

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

Dhaka Premier League
NCL (DAY-3)
Dhaka vs Khulna, Sics Academy

Rangpur vs Sylhet, SICS
Chattogram vs Dhaka Metro, BKSP
Rajshahi vs Barishal, Cox's Bazar

AGENCIES

"It's a nice thing, a nice stat. I don't really play the game for the stats, just excited about where I feel I am with my batting and for the rest of the tournament."

JOS BUTTLER ON SCORING 100s FOR ENGLAND IN ALL 3 FORMATS

Twenty20 World Cup favourites England effectively sealed a place in the semi-finals after Jos Buttler's incendiary century fashioned a 26-run victory against Sri Lanka in their Group I match on Monday.

Put in to bat, England's batting looked under pressure for the first time in the tournament but Buttler's unbeaten 101 off 67 balls fired them to a strong 163-4.

Sri Lanka were 137 all out in 19 overs, threatening to pull off an upset at one stage, but Eoin Morgan's team went on to notch up their fourth victory in as many matches to consolidate their position as group leaders.

Former champions England are bidding to become the first team to hold the 20-overs and 50-overs World Cups at the same time.

"I'm incredibly proud of everything we've done tonight. I felt the guys had to fight



unbelievably hard, particularly with the ball and in the first 10 overs with the bat," said England captain Eoin Morgan after the match.

"I thought Jos Buttler played one of his best ever innings in an England shirt. It was incredible to be at the other end and watch just the ebb and

flow, and then just the sheer domination at the end. He really is one of the best in the game, a privilege to play with and great to have in our team," he added.

"I found it tough early on, the spinners especially tricky with the low bounce and they were hard to get away. So I'm really pleased to keep a calm head and work through it, back myself to come good at the end and start to target certain bowlers and at certain ends with a shorter side on one side. I felt like I used a lot of experience," said Buttler.

Sri Lanka's spinners dictated terms early in the match to restrict England to 36-3 after the powerplay overs.

But Buttler and skipper Eoin Morgan (40) decided to go after the pacers and hit Lahiru Kumara for three sixes in the 15th over.

With Buttler going berserk with the bat, England plundered 116 runs in the final 10 overs. The stumper-batsman brought up his maiden century in T20 Internationals with his sixth six off the final ball of the innings.



An acid test for Namibia against marauding Pakistan

AGENCIES

Pakistan will aim to maintain their remarkable consistency against a spirited Namibia and seal a semifinal spot in the T20 World Cup in Abu Dhabi today.

Pakistan have raced to three wins in as many games starting with a resounding ten-wicket opening fixture victory over arch-rivals India followed by New Zealand and Afghanistan. Namibia qualified for the Super 12s for the first time and have won one and lost one so far.

Pakistan need another win to qualify for the semi-finals from Group 2 of the Super 12 stage.

Veteran allrounder Shoaib Malik said on Monday Pakistan's morale was "high". "The morale in the camp is high," said 39-year-old Malik before Tuesday's meeting.

