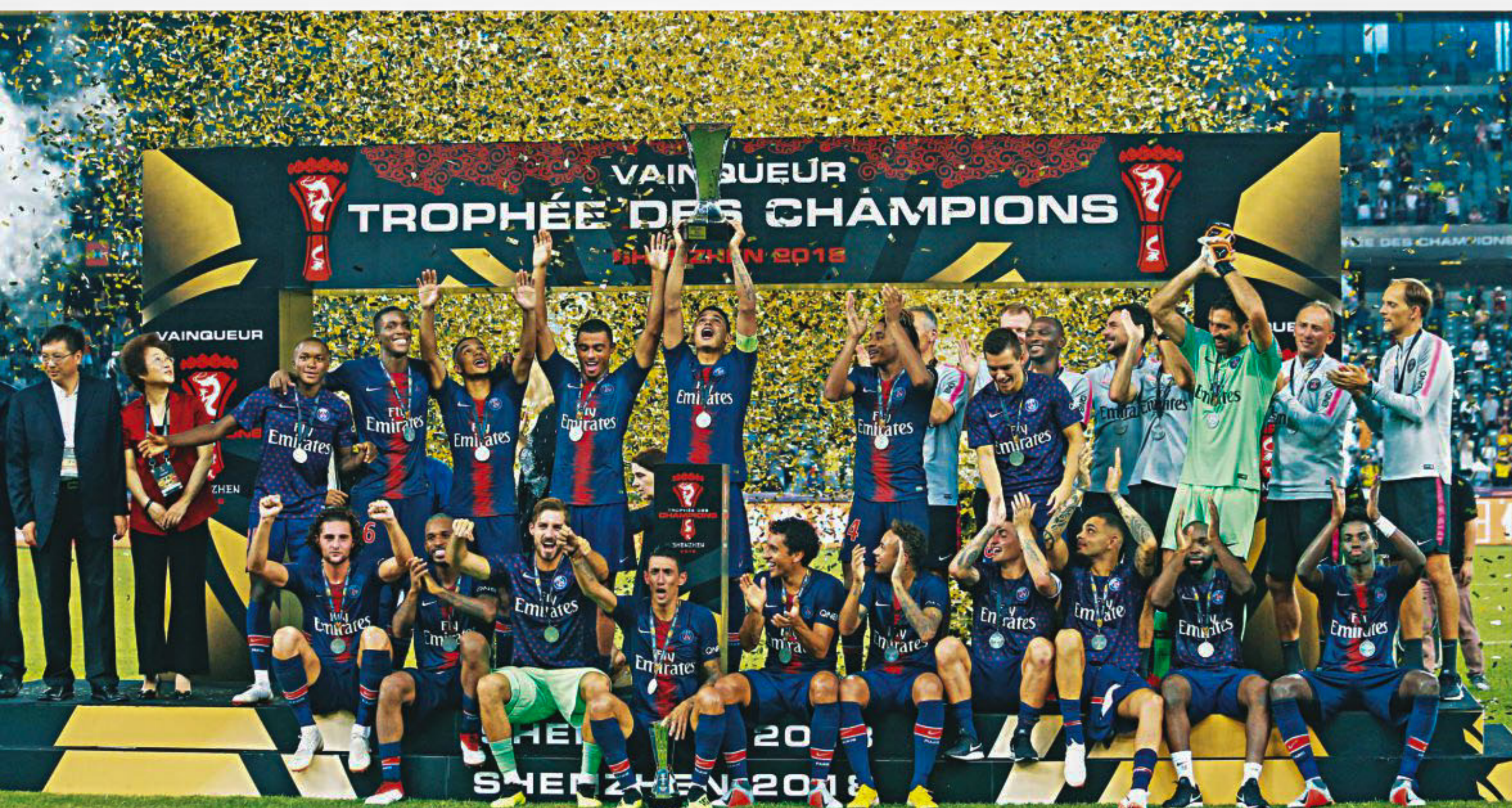


# What to WATCH

**GTV & CHANNEL 9**  
Bangladesh v West Indies  
Second T20I  
Live from 6:00am  
Bangladesh v West Indies  
Thrid T20I  
Live from 6:00am (Monday)

**SONY SIX**  
Sri Lanka v South Africa  
Third ODI  
Live from 10:30am  
**TEN 2**  
Community Shield  
Chelsea v Manchester City  
Live from 8:00pm

