

What to WATCH

CHANNEL 9
SAFF Championship
Nepal v Pakistan
Live from 4:00pm
Bangladesh v Bhutan
Live from 7:00pm

DAY'S EVENT

SAFF Championship
Nepal v Pakistan
Time: 4:00pm

Bangladesh v Bhutan
Time: 7:00pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & 2
US Open
Men's Singles
Round-4
Live from 12:00am (Wednesday)

BERBATOV HAD RUDE REPLY TO CITY OFFER

Dimitar Berbatov has told FourFourTwo that he only ever had eyes for Manchester United when he left Tottenham in 2008 – and had no interest in joining their city rivals. The Bulgarian striker was a £30m signing at Old Trafford in September 2008. At that point, the Citizens were still two weeks away from being taken over by the Abu Dhabi United Group and had finished 9th in the 2007/08 Premier League. With that in mind, Berbatov was only ever interested in joining Alex Ferguson's red revolution and unmoved by the riches on offer elsewhere. "I think it was the night before City signed Robinho from Real Madrid and my agent said, 'Berba, there's another team in for you'. I said, 'F*ck off, we're going to Man United'. He said, 'But they'll give you more money!' 'It's not all about the money sometimes, though. For me it was the right decision because going to the top of the mountain was my dream. -- AGENCIES



I would like to turn around where a West Indian will miss, miss, six six. I'd like to see a Bangladeshi guy go four, four, four. I am not too fazed by big sixes but by what's happening in between.

NEIL MCKENZIE

New Bangladesh batting consultant Neil McKenzie (R) is engaged in a discussion on technique with Liton Das, one of his more promising charges, during the Tigers' skills training camp at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: BCB

'Nothing left in the tank'

Cook to retire after India series

REUTERS, London



Alastair Cook, England's leading Test run-scorer, will retire from international cricket after this week's fifth Test against

India, the 33-year-old said on Monday.

The left-handed opening batsman, who captained England in 59 Tests, admitted there was "nothing left in the tank" after enduring a poor run of form in nine Tests this year in which he has averaged 18.62 runs compared with a career average of 44.88.

"After much thought and deliberation over the last few months I have decided to announce my retirement from international cricket," Cook, who will play his 161st Test starting on Friday, said in a statement.

"I have achieved more than I could have ever imagined and feel very privileged to have played for such a long time alongside some of the greats of the English game," he added.

Cook, who will continue playing for his

county Essex next season, thanked his mentor Graham Gooch, whose England Test runs record of 8,900 he passed in 2015.

"A special mention must go to the Barmy Army and all supporters for their constant encouragement for the team," Cook said.

"Graham was my sounding board, especially in the early years of my career, spending hour after hour throwing balls at me with his dog stick. He made me realise you always need to keep improving whatever you are trying to achieve. My family and I have had 12 wonderful years fulfilling my dreams and this could not have been done without them."

England and Wales Cricket Board chairman Colin Graves hailed Cook's achievements as England's most capped player.

"Alastair's selfless dedication to the England cause and his desire to succeed are an object lesson to any professional cricketer ... he fully deserves to be remembered as one of England's greatest ever cricketers," Graves said in a statement.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

The left-hander scored an unbeaten 104 on his Test debut against India at Nagpur in 2006.

Scored 766 runs in seven innings during the 2010-11 Ashes tour to help England to their first series win in Australia for 24 years.

Scored 294 against India in 2011, his highest Test score to date, and was named the ICC Test Cricketer of the Year.

Scored his 23rd century in 2012, against India, to break the record for most Test hundreds for England. Also became the youngest player to pass 7,000 Test runs and was named one of Wisden's Cricketers of the Year.

Captained England to a 3-0 home Ashes win in 2013.

Passed Graham Gooch's 8,900-run tally during the 2015 series against New Zealand to become England's leading run scorer in Tests.

Led England to a surprise 3-2 Ashes win in 2015, and was named captain of the ICC's Test team of the year.

In May 2016, became the first English batsman and the 12th player from any country to score 10,000 runs in Test matches.

