

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS 1 & SELECT 1
India v West Indies
Second T20I
Live from 7:30pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
English Premier League

Aston Villa v Leicester
Live from 8:00pm
Brighton v Wolves
Live from 10:30pm
TEN 1
Serie A

Torino v Fiorentina
Live from 8:00pm
TEN 2
Serie A
Lecce v Genoa
Live from 5:30pm

Sassuolo v Cagliari
Live from 8:00pm
Sampdoria v Parma
Live from 11:00pm
Bologna v AC Milan
Live from 1:45am (Monday)

Salman, Katrina to light up opening

SPORTS REPORTER



The special edition of the Bangladesh Premier League T20 to mark birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is set to raise its curtains through a grand opening ceremony at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today.

The main ground was busy for the last-minute preparations for the opening ceremony of the cash-rich tournament and teams were busy attending practice sessions at the BCB Academy Ground.

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif are the main attraction of the ceremony, which will last for almost five hours.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will declare the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League open at around 7:00pm.

The programme has been divided into two parts, which is set to begin from 5:00pm. Bangladesh singers James, Mumtaz and others will rule the roost in the first part while the second part will be handled by entertainers from Bollywood.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday declared Akash DTH, the first ever Direct To Home (DTH) service launched in Bangladesh by Beximco, title sponsors through a ceremony.

BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury and Beximco Communications Limited CEO Faisal Hyder were present at the logo unveiling ceremony.

BBPL OPENING CEREMONY ACTIVITIES

5:25 pm	Performance by Moidul Islam Khan 'dRockstar' Shuvo
5:35 pm	Performance by Reshmi Mirza
6:00 pm	Performance by James
6:40 pm	Performance by Momtaz
7:20/30 pm	Arrival of Hon'be Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the inauguration
7:40 pm	Fireworks
7:45 pm	Performance by Sonu Nigam
8:35 pm	Laser Beam Show
8:55 pm	Performance by Kailash Kher
9:35 pm	Performance by Katrina Kaif
10:00 pm	Performance by Salman Khan
10:20 pm	Performance by Salman Khan & Katrina Kaif



The stage is set for a spectacular opening to the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today. (Inset) Since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be present to inaugurate the competition, security forces thoroughly inspected the ground yesterday. The seven-team tournament is set to kick off on the 11th.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Diego, Roman to face off

AFP, Buenos Aires

Diego Maradona and Juan Roman Riquelme are back in the heart of the battle at their former club Boca Juniors, but this weekend they are playing political football.

Riquelme's decision to join the opposition ticket in the election of the club board has added fuel to a heated campaign and reopened a feud with Maradona who aimed a broadside at his former team-mate.

The vote on Sunday is also shaping as a rematch of the recent Argentine



presidential election.

The 80,000 Boca members can vote at the club's famous Bonbonera stadium on Sunday in a ballot that could bring a second defeat for Mauricio Macri in less than two months.

BBPL's focus on youth

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will be looking at young players in the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) and try to integrate them into the national team during the T20 World Cup, scheduled for October next year.

"This BBPL is very crucial to us. The T20 World Cup is knocking on the door. Also, we have a lot of T20 matches coming. Our performance there will be vital. We are working in the areas where we have deficiencies," chief selector Minhajul Abedin told reporters yesterday.

Bangladesh are yet to find a batsman who can consistently score quick runs in the lower order. Moreover, the BCB has already implemented a few guidelines that they believe will help them overcome their deficiencies ahead of the World Cup. The BCB has made it mandatory for BPL teams to employ at least one wrist spinner and a fast bowler capable of bowling over 140kmph.

And with the BBPL being organised solely by the board, the event is being touted as the perfect platform for youngsters to prove their mettle and make their way into the national team.

Minhajul shared those sentiments. "We all want to see good performances from the players in



While the onus will be on the youngsters come the BBPL, more experienced campaigners such as Sabbir Rahman (R) still have a lot to prove. PHOTO: STAR

these areas and we will see that in the BPL. If we get some players from here, then it will be a bonus," Minhajul, who is also acting as the team director of the Cumilla Warriors, said.

"A lot of good overseas players are coming so our local cricketers will have a great opportunity to gain experience. In the shorter format, you have to be involved in the game in

such a manner that every moment is a challenge. This is a huge opportunity for players who cannot cope with the T20 format. As the World Cup is coming up, we are working on our squad. This is a big opportunity for youngsters too. If they play well, it is good for the team," said Minhajul, who believes that dew might be a big factor in BBPL matches.

No Tigers in PSL

SPORTS REPORTER

No Bangladeshi cricketers were selected for the upcoming Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2020 mainly due to the Tigers' unavailability during the fifth edition of the tournament, which is slated to be held in Pakistan from February 20 next year.

