

What to WATCH

GTV, CHANNEL 9 & STAR SPORTS 1
India v Bangladesh
First Test, Day Two
Live from 10:00am

TEN 1
Euro Qualifiers
Armenia v Greece
Live from 11:00pm
Romania v Sweden
Live from 1:45am (Saturday)

TEN 2
Euro Qualifiers
Finland v Lichtenstein
Live from 11:00pm
Spain v Malta
Live from 1:45am (Saturday)

SALAH TO MISS CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS

African superstar Mohamed Salah will not play for Egypt against Kenya on Thursday in 2021 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying because of a lingering ankle injury. The 27-year-old forward was hurt against Leicester City last month and despite making several subsequent appearances for Liverpool, is suffering from slight discomfort in his left ankle. Egyptian media reported that after Salah travelled from England to Mediterranean city Alexandria, national squad medical staff ruled him out of the Group G clash. He will also miss the away fixture against the Comoros in Moroni next Monday. Salah wore a protective boot on his left foot as he watched his Pharaohs teammates prepare in Alexandria to face the Harambee Stars at the 87,000-capacity Borg el Arab Stadium.

--AFP





Stefanos Tsitsipas hits a return against Alexander Zverev during their men's singles round-robin match of the ATP World Tour Finals at the O2 Arena in London on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Tsitsipas sets up Nadal tie

AFP, London



Stefanos Tsitsipas coasted past defending champion Alexander Zverev in straight sets to advance to the last four of the ATP Finals on Wednesday after Rafael Nadal came back from the dead to keep his title hopes alive.

The Greek tyro, 21, broke his big-serving German opponent three times in the Group Andre Agassi match to seal a 6-3, 6-2 win at London's O2 Arena.

The straightforward victory, which took Tsitsipas's head-to-head record against Zverev to 4-1, was in sharp contrast to the earlier match, in which Nadal produced an astonishing comeback to beat Daniil Medvedev.

The Spanish top seed was on the brink of defeat when facing a match point at 5-1 down in the deciding set but stormed back to win 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

"Today is one of those days that one out of 1,000 you win and it happened today," said a delighted Nadal.

The 19-time Grand Slam champion, who also beat Medvedev in the US

Open final, said earning a break back in the deciding set had infused him with confidence.

"When you have the first break, 5-3, then you are only one break away," he added.

"And I know from my personal experience how tough it is to close out matches, especially when you have two breaks in front and you lose the first one. From that moment I thought I can have a chance."

Both players were under intense pressure after losing their opening round-robin matches on Monday

Nadal is on a double mission in London -- aiming to win the end-of-season event for the first time in his illustrious career and to secure the year-end number one spot.

Russia's Medvedev, who has won two Masters titles this season, took the first set on a tie-break to leave Nadal staring down the barrel.

The Spanish veteran broke his 23-year-old opponent in the first game of the second set, repeating the trick to level the match.

But Medvedev was quickly into his stride in the decider, sprinting to the net to dispatch a cross-court backhand past his opponent and earn a double break.

Nadal, who came into the tournament under an injury cloud, fended off a match point on his own serve and then, roared on by a lively crowd, broke Medvedev twice to level.

The match went to a tie-break and Medvedev was first to falter, hitting a regulation forehand wide to hand Nadal two match points and he grabbed the opportunity.

The world number one has qualified 15 straight times for the ATP Finals but has never clinched the title, won a record six times by Roger Federer and five times by Novak Djokovic, who is battling Nadal for the number one ranking.

In the later match, Tsitsipas grabbed the contest by the scruff of the neck at end of the first set, breaking Zverev in the eighth game and served out for the set.

The Greek then broke in the opening game and the fifth game of the second set as Zverev struggled to produce the same level of tennis that propelled him to victory against Nadal on Monday.

"I was really surprised by my performance today," said the sixth seed, who beat Medvedev earlier in the week and who is yet to drop a set in London on his tournament debut.

Bangladesh fall to fourth

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Bangladesh had to be satisfied with finishing fourth among five teams in the Bangamata Asian Senior Women's Central Zone International Volleyball Championship after suffering a straight 3-0 sets defeat to Kyrgyzstan in a place-deciding match at the Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Bangladesh, who beat Kyrgyzstan by 3-2 sets in a group-stage match on Wednesday, failed to put up any resistance in the third-fourth deciding match as the girls in red and green conceded 13-25, 14-25 and 12-25 set defeats against the Central Asian nation, who subsequently finished third in the inaugural meet.

On the other hand, Nepal emerged as unbeaten champions after thrashing Maldives by 3-0 sets in the final. Nepal, who also beat Maldives by an identical margin in a group-stage match, notched 25-13, 25-12 and 25-8 set points to claim the victory.

"It is a historic moment for us because volleyball has recently been declared the national sport of Nepal and it is the first trophy for Nepal in volleyball since the announcement. I think this success will boost the confidence of the girls for the upcoming SA Games in Nepal," said Nepal coach Jagodish Prasad after the match.

Agriculture minister Abdur Razzak distributed prizes among the winners while Bangladesh Olympic Association secretary general Syed Shahed Reza, Ilias Uddin Mollah MP, Bangladesh Volleyball Federation president and Dhaka City Corporation (North) mayor Atiqul Islam among others, were present on the occasion.