**TEN 2**  
ATP Citi Open  
Men's Semifinal  
Live from 12:30am (Monday)



Thomas Tuchel made a winning start to life as Paris Saint-Germain coach, overseeing a comprehensive 4-0 win over AS Monaco in the French Super Cup yesterday. Angel Di Maria scored twice as the Parisiens picked up a record-equalling eighth Super Cup win, with their Brazilian superstar Neymar making a cameo at the end of the second half.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## League committee takes big decisions

*BPL from Nov 16; six home venues; matches three days a week*

SPORTS REPORTER



The upcoming football season will get underway through the Federation Cup on October 22, informed officials of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday.

The decision was taken at a meeting of BFF's professional football league committee, which took a few more decisions regarding domestic tournaments and their formats. The season's curtain raiser, which will feature the 13 teams of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), will end on November 11.

The 11th edition of the premier league will kick off five days later, on November 16, and has been scheduled to end on May 31 next year.

This home and away basis league, which will feature three matches a week, will be held in six different venues -- Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka, MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong, Rafiq Uddin Bhuiya Stadium in Mymensingh, Sheikh Fazlul Haque Mani Stadium in Gopalganj, Sheikh Kamal Stadium in Nilphamari and Shaheed Bhulu stadium in

Noakhali.

"The league matches will be held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday of every week," BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said after the meeting.

"We also took the unique decision of holding the Independence Cup during the league matches. Apart from the league matchdays, we will hold matches of the Independence Cup in Dhaka on the rest of the days of the week. This decision has been taken by following the European league system so that the clubs don't need to linger in their camps," Shohag added.

Meanwhile, the premier league clubs will be allowed to register four foreign players including one player in Asian quota and all four foreigners will be eligible to be fielded at the same time, which is a deviation from the decision of allowing three eligible players to play together, according to the previous meeting.

BFF extended the local players' transfer window till October 15 instead of August 30, considering the requests of participating clubs.

"As the foreign players' transfer window will be closed on October 15, the clubs requested us to extend the time for the local players' registra-

tion," Shohag said.

Even though the game's local governing body finalised six venues, the clubs are still uncertain regarding their home venues. The BFF is set to fix the home venues in its next meeting.

Defending champions Abahani, three-time champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Mohammedan SC have shown interest in using the Bangabandhu National Stadium as their home venue.

Brothers Union and Rahmatganj MFS wanted the Kamalapur Stadium as their home venue but the meeting declined their demands.

Newly promoted Bashundhara Kings wanted Nilphamari Stadium as their home venue while Sheikh Russell Krira Chakra and Muktijoddha Sangshad Krira Chakra chose Gopalganj as their home venue.

Saif Sporting Club and Arambagh KS selected Mymensingh Stadium as their home base while Chittagong Abahani opted for the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong.

Team BJMC wanted to make Rajshahi their home venue but the meeting declined their request.



Juventus forward Paulo Dybala (R) shares a light moment with Leonardo Bonucci, who returned to the Old Lady after a year away at AC Milan, during a training session at the club's training facility in Turin yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## City, Chelsea clash today

AFP, London



Manchester City take on Chelsea in Sunday's Community Shield -- the traditional curtainraiser to the English season -- but the Wembley showpiece will offer few clues as to the destination of the Premier League title.

The glorified friendly between the league champions and the FA Cup winners has been a notoriously poor predictor of success in recent years -- no winner has gone on to be crowned champions in the same season since Manchester United in 2010-11. The game is set to feature various youngsters and fringe players as World Cup stars ease their way back into club action.

But whatever the line-ups, there are plenty of talking points and the game will be closely watched for clues as domestic football reclaims centre stage just three weeks after the World Cup final in Russia.

Can Manchester City pick up where they left off last season or will they have a serious challenger? Will new manager Maurizio Sarri be able to revive Chelsea, who finished fifth last season after winning the title the previous year under Antonio Conte?

One question for City fans is how manager Pep Guardiola will deploy Riyad Mahrez -- the only significant addition to their already-impressive list of forward options during the summer transfer window.

The manager has confirmed his record £60 million signing is in contention to start the match after he was forced off during last weekend's final match of the US pre-season tour against Bayern Munich.

