

# What to WATCH

## STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

Afghanistan v West Indies  
First T20I  
Live from 2:30pm

## SONY ESPN

UEFA Champions League  
Bayern Munich v Olympiacos  
Live from 11:55pm  
Crvena Zvezda v Tottenham  
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

## SONY SIX

UEFA Champions League  
Leverkusen v Atletico Madrid  
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

## TEN 1

Europa League  
Vitoria SC v Arsenal  
Live from 9:50pm  
UEFA Champions League  
Real Madrid v Galatasaray

Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

## TEN 2

UEFA Champions League  
Lokomotiv Moscow v Juventus  
Live from 11:55pm  
Atalanta v Man City

Live from 2:00am (Thursday)



(From L-R) Real Madrid's Karim Benzema, Ferland Mendy, Eden Hazard and Thibaut Courtois jog during a training session at Ciudad Real Madrid yesterday on the eve of their Champions League encounter against Galatasaray.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Hazard's slow start gathering pace

AFP, Madrid



Eden Hazard is beginning to show glimpses of his best form and it cannot come soon enough for Real Madrid.

They play at home to Galatasaray in the Champions League on Wednesday, when victory would put them within touching distance of qualification from Group A.

Hazard has endured a disjointed and disappointing start in Spain, where expectations soared following his long-awaited 100-million euro move from Chelsea in June.

A week later, 50,000 fans streamed into the Santiago Bernabeu to see Hazard wear the shirt while some even ran to the entrances to grab a better seat.

As supporters left, Hazard was giving his first press conference underneath the stadium, telling a packed auditorium he wanted to be a galactico.

"I'm not a galactico, not yet, but I hope I will be one day," he said.

But the grand opening fizzled, in part due to events off the pitch, a combination of bad luck and personal circumstances that have spared the 28-year-old harsher critique from fans and journalists alike.

On the day before Madrid's first game of the season away at Celta Vigo, Hazard pulled a muscle in his thigh in training and had to withdraw from the squad.

He sat out three matches before making his first start against Paris Saint-Germain, but looked off the pace and it was a night to forget as Madrid were thrashed 3-0.

Hazard was left on the bench against Osasuna amid reports he was overweight and then scored his first goal against Granada, a delightful looping finish that promised finally to unleash the Belgian's best.

"We know the quality of player we have and we know he is going to deliver," said Zinedine Zidane in September.

"Everyone expects a lot from him and he knows that. But we support him and as the games go by I am sure he is going to be the player we want him to be in this Real Madrid team."

But the international break checked Hazard's momentum and he missed Madrid's first match back, a 1-0 loss away at Mallorca, due to the birth of his fourth child.

In the three games since, he has appeared in bursts, delivering exhilarating moments like the glorious flick inside against Galatasaray and a run in behind to win the penalty against Leganes.

"He sees things that other players cannot see," Zidane said.

Yet there have been disappointments too, not so much glaring errors as a general hesitance, a tendency to choose the safe option or fail to choose at all when in those attacking positions he usually relishes.

# U-19s take on Bahrain today

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh will take on hosts Bahrain in their first match of Group E of the AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers at the Khalifa Sports City Stadium in Manama today, looking to qualify for the final round for the first time in 17 years.

The match will kick off at 10:00pm Bangladesh time. Champions of 11 groups and four best runners-up teams will join Uzbekistan in the final round, which will be held from October 16 to 31 next year.

Bangladesh have been pitted alongside Bahrain, Jordan and Bhutan in the group and they will take on Jordan on November 8 before ending the qualifying campaign against South Asian rivals Bhutan two days later.

Bangladesh coach Andrew Peter Turner was looking forward to the competition as he felt his team is well prepared for the challenge.

"We are very much looking forward to this competition. We have prepared really well; had a very good SAFF competition. We've looked into the teams and the players and what they are about. We are looking to compete against three excellent teams," the coach said at the pre-tournament press briefing on Monday.

The English coach also said he was glad to see the support of the local Bangladeshi staff at the team hotel and hoped his team could give them a reason to celebrate.

# BJF investigation proceeds at snail's pace

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Sports Council (NSC) have apparently made progress at a snail's pace in their investigation of the financial irregularities found in the Bangladesh Judo Federation (BJF). BJJF president, Brigadier General (Rtd) SK Abu Baker, brought allegations of fund embezzlement against general secretary AKM Selim around four months ago.

Baker had filed a complaint on the matter to NSC secretary Masud Karim on June 25, requesting him to investigate the possible BJJF fund embezzlement and take action against those concerned.