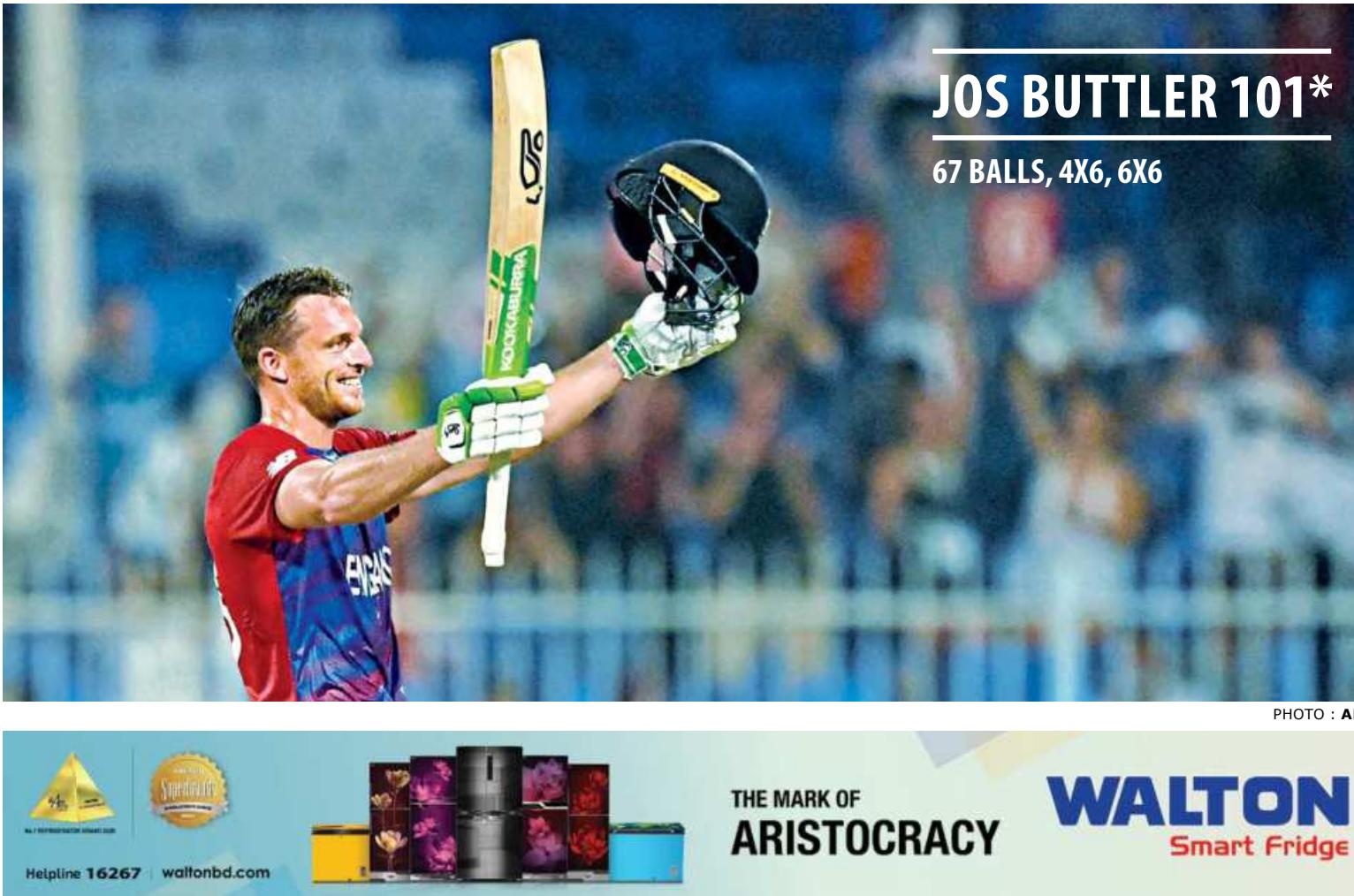
"When you win games, the confidence level is quite high in the dressing room. Everyone is looking forward to playing the rest of the games we have left in the tournament."

After a chaotic build up to the World Cup with England and New Zealand pulling out of Pakistan tours, the Babar Azam-led side has defied the odds and has become the team to beat in the tournament.

Following a historic win over India, Pakistan showed a few chinks in their armour against New Zealand and Afghanistan but that could not stop them from recording resounding wins.

If their in-form openers Babar and Mohammad Rizwan don't fire, Pakistan can rely on their middle-order and even if that is not enough, six-hitting machine Asif Ali will win the game for them on his own.

But Pakistan will be looking to ensure that they don't allow Namibia to comeback in the game after taking early wickets, something they were guilty of in the Afghanistan clash. Namibia, who were blown away by Afghanistan on last Sunday, will be looking to compete against a top side.



JOS BUTTLER 101*

67 BALLS, 4X6, 6X6

PHOTO : AFP

THE MARK OF ARISTOCRACY

WALTON Smart Fridge

Coaches under scanner as CL returns

AGENCIES



It's been a roller coaster of a ride but somehow Manchester United find themselves

top of Group F with six points and victory in Atalanta on Tuesday would all but guarantee the Reds a spot in the knockout stages of the world's most prestigious club competition.

United are narrow favourites in what is a wide-open betting heat but they have lost their last three away games in the UEFA Champions League and five of the last seven so their form on the road in this competition is hardly inspiring.

That said, it is undeniable that the Reds are well placed to be effective on the road provided they can get the defensive side of their game right, as

Atalanta have only won one of their last four games. The Italians have just four points so defeat this week would put them in real danger of failing to qualify for the next phase.

Meanwhile, Barcelona go into the biggest game of their season so far against Dynamo Kiev on Tuesday without the previous coach and still waiting for the next one to arrive.

Barca president Joan Laporta said on Friday he should have sacked Ronald Koeman sooner, that the club had been "dangerously drifting" and the situation was "unsustainable".

Yet removing Koeman days before the trip to Kiev looks like a gamble, not least because it assumes the team had a worse chance of winning under him than they do now under interim coach Sergi Barjuan, whose



them to pick up anything other than a defeat.