Scored 10,000 runs in Test matches. Led England in 59 Tests between 2012 and 2016, more than any of his predecessors.

Cook is England's most prolific Test batsman, with 12,254 runs in 160 Tests.

'Young guys are eager to learn'

MAZHAR UDDIN



You can have the best coaching staff in the world but it is also up to the players, especially at an elite level, to get the most out of the coaches through proper communication. Unfortunately, there has often been a tendency for Bangladeshi cricketers to be shy and scared to ask questions of foreign coaches due to the language barrier or the high profile of the coach.

According to sources close to the team many young Bangladeshi fast bowlers were initially nervous about talking to West Indies fast bowling legend Courtney Walsh after he was appointed the Tigers' bowling coach.

The latest high-profile addition to the coaching staff is a limited-overs batting consultant in the form of former South Africa batsman Neil McKenzie, whose first assignment was the limited-overs leg of the West Indies tour which Bangladesh won after batting de-

cles saw them lose both Tests on tour.

A veteran of 58 ODIs and 64 Tests during the Proteas' heyday between 2000 and 2009, McKenzie joined the Tigers' ongoing training camp yesterday and immediately started working with the batsmen and the question of the cricketers' shyness was put to him.

"I will do anything to benefit the team as the team always comes first. If talking to someone benefits the team, I would do it. I don't talk for the sake of talking -- some coaches want to show how much they know. I am not that type of guy. I try to hang back, do the work and get to know the guy's technical side. The Bangladesh guys are open to learning, they ask questions the whole time, especially the young guys. It will be a good fit and communication. But I am not scared to talk," McKenzie told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The 42-year-old also added that he is the type of person who reads

the players' personality and said that he is eager to build trust and relationships with his charges.

Head coach Steve Rhodes meanwhile conducted a match-scenario training session yesterday where the batsmen had to chase 49 runs in the last six overs or score 12 runs in the final over keeping the final stages of a tight game in mind.

"Most of the ODI sides in the world are quite similar, so it comes down to the last ball or the last over. The younger guys, after being in these situations, will know better in bigger occasions how to deal with such situations," McKenzie said.

McKenzie did not buy the common line that there is a lack of big hitters in Bangladesh.

"[Mahmudullah] Riyad just got 28 off 11 balls in the CPL," was McKenzie's way of disproving the notion.

"I think we can be very competitive not by getting the guys hitting more sixes but showcasing the talent of hitting more skilled shots. I'd like to turn around where a West

Indian will miss, miss, six, six. I'd like to see a Bangladeshi guy go four, four, four. I am not too fazed by big sixes but by what's happening in between. We can get 12 off three good cricket shots and another one with talent and committing to certain areas," McKenzie said.

The right-hander, who along with Graeme Smith added a world record 415-run Test opening partnership against Bangladesh in 2008, was also optimistic about finding the missing puzzle piece that is Tamim Iqbal's opening partner.

"I am a fresh pair of eyes at the moment. You keep telling me these things. I haven't really thought about it like that. I want to give everyone their time to grow. I don't see there being any problem. I think [Liton] Das played a beautiful innings in the T20s [the third against West Indies]. Tamim got the most runs. I think getting 70 off five overs was a step in the right direction," he added.

FIFA BEST PLAYER AWARD

Messi absent from list

AFP, London



Lionel Messi was left off the shortlist for the FIFA's men's player of the year award on Monday as his old rival Cristiano Ronaldo was named alongside Luka Modric and Mohamed Salah.

Messi has dominated the award along with Ronaldo over the past decade, but the Barcelona star has been omitted from the contenders list for the first time since 2006.

After featuring in the top three for 11 straight years, Messi was overlooked when the list was announced by football's world governing body on Monday.

The 31-year-old Argentine was runner-up for the prestigious prize in 2007 and 2008 before winning it for the first five times in 2009.

Messi and Ronaldo, the world's two best players, have been engaged in a fascinating

duel for the sport's top individual and club honours for over a decade.

Between them, Messi and Ronaldo have won the Champions League nine times and have a combined 14 domestic league titles.