"Without my consent or approval, the BJJF general secretary withdrew money from the federation account and used it illegally. That's why there is a great possibility that money was embezzled. Besides, the secretary seems to have no accountability," the letter read. "It is necessary to see how much money was debited and credited. I request you to take action against the offenders after auditing the BJJF account by the auditor of CAG."

Baker also wrote that he would not operate the account and will not take responsibility if money gets embezzled.

After receiving the complaint, the NSC formed a one-member probe committee with director (admin) ABM Nasirul Alam taking up the charge. However, Alam's investigation is still ongoing and sought another two to three weeks to complete his report.

"I can't make any comments on it because I still need to investigate some things. I need another two to three weeks to complete the investigation," Alam told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that his investigation has gone on for the last two or three months.

It was also learnt that Alam had questioned both the BJJF president and BJJF general secretary on the matter about one-and-a-half months ago but he has yet to submit a report on it for unknown reasons.

NSC secretary Masud Karim said that he cannot make any moves until the independent probe committee submits its report.

"It is not financial irregularities, rather it is corruption and that is unfortunate for the country," BJJF president Baker told The Daily Star yesterday. "I requested the minister [state minister for youth and sports] to disband the committee and form an ad-hoc committee but I don't know what they are doing."

AKM Selim has staunchly denied all the allegations made against him and insists that the BJJF president has an ulterior motive behind his actions. He also said that he would accept any punishment handed to him if the allegations are proven true.

"I have been doing everything by the constitution and the enquiry committee went through the account. Besides, we have completed the audit of the account by an external audit firm. There is no evidence of fund embezzlement," Selim told The Daily Star.

"Actually he is doing this for another reason. He doesn't want to accept the members of the elected committee and their decisions. Sometimes he imposed his own decisions by bypassing the executive committee's decision. He rules like a dictator and uses abusive words on us," alleged Selim, who was elected general secretary in March, 2016 with his committee's tenure set to expire in March, 2020.

"The NSC can do whatever they think will benefit the greater interest of Judo but I am ready to accept action if the allegations are proven," continued Selim.

On the ground of anonymity, an official on the BJJF executive committee said that the conflict between the president and the

general secretary began during the congress of the Judo Union of Asia (JUA) in April earlier this year. Apparently, Selim himself wanted to be member of the JUA but the president instead proposed Kamrunnahar Hiru, who was eventually elected as the Bangladesh representative.

The official also said that Selim had withdrawn about Tk 9 lakh for use on foreign tours and then a further Tk 8.5 lakh for judo mats without approval, claiming that Selim had violated the federation's norms. He further alleged that Selim kept the Tk 8.5 lakh for four months before clearing the duty of judo mat.

The supposed friction between the president and general secretary has put the federation in jeopardy as there have been no initiatives taken in regards to organising domestic competitions or participating in international tournaments for the last four months. However, preparations for the South Asian Games are ongoing under the supervision of the Bangladesh Olympic Association.

The BJJF is the fifth national organisation after the wushu, football, squash and tennis federations to have had allegations of financial irregularities brought against them by their own office bearers.

# NZ take series lead after Eng collapse

AFP, Nelson

A dramatic England collapse which saw five wickets fall for only 10 runs allowed New Zealand to snatch a 14-run victory in their Twenty20 international in Nelson Tuesday.

It also put New Zealand 2-1 ahead in the series with two games to play.

England were on track to overhaul New Zealand's 180 when they reached 139 for two in the 15th over, with captain Eoin Morgan in full flight as he cracked sixes off consecutive Mitchell Santner deliveries.

But with England needing 42 off the remaining 31 deliveries Santner turned the match when he had Morgan caught by Colin Munro off the final ball of the over.

Dawid Malan (55) and James Vince (49) had laid a solid foundation for England at the top of the innings. But Morgan's dismissal started a collapse which saw Munro run out Sam Billings for one.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**NEW ZEALAND:** 180 for 7 in 20 overs (Guptill 33, De Grandhomme 55, Taylor 27; Curran 2-29)  
**ENGLAND:** 166 for 7 in 20 overs (Malan 55, Vince 49; Ferguson 2-25, Tickner 2-25)

**Result:** New Zealand won by 14 runs and lead 5-match series 2-1.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Colin de Grandhomme.



GM Niaz Murshed (L) ponders a move against fellow GM Reefat Bin Sattar during the Saif Powertec 45th National Chess Championship match at Institute of Engineers building in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Flick demands improvement

AFP, Munich



Bayern Munich's stars have been told to knuckle down under interim coach Hansi Flick ahead of their Champions League clash with Olympiacos following Niko Kovac's sacking.

