

SONY SIX
Pakistan v Sri Lanka
First T20
Live from 7:30pm
STAR SPORTS 1
India v South Africa
First Test, Day Four
Live from 10:00am

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
English Premier League
Brighton v Tottenham
Live from 5:30pm
Liverpool v Leicester
Live from 8:00pm
West Ham v Crystal Palace
Live from 10:30pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
Bundesliga
Freiburg v Dortmund
Live from 7:30pm
TEN 2
Serie A
SPAL v Parma
Live from 7:00pm

Verona v Sampdoria
Live from 10:00pm
Genoa v Inter Milan
Live from 12:45am (Sunday)

The neglect of a gold-winner

ANISUR RAHMAN

Having been ignored from Bangladesh international squads in the past, South Asian (SA) Games double-gold medallist swimmer Mahfuza Khatun Shila removed herself from the ongoing training camp for December's SA Games, citing a lack of physical fitness.

Shila was the first female swimmer in the country's history to win not just one but two gold medals in the SA Games, breaking a 32-year gold drought at a time when Bangladesh seemed unlikely to win a single medal in the last edition in Guwahati, India in 2016.

Bangladesh went to compete in the 12th edition of the multi-discipline sporting extravaganza in India on the back of 18 gold medals in the 11th SA Games but there was little hope of winning a single gold medal. Shila's double gold helped save Bangladesh's blushes as they finished with four gold medals.

However, the prolific swimmer of Bangladesh Navy got hardly any appreciation or access to facilities from the Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF) to better her performance over the last two years, which eventually forced her to take the alternate option -- starting a family.

"You know everything about my past. What is the benefit of swimming? I have been criticised despite producing gold medals and I wasn't considered in the camp [for other international competitions]. I am kept only in the SA Games training because of the hope of winning a gold medal. But I have self-respect.

"Despite having the quality, I have not been considered for the national camp for different international meets, which forced me to take the second option -- family planning -- because I'm getting older. I talked to doctors,



who advised me not to work too hard if I wanted a family; I submitted the doctor's certificate to the federation and they accepted my appeal," the 29-year-old swimmer said while talking to The Daily Star last month.

Before the 2016 SA Games, Shila reportedly faced some troubles in the training camp from a federation official because of her 'straightforward approach' against irregularities. Shila was even told that she got a place in the national team because of 'the Muktijoddha quota' and that she had nothing left to offer in the pool.

Shila finally answered the federation's

negligence by winning two gold medals, creating a Games record in the 50m breaststroke by clocking 34.88 seconds after winning the 100m breaststroke gold medal the previous day.

Despite her gold medals, the BSF has apparently not changed its attitude towards Shila. She was one of those who complained about unsavoury activities of the then camp commander Abdul Hamid. He has however strengthened his hold at the federation as its investigation committee found no evidence against Hamid, who is now the joint secretary of the swimming federation.

Foxes head to Anfield today

AFP, Liverpool



Brendan Rodgers guided Liverpool to the brink of the Premier League title when he was in charge at Anfield.

Now, on his first return since leaving four years ago, the Leicester boss is aiming to slow his former club's latest championship challenge and demonstrate that his side deserve to be considered top-four contenders.

Rodgers was dismissed by the Merseyside club after a three-year stint as manager little more than a year after his side had fallen agonisingly short in their efforts to beat Manuel Pellegrini's Manchester City to top spot in 2014.

Five years on, Jurgen Klopp's side are once again locked in an intense rivalry with City and will attempt to maintain their perfect start to the league campaign on Saturday.

However, the combination of Leicester's impressive resurgence under Rodgers and Liverpool's unconvincing midweek Champions League display against Salzburg means Klopp's side face a tough task to make it eight wins from eight.

Rodgers returned to the Premier League in February after a trophy-laden spell in Scotland with Celtic, charged with injecting fresh life into a Leicester side that had lost its way under Claude Puel.

The excitement of the thrilling title success in 2016 had faded, with Puel accused of adopting a negative style of play that meant mid-table was the best the club could hope for.

The arrival of Rodgers provided an immediate lift and he has restored belief at the King Power Stadium that the club can establish itself among the leading group of clubs.

He has done that while continuing the process of rebuilding the team -- of the title-winning line-up, only goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel and striker Jamie Vardy have been regular starters this season.

Having been touted as a contender to finish seventh in the Premier League, the "best of the rest", before the campaign, the Foxes' subsequent form has seen them spoken of as a top-four side.

Leicester have lost just once this season and are third in the Premier League on 14 points, nestled behind Liverpool and Manchester City.

Mehedi powers DS to semis

SPORTS REPORTER

The Daily Star romped into the Kool-BSJA Media Cup semifinals with a ruthless 3-0 win against Bangladesh Pratidin at the BFF astroturf yesterday.