Now Messi's absence from the shortlist opens the way for Ronaldo, also a five-time winner of the award, to move ahead in their personal battle.

Portugal forward Ronaldo lifted a fourth Champions League title in five years in May before joining Italian champions Juventus in July.

The 33-year-old won the player of the year crown in 2008, 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2017.

France's World Cup-winning manager Didier Deschamps, Zlatko Dalic and Zinedine Zidane were nominated as the finalists for FIFA's coach of the year award.

The award ceremony takes place on September 24 at Royal Festival Hall in London.

Sabbir's ban underway

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) disciplinary committee's recommendation to suspend Sabbir Rahman from international cricket for six months as punishment for abusing a fan on social media and keeping in mind all his past indiscretions was approved by board president Nazmul Hassan yesterday.

"The BCB president has approved the recommendation for Sabbir's punishment from the disciplinary committee. The ban has been in effect from September 1," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told reporters yesterday.

The immediate effect of the punishment is that Sabbir will be out of the national team until the end of February and will be unavailable for the home series against Zimbabwe and West Indies, as well as a part of their New Zealand tour. He will also have to fight hard to play in the 2019 World Cup, to be held in England.

Sabbir had just finished serving a ban from domestic cricket for physically assaulting a fan during a first-class match last December, for which he was also fined Tk 20 lakh and consequently lost his central contract.

The disciplinary committee has also warned the 26-year old cricketer that another offence would result in a long-term or life ban.

Root basks in best win

STAR SPORT DESK

The fourth Test in Southampton started on Thursday with Virat Kohli's India eyeing a second win on the trot to follow a clinical show in Nottingham in order to go level with England at 2-2 and contemplate becoming only the second team to win a five-match series after losing the first two Tests. However, four days later India's brittle batting was exposed by the off-spin of all-rounder Moeen Ali, who was playing his first

Test of the series and Joe Root celebrated his first series win as captain in 2018. It was England's lower-middle order batsmen Jos Buttler, Ben Stokes and Sam Curran -- the find of the series -- that proved to be the difference between the sides. The following are a few of the respective captains' thoughts after the match.



JOE ROOT

On the match

I was fairly confident that if we bowled to our potential... then we'd have enough in the bank to get across the line. I thought after being 80-odd for six on day one, to then go out and play in different but still difficult conditions in the second innings -- and go about things how we did -- was a start to a really significant improvement.

His captaincy

I feel like I've had quite a big input into what has been going on, felt in control of things and I've got a real clear vision of how I see us improving long-term.

We've got some guys who are very willing to buy into that, and are very realistic and understanding of where we currently are and where we could really get to.

Yes, I think it probably has been [the best victory as captain]. When you have that understanding across the board and there's no selfish people within a team, it makes it very easy.

Moeen Ali

He's been brilliant. I couldn't be more pleased for him. He's such a big part of this team, and I think that's going to be the case moving forward.



VIRAT KOHLI

On not competing enough

We can look at the scoreboard and say we were only 30 runs away or 50 runs away, but we have to recognise that when we are in the midst of the situation, and not later. We know that we have played good cricket but we cannot say again and again to ourselves that we have competed. When you come so close, there is an art of crossing the line as well, which we will have to learn.

Wasting opportunities

We've spoken about that, even during the match when we're in a driving position, we should be able to capitalise on it and not let the opposition come in and fight back again and again.

At Nottingham we did that, for three days we were relentless and were on top. So we need to think about how to start a series like that as well.

England's lower order

It is quite handy to have guys who can strike the ball well at six, seven and eight because you have nothing to lose.

No team likes to see [opposition] players getting runs lower down but they have guys who are fearless and back their skills. I would like to congratulate Sam Curran, he has been a nice find for England and he is doing really well for them.



Brazil legend Ronaldo (C) walks with Valladolid mayor Oscar Puente (L) during a tour of the city yesterday after El Fenomeno took control of Real Valladolid, buying 51 per cent of the La Liga club's shares. PHOTO: AFP