

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
India v West Indies
First T20I
Live from 7:30pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
Bundesliga

Eintracht v Hertha Berlin
Live from 1:30am (Saturday)
TEN 2
Serie A
Inter Milan v Roma
Live from 1:45am (Saturday)



Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford scored a brace to help his side walk away 2-1 winners of their English Premier League clash with Tottenham on Wednesday, making Jose Mourinho's return to Old Trafford a bitter experience indeed.

PHOTO AFP

ITALIAN CLUBS SLAM 'BLACK FRIDAY'

Italian football clubs yesterday slammed a renowned sports daily's front page as "unacceptable" and "terrible" after it used "Black Friday" in a headline in reference to Romelu Lukaku and Roma defender Chris Smalling. Smalling and Lukaku, former Manchester United teammates, face off at the San Siro on Friday as Inter Milan look to maintain top spot in Serie A beating Champions League-chasing Roma, prompting the Rome-based Corriere dello Sport to publish the controversial headline. The article praised the two players for taking "strong positions against racism and are the symbols of the two clubs", but Roma tweeted "not a single soul" would think the headline a good idea. The club's chief strategy officer Paul Rogers told AFP the choice of headline was "terrible" although the article itself was "positive". Racism is a recurrent problem in Italian football, with several black Serie A players having suffered racial abuse by supporters in the first months of the season.

-AFP



Rashford brace sinks Spurs

AFP, Manchester

Marcus Rashford spoiled Jose Mourinho's return to Old Trafford on Wednesday, scoring twice as Manchester United beat Tottenham 2-1 to end their former manager's perfect start to his tenure at his new club.

The England forward put United in front early in the first half and converted a second-half penalty to restore their lead after Dele Alli's exquisite equaliser as Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side leapfrogged Spurs, climbing to sixth in the Premier League table.

Spurs went into the match ahead of United after their mini-revival under their new boss, who replaced the sacked Mauricio Pochettino at the London club last month.

Struggling United had made their worst start to a season in 31 years but played with energy and adventure and deserved their win.

The home side deservedly took the lead when Rashford beat Paulo Gazzaniga at his near post in the sixth minute -- the forward's 11th goal in his past 13 games for

United and England.

United could easily have stretched their lead but Gazzaniga made amends by touching a thunderous Rashford shot onto the crossbar.

It was a far cry from recent disjointed performances against Sheffield United and Aston Villa. Both of those matches ended in draws after United had taken the lead.

But despite being a clear second best, Tottenham edged their way back into the game and were on level terms six minutes before half-time thanks to an audacious piece of skill from the in-form Alli.

United would have been disappointed to have been trailing at the break after their impressive first-half showing but they were back in front in the 49th minute when Rashford sent Gazzaniga the wrong way from the spot after being brought down by Moussa Sissoko.

United are also eyeing the top four despite a big gap to close. They remain eight points behind fourth-placed Chelsea and just seven points above the relegation zone.

Hazard to miss Clasico

AFP, Madrid

Eden Hazard is set to miss the Clasico against Barcelona after further tests revealed a fracture in his right ankle, Real Madrid confirmed yesterday.

Hazard was forced off during the draw with Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League last week and despite Zinedine Zidane saying after the match he had suffered a "bad twist", Madrid announced the Belgian had been diagnosed with "bruising".

But further tests have shown a fracture, with Hazard now expected to be out for around four to six weeks. It would mean he will sit out the Clasico at Camp Nou on December 18.

"After tests performed on our player Eden Hazard by the Real Madrid Medical Services during the process of improving the bruising in his right leg, he has been diagnosed with an incomplete external fracture in that area," a club statement.

Stern test for Pollard's men

ICC



Defending champions of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, West Indies, are settling to the new leadership of Kieron Pollard, and the three-match series in India will present them with a tough challenge, starting today in Hyderabad.

West Indies will have to play their best quality of cricket if they are to get off to a winning start against India, an opponent against whom they have lost each of their last six T20Is, including three matches hosted by them only four months ago.

Coming off a 2-1 loss to Afghanistan recently, the visitors won't be doing too well in the confidence department either. During that series, the Windies batsmen seemed to struggle against seamers and India have a wealth of fast bowling talent, both experienced and otherwise, who will look to probe this apparent weakness.

