

# What to WATCH

WEDNESDAY  
**T SPORTS & GTV**  
 ICC Men's T20 World Cup  
 Namibia vs Netherlands  
 Live from 04:00 pm  
 Sri Lanka vs Ireland

Live from 08:00 pm  
**TEN 2**  
 Uefa Champions League  
 Barcelona vs Dynamo Kyiv  
 Live from 10:45 pm  
**SONY SIX**

Uefa Champions League  
 Salzburg vs Wolfsburg  
 THURSDAY  
**T SPORTS & GTV**  
 ICC Men's T20 World Cup  
 Bangladesh vs Papua New Guinea

Live from 04:00 pm  
 Oman vs Scotland  
 Live from 08:00 pm  
**TEN 1**  
 Uefa Champions League  
 Chelsea vs Malmo

Live from 01:00 am  
**TEN 2**  
 Uefa Champions League  
 Manchester United vs Atalanta  
 Live from 01:00 am  
**TEN 3**

Uefa Champions League  
 Zenit vs Juventus  
 Live from 01:00 am  
**SONY SIX**  
 Benfica vs Bayern Munich  
 live from 01:00 am

## DAY'S EVENT

NCL (DAY-4)

KHULNA V RANGPUR, SICS  
 CHATTOGRAM V RAJSHAHI,

ZACS

DHAKA METRO V BARISHAL,  
 SICS Academy (Cox's Bazar)



Bangladesh opener Naim Sheikh smashes one through square during his half-century against Oman in their T20 World Cup Round 1 fixture at the Al Amerat Cricket Ground in Muscat yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

## 'Afghanistan are one of the tournament's dark horses'

AGENCIES



Afghanistan have enjoyed an astounding rise up the international cricket pecking order, taking huge strides at a rapid pace. Having familiarity with the conditions in the UAE where they have played the majority of their cricket, will the Asian side make a deep run in the tournament, springing a major surprise or two along the way?

Ever since their tournament debut at the 2010 ICC Men's T20 World Cup in the Caribbean, it has been a story of constantly striving for improvement.

While some of the faces of old still remain becoming a cornerstone of Afghan cricket, new stars have emerged, forging the side into a steely unit, capable of competing with the best that international cricket has to offer.

The 2021 edition in UAE and Oman will be another parameter where Afghanistan will gauge their current standing in the global game while charting their progress in international cricket.

Producing their best in the shortest format has always been Afghanistan's forte. It is the format in which they have revelled the most and can boast of having some of the most dangerous T20 players in their artillery.

Ever since gaining ICC's Affiliate status in 2001, Afghanistan cricket has come by leaps and bounds and are a genuine force to be reckoned with in T20 cricket. They have a formidable record in T20 cricket, having



played 84 matches and having won 58 of them, with a 69.64-win percentage.

"Experienced T20 players who have played in leagues around the world, such as Rashid Khan and Mohammed Nabi, definitely have a positive side. Afghanistan are one of the tournament's dark horses. The situation changes so rapidly in the T20 that neither side will downplay us. We are part of a team studded with stars from India, Pakistan, New Zealand and more and want to have a good show. Some of our players are playing in leagues around the world and the rest are training in Afghanistan. It should make our player stand firmly," Afghanistan coach Lance Klusener, who played 49 Tests and 171 ODIs for South Africa, told an Indian newspaper.

## United, Barca desperate for lift-up

AGENCIES



Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer faces a fight to lift his squad for Wednesday night's Champions League clash with Atalanta with the mood in the dressing room reported to have taken a massive hit following the 4-2 defeat to Leicester City last Saturday.

The scrutiny on Solskjaer is increasing ahead of Atalanta's visit to Old Trafford with progress to the last 16 of Europe's premier club competition far from certain.

Star forward Cristiano Ronaldo's last-gasp strike to snatch a 2-1 win over Villarreal three weeks ago was badly needed after United lost their opening game in Group F to Swiss champions Young Boys.

Solskjaer already has one early group stage exit on his CV. Last season the Red Devils blew a perfect start to be knocked out by Paris Saint-Germain and RB Leipzig.

Failure to reach the knockout stages again could be the final blow to Solskjaer's credibility among a fanbase beginning to turn on the man who famously won them the Champions League with a stoppage time goal against Bayern Munich in 1999.

Pressure will also be on Barcelona as after successive 3-0 losses to Bayern Munich and Benfica in Group E, another loss at home to Dynamo Kiev on Wednesday would leave them on the brink of Champions League elimination.

It would bring closer the possibility of failing to reach the knock-out stage for the first time since 2003, when Barca had not qualified for the competition.

For Barcelona, relegation would be particularly deflating, especially coming after the departure of Lionel Messi to Paris Saint-Germain.

Barca sit bottom of Group E with two games against Kiev up next, the first at Camp Nou on Wednesday. And coach Ronald Koeman insisted that there is no way but to win today to survive in the tournament.

"Tomorrow [Wednesday] we are playing for our future in this Champions League," said Koeman. "After losing two games, we have to win to have a chance of going through. There is no other option."

Koeman must decide whether to play Ansu Fati from the start against Kiev, with a Clasico against Real

Madrid to come on Sunday.

Fati has lifted the mood at the club since returning from 11 months out through injury.

He scored on his first game back against Levante last month and struck another goal in a 3-1 win over Valencia on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Bayern Munich will be without full back Alphonso Davies and midfielder Leon Goretzka when they face Benfica in Lisbon for their Champions League Group E encounter.

