

SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Bangabandhu Cup International Kabaddi
Bangladesh vs Malaysia
Live from 10:00 am
South Africa vs Bangladesh

2nd ODI
Live from 02:00 pm
FA CUP
Nottingham Forest vs Liverpool
Live from 12:00 am (Monday)
La Liga

Real Madrid vs Barcelona
Live from 02:00 am (Monday)
TEN 2
Bundesliga
Koln vs Borussia Dortmund
Live from 12:30 am (Monday)



Group phase heads into crunch time

SPORTS REPORTER

As Australia have already secured their place in the semi-finals of the ICC Women's World Cup, with their highest successful run chase in the event against India, all eyes are now on the remaining three spot as teams head into must-win encounters.

Bangladesh, being World Cup debutants, weren't tipped to compete for the top four places. However, their first-ever win in the event has kept them in contention, on paper at least, despite being seventh in the table, with two points in four matches played so far.

Victory over Pakistan, who are knocked out