

# SPORT

## What to WATCH

**SONY SIX & TEN 2**  
EURO 2020  
Round of 16  
Netherlands vs Czech Republic  
Live from 10:00 pm  
Belgium vs Portugal  
Live from 1:00 am (Monday)

**SONY SIX, TEN 1 & TEN 2**  
Copa America 2021  
Brazil vs Ecuador  
Live from 3:00 am (Monday)  
Peru vs Venezuela  
Live from 3:00 am (Monday)



## Abahani's third on the trot

SPORTS REPORTER



Abahani secured a hat-trick of Dhaka Premier League title by beating Prime Bank Cricket Club by eight runs in the final Super League game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

All-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin proved instrumental with bat and ball as Abahani posted 150 for seven before restricting Prime Bank to 142 for 9 in 20 overs.

"We were unable to pick up early wickets during the powerplays in the previous game against Sheikh Jamal. But today (Saturday) we managed to pick

for Abahani as the right-arm seamer bagged four wickets from four overs for the concession of 36 runs. Mehedi Hasan Rana took two wickets.

Earlier, Abahani were also struggling after electing to bat and were reeling on 31 for three, losing top three batsmen Mohammad Naim (0), Munim Shahriar (3) and Liton Das (19).

But Najmul Hossain and skipper Mosaddek Hossain rescued Abahani and added 70 for the fourth wicket to give them a platform for the Sky Blues to post a challenging total.

Najmul was the first to depart after scoring 45 off 40 while Mosaddek followed soon on 40 as Prime Bank managed to bounce back well in the



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

early wickets that helped us defend the total. It always feels good to be a part of the champion team and I am happy to contribute both with bat and ball in the title-deciding encounter, which is more satisfying from a player's point of view," man of the match Saifuddin told the media after the match.

Prime Bank were in all sorts of trouble after coming in to chase and lost wickets at regular intervals.

Opener Rubel Mia kept hopes alive from one end and top-scored with 41 off 43 balls but the likes of Rony Talukdar (1), skipper Anamul Haque (13), Raquibul Hasan (4) and Mohammad Mithun (6) failed to fire in the all-important game.

Experienced Alok Kapali had a 17-ball cameo that yielded 34 runs but it was not enough for Prime Bank to clinch a maiden title.

Saifuddin was the pick of the bowlers

latter stage of the innings.

Saifuddin then smashed two sixes off the last over of the innings from Mustafizur Rahman and was unbeaten on 21 off 13 balls.

Rubel Hossain picked up two wickets while Mustafizur, Nahidul Islam, Shoriful Islam and Rubel Mia took a wicket each for Prime Bank.

Earlier in the day's first match, pacers Ruyel Miah and Yeasin Arafat shone with the ball as Mohammedan ended their campaign with a convincing 25-run win over Prime Doleshwar in their final Super League encounter in Mirpur.

Following five consecutive defeats, this was Mohammedan's first win in the Super League stage. Mohammedan however ended at the bottom of the Super League table with 15 points from 16 games while Doleshwar stayed third with 21 points from nine wins in 16 outings.

## BELGIUM AND PORTUGAL face off in a mouth-watering clash

AGENCIES



Belgium and Portugal will trade tackles in one of the most high-profile round-of-16 fixtures in Euro 2020 tonight.

Belgium, the world's top-ranked side, face a difficult draw after taking maximum points from their three Group B matches, with Portugal going through as one of the four best third-placed teams, just as they did in 2016.

Belgium's golden generation have been top of the FIFA rankings for almost three years but are without a major tournament

triumph, losing in the semi-finals of Russia 2018 to France three years ago.

With an in-form Romelu Lukaku, Kevin De Bruyne back fit after a facial injury sustained in the Champions League final and Eden Hazard making his first start in the 2-0 win over Finland, the Belgians have no shortage in firepower of their own.

Lukaku believes he should be classified now as a world-class striker and says everything fell into place for him in the season just finished, as he looks ahead to meeting Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal tonight.

The comparison with the two has dominated the build-up to the last-16 clash between holders Portugal and top-ranked Belgium in Seville, in what could be the clash of the round.

Ronaldo is one goal away from setting a new record for most national

team goals, while Lukaku is Belgium's top scorer with 63 in 96 international appearances.

"At his age, he continues to shine and I'm going to try and get as close to his achievements as possible," Lukaku said of his Portuguese rival, who he added was a major source of inspiration and motivation.

"Oh, I need competition. When someone says he's better than me, I want to transcend him. Ronaldo wants to be the best at everything, (France striker Kylian) Mbappe also wants to win everything," Lukaku told reporters.

"I've taken a big step. (Robert) Lewandowski, (Karim) Benzema and (Harry) Kane used to be talked about as world-class strikers. For me, those sort of comment was always limited to: 'He is in shape'. Well, now I'm world class, too. That was my personal goal.

