

SPORT

What to WATCH T SPORTS
BANGLADESH PREMIER LEAGUE
Uttar Baridhara vs Saif Sporting
Live from 4:00 pm



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Liton Das (C) talks with Nurul Hasan (R) and Shamim Hossain Patwari following a training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday ahead of the New Zealand T20I series. (Bottom) Test specialists like Taijul Islam were also involved in individual training too.

Hockey clubs gearing up

SPORTS REPORTER



After a three-year hiatus, the hockey clubs are returning to activity following the announcement of the inter-club player transfers, scheduled for September 19 to 23 and with the hockey season getting underway through the Club Cup tournament from October 12.

Since the completion of the Dhaka Premier Division League in June 2018, Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) could not take the top-flight league to the turf due to international engagement of the senior and junior national teams, conflicts among club officials soon after the 2019 BHF elections as well as the outbreak of coronavirus last year.

However, things changed rapidly once Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina allocated a budget of Tk one crore for the 12 participating clubs in a bid to bring the Premier Hockey League back to the turf.

Following the budget announcement, the clubs have already started communicating with the players to form their squads. The top clubs, especially holders Mohammedan, runners-up Dhaka Mariner Youngs' Club and Abahani, are ahead of others in this regard.

"As a former player, I feel good that hockey is returning after a long gap. I have

already started talking to the players we targeted to sign up as I have been given the responsibility again after 10 years. I definitely want to repay the faith the club management had put in me by forming a strong team for the championship," Mohammedan's hockey secretary Sajed A Adel told the Daily Star yesterday.

Dhaka Mariners general secretary Hasan Ullah Khan Rana said, "We have already confirmed three top players out of a five-player quota and are negotiating other players to form a squad that will fight for the championship."

"We are yet to start the official procedure as the club directors are supposed to sit sometime later this month. However, unofficial discussion with the players is going on and we are hoping to form a strong team as Abahani always do," said Abahani's hockey secretary Zaki Ahmed Ripon.

A club official, seeking anonymity, said that the players are also demanding high salaries compared to 2018 but the club officials are not ready to spend high amount due to financial limitation amid the pandemic.

Since each club can field up to four foreign players against seven registered, the title contenders would want to first bank on the local players to form strong squads and then think of foreign players, whose movement could be susceptible amid travel restrictions due to the pandemic.

Bangladesh start SAFF campaign against SL

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will begin their SAFF Championship campaign by taking on Sri Lanka in one of the two opening day matches on October 1 at the National Football Stadium in Maldives as the fixtures of the 13th edition were disclosed yesterday.

The regional football extravaganza has turned into a five-team competition

after Bhutan failed to get permission from their government while Pakistan are banned by FIFA from taking part in any international tournament.

Following their opening match against Sri Lanka, the men in red and green will face two tough opponents – India and Maldives – before squaring off against Nepal in the final group match.

FIXTURES

DATE	MATCHES	TIME (BST)	VENUE
Oct 1	Nepal vs Maldives Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka	5:00pm 10:00pm	NFS in Male NFS in Male
Oct 3	Bangladesh vs India Sri Lanka vs Nepal	5:00pm 10:00pm	NFS in Male NFS in Male
Oct 6	India vs Sri Lanka Bangladesh vs Maldives	5:00pm 10:00pm	NFS in Male NFS in Male
Oct 8	Maldives vs Sri Lanka Nepal vs India	5:00pm 10:00pm	NFS in Male NFS in Male
Oct 11	Bangladesh vs Nepal India vs Maldives	5:00pm 10:00pm	NFS in Male NFS in Male
Oct 13	Final	9:00PM	NFS in Male

A test of patience for TEST CRICKETERS

SPORTS REPORTER



Following the recent historic T20I series win over Australia, Bangladesh cricket team are gearing up for the upcoming five-match T20I series against New Zealand and with the ICC T20 World Cup in sight, members of the Test team are currently passing an idle period.

The last time the Tigers played a Test match was against Zimbabwe in July this year, where the visitors went on to register a comprehensive 220-run win. Since then, the players who only play the Test format – the likes of skipper Mominul Haque, Shadman Islam, Abu Jayed, and Taijul Islam – are waiting for their opportunity to perform.

Later this year, Bangladesh will take on Pakistan to begin the new cycle of the World Test Championship, and venture into their busy schedule in the longest format. The Tigers will then host Sri Lanka for a two-match Test series which makes it important for the cricketers who are only considered in the longest format to remain in



touch and prepare themselves.

However, it is not easy to keep the focus intact especially with no domestic league schedule in the coming days, however the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has planned to keep these cricketers busy during this period.

The BCB has already announced the High-Performance (HP) squad to begin a training camp while the

likes of Mominul, Shadman, and the players who will not feature in the T20I series against New Zealand, will play for Bangladesh A team.

The HP side, following a 15-day training camp, will play three one-day and two four-day games against the Bangladesh A team in Chattogram next month.

Left-handed opener Shadman

Islam, who struck his maiden hundred in the lone Test in Zimbabwe, was seen training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

"I heard there'll be few matches against the High-Performance side and I hope those games will help us prepare. Also, the National Cricket League and the international series are lined up, so it is important for me to prepare for those challenges.

