



### ICC AWARD INSPIRES MUSHFIQUR

Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim has been named as International Cricket Council's Men's Player of the Month for May 2021. The governing body of world cricket introduced the Player of the Month Awards in January this year, with the winners decided through voting from ICC's voting academy and from fans across the world. "First of all I would like to thank ICC for nominating me for the month of May and even bigger thanks to those who voted for me. I think I'm not the only winner, Bangladesh, too, has been the winner here. Not just as player of the month, I will try to perform consistently throughout the year and will try to play my best innings, match winning innings in the coming days," Mushfiqur said in a video message to media after the announcement. The other nominees for the award were Pakistan pacer Hasan Ali and Sri Lanka's left-arm spinner Praveen Jayawickrama.

## Depleted Bangladesh up against Oman today

SPORTS REPORTER



A depleted Bangladesh football team will look for another defensive display in the World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifiers as they face Oman in their final group match at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha today, with the match kicking off at 11:10pm (BST).

The men in red and green largely displayed good defensive discipline in the previous two matches against Afghanistan and India, except for a few late mistakes which led them to concede one against Afghanistan -- a brilliant strike from Amir Sharifi -- and two against India, with Sunil Chhetri scoring both those goals. The focus in today's match will still be on keeping the defence unbroken as long as they can against Oman, who sit 104 places above Bangladesh in FIFA ranking.

Bangladesh are missing nine of the 11 players who started the reverse fixture in Muscat in 2019 which Bangladesh lost 4-1, with Mohammad Ibrahim and Riyadul Hasan Rafi the two players available from that starting eleven.

Having eked out a 1-1 draw against Afghanistan and conceding a 2-0 defeat against India recently, the focus for the Bangladesh team is giving their best regardless of the result.

"It's a tough fixture against a far superior team with us missing many players, so all I can ask is that they give their best. [I'm] just looking for another good performance from the players that are selected,"

Bangladesh coach Jamie Day told The Daily Star yesterday.

Since the match against India on June 7, the 41-year-old coach has worked on defensive organisation of the team, showing the players how to launch quick counterattacks and keep ball possession.

"We need to improve that [to have ball possession] but it's not easy against far better players but we will try that's all I can ask of them," said Day.

Echoing the sentiment of the coach, defender Tapu Barman, who is likely to wear the captain's armband in this match,

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JAMIE DAY  
BANGLADESH COACH

said, "If we can give our best collectively, we can hope for good performance but it is tough to resist a strong team like Oman, who can attack quickly from the flanks. They have tall and good players in number 9 and number 10 positions," Tapu said. "We haven't conceded any goals in the first half against Afghanistan and India and even against Oman in the away match. So we will try to keep that momentum to not concede goals in the first half."

## Abahani ride on Munim's blazing knock

SPORTS REPORTER



Abahani and Prime Bank Cricket Club are cruising along in the ongoing Dhaka Premier League T20 as both the clubs, with seven wins in nine games, are battling it out on top of the points table.

After a blistering unbeaten ninety in the previous game, opener Munim Shahriar once again smashed a quick-fire seventy while Najmul Hossain Shanto struck an unbeaten fifty, helping Abahani to post a huge total of 181 for 4 in 20 overs and eventually Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club was beaten by 49 runs in D/L method.

Munim and Najmul's partnership of 88 runs for the second wicket laid the foundation of a big total for Abahani. Right hander Munim was dismissed on 74 off forty balls which included three sixes and nine fours but Najmul remained unbeaten on 65 off 42 balls. Mosaddek Hossain



Abahani opener Munim Shahriar plays a slog sweep during his quick-fire 70-run knock against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

played an unbeaten 15-ball 26 came in the end.

Sheikh Jamal was set the revised target of 148 in 13 overs after the rain and they ended up on 98 for 8 where Mohammad Enamul's unbeaten 29 remained the highest score for the batting side.

Prime Bank rode on Rony Talukdar's fifty to post 147 for 7 and managed to bundle out Old DOHS on 125 to seal a comfortable 22 run win.

Rony alongside Tamim Iqbal added 51 run in the opening stand before the Tigers ODI skipper was

dismissed on 25. But Rony went on and added 54 off 39 balls while on the other side, Asaduzzaman Payel and Rakibul Hasan picked up two wickets each for DOHS.

In reply, DOHS kept losing wickets at regular intervals and were eventually bundled out to face their sixth defeat.

Gazi Group registered their sixth win in another rain-affected encounter against Partex Sporting Club where Mahmudullah Riyad's side registered a comprehensive nine wicket win in D/L method.

Partex posted a small total of 109 for 7 in 20 overs where Gazi were set the revised target of 48 runs in eight overs which they chased down with 15 balls to spare, courtesy of a 13-ball 33 run knock from opener Mahedi Hasan.

Elsewhere, Shinepukur Cricket Club clinched a 15 run win in D/L method over Khelaghar Samaj Kallyan Samity while Prime Doleshwar sealed a 14 run win over Legends of Rugganj. Mohammedan and Brothers Union shared points after the rain abandoned the game.