If they fail to get out of Group E and come third, Barcelona would have to win the Europa League to make up for the prize money lost.

In another Tuesday night clash, Bayern Munich will hope to use the criticism from their shock German Cup disaster to help them secure a spot in the Champions League knockout phase by beating Benfica.

Bayern are five points clear in Group E and a win over second-placed Benfica would guarantee a spot in the last 16 of the Champions League.

In Group H, table-toppers Juventus, with three wins from as many games, will be targeting a win against Zenit St Petersburg to confirm their place in the knockout stages. Sitting second in the group are defenders Chelsea, who will travel to Malmo with hopes of a dominating performance against a side who are at the bottom of the table without a point or a goal. Chelsea had crushed the Swedish side 4-0 at home just a fortnight ago.



they highlighted at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium during their 3-0 win on Saturday evening to ease pressure on coach Ole Gunnar Solksjaer.

Just when Solksjaer needed it most, United found a way to earn their first clean sheet since winning 1-0 at Wolves on August 29 and it will be a surprise if the Norwegian doesn't continue with the three centre-back policy that prevented Spurs having a single shot on target.

performance will also be under the scanner.

After losing both of their opening games 3-0 to Bayern Munich and Benfica, Barcelona gave themselves hope with a scrappy 1-0 win over Dynamo at home last time out. But another victory in the reverse fixture remains crucial, given Barca will finish the group stage at home to Benfica and then away at Bayern Munich, when few would expect

Ibra hits 400th-goal milestone

REUTERS

Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored his 150th Serie A goal as AC Milan inflicted Jose Mourinho's first home defeat in the Italian top flight with a 2-1 win over AS Roma at the Stadio Olimpico on Sunday to keep pace with Serie A leaders Napoli.

The 40-year-old striker rifled a low free-kick into the bottom corner in the 25th minute to put the visitors ahead after a lively start, his 400th goal in total in domestic leagues.

Ibrahimovic had a brilliantly finished second ruled out for offside after the break, just like team mate Rafael Leao in the first half, before going



down under Roger Ibanez's challenge to earn a spot kick that Franck Kessie converted in the 57th.

Milan were reduced to 10 men for the final 25 minutes after left back Theo Hernandez was shown a second yellow card, but Stephan El Shaarawy's stoppage-time strike was not enough to rescue the game for Roma.

Victory leaves Milan second, level on 31 points with leaders Napoli and 12 points ahead of fourth-placed Roma.

Nahidul smashes 175

SPORTS REPORTER

Khulna Division's Nahidul Islam played an enduring 175-run knock against Dhaka Division while national team batters Shadman Islam and Nazmul Hossain Shanto scored half-centuries for Dhaka Metro and Rajshahi Division respectively on the second day of the third round of 23rd National Cricket League yesterday.

Having rescued his side from a batting collapse on the first day with 73 runs at the Sylhet Academy Ground, Nahidul continued the good work yesterday, stitching together a 147-run seventh-wicket partnership with Mehedy Hasan Miraz. Mehedy scored 67 off 113 while Nahidul went on to score 175 runs, featuring 12 boundaries and six maximums that led Khulna to amass 419 runs. Dhaka, in reply, ended the day with 86 for no loss, with opener Abdul Mazid bringing up a half-century.

Meanwhile following centuries from Mahmudul Hasan Joy and skipper Mominul Haque on Day One at BKSP, Chattogram Division went on to score

445 for nine before declaring their first innings. Shohidul Islam and Abu Haider Rony scalped three wickets each for Dhaka Metro.

Afterwards, Dhaka Metro scored 119 losing four wickets before stumps were called. Skipper Shadman remained unbeaten on 66, his innings featuring four fours and a maximum.

However, at the Cox's Bazar Cricket Academy, Barishal Division ended their first innings on 404 against Rajshahi following a blistering ton from Shohag Gazi on the previous day. Rajshahi's Taijul Islam, who scalped a couple of wickets on Day One, plucked a couple more yesterday. However, reminiscent of his national Test teammate Shadman, Rajshahi's Shanto executed a patient 68 off 114 balls. In the other game in Sylhet, Rangpur suffered a batting collapse and were bundled out for 266 by Sylhet after having started the day with 82 for no loss. Enamul Haque Jr and Shahanur Rahman grabbed three wickets each for Sylhet. Later on, Sylhet came down to bat for their second innings scoring 32 for one as they ended the second day trailing by 121 runs.