Soumya shines for emerging team

SPORTS REPORTER



Riding on opener Soumya Sarkar's unbeaten 74-ball 84, the Bangladesh Emerging Team romped to a nine-wicket win against their Hong Kongese counterparts during an ACC Emerging Teams Cup encounter at BKS-4 in Savar yesterday.

Asked to bat on the opening day of the tournament, Hong Kong were restricted to a below-par 164 for nine in 50 overs before Bangladesh chased down the target in just 24.1 overs.

Bangladesh kept Hong Kong at bay from the beginning, picking up wickets at regular intervals and not allowing any partnership to grow. Hong Kong had lost half their squad by the 26th over with the score on just 76. A team-high 33-ball 35 from Haroon Arshad down the order helped Hong Kong reach 164 for nine. For Bangladesh, right-arm pacer Sumon Khan was the pick of the bowlers, returning figures of four for 33 in his 10 overs. Soumya, who would go on to play an incredible knock which steered

Bangladesh to victory, also shone with the ball. Although the 26-year old remained wicketless, his economic spell of 36 runs in 10 overs, featuring two maidens, helped Bangladesh's cause.

After the exchange, opener Mohammad Naim, who was impressive during Bangladesh's last T20I against India, continued his good run of form, scoring a run-a-ball 52 before being dismissed in the 16th over. Meanwhile, Soumya laced his innings with nine boundaries and three sixes to see Bangladesh over the line with 155 balls to spare.

However, Bangladesh were suffered a blow in the form of the injury of leg-spinner Aminul Islam. Aminul left the field after being hit on his right hand following an attempt to stop the ball off his own delivery in the 19th over.

In the day's other matches, India defeated Nepal by seven wickets at BKS-3. Meanwhile in Cox's Bazar, Oman won against Sri Lanka by four wickets and Pakistan defeated Afghanistan by eight wickets.



Opener Soumya Sarkar scored an unbeaten 74-ball 84 as Bangladesh Emerging Team beat Hong Kong by nine wickets in an Emerging Teams Cup encounter at BKS-4 yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BD move to semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh moved into the semifinals of the inaugural Junior World Kabaddi Championship by defeating Thailand 62-37 in the fourth quarterfinal at Kish Island, Iran yesterday.

In today's second semifinal fixture, Bangladesh will take on Iran, who thrashed Chinese Taipei 53-31 in the second quarterfinal. Meanwhile, Pakistan beat Sri Lanka 44-32 to set up a semifinal clash against the winner of the other quarterfinal encounter between Denmark and Kenya.

Earlier in the tournament, Bangladesh outplayed Afghanistan 84-11 before going on to defeat Chinese Taipei 48-36 to emerge as champions of Group C and ensure a quarterfinal berth.

Test cricket finally returns to Pakistan

AFP, Karachi

Test cricket will return to Pakistan after a long gap of 10 years after Sri Lanka agreed to a tour for two matches next month, the Pakistan Cricket Board announced on Thursday.

The vote of confidence from Sri Lanka is hugely symbolic, as it was the attack on their team bus during a visit to Lahore in 2009 which drove international cricket away from Pakistan as the country grappled with militancy.

Ibra confirms LA Galaxy exit

AFP, Los Angeles



Swedish star Zlatan Ibrahimovic confirmed his departure from the Los Angeles Galaxy on Wednesday, but gave no clue over his future plans or possible retirement.

The 38-year-old striker's departure from the Galaxy had been widely expected following the club's elimination from the Major League Soccer playoffs last month.

Ibrahimovic, who joined the Galaxy in the opening months of the 2018 campaign, announced the end of his Californian sojourn in a characteristically enigmatic post on Twitter.

"I came, I saw, I conquered. Thank you @lagalaxy for making me feel alive again," Ibrahimovic wrote. "To the Galaxy fans - you wanted Zlatan, I gave you Zlatan. You are welcome."

"The story continues...Now go back to watch baseball."

The Galaxy said in a brief statement the club had parted company with Ibrahimovic by mutual agreement.

"We would like to thank Zlatan for his contributions to the LA Galaxy and Major League Soccer," said LA Galaxy President Chris Klein.

Ibrahimovic has been strongly linked with a return to Italian club AC Milan, where he played for two seasons between 2010 and 2012, scoring 42 goals in 61 league appearances.

THIRD YOUTH ODI BD U-19 thrash SL

SPORTS REPORTER

A magnificent unbeaten 98-ball 123 from Towhid Hridoy saw the Bangladesh under-19 team register a whopping 161-run victory over their Sri Lankan counterparts in the third of a five-match Youth ODI series at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday. The win ensured Bangladesh a 2-0 lead in the series with the first match being abandoned due to inclement weather.

Asked to bat, Bangladesh posted a mammoth 340 for seven in 50 overs. Three of the young Tigers crossed the 50-run mark with Towhid smashing an unbeaten century.

Following the exchange, a disciplined bowling unit helped the young Tigers bundle Sri Lanka out for 179 runs in 39.2 overs. All six bowlers used by Bangladesh on the day scalped at least a wicket each. For Sri Lanka, opener Navod Paranavithana top scored with 50 off 32 balls.



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