Midfielder Abdullah Al Mehedi led from the front as DS's attack fired on all cylinders with Nabid Yeasin again showing flashes of brilliance. Mehedi provided an assist to Sheikh Mehedi Morshed after some beautiful, intricate interplay.

He scored the second after a sumptuous set-piece delivery from the yet-again impeccable Samama Rahman, who won a free-kick after goalkeeper Osama Rahman played the worst possible pass as he attempted a 'no-look pass like Ronaldinho'.

Mehedi added the third from a fine solo run -- the earth shaking with every heavy step -- before slotting home in clinical fashion. The highlight came when Rumman Kalam angered the sensitive Mazhar Uddin -- who is quite displeased with the coverage of the tournament -- but the infighting did not stop the DS juggernaut, who were cheered on by the dapper, Bishwajit Roy, his son and blonde beauty Nafisa.

DS will take on favourites Dhaka Tribune in their semifinal today.

Naser races to 400m title

AFP, Doha



Bahrain's Salwa Eid Naser stunned race favourite Shaunae Miller-Uibo to take the women's 400 metres world title on Thursday in the third fastest time ever run of 48.14 seconds.

The 21-year-old Nigeria-born sprinter -- silver medallist in the 2017 final -- was clear coming into the straight and though Miller-Uibo closed she had too much of a gap.

Only East Germany's world record holder Marita Koch and Jarmila Kratochvilova of the former Czechoslovakia have run faster and both were over 30 years ago.

"I'm the first one to win a global medal for Bahrain -- it is really rewarding and I'm so happy," she said.

"I still can't believe the time. The time is so crazy, crossing the line and seeing the time I went completely crazy.

"Yes I was training so hard but I never expected to run this fast."

Miller-Uibo took silver with a time of 48.37sec -- the sixth fastest of all time -- whilst Olympic bronze medallist Shericka Jackson of Jamaica was third (49.47).

Miller-Uibo -- suffering her first defeat since finishing eighth in the 100m at the 2017 Diamond League meet in London -- sat on the track draped in the Bahamas flag, her hair dyed in the national colours, shaking her head.

The slight of build Naser produced an astonishing burst of speed coming round the bend passing defending champion Phyllis Francis and leaving Miller-Uibo with a lot of ground to make up.

Naser did not falter even as Miller-Uibo ground down the gap between them but it was not even small enough for the 25-year-old to repeat her dive over the line that secured her the 2016 Olympic title.

Naser, who moved to Bahrain as a child, said the time had taken her breath away.

"Yes I'm a world champion, but seeing the time I screamed so loud, I was so happy," she said.

De Bruyne left out of Belgium squad

AFP, BRUSSELS

Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne was left out of Belgium's squad for their upcoming Euro 2020 qualifiers due to a groin injury, coach Roberto Martinez announced yesterday.

De Bruyne, 28, missed City's midweek Champions League win over Dinamo Zagreb after suffering the injury in the Premier League victory over Everton on September 28.

Former captain Vincent Kompany and Lyon defender Jason Denayer also miss out due to fitness issues.

There are doubts about goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, forward Romelu Lukaku and defender Thomas Meunier with Martinez saying a decision about the three will be made on Monday.

Martinez added he was "relatively optimistic" about Courtois who was replaced at half-time in Real Madrid's 2-2 draw with Club Brugge on Tuesday due to a stomach problem. The Red Devils sit top of their group unbeaten before hosting San Marino on October 10 before travelling to Kazakhstan three days later.



Alexander Zverev drove past Sam Querrey 7-6(3), 6-2 to secure a semifinal berth in the China Open in Beijing yesterday. Meanwhile, (bottom) Andy Murray made his exit after being beaten 6-2, 7-6(3) by top seed Dominic Thiem. PHOTO: AFP

Thiem ousts Murray

REUTERS, Beijing



Top seed Dominic Thiem held off a spirited display from Britain's Andy Murray in a 6-2 7-6(3) victory to reach the China Open semifinals in Beijing yesterday.

Austrian Thiem was off to a flying start as he broke serve in a 14-point opening game, and did so again to move 4-2 up before closing out the first set.

Thiem failed to serve out the match at 5-4 in the second set as he hit three double faults in four points to allow Murray to draw level.

Former world number one Murray, playing his first quarterfinal in over a year following a career-saving hip surgery in January, forced the second set into tiebreak but Thiem soon rediscovered his rhythm.