While Mohammed Shami and Bhuvneshwar Kumar are proven match-winners, Deepak Chahar and Shivam Dube have done remarkably well in their limited opportunities so far. And with severe competition for fast bowling spots in the Indian set up, less than a year out of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Australia, expect them to be firing on all cylinders. If West Indies do deal with the quicks well, they will have to contend with the quality spin attack comprising of Yuzvendra Chahal, Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav.

The onus will be on the experienced West Indies batsmen to lead the way in countering a fine Indian attack. To that end, Pollard himself will be a crucial figure and as will Evin Lewis, both of whom have a good deal of IPL experience having routinely faced bowling of such calibre.

The visitors have a strong T20 bowling attack. Kescrick Williams is the wily seamer with nifty variations, while Keemo Paul and Sheldon Cottrell can make things happen with pace and bounce. The leg-spin of Hayden Walsh adds another dimension to the attack.

ACU agents will be with BBPL teams

SPORTS REPORTER



Each of the seven participating teams participating in the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) will be tagged with an agent from the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU), informed Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) President Nazmul Hassan yesterday.

"There will be an anti-corruption agent with each of the teams in this BPL, so we are very serious in this regard," Hassan told reporters yesterday. Bangladesh's premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan was handed a two-year ban, with the second of those suspended, in October by the ICC after the 32-year-old failed to report corrupt approaches by a bookie.

The BCB president mentioned that the board, who were always serious

I actually enjoy playing BPL as it is Bangladesh's best tournament. A lot of star players play in the BPL and there is always the opportunity to share the dressing room with them so there always remains a different vibe. I always have a good feeling about it.

TASKIN AHMED
Rangpur Rangers pacer



Rangpur Rangers pacer Taskin Ahmed (C) got in some catching practice at the BCB Academy ground in Mirpur yesterday, ahead of the Bangladesh Premier League which begins on December 11. PHOTO: COLLECTED

about these issues, will now be taking sterner steps and help the ACU in any way possible to avoid recurrences of such incidents.

"That is for sure [that we became more serious after the Shakib issue]. Actually, we were always serious about this but now we are sterner. However, it is not like that we have to do everything. These steps are taken by them [ACU]. What we are doing is that now we will have some additional expenditure. For instance, if we are to

assign an agent with every team, there is an added expense. Their salary and accommodation allowance will be given by the board. So, we are doing everything as per the instructions. We also said that we will do whatever we can to make it more secure," said Hassan.

Hassan, however, mentioned that the board will not interfere regarding the assignment of the agent as the ACU will be making the decision independently.

GET YOUR TICKETS

Tickets for the BPL opening ceremony will be available from today.

BOOTHS

1. Ticket booth adjacent to Gate 01 of Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur
2. Ticket booth at the Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium, Mirpur

TIME

Ticket will be on sale at the designated booths from 09h30 to 18h00

PRICE

On ground seating	BDT 10,000.00
Grand Stand	BDT 2,500.00
Club House	BDT 1,000.00



I hope that my team can come back. Our team looks mediocre but we are not underdogs. Except Dhaka, none of the other teams are that strong. This is a T20 tournament and the team that plays well will become champions.

SARWAR IMRAN
Sylhet Technical Director

'Cricket lost a dear friend'

AGENCIES, London

Bob Willis, who famously bowled England to a dramatic Test win against Australia in 1981, died aged 70 on Wednesday.

Willis played in 90 Tests, taking 325 wickets with his aggressive pace bowling and also captained England for a spell before retiring in 1984 and taking up a career in broadcasting.

His most famous moment as a player came in the 1981 Ashes series, known as "Botham's Ashes" for Ian Botham's devastating displays with bat and ball, when he took 8-43 in a remarkable spell of fast bowling in the third Test at Headingley that changed the course of the series.



It is understood that Willis, who was diagnosed with prostate cancer three years ago, had begun to deteriorate in health over the past two months, with a recent scan revealing the cancer had advanced.

"We are heartbroken to lose our

FIVE BEST PERFORMANCES

- 8-43 v Australia, third Test at Headingley, 1981
- 5-42 v West Indies, fourth Test at Headingley, 1976
- 5-27 v India, second Test at Eden Gardens, 1977
- 7-78 v Australia, first Test at Lord's, 1977
- 5-65 v West Indies, first Test at Trent Bridge, 1980

beloved Bob, who was an incredible husband, father, brother and grandfather," said a statement from the Willis family.

"He made a huge impact on everybody he knew and we will miss him terribly."