"Previously we didn't get enough Test matches but recently we played a few. And we also have the World Test Championship. I don't think the numbers are less but yes, if we can perform well we might get more test matches in future," Shadman told the media yesterday.

For someone like Shadman, exclusively a Test player for the Tigers so far, it is difficult to preserve the focus in a time when everyone is buzzing about the glamour of the T20 format.

"Obviously I also want to play in all the formats. During this off-season I am trying to work on my areas of weakness. Hopefully I can perform well and achieve my goal," he added.

Ronaldo rubbishes Real rumours

AFP, ROME

Cristiano Ronaldo on Tuesday blasted reports that he was trying for a return to Real Madrid, hours after coach Carlo Ancelotti also said he was not going to take the Juventus forward back to Spain.

In an Instagram post, Ronaldo said that his "story at Real Madrid has been written", although he did not explicitly say that he was not looking for a way out of Juve.

He said that such talk was "disrespectful" to both him and "to all the clubs involved in these rumours, as well as to their players and staff". "There have been frequent news and stories associating me with a number of clubs in many different Leagues, with nobody ever being concerned about trying to find out the actual truth," Ronaldo added.

"I'm breaking my silence now to say that I can't allow people to keep playing around with my name. I remain focused on my career and in my work, committed and prepared for all the challenges that I have to face. "Ronaldo has been the subject of a series of rumours about his future this summer.

On Tuesday Italian daily Corriere dello Sport said that his agent Jorge Mendes had offered the 36-year-old to Manchester City.

Other

outlets said that Paris Saint-Germain were interested but stepped back once they pulled off the signing of the close season, bringing free agent Lionel Messi to the French capital. Earlier on Tuesday, Ancelotti said that Real Madrid were not interested in the return of the man who fired the club to four Champions League triumphs.

"Cristiano is a Real Madrid legend and he has all my love and respect. I have never considered signing him. We look forward," Ancelotti said on Twitter.

Nagelsmann wants more trophies

AFP, Dortmund



Julian Nagelsmann joked that he wants to hoard titles like a 'hamster' after winning his first trophy at Bayern Munich with his debut victory as head coach of the Bundesliga giants.

Bayern swept aside league rivals Borussia Dortmund 3-1 on Tuesday to win the German Super Cup with Robert Lewandowski scoring twice in a stellar performance.

Nagelsmann, 34, is under pressure to win a tenth straight Bundesliga title for Bayern in only his first season in charge -- the champions drew Friday's opening league game at Moenchengladbach.

He celebrated with his team after captain Manuel Neuer lifted the Super Cup in Dortmund and joked that he hopes to hoard titles in the way hamsters store food.

"You can see that I have such small hamster teeth -- I'd like to be a title hamster," joked Nagelsmann.

"The title is a reward for our pre-season work. I am still happy, but it belongs more to others than to me,"



Bayern Munich coach Julian Nagelsmann celebrates with players after winning the DFL Super Cup with a 3-1 win over Borussia Dortmund on Tuesday.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Nagelsmann added after Bayern's impressive display.

Their head coach is not the only one who covets titles in his first season.

"This title is just the beginning, we still have a lot to do," wrote Bayern's new CEO Oliver Kahn on Twitter.

Nevertheless, Bayern's sixth straight win over Dortmund was a clear reminder of their status as Germany's top club.

Dortmund striker Erling Braut Haaland, who dazzled last Saturday

with three assists and two goals in a 5-2 thrashing of Frankfurt, had a frustrating night against the Bayern defence.

The towering Norwegian had a goal ruled offside, as did Dortmund striker Youssoufa Moukoko, 16, while the hosts pulled a goal back when their captain Marco Reus curled a long-range shot inside the post.

Nagelsmann described Robert Lewandowski, who turns 33 on Saturday, as "better" than Haaland. The Polish goal-machine has

now scored 24 times in as many games against his former club Dortmund.

Dortmund were left licking their wounds as defensive mistakes contributed to Bayern's goals.

Dortmund head coach Marco Rose acknowledged there are certain mistakes "you can't make" against Bayern and there were "one or two too many of them".

Both teams wore black armbands in honour of legendary Bayern striker Gerd Mueller who died last Sunday, aged 75.

NEWS IN BRIEF

AFC compensates Kings

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) agreed to give Bashundhara Kings compensation worth US\$57,000 after the Bangladesh champions claimed the amount following the sudden suspension of Group D Matches of AFC Cup in May.

The AFC was forced to suspend the AFC Cup fixtures in Maldives due to the surge in Covid-19 infections, leaving Bashundhara Kings to abort their scheduled departure for the island nation hours before the flight. The compensation included fees for hotel booking and ticket prices.

Petrakov replaces Shevchenko as Ukraine coach

Oleksandr Petrakov, who managed Ukraine's youth football team to victory at the Under-20 World Cup in 2019, was named acting coach of the Ukrainian national team on Wednesday. Petrakov, 64, who has coached various Ukraine youth teams for the past decade, takes over from Andriy Shevchenko, who managed Ukraine for five years and led the team to the Euro 2020 quarter-finals this summer but whose contract expired earlier this month.