



Boxer Sadia Sultana (Blue) of Bangladesh Ansar beat Tania Sultana of Bangladesh Police to grab gold in women's 51kg weight category while boxer Selim Hossain of Bangladesh Army (Red) secured gold by defeating Md. Robin Mia of Bangladesh Ansar in men's 56kg weight category in the Bangabandhu 9th Bangladesh Games at Mohammad Ali Boxing Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUARTERFINALS

'I love to play against the best player'

REUTERS



Paris St Germain's Kylian Mbappe has repeatedly been criticised for some sub-par performances this season but the France striker has also proved his worth with a number of sublime performances in the Champions League knockout ties.

Mbappe said he felt no pressure in facing one of the world's best keepers in Bayern Munich's Manuel Neuer on Wednesday and hoped to add to his tally after beating the German twice in their 3-2 Champions League win.

Mbappe scored an early opener for PSG and Marquinhos put them 2-0 up in the 28th minute before hosts Bayern hit back through Eric-Maxim Choupo-Moting and Thomas Mueller.

The remake of last year's final promised

to be exciting between two highly technical sides. The start of the game quickly set the scene: even though the Bavarian side attacked strongly, it was Les Parisiens that found the opener in the first minutes of the match, thanks to a world-class move from Neymar Jr and Mbappe with the Brazilian perfectly finding the Frenchman and the latter slotting into the back of the net.

The 22-year-old Mbappe then scored again, drilling in from a tight angle and with two defenders in front of him to put PSG back in front and hand Bayern their first Champions League defeat in more than two years.

Mbappe said he relished the chance to test himself against Neuer. "I love to play against the best player in the world and Manuel Neuer is one of the best keepers in the history of the game," Mbappe told BT Sport. "I don't have any pressure."

"We played in the final against him (Neuer) and didn't score but now I scored two goals," added Mbappe. "I will play one (more) time against him so I hope to score again."

"I am happy with the result and the attitude of the team, who found themselves in difficult situations against the best side in Europe," PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino said. "We need to congratulate the players for their sacrifice and we want to repeat this kind of performance."

"Obviously, our opponents scored three goals from their few chances and we scored too few but the way we played was impressive," Bayern coach Hans Flick told reporters. "We could have gotten a good result but we were not efficient enough."



Urmi finally does it ON THE BIG STAGE

SPORTS REPORTER

Urmi Akter was crowned champion of the women's singles badminton event in the Bangabandhu 9th Bangladesh Games after the 10th-grader came back from a set down against Bristi Khatun to win the final 2-1 at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium yesterday.

Bristi won the first set 23-21, before Urmi, representing Bangladesh Ansar, staged a strong comeback and took the remaining sets 21-13 and 21-14 respectively.

The 18-year-old shuttler has been crowned champion four times in different age groups during the Junior National Badminton Championships since 2016, but never crossed the quarterfinals in senior national championships.

"I had regularly been in practice during the pandemic because I was really serious about the Bangladesh Games. I worked hard for the past year. The Pabna DSA did a tremendous job for us because they kept their facilities open so that we could keep continuing practice," Urmi told The Daily Star. "Pabna DSA not only provided a coach, but also valuable sporting gear. Faruque sir, a member of the Pabna DSA, also gave me a scholarship worth Tk 5,000 per month so I



HIGHLIGHTS

➤ Gourav Singh of Sylhet DSA bagged gold in men's singles badminton after handing a 2-0 defeat to Al Amin Jumer of Bangladesh Army in the final.

➤ Bangladesh Ansar grabbed the gold medal in women's handball event with an emphatic 42-20 win over Bangladesh Police in the final.

➤ Bangladesh Ansar also became champions in boxing after winning five gold, two silver and as many bronze medals.

➤ After 14 records tumbled in previous days, weightlifters Ashiqur Rahman, Aminul Islam and Monira Kazi

made three more records.

➤ Bangladesh Navy became champions in basketball, handing a 57-52 defeat to Bangladesh Army in the final.

➤ Jheniadha DSA and Narail DSA booked the women's hockey final after beating Dinajpur 7-0 and Kishorganj 1-0 respectively in the semifinals.

➤ Bangladesh Army clinched the men's volleyball title with a 3-1 win over Bangladesh Air Force while Bangladesh Ansar became champions in women's volleyball event with a win over Bangladesh Police.

could improve my diet."

However, Urmi regretted that her own district sports association in Khulna did not provide anything for her when she sought daily conveyance of Tk 50 to 60 or a bicycle as transport. She then moved to Pabna in late 2017 to avail the facilities there.

Urmi also faced questions about whether the absence of the country's top two shuttlers, Shapla Akter and Alina Sultana had helped her strike gold more easily.

"I am actually upset by their absence. But both of them asked me about the Games. It could have been better had I got them on the way to winning the gold medal," said Urmi, whose father runs a small hotel in Labanchura.

"I started the campaign low on confidence but it grew the Games progressed even though I have nothing to lose as a junior player. My parents played a great role in bringing me to this stage because they supported me by mentally and financially."

The teenager also demanded to resumption of the league to ensure the future of shuttlers.

"I never got any leagues in my career. Now there are no tournaments or leagues and no way to earn money to help our family. I think the federation should provide salaries to the players who are representing the country," said Urmi.