Former Bayern and West Germany defender Andreas Brehme says the Bayern squad "let Kovac down" with a series of lacklustre recent performances that led to the coach's dismissal.

Group B leaders Bayern host bottom side Olympiacos at the Allianz Arena with a fourth straight Champions League win in their sights after beating the Greek side 3-2 in Athens a fortnight ago.

Bayern already have one foot in the knock-out phase as they currently sit five-points clear of second-placed Tottenham, who they host in December having routed them 7-2 in north London last month.

However, all is not well behind the scenes at the Bavarian giants, who dismissed Kovac on Sunday after winning just three of their last six games in all competitions.

Saturday's embarrassing 5-1 drubbing at Eintracht Frankfurt -- the defending champions' heaviest league defeat for a decade -- did for Kovac, who never enjoyed the full confidence of the club despite winning the league and cup double last season.

# 45TH NATIONAL CHESS C'SHIP Niaz beats Reefat to extend lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Niaz Murshed beat fellow GM Reefat Bin Sattar to extend his lead in the Saif Powertec 45th National Chess Championship at the end of the fourth round at the Institute of Engineers of Bangladesh building in the capital yesterday.

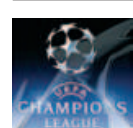
The sub-continent's first GM, playing with black pieces, beat Reefat after 38 moves to take himself to four points from four games.

Niaz was leading six players -- GM Abdullah Al Rakib, GM Ziaur Rahman, IM Fahad Rahman, IM Minhaz Uddin Ahmed, IM Abu Sufian Shakil and FM Taibur Rahman -- who shared the second position with three points each.

In some of the other games, Rakib drew against Minhaz; Taibur beat FM Sheikh Nasir Ahmed; Zia beat CM Saiful Islam Chowdhury; GM Enamul Hossain Razib beat FM Syed Mahfuzur Rahman; CM Manon Reja Neer beat Delwar Hossain while and WIM Rani Hamid beat CM Monir Hossain.

# Atalanta aim to avoid another slaughter

AFP, Milan



Gian Piero Gasperini warned that psychology will be key as Italian newcomers Atalanta look to avoid another huge defeat at the hands of Champions League rivals Manchester City in Milan on Wednesday.

The Premier League champions can seal their ticket to the knockout rounds with a win over Atalanta, who have lost all three Group C games in their first ever foray into the elite European competition.

Man City are top of their group with maximum nine points and 10 goals scored, with the Bergamo side bottom after conceding 11 goals conceded and scoring just two.

Five of those came last time out, when an 11-minute Raheem Sterling hat-trick helped City to a 5-1 win in Manchester.

"The psychological aspect will be fundamental," said Gasperini.

"It's a tight turnaround, but we'll prepare as best we can."

Atalanta hit back in Serie A days later with a 7-1 demolition of lowly Udinese, but they have felt the absence of star Colombian striker Duvan Zapata, who has been out with a thigh injury picked up on international duty last month.

Without him Atalanta have slipped from third to fifth in Serie A, eight points behind leaders Juventus after a 2-0 defeat to Cagliari at the weekend.

Juventus, Inter Milan and Napoli are used to measuring themselves against the European elite, but Atalanta's only trophy was the Italian Cup back in 1963.

The turnaround in their fortunes has been orchestrated by former Genoa and Palermo boss Gasperini who took over in 2016.

The 61-year-old's success at Atalanta came eight years after being sacked by Inter Milan after just three months.



Manchester City star Raheem Sterling (L) attends a training session at City Football Academy in Manchester yesterday on the eve of their Champions League tie against Atalanta.

PHOTO: AFP

# Faldo Series gets underway

SPORTS REPORTER

The sixth edition of the Faldo Series Bangladesh Championship got underway at the Kurmitola Golf Club in Dhaka yesterday.

A 100-strong field of junior golfers will vie for glory over three days, with the age-group winners getting an opportunity to participate in the 14th Faldo Series Asia Grand Final in Vietnam in March, 2020.

Recognised as the only global amateur series for boys and girls, the Faldo Series was established in 1996 and features 40 events in 30-plus countries worldwide today.

President of the junior division of Bangladesh Golf Federation Major General Moshfequr Rahman and tournament administrator of Faldo Series Asia-Europe Osman Rafiq Bin Ramlan inaugurated the event.

# Neymar escapes with a warning

AFP, Bobigny

Neymar will escape prosecution for an altercation with an opposition supporter after Paris Saint-Germain's surprise defeat in the French Cup final in April, sources told AFP on Monday.

Prosecutors have decided the Brazilian star will receive a written warning and no further action will be taken.