"Mahrez is good. He had a little bit of pain but he trained day before yesterday -- I think so [he can play on Sunday]," said Guardiola, who twice outwitted Sarri in the Champions League last season when the Italian was managing Napoli.

The City manager also revealed how much he was looking forward to locking horns with Sarri, who replaced Conte last month. "I am happy that he is here in the Premier League," Guardiola said. "I will learn a lot to see his team every weekend. I saw three games -- he gets it, the team in a short time plays like he wants. I think it will be a good game, always Chelsea is a big rival. Antonio was, Maurizio will be too. The style of play will be perfect for English football."

Sarri is eager to do well but the 59-year-old acknowledges the size of the task against the Premier League champions. "The match for us is very difficult for one reason: they have worked all together for two years. We started two and a half weeks ago. I want to win, because it's very important to have immediately a trophy. But in this moment of the season it's very important, the performance."

## Girls confident of defending title

*U-15s leave for Bhutan tomorrow*

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh team leave for Bhutan tomorrow morning with the aim of retaining the title of the SAFF U-15 Women's Championship, which they won at home last year.

Golam Rabbani Choton's young charges had emerged unbeaten champions in the first edition, held in Dhaka in December last year. And the team are confident of repeating that feat despite playing away from home in the high altitude of Thimphu when the six-nation event gets underway on August 9.

Bangladesh were pitted in Group B alongside Nepal and Pakistan while Group A features India, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. The final will take place on August 18.

During a press conference at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) House yesterday, Choton claimed that this team is better than the one that won the title last year, despite the fact that five new players have joined their ranks.

"There are obvious challenges like the high altitude in Bhutan and the fact that the other teams have improved in the meantime. But we have improved more than them. We have worked hard on the tactical, technical, social and psychological aspects of the players, which is why I am confident we can defend our title," the successful women's coach said.

The Bangladesh team, with 42 players from different age-levels ranging up to the senior team, have been training continuously over the last year or so and have also played a number of practice matches, which should

make the team a more competitive one.

Although Bangladesh won all their matches last time around, they did struggle, especially in the final against India, to find the back of the net but they eventually won 1-0. The coach believes the issue with scoring goals has been somewhat resolved.

"We had scoring issues last time around. But this year we played a four-nation tournament in Hong Kong where we played against teams like Malaysia, Hong Kong and Iran and eight different players scored. So that issue of scoring should not be a factor this time," Choton added.

The coach claimed that the five new faces have proven their worth in the JFA Cup tournament and in trials. Four out of the five excluded players were left out due to poor performances while the other one, Marzia Khatun, exceeded the age-limit.

Although the team has not played a practice match against any international side ahead of this big assignment, the coach informed that they had enough game-time as the under-15 team have been playing matches regularly against the under-18 and under-19 teams as a part of their preparations.

Skipper Maria Manda echoed her coach's confidence. "Our target was to become champions last time and we did that. We have had regular practice and played matches as well. So hopefully we can come back with a good outcome," she said.

The press conference was attended, among others, by BFF strategic and technical director Paul Smalley, BFF ex-co and FIFA member Mahfuza Akter Kiron and Walton Group's senior operative director Iqbal Bin Anwar.



Bangladesh U-15 women team members and officials pose for a picture at the BFF House yesterday, ahead of their departure for Bhutan on Monday.

PHOTO: BFF

## Worn-out Andy pulls out

AFP, Washington



Three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray withdrew from the ATP Washington Open on Friday, citing fatigue after a 3:00am finish that left him crying into a towel.

The 31-year-old, who returned in June from an 11-month layoff, also withdrew from next week's ATP Toronto Masters, citing the drain from three grueling three-set victories over more than eight hours on the hardcourts.

"I'm exhausted after playing so much over the last four days, having not competed on the hard courts for 18 months," Murray said. "I also need to be careful and to listen to my

body as I come back from a long-term injury."

"I've played quite a few matches this week in Washington and I need to be smart with my rest and recovery as I come back from injury," Murray said.

The Scotsman was upset following his 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) victory over Romanian Marius Copil at having been forced to play from midnight to 3 a.m. -- the latest finish in the Washington event's 50-year history.

"I don't think I should be put in a position like that," Murray said after the victory. "[My body] doesn't feel great right now."

"Finishing matches at three in the morning isn't good for anyone involved. When you're expected to come back and perform the next day, I think that's unreasonable."

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