The England and Wales Cricket Board said it was deeply saddened by Willis's death, adding: "Cricket has lost a dear friend".

"He will always be remembered for his outstanding cricket career... In later years as a broadcaster Bob was a perceptive and respected voice at the microphone," the ECB said in a statement.

Star all-rounder Botham previously described his teammate as a "tremendous trier, a great team man and an inspiration -- the only world-class fast bowler in my time as an England player".

Former England captain David Gower, who played with Willis and was a colleague of his at Sky Sports, described him as "a very loyal friend

and a loyal supporter".

"I toured with him as a captain and I took over the captaincy from him and then had him as what was called in those days as an assistant manager," he told BBC Radio. "He was a very loyal friend and a loyal supporter.

New Zealand's record wicket-taker Richard Hadlee called Willis "one of the great fast bowlers of his time."

"Bob was the archetypal fast-bowler: big, tall, aggressive - very quick and extremely competitive," said all-rounder Hadlee, who took 431 Test wickets.

Willis made his international debut aged 21 in the 1971 Ashes in Australia.

WHAT THEY SAID

Bob Willis was a terrific fast bowler, with a run-up that was unique. Not a fluent run-up but once the ball left his hand it was terror for the batsman.

---Indian great Kapil Dev

So sad at the news of Bob Willis... may his soul rest in peace... love to his entire family... india will miss a stalwart.

---Sourav Ganguly

Just saw the news on Bob Willis and very sad indeed. Had the pleasure of working with him for @SkyCricket and off air I just loved listening to his great stories on how they played the game back in the day. RIP Great man.

---Allan Donald

Saddened to hear that Bob Willis has died. One of our greatest fast bowlers. Met him on many occasions and he was always great company with a sense of humour that was as sharp as his bowling. #RIPBob.

---Gary Lineker

Balbirnie to lead Ireland for WI series

ICC

Andrew Balbirnie, who was recently named Ireland captain for all three formats, is set to officially lead them for the first time when Ireland travel to the Caribbean for three one-day internationals and as many T20 internationals in January next year.

Balbirnie was named in charge of 14-man squads for the two bilateral series, announced on Thursday by Cricket Ireland.

The 28-year-old opening batsman was handed over the mantle last month, initially assuming charge of the Test and ODI teams in the aftermath of the resignation of former captain William Porterfield, before replacing Gary Wilson as leader of the T20 outfit, too, in late November.

"The Caribbean tour will be the start of a quite intensive year for the senior men's team," Graham Ford, the head coach, said. "We have tours before the start of the home season, hosting several full members in the summer, commence our participation in the ICC World Cup ODI Super League, including playing an ODI series against England, and then head to a T20 World Cup in October. These matches will be the first under Andrew Balbirnie's leadership, so will be a great first-up challenge for him and one which I know he is looking forward to."



Winners of the Wheelchair Basketball tournament, organised by ICRC, CRP and Bangladesh Basketball Federation, pose with their trophies at the Center for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Crisis deepens in SA cricket

AFP, Johannesburg



The crisis in South African cricket deepened on Thursday as former chief executive Ali Bacher called on incumbent Thabang Moreo to quit, while a second independent director resigned from the board of Cricket South Africa.

Bacher, a former Test captain, said Moreo was out of his depth, while independent board member Iqbal Khan, the chairman of CSA's finance committee, said he could no longer be party to an organisation that was "ruining the game".

Khan blamed Moreo for the majority of issues besetting CSA, including failing to adhere to the terms of an agreement with the SA Cricketers' Association, the banning of five journalists last weekend and "widespread credit card abuse".

In his letter to CSA president Chris Nenzani, Khan wrote: "Unfortunately, all fingers point at the CEO.

"But, having said that, I cannot believe

that you are not aware of the many issues that have caused this malaise and to that extent you are also complicit and perhaps even the entire board."

Khan's resignation came a day after that of Shirley Zinn, leaving CSA with only three of their five independent directors.

CSA will be holding an emergency board meeting in Johannesburg on Saturday at which it said "important decisions will be made".

Bacher said in an interview with the espnricinfo website that he had mediated talks between Moreo and former Test captain Graeme Smith on August 28, which could have led to Smith becoming CSA director of cricket.

Smith announced on November 15 that he had withdrawn his interest in taking the job - although he confirmed on Monday that new talks were under way.

According to Bacher, in more than two months since the original discussions, Smith had still not been presented with a contract for his consideration.