"It was important to start winning trophies, and the Serie A title with Inter gave me motivation and now I also want to win with the Red Devils. It would be the ultimate recognition for this team. If I play badly I will be really disappointed in myself and the team, because now is the right time to harvest."

## Czechs face Netherlands with history on their side

AGENCIES

Memphis Depay, who will join Barcelona next week, has been integral to the Dutch's stroll through the group stage, scoring twice and setting up one more as the Oranje racked up a perfect nine points and scored eight goals in three games. "Memphis is a guy of whom I see a specific focus and conviction, a need to show what he has and will to be the best within team in which he plays," Ruud van Nistelrooy, an assistant to coach Frank de Boer, heaped praise on

Memphis Depay. The Czech Republic, however, will enter tonight's game against the Netherlands as the odds-on favourites, at least when it comes to the history of their head-to-head encounters.

Since the Czech Republic emerged as an independent state in 1993, its national team has won five games and lost three against the Dutch, on top of three draws. Before that, Czechoslovakia memorably beat the Netherlands on the way to their only European Championship title in Belgrade in 1976.



## Three teams vying for two spots



AGENCIES

Brazil will be looking to end the Copa America group stage with a win when they face Ecuador while Venezuela lock horn with Peru in the other Group B match. Both the matches will start at 3am, Monday (Bangladesh Time).

Having already confirmed their first-placed finish in the group, Brazil will try to maintain perfect record but the other teams have plenty to play for, currently finding themselves in a battle for the final qualification spots with their final opportunity to pick up points. Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela are in the fight for the last two spots in the quarterfinals.

With four teams progressing out of the group of five, Group B has Brazil with nine points, followed by Colombia and Peru with four, Venezuela at three, and Ecuador counting two. Colombia is the only team that has already played all of its four group games.

If Peru doesn't lose to Venezuela it will advance for sure while Ecuador needs to beat still and defending champion Brazil. Ecuador can still advance with a defeat as long as Venezuela fails to win against Peru and the goal difference doesn't change much.

Group A has been decided with Bolivia missing out after three defeats. Argentina leads with seven points, followed by Paraguay with six, Chile five, and Uruguay four. Whoever finishes in the fourth position will face Brazil. Uruguay needs to beat or draw with Paraguay on Tuesday morning (6am, Bangladesh Time) to leave Chile in fourth place.

## KINGSLEY SCORES on historic 'debut'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh football witnessed a piece of history yesterday when Eleta Kingsley became the first naturalised footballer to play as a Bangladeshi in a Bangladesh Premier League fixture between Bashundhara Kings and Rahmatganj Sporting Club.

The 31-year-old striker, who has been playing in Bangladesh for a decade now and has settled here after marrying a Bangladeshi woman, recently acquired a Bangladeshi passport, making himself eligible to play as a local player.

The Nigerian-born striker was drafted in the starting eleven of champions Bashundhara Kings as the league resumed following a break of a month-and-a-half.

Kingsley, who had last played in a professional match last year for Arambagh KS, made the occasion all the more memorable with the opening goal -- a glancing header on a cross from Jonathan Edwards on 29 minutes as the league leaders won the game 2-1 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. The win took the defending champions to 46 points from 16 matches.

Rahmatganj, starting the match in ninth position with 14 points,

equalised through Christ Remi's placing shot from the top of the box 10 minutes later but Kings finished the first half with a one-goal lead, thanks to Raul Becerra's header on a curling free-kick from Jonathan.

Kingsley was one of three players taken off at the hour-mark as Bashundhara Kings looked in control but a straight red card to second-half substitute Tariq Kazi in the 87th minute for a foul-mouthed tirade at the referee gave them a few nervy moments towards the end.

Six-time champions Abahani will take on arch-rivals Mohammedan in the last game of the 16th round today.



## NEWS IN BRIEF



Bangladesh T20I skipper Mahmudullah Riyad was the surprise last-minute inclusion in Tigers' Test squad for the upcoming Zimbabwe tour. The 35-year-old returned to the Test side after 16 months, having played his last Test back in February 2020 against Pakistan. "We have a few injury concerns as both Tamim (Iqbal) and Mushfiqur (Rahim) continue to recover from their knee and finger injuries, respectively. Long tour and conditions in Zimbabwe demanded that we minimize risks and thus form a bigger squad. Mainly he (Mahmudullah) is the backup for the batsman Mushfiqur," cricket operations committee chairman Akram Khan told the media yesterday.



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has appointed Sri Lanka's Rangana Herath as Tigers' spin bowling consultant and South Africa's Ashwell Prince as their batting consultant. Herath will join the team in Zimbabwe and will be in the role until the end of Bangladesh's campaign in this year's ICC Twenty20 World Cup. Prince has reached an agreement with the BCB to work for the tour of Zimbabwe 2021. "We are planning to get Herath on a long-term contract and we will have Prince for a few series first and then plan to extend his contract till the next T20 World Cup," said Akram Khan.