

What to WATCH

TEN 1
UEFA Champions League
Sporting vs Man City
Live from 02:00 am (Wednesday)

TEN 2
UEFA Champions League

PSG vs Real Madrid
Live from 02:00 am (Wednesday)

STAR SPORTS HD 1
EPL
Manchester United vs Brighton
Live from 02:15 am (Wednesday)

day)
SONY SIX
Australia vs Sri Lanka
3rd T20I
Live from 02:10 pm

‘Commentary a good option for future’

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal yesterday said that commentary could be a good option for him in future when he hangs up his bat after making an impromptu appearance as a commentator during a match of the Bangladesh Premier League in Mirpur yesterday.

Tamim, whose team Minister Group Dhaka exited from the group stage, did not let pass the opportunity to take up the mic when asked by the broadcasters.

“Feeling really good after commentating for the very first time,” the left-handed batsman said during his brief commentary stint.

“No plans regarding commentary at the moment, but it could definitely be a good option for future,” Tamim added.

The highest run-getter of this edition of BPL, Tamim has a reputation as a good speaker and a good leader. However, he admitted he felt a little nervous when he first picked up the mic in the commentary box.



Fortune Barishal successfully defended a middling total against Comilla Victorians to make the final after Chattogram Challengers knocked out Khulna Tigers in an exciting day of action in the BPL in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Barishal in final; Ctg stay alive

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Two pulsating games, each with their own themes and surprises in store, played out yesterday in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) and at the end of it all, Shakib Al Hasan's Fortune Barishal were smiling, through to the final of the BPL on February 18 after defending a middling total and thwarting two-time winners Comilla Victorians in the first qualifier with a 10-run win.

The conquered Victorians will go on to play the second qualifier on February 16 against Chattogram Challengers, who overcame Khulna Tigers by seven runs in the day match in a nervy eliminator.

Both games had been on knife's edge at certain points and both victors were on the backfoot in their respective matches. Barishal, sent in to bat, found opener Munim Shahriar on song yet again during

a 30-ball 44, laced with a few gutsy blows. Munim departed with the score on 84 for two inside the 10 overs before Barishal fumbled, with skipper Shakib running himself out. Barishal never recovered from that point, managing just 143 for eight in the end. Liton Das and Mahmudul Hasan Joy gave Comilla a flying start with 50 in just seven overs before Barishal started pulling things back, first squeezing the runs through some economical Dwayne Bravo overs.

Shakib was efficient with his changes, bringing in Mehedi Hasan Rana and Shofiqul Islam, the two turning the game with three wickets – those of Liton, Joy and Imrul Kayes – in quick succession. Some fantastic death bowling then saw Barishal defend 32 in final three overs, Rana and Shofiqul ending with two for 15 and two for 16 respectively.

Earlier, Chattogram overcame their captaincy shuffles and general chaos in a close victory. Without Will Jacks, out with food poisoning, it looked dismal when they lost four wickets in 10 overs after being sent to bat. An unbeaten 40-ball 89 from Chadwick Walton, during a record 115-run stand with Mehedi Hasan Miraz, saw them reach 189 for five. Khulna's Andre Fletcher then began making the score look small with an unbeaten 80 while Mushfiqur Rahim and Yasir Ali played assertive knocks but in a gripping last over, Miraz offset his own blues by defending 16 runs, giving away just eight.

Mushfiqur, yet to get his hand on a BPL trophy, felt that bowling let them down. “I am feeling bad for my team. Since we were runners-up last time, thought we could make the final” he said at the post-match press conference.

Wholesale changes for Afghan ODI series

SPORTS REPORTER

The Minhajul Abedin-led selection panel made wholesale change to the ODI squad for the three-match home series against Afghanistan, starting from February 23 in Chattogram.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced a 15-member squad, where as many as seven players from the 16-member ODI series against Zimbabwe in July last year.

