

What to WATCH

CHANNEL 9 & STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
New Zealand v Bangladesh
First Test, Day One
Live from 4:00am (Thursday)
English Premier League
Man City v West Ham
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
India v Australia
Second T20I
Live from 7:30pm
English Premier League
Chelsea v Tottenham
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

SONY SIX
West Indies v England
Fourth ODI
Live from 7:30pm

DAY'S EVENT

Dhaka Premier League T20
Venue: SBNS, Dhaka
Abahani v Prime Bank

Time: 12:30pm
Prime Dofeshwar v Gazi
Time: 5:30pm

Venue: KSOAS, Fatullah
Sheikh Jamal v Uttara
Time: 9:00am

Rupganj v Mohammedan
Time: 1:30pm

Bangladesh Premier League (Football)
Venue: BNS, Dhaka
Sheikh Jamal v Saif SC

Time: 3:30pm
Abahani v Mohammedan
Time: 6:30pm

Women's National Cricket League
Time: 9:00am
Sylhet v Khulna

Venue: SKICS-2
Rajshahi v Dhaka
Venue: SKICS-1



Diya Siddique celebrates after her gold medal-winning performance in the recurve women's individual event of the ISSF 3rd International Archery Championships at the Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master Stadium in Tongi, Gazipur yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Diya tastes 1st gold

SPORTS REPORTER



Two years ago, Diya Siddique picked up her bow and arrows for the first time during the National Sports Council's talent hunt programme in Nilphamari, where she was selected for a month-long training camp in Dhaka.

The eighth grade student grabbed that opportunity with both hands and then tried her luck in a BKSP trail before the country's lone sports institute selected her for the archery discipline in 2017.

Having spent nearly two years at BKSP, Diya got the opportunity to represent Bangladesh in the ISSF 3rd International Archery Championships and the unheralded archer did not disappoint in her first-ever international meet, grabbing the gold medal of the recurve women's individual event at the Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master Stadium in Tongi, Gazipur yesterday.

To overcome Iran's Shojamehr Shiva was no easy task though as Diya lost the first two sets before coming back strong to win the next two sets and level the score at 4-4 set points. In the fifth and final set, Diya outplayed her opponent, scoring 28 out of 30 against Shiva's 23. Barely able to contain herself after winning her first-ever gold medal at any level of competition, the tenth grader leapt for joy as she pumped her fist in the air.

"I was anxious to the point of trembling before playing the final since it was my first

international tournament and also because the opponent was strong as well. I believed in myself to do better, just as I have been bettering myself in practice sessions," said Diya, who once practiced archery as a game with bamboo-made equipment with her younger brothers.

"I was initially suffering from nervousness amid the windy condition but I got back my confidence after winning the third set and started to believe that I could win the gold especially since I came through similar situations in previous matches [the quarterfinal and semifinal]. I also believed that if I could get better scores, the opponent herself would be grabbed by pressure," explained Diya.

Diya's future is two pronged as she wishes to fulfil the dream of her journalist father -- Nur Alam Siddique, a Nilphamari correspondent of Bangla Vision Television -- to become a doctor in the future. However, she also hopes to flourish at international level archery competitions.

"Though my mother is not interested in allowing me to practice archery, my father inspired me to explore the world by playing sports. I don't want to spoil this opportunity. I will be trying to keep this performance intact in next month's Asia Cup in Thailand if I am given the opportunity to compete. Besides, I want to play in the Olympic Games in the future," said Diya, who took part in the NSC talent hunt programme after her school's PE teacher -- Khairul Islam -- asked her to try her luck.

Abahani take on struggling MSC

SPORTS REPORTER



Defending champions Abahani will square off against perennial rivals Mohammedan as the ninth round of the Bangladesh Premier League kicks off today.

The two traditional powerhouses will face off at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka at 6:30pm after three-time champions Sheikh Jamal host Saif Sporting Club at 3:30pm at the same venue.

This is the first time this season that the two popular clubs will come face to face, but there is not expected to be too much attention drawn to this fixture as the duel has become a one-sided affair over the last decade, with Abahani having racked up six titles of the top-tier professional league against the sorry figure of zero for Mohammedan.

While Mohammedan have failed to cross the hurdle of the group stages in both the Federation Cup and the Independence Cup this season, Abahani already have silverware in their cabinet in the form of the Federation Cup trophy.

The fortunes in the league have also been skewed heavily towards the Sky Blues, who are second in the 13-team table with 17 points from eight matches, a point behind leaders Bashundhara Kings, who have played seven matches.

Mohammedan, on the other hand, are languishing just above the relegation zone, with five points from seven matches.

However, the Black and Whites might take some confidence from consecutive draws in their last two matches, coupled with the fact that Abahani lost their last match against Sheikh Russel.

A win for Abahani would see them regain their lead, at least temporarily, while a win for Mohammedan would come as a big boost in their struggles to move off the danger zone and into relative safety.

Sheikh Jamal, meanwhile, will be looking to get back to winning ways after consecutive draws while a win for Saif SC would keep them well and truly in the title race.

Bangladesh lose crown

SPORTS REPORTER



Although the Bangladesh compound women's team and recurve individual archer Diya Siddique both won their respective finals, the rest of Bangladesh's archers failed in three other finals on the concluding day of the 3rd ISSF International Archery Championships at the Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master Stadium in Tongi, Gazipur yesterday.

Bangladesh, the defending champions with five gold medals from the last edition, lost their crown to first time participants India, who had a youthful squad with ages ranging from 14 to 16.

Runners-up Bangladesh bagged two gold medals in total while India won four gold medals -- compound women's individual, compound men's team, recurve mixed and recurve men's team. Iran, Chinese Taipei, Germany and Thailand bagged one gold medal each.

Amid chilly weather after a morning

drizzle at the venue, the Bangladesh compound women's team, comprised of Susmita Banik, Shyamoly Roy and Bonna Akter, beat India by 230-225 points in the final. The first set was locked 57-57 but the girls in red and green held nothing back in the next three sets, outplaying their Indian counterparts, who were selected through the 'Khelo India' project.

Rather than following suit, the more experienced Bangladesh men's team lost to the school boys from India. The hosts, who made a frustrating start to score only 54 out of 60 points against India's 58 with the first six shots, never recovered and eventually lost the match by 228-231 set points.

Bangladesh also surrendered meekly in the recurve men's team final with a 1-5 set point defeat. The country's top archer, Roman Sana, then stirred hopes for the recurve men's individual final after winning the first set against Thailand's Denchal Thepna. However, Roman's dream to win an international gold medal on home soil remained elusive as

Denchal won the final three sets.

"We had some good moments in this championships as the archers had good scores in the qualification round and compound women's team and Diya also did well although it is sad that the men's teams could not do well," Bangladesh team's German coach Martin Frederick said. "If you compare this with the last championships, we could not produce good results but this time there were some strong opponents like India, Germany, Iran, Chinese Taipei and Thailand, who came here to participate for the first time."

Indian coach Ranjeet Rajendra said, "We brought 16 out of 400 archers who participated in the Khelo India project. Of them, ninety percent had no international experience, having prepared under difference coaches, and I did not train any of them before this championship. But we knew that we need a good plan, some matches and mental preparation, and we did exactly what we needed for success."



With all the headlines ahead of Real Madrid's second leg of the Copa del Rey against Barcelona surrounding Gareth Bale's discontent and Vinicius Jr's (C) run of form, the duo will be under pressure to get one over their club's biggest rivals tonight. PHOTO: REAL MADRID

'Clasicos to define season'

AFP, Barcelona

Clement Lenglet describes it as the fixture that "freezes time" and believes this week's Clasico double-header could still define the seasons of both his own Barcelona, and Real Madrid.

The two clubs will meet twice in four days at the Santiago Bernabeu, on Wednesday in the second leg of their Copa del Rey semifinal and then on Saturday, in a battle of first against third in La Liga.

Even victory is unlikely to project Madrid back into the title race but for Santiago Solari's side, momentum is at stake, their steady, if not unwavering, resurgence poised for a potential double boost ahead of the campaign's decisive months.

Barcelona's priority may be the Champions League and their hold on La Liga too tight to shake off but it says something for the magnitude of the Clasico that Lenglet still feels its significance.

"This month is pivotal," he says, in an exclusive interview with AFP.

"There is the Champions League and these two games against Real, when we can qualify for a cup final and then gain or lose points on them in the league.

"We have to manage them properly. It could be pivotal for the rest of the season."

SHORT CORNER

Women fail in pistol shooting

The performance of Bangladesh shooters in the New Delhi World Cup continued to be grim as three female shooters failed miserably in the qualification round of the 10m air pistol event yesterday.

Ardina Ferdous finished 53rd and Armin Asha finished 60th while Nilufa Yeasmin finished 64th out of 78 participants in the qualification round. Ardina scored 563 points, Asha scored 557 points while Nilufa shot 554 points. The eighth and final qualifier for the eight-person final round shot a total of 574 points while the top qualifier scored 582 points.