Goretzka is out with a cold while Davies, also nursing a cold, will be given a break to avoid fatigue due to the German champions' busy schedule in the coming weeks, coach Julian Nagelsmann said on Tuesday.

The Group H fixtures will see third-placed Zenit host leaders Juventus while Chelsea face Malmo at home.



## T20 World Cup blast by the numbers

Three days into the event, International Cricket Council (ICC) took a look at some of the most interesting statistics to emerge so far in the ongoing T20 World Cup.



### The highest wicket-taker

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is the new leading wicket-taker in men's T20 Internationals. The 34-year-old accounted for two wickets in Bangladesh's opening match against Scotland and has taken his career tally to 108 wickets - the highest for any bowler, breaking Lasith Malinga's record of 107 T20I wickets.

### New teams in T20 World Cup

Two teams have made their ICC Men's T20 World Cup debuts in this tournament. Papua New Guinea became the 20th team to feature while Namibia became the 21st team to appear in the tournament.

### Four in four

Twenty-two-year-old Curtis Campher had a dream T20 World Cup debut for Ireland in the match against Netherlands in Abu Dhabi. He etched his name in history books when he took four wickets in four balls and became only the third bowler to achieve this feat in Men's T20Is. The two before him were Afghanistan's Rashid Khan (against

Ireland in Dehradun in 2019) and Sri Lanka's Lasith Malinga (against New Zealand in Halle in 2019).

### Wicket with first ball in World Cup

In the game between Namibia and Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi, two bowlers took a wicket with their first ball. Sri Lanka's wily spinner Maheesh Theekshana, also named player-of-the-match for his three wickets for 25 runs, struck with his very first ball in the World Cup when he dismissed Stephan Baard. Namibian seamer JJ Smit created a similar record in the second innings when he got the better of Dinesh Chandimal.



### T20 World Cup for two teams

Only three men have played in ICC Men's T20 World Cup for two different teams. David Wiese is the latest to join the list. Wiese played the previous edition in India in 2016 for South Africa and is playing the 2021 tournament for Namibia.

## 'This is going to be another step up'

AFP, LONDON

Twenty20 cricket has given a platform for many players to carve out successful careers but few owe as much to the format as England fast bowler Tymal Mills.

Without the 20-overs-per-side game, the 29-year-old left-arm quick might already be well into his retirement after numerous and serious injury problems.

In Mills, England have a genuinely express left-arm quick, all the more valuable in light of the absence at the T20 World Cup through injury of fellow speed merchant Jofra Archer.

And while his England selection is far from guaranteed, Mills, a renowned "death" bowler at the end of the innings, believes he is also a smarter operator than when he made his name.

"Do I believe I'm a better cricketer than I was then? One hundred percent," he said. "I feel like I've got a lot more control. I've played a lot more games. I've got that experience under my belt."

"This is going to be another step up -- playing in a World Cup is as high a level of competition as you're going to get."

## Spinners continue to shine

Dhaka beat Sylhet inside three days

SPORTS REPORTER

Spinners continued to dominate on the third day of the first round of the National Cricket League while the Tier-1 match between Sylhet and Dhaka came to a speedy end, with the latter winning by seven runs at the Sylhet Academy Ground yesterday.

Dhaka started the day needing only 18 runs to secure victory and Saif Hassan's side chased the target in just 2.5 overs. However, the foundation for Dhaka's victory was established by left-armed Nazmul Islam Apu, who scalped 10 wickets in the match.

Spinners continued to shine elsewhere as well, with Dhaka Metro spinner Md Sharifullah picking a fiver against Barishal in a Tier-2 clash at the Cox's Bazar Academy Ground. The veteran gave away just 34 runs in his 23-over spell while his bowling ally Shohidul Islam scalped four for 41 runs.

The second day's play was called off due to inclement weather and Barishal started the third day with the six runs they had accrued at the end of day one. Fazle



Mahmud Rabbi's team then managed to reach 241 before being bowled out. Dhaka Metro ended the third day with 25 runs on the board in their second essay, giving them a lead of 23 runs.

Another demonstration of spin-bowling mastery was on display at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, where Chattogram's Nayeem Hasan plucked four wickets and Mehedi Hasan Rana bagged three against Rajshahi in a Tier-2 encounter.

Rajshahi's middle-order batter Towhid

Hridoy played a decent knock of 68 runs off 148 balls striking 10 fours before they were bowled out for 259, setting a meagre 77-run target.

However, Mominul Haque's Chattogram lost two early wickets to Sunzamul Islam and Towhid Hridoy and were on 15 for two when stumps were drawn. The hosts' skipper and Yasir Ali Chowdhury, who scored a ton in the first innings, are yet to bat.

Meanwhile, Rangpur's veteran spinner Sohrwardy Shuvo, who plucked three wickets on day two, collected three more against Khulna in the Tier-1 encounter at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium. The left-armed bowled 35.3 overs in the innings, featuring seven maidens and 165 dots.

Khulna opener Anamul Haque Bijoy, who resumed on 72, added just 12 runs before falling prey to Shuvo, and his side were bowled out for 260 in their first innings.

Coming in for their second innings, Rangpur were at 42 for no loss, giving them a 39-run lead.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Mariner Youngs Club's Harshdeep Kapoor attempts to block a shot from Bangladesh Police's Tanjim during the opening match of the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division League at the Maulana Bhashani Hockey Stadium yesterday. Mariner Youngs, the Club Cup champions, thrashed Police 6-1 before defending league champions Mohammedan blanked Dilkusha Sporting 10-0 in the second match of the day. The third match saw Abahani thump Azad SC 6-0.