SQUAD: Tamim Iqbal (captain), Liton Das, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Mahmudullah Riyad, Afif Hossain, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam, Ebadot Hossain, Nasum Ahmed, Yasir Ali Chowdhury and Mahmudul Hasan Joy.

OUT: Naim Sheikh, Mosaddek Hossain, Mohammad Mithun, Nurul Hasan Sohan, Taijul Islam, Mohammad Saifuddin and Rubel Hossain.

IN: Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Ebadot Hossain and Nasum Ahmed.

COMEBACK: Najmul Hossain Shanto made a comeback alongside uncapped all-rounder Yasir Ali Rabbi.

A stalemate despite two wonder goals

SPORTS REPORTER

The Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master Stadium in Tongi staged two superbly struck goals but eventually Mohammedan Sporting Club and Chittagong Abahani played out a 1-1 draw yesterday.

Mohammedan went ahead in the 27th minute, courtesy of an unbelievable strike from Souleymane Diabate, who had now scored three on the trot for the Black and Whites. Three minutes after resumption, Abahani equalised through Kamrul Islam, who somehow found the back of the net from a direct corner kick.

Meanwhile at Munshiganj, the day's other match between Uttar Baridhara and Swadhinata Krira Sangha too had ended in a draw, a goalless one in this case.



All focus on Mbappe as PSG face Real

AFP, Paris

As Paris Saint-Germain prepare to face Real Madrid in the Champions League, the French club hope a victory in the tie could yet help convince Kylian Mbappe to stay rather than move to the Spanish capital.

The clock continues to tick down on the World Cup-winning striker's contract in Paris which expires in June, five years after he joined his hometown team from Monaco in a 180 million-euro (\$204m) deal.

It is understood PSG turned down an equivalent offer from Real last August to keep Mbappe for at least one more season and team him up in attack with Lionel Messi and Neymar.

That seemed to prove money is no object for the Qatar-owned club, but it appears that all the money in the world may not be enough to convince Mbappe, now 23, to stay at the Parc des Princes.

Real's pursuit of the France star goes back to when he was a young teenager and they invited him and his parents to take in a game at the Santiago Bernabeu, having Zinedine Zidane meet him at their

training ground.

He opted to sign for Monaco then, and he chose PSG in 2017 despite again being linked with Real, yet an eventual move to Madrid has always seemed inevitable.

In Paris, they are clinging to the hope Mbappe could change his mind if Mauricio Pochettino's team beat Madrid in their Champions League last-16 tie, with the first leg at the Parc des Princes on Tuesday to be followed by the return in Spain on March 9.

It is a pivotal moment for PSG. This season has simply confirmed that, while a 34-year-old Messi is on the wane and Neymar remains plagued by injury, Mbappe represents the future.

A loss to Real, followed by Mbappe confirming his departure would feel like a humiliation for a club still chasing elusive Champions League glory, 11 years on from the Qatar Sports Investments takeover.

Meanwhile, regardless of the outcome of this tie, Madrid need a new talisman. Karim Benzema is 34 and Luka Modric will soon be 37, while Gareth Bale and Eden Hazard have been increasingly sidelined

under Carlo Ancelotti.

City's latest 'diamond' Cancelo key to CL pursuit

Manchester City's quest to win the Champions League resumes this week with a homecoming for three of their most consistent players this season in a trip to Sporting Lisbon.

Joao Cancelo, Ruben Dias and Bernardo Silva all began their careers on the other side of the Lisbon divide with Benfica before following the familiar path abroad for the best Portuguese talent.

Cancelo made just one Portuguese league appearance before the first step on a journey that at 27 has already taken him to Spain, Italy and England when he moved to Valencia in 2014.

But he looks set to play his prime years in Manchester after extending his City contract to 2027 earlier this month.

City look well set to win a fourth Premier League title in five years and second in Cancelo's three seasons at the club. But the Champions League has continued to prove elusive despite the billions poured in by the club's Abu Dhabi owners over the past decade.



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