The Tigers will be busy with a home series against Zimbabwe in March and will therefore not be available for the PSL.

23 Bangladesh players were named in the players' draft held in Lahore on Friday. Opener Tamim Iqbal, all-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad, left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman and pace bowling all-rounder Mohammed Saifuddin were placed in gold category.

Earlier, no team from the newly-introduced 100-ball cricket picked any cricketers from Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, six Bangladesh cricketers -- Tamim, Mahmudullah, Mustafizur, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Taskin Ahmed and Soumya Sarkar -- have been named in the Indian Premier League auction.

Benzema sinks Espanyol

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid were without Eden Hazard and Gareth Bale on Saturday but Karim Benzema stepped up again to ensure they beat struggling Espanyol in La Liga.

Benzema scored one and set up another in a 2-0 win at the Santiago Bernabeu, where Real wore an all-green kit to show support for this week's Climate Summit in the city. Victory means Zinedine Zidane's side move to the top of the table, for a few hours at least, before Barcelona play later at home to Real Mallorca.

Espanyol, who have not won in six league games, stay 19th.

An ankle injury is likely to rule Hazard out of the season's first Clasico on December 18 while Bale has a thigh problem and is also a concern ahead of that crunch game at Camp Nou.

But another excellent Benzema display will at least be of some consolation, after he teed up Raphael Varane before scoring his 15th goal this term to put Espanyol out of sight.

"We're talking about Karim a lot recently, in a good way," said Zidane. "He's getting older and that's made a difference, his maturity."

"None of us are perfect. But he's asked to chase and he does it. He's asked to score and he does it. I can't ask for more, only that he keeps doing it."

Increasingly it looks like the winner of the Clasico will spend the Christmas break first in the table, with the top two pulling away from the likes of Atletico Madrid, who drew away at Villarreal on Friday.

Sevilla, in third, are four points behind Zidane's side before they travel to Osasuna on Sunday.

The absence of Hazard and Bale meant Rodrygo came in on the right of the front three while Vinicius Junior was given a rare chance to stake a claim on the left.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Tottenham forward Son Hueng Min went 90 yards in 12 seconds, skipping past five defenders en route, to score a wondergoal against Burnley in a 5-0 demolition by Jose Mourinho's men in their Premier League match yesterday.

United silence the Etihad

'Son-aldo' scores sublime goal; Liverpool 14 clear

AGENCIES, Manchester



Manchester City's Premier League title hopes were in tatters after suffering a 2-1 derby defeat at home to Manchester United on Saturday, leaving Pep Guardiola's champions 14 points behind leaders Liverpool.

A penalty from Marcus Rashford and a goal from Anthony Martial put Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side 2-0 up at the break and City only pulled one back in the 85th minute through Nicolas Otamendi.

United went ahead in the 23rd minute when VAR ruled that Bernardo Silva had brought down Rashford inside the box and the United striker kept his cool to convert from the spot.

Rashford missed a good chance to double the lead and the England forward struck the bar with a lofted shot from the edge of the box after.

The second goal wasn't long in coming, however, Martial squeezing home a low shot after a swift exchange with Daniel James. It was not until the 85th minute when Otamendi headed in a corner that the hosts were able to find a way through, but to no avail.

Meanwhile, a rampant Liverpool beat Bournemouth 3-0 to lock down the Christmas number one spot as Jose Mourinho's Tottenham blitzed Burnley 5-0 to climb to fifth in the table.

Interim boss Duncan Ferguson lifted Everton's spirits, condemning Chelsea to their third league defeat in four matches.

Liverpool took advantage of playing before their closest rivals to widen the gulf at the top of the table to 14 points, meaning they cannot be caught by December 25.

Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain opened the scoring, and they made it 2-0 just before the break when Naby Keita finished from close range, with Keita

turning provider for Salah in the 54th minute.

After Tottenham's 5-0 thrashing of Burnley, Jose Mourinho hailed Son Heung-min's wonder-strike as the best goal he has seen since an equally stunning effort from Brazilian legend Ronaldo.

Son stole the show when he ran from deep inside his own half past a host of Burnley defenders and capped the astonishing burst with an ice-cool finish.

"Before this goal my son calls him Son-aldo and today he was Son-aldo!" Mourinho said. "This was an amazing goal. I know that he is going to reach the face of the keeper, his control is unstoppable. The only thing that compares was when I was at Barcelona with Bobby Robson. Ronaldo Nazario, Compostela against Barcelona, 1996. Ronaldo got the ball near the halfway line and scored a similar goal, an amazing goal."