'Mount fits into his role'

REUTERS

Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel praised midfielder Mason Mount's attitude after the England international scored his first Champions League goal in Wednesday's 2-0 win against Porto in Seville.

Mount and Ben Chilwell scored to put Chelsea in the driving seat ahead of the "home" leg of the quarter-final on April 13, which will also be played in Seville due to Covid-19 travel restrictions between Portugal and England.

Since Tuchel replaced Frank Lampard at Stamford Bridge in January, Mount has scored five goals in all competitions, more than any other Chelsea player.

"The finish was clinical from Mason," Tuchel told reporters. "He has the quality to do this and to do it in a quarter-final is a big step for him."

"He has the right attitude towards success. He is open and hungry to learn."

At 22 years and 87 days, Mount also



became Chelsea's youngest goalscorer in a Champions League knockout game. "Mason is a key player for us and I am happy he fits into this role at a young age," Tuchel added.



Bangladesh Women's Emerging team leg-spinner Rabeya Khan poses with the player-of-the-match trophy after her side's six-wicket victory over visiting South Africa Women's Emerging team in the third one-day of the five-match series at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. Rabeya claimed three wickets for 15 runs as the hosts confirmed the series win with two matches in hand.

PHOTO: BCB



DYBALA'S STUNNING RETURN

Juventus striker Paulo Dybala celebrates his goal with teammates during his side's 2-1 win over Napoli in Serie A on Wednesday. Cristiano Ronaldo fired the hosts into an early lead before substitute Dybala, making his first league appearance since January, curled a shot into the bottom corner to double their lead after 73 minutes. It was a huge result for Juve coach Andrea Pirlo, who came into the game under massive pressure after picking up one point from two matches against relegation-battling sides Benevento and Torino. The champions are third in the standings with 59 points, one behind AC Milan and 12 adrift of leaders Inter Milan. Napoli are fifth with 56 points.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Can anyone stop MI from hattrick title?

Cash-rich IPL kicks off today

REUTERS, New Delhi



Mumbai Indians (MI) have assembled a side that looks even stronger than their back-to-back title-winning teams, with only Delhi Daredevils and Sunrisers Hyderabad appearing capable of denying them a third straight Indian Premier League (IPL) crown.

Mumbai get the money-spinning tournament rolling in Chennai on Friday, just four months after claiming their second successive title, with a match against Royal Challengers Bangalore, led by India captain Virat Kohli.

Captain Rohit Sharma headlines a Mumbai batting lineup teeming with explosive hitters including Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav, who made impressive India



debut in the recent Twenty20 series against England.

Power-hitters Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya are adept at launching a late assault, while Trent Boult's powerplay skills and Jasprit Bumrah's death-overs mastery mean they have no real bowling woes either.

So dominant are Mumbai that they have won five of the last eight titles and former England captain

HIGHLIGHTS

➤ Bangladesh star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan already expressed his desire to play any role for Kolkata Knight Riders.

When asked about an IPL record he wanted to break, the 34-year-old replied, "Scoring a hundred and getting a five-for in the same match." Over the course of his eight seasons, he has played 63 games so far in the tournament and scored 746 runs at a decent strike rate of 126.65, and picked up 59 wickets.

➤ Having gone for the highest-ever price at an IPL auction, Chris Morris will carry some expectation into his eighth season of the competition. However, the South African all-rounder, who was sold to Rajasthan Royals for INR 16.25 crore,

told earlier that, "At the end of the day, you need to perform, no matter what the price tag is."

➤ Bangladesh's left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman will return to action in the IPL since the 2018 edition, having been purchased by Rajasthan Royals at the auction for INR 1 crore. But in a squad full of stars and big names, he will have to face stiff competition to ensure his place in the playing eleven. In the 2016 edition, when he made his IPL debut for Sunrisers Hyderabad, the Fizz picked up 17 wickets in 16 matches. But the next two seasons were lean as he didn't get much of an opportunity.



Michael Vaughan has said this side might be even better than India's Twenty20 team.

South Africa quick Dale Steyn was in no doubt Mumbai were the favourites again.

"I have got them as number one," he told www.espn.com this week. "I'm going with them winning it again."

David Warner led Hyderabad to their maiden IPL title in 2016 but the Australian's nagging groin injury

remains a concern. Hyderabad also lack firepower in their lower order, though they have a potent bowling attack that includes swing bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Afghan spin spearhead Rashid Khan.

Delhi had to change their captain after Shreyas Iyer, who led them to their maiden final last year, was ruled out of the tournament with a shoulder injury.

At 23, Rishabh Pant will be the IPL's youngest skipper this year but Delhi head coach Ricky Ponting has high hopes for the stumper-batsman.

Bangalore, the tournament's perennial underachievers, have added Australian Glenn Maxwell to the batting order but their death-overs bowling remains a worry.

England captain Eoin Morgan will lead Kolkata Knight Riders'



Bangladesh and Kolkata Knight Riders ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), wrote on his Facebook page yesterday: "Fighting against Corona". The rising Covid-19 cases among players, franchise staff and service providers associated with the tournament is giving organisers a big headache.

quest for a third title but Chennai Super Kings, who finished second from bottom last year, may struggle again.

The three-time champions failed to make the playoff for the first time last year and their core of ageing players, including captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, had little game time heading into this year's tournament.