## 'Everything is possible'

AFP, Paris



Novak Djokovic has set his sights on the Golden Grand Slam of all four majors and the Olympic title, insisting:

"Everything is possible."

The world number one captured a second French Open and 19th Slam with a 6-7, (6/8), 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 win over Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas on Sunday.

It allowed him to become the first man in the Open era, and only third in history, to claim all four Grand Slam titles on multiple occasions. Now he has targeted being the third man to complete a calendar Grand Slam after Don Budge in 1937 and Rod Laver in 1962 and 1969.

On top of that, he also wants the Olympic gold medal to complete the Golden Grand Slam. "Everything is possible. Definitely in my case I can say that what I've been through in my career, in my life, this journey has been terrific so far," said Djokovic. "I've achieved some things that a



lot of people thought it would be not possible for me to achieve. "So everything is possible, and I did put myself in a good position to go for the Golden Slam."

The Golden Slam has never been achieved by a man while, in the women's game, only Steffi Graf in 1988 has swept all four majors and Olympic gold in the same year.

In Graf's case, Olympic gold came in Seoul. For Djokovic, the opportunity will come in Tokyo later this summer. "Obviously his goal and our goal is to win the Olympics and then win the Grand Slam. That would be the absolutely top of this year," said Djokovic's longtime coach Marian Vajda.

"But it's still far away from us. We have to still focus on the next one. But overall he's set up for this year. His priority is Wimbledon, Olympics and US Open. I think that says all."

Djokovic is already halfway to a calendar Slam having secured a record ninth Australian Open in February. Next up is Wimbledon, where he is the defending champion, Olympics and then a bid to win the US Open for a fourth time.

Novak Djokovic's French Open triumph has reignited the debate over who is the greatest male player of all time.

Seven-time major winner and former number one Justine Henin added: "When Djokovic, Federer and Nadal play at their best, it's Novak who probably stands out."



## TALISMAN NEYMAR SHINES

Brazil's talisman Neymar celebrates after scoring their second goal during a 3-0 victory over a coronavirus-depleted Venezuela on Sunday in the opening match of the 2021 Copa America. It was a great display from Neymar, who scored one and assisted another, as hosts Brazil began the defence of their title with a comfortable victory.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## EURO 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

The encounter between Netherlands and Ukraine is the first-ever match in the history of the European Championships to see five goals scored in the second half of a match that was 0-0 at half-time.

Four of Austria's five goals at the EUROs have been scored by substitutes (80%), including the two from Michael Gregoritsch and Marko Arnautovic against North Macedonia.

England have won all 11 of their internationals in which Raheem Sterling has scored, the best 100% winning rate when scoring any player in the national side's history, overtaking Martin Chivers (10/10).



## WIJNALDUM DEDICATES GOAL HONOURING VAN DIJK

Netherlands' Georginio Wijnaldum put his hand to his chin and poked out his tongue to replicate the celebration popularised by Virgil Van Dijk after scoring their first goal during a 3-2 victory over Ukraine in a thrilling Group C opener at the European Championship on Sunday. Van Dijk was ruled out of the tournament following an anterior cruciate ligament injury suffered against Everton in October. Wijnaldum revealed the following month he would celebrate in honour of the defender 'until my captain is back'. And the 30-year-old -- who left Liverpool on a free transfer this summer to sign for Paris Saint-Germain -- kept his promise as he netted the first. Flying full-back Denzel Dumfries scored a late winner after the Dutch had thrown away a two-goal lead. "I am relieved," Wijnaldum said. "Overall, we played a good game, but we gave them two chances in 10 minutes which were two goals. We need to learn that if we play such a match we need to finish it off well. We let them get back into the game and that needs to improve."

PHOTO: TWITTER

## BCB optimistic about Zim tour

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite Zimbabwe Cricket [ZC] putting on hold all cricketing activities in the nation as part of their latest COVID-19 lockdown restrictions in place from Monday, the Zimbabwe cricket board remained confident regarding hosting Bangladesh for a full series in the next month.

As per their government's directives, ZC has temporarily put on hold all cricket activities including the four-day match between Zimbabwe A and South Africa A which started on Sunday.

Bangladesh national cricket team are scheduled to fly to Zimbabwe on June 29 for a full series featuring one Test on July 7 followed by three ODIs and as many T20s.

The first of the three ODIs will be played on July 16 while the T20 series will begin on July 23. All the matches are scheduled to be held in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe.

Bangladesh are also scheduled to play a two-day practice game at Bulawayo on July 3.

BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury mentioned that he contacted his Zimbabwean counterpart and received an optimistic response regarding the upcoming tour.

"I have talked with the Zimbabwe Cricket CEO and he was confident that the series would go on. They [ZC] are already in talks with their government regarding getting permission to go ahead with the series. We are also positive about it," said BCB CEO Nizamuddin to The Daily Star.