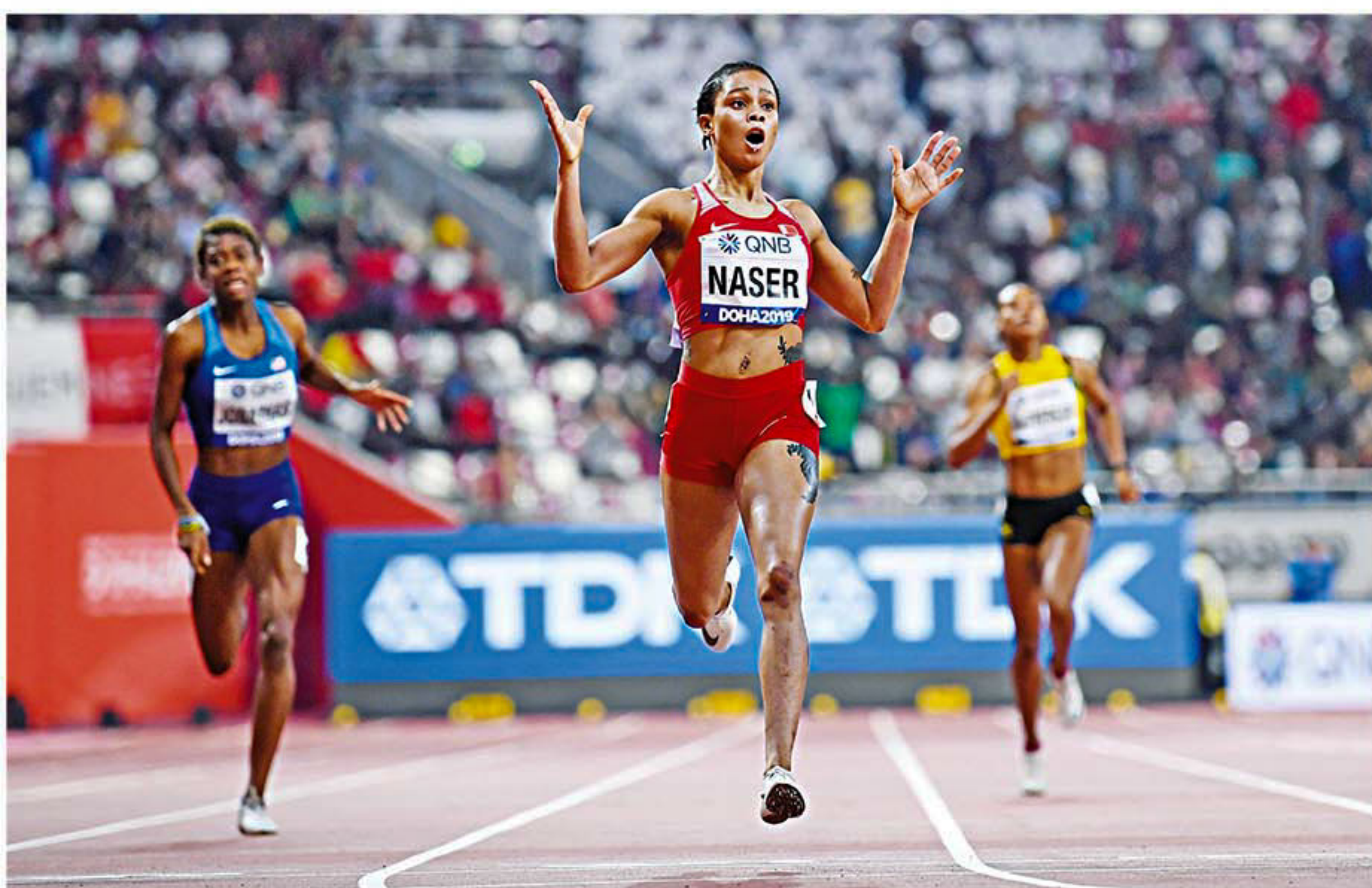


Thiem won five of the first six points in the tiebreak before securing a place in his seventh Tour-level semifinal of the season.

"I was a little bit unsure kind of how to go about the match at the beginning... I was feeling a little bit tired this morning," Murray said.

Meanwhile, Alexander Zverev continued his steady progress with a 7-6(3) 6-2 win over American Sam Querrey.

From 2-2 in the second set, Zverev reeled off four consecutive games to set up a semifinal showdown with Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas.



Bahrain's Salwa Eid Naser (M) raises her arms in disbelief after clocking in at a record 48.14 seconds, the third fastest time in history, to win gold in the 400m event at the World Championships in Doha on Thursday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Fareast, BUTEX advance

SPORTS REPORTER



Holders Fareast University and Bangladesh University of Textiles (BUTEX) moved into the quarterfinals of the United Group Faraz Inter-University Gold Cup football tournament by beating their respective rivals at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Fareast University handed a single-goal defeat to East West University with captain Ahsan Ullah Rana striking the decisive goal in the 50th minute.

In the day's other match, BUTEX thrashed South Asia University 6-0, thanks to a hatrick from Akash while Kawsar struck a brace and Mohibur netted the other.

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