--SPORTS REPORTER

NCC from today

The National Cricket Championship (NCC) will start today at sixteen venues across the country with sixty-four district teams participating in the limited overs competition. The teams in the 39th version of the competition are competing in a two-tier -- Tier 1 and Tier 2 -- format with each tier consisting of 32 teams equally split into eight groups.

The top finisher of each group of Tier 1 will qualify for the second round while the bottom-placed team will be relegated to Tier 2 for the next season. The eight group

toppers will be placed in two groups of four, of which the two group champions will fight for the title in the final.

In Tier-2, the top teams from each group will get promoted to Tier 1 for the next season and there will be no second round in this tier.

--SPORTS REPORTER
Mourinho wants next club to have empathy
Former Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho says the next club he joins must have a strong sense of "structural empathy" to help him cope with the demands of modern football, in which player power heavily influences the game.

The Portuguese coach, who was sacked by United after a 2-1/2 year spell last December, intends to return to the game before the start of next season but said he would only join a club that did not have "internal conflict".

"You have the player, the family, the agent, the entourage, the director of communication... When you have a player you have all these distractions.

"And if there is no empathy in the structure of the club you get into so many contradictions that it is really, really difficult to work."
--REUTERS



Bangladesh players show their resolve and team spirit after a practice session in Mandalay, Myanmar yesterday ahead of today's AFC U-16 Championship opener against Philippines. PHOTO: BFF

U-16 GIRLS' MYANMAR MISSION Bangladesh take on Philippines in opener today

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh will start their campaign for the final round of the AFC U-16 Championship when they take on Philippines in the first match of the second round of the qualifiers in Mandalay, Myanmar today.

The match is scheduled to kick off at 2:30pm (Bangladesh time) at the Mandalathiri Stadium.

The four-team group, which also features China -- the strongest team on paper -- and hosts Myanmar, will see two teams progress to the final round.

Last time around, Bangladesh had qualified for the final round by dint of winning the home qualifiers, but due to a higher number of participating teams this time, they are having to navigate through another round of qualifiers.

The girls in red and green, who emerged champions at home in the first round of the qualifiers having scored 27 goals and conceded none, have never faced Philippines at any level in women's football. So they will be wary of the opposition, not just because of the lack of knowledge but also because it is the first match of the campaign.

Coach Golam Rabbani Choton is banking on the experience gathered through year-long training and international matches over the last couple of years.

"Our girls have been playing well in international tournaments over the last few years. They know how to cope with pressure of international matches. Whoever is the opposition, they will play their natural game," Choton said ahead of the match yesterday.

This is a must-win game for Bangladesh because the challenge will only get stiffer when they face hosts Myanmar and then cap it off with a match against China. Unlike the other three teams in the group, Philippines finished second in the group during the first round of qualifiers. So Choton's charges will definitely be looking to pick up all three points from this match.

"We want to move match by match. Since our target is the final round, we don't want to take anyone lightly. Every team is strong. But we have confidence in our players," said Choton.

China will take on hosts Myanmar in the second match of the day at the same venue.

Kepa fined; the goalkeeper apologises

AFP, London

Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga has been fined a week's wages by the club after defying manager Maurizio Sarri and refusing to be substituted during the League Cup final on Sunday.

"Although there was a misunderstanding, on reflection, I made a big mistake with how I handled the situation," Kepa said in a statement on Chelsea's website which announced the fine.

The club simultaneously published a statement from Sarri in which the manager said the pair had spoken following the row, which occurred in extra time of the match which Manchester City won on penalties.

"He has apologised to me, his teammates and the club," said Sarri.

"It is up to the club if they want to discipline him according to the club rules, but for me this matter is now closed."

Sarri, who reacted furiously when Kepa refused to be substituted after needing treatment in the closing stages, said the incident had been a "misunderstanding".

"There was a misunderstanding yesterday but (Kepa) realises he made a big mistake in the way he reacted.

"The team performance as a whole was extremely positive and it is a shame to see how this incident has overshadowed our efforts in what was a very competitive cup final."

Kepa, the club's record £71 million (\$93 million) signing from Athletic Bilbao, refused to leave the field to be replaced by Willy Caballero. Sarri then stormed off down the tunnel in anger before returning.

"I wanted to take the time today to apologise fully and in person to the coach, to Willy, my teammates and to the club," said Kepa, 24, whose fine will be donated to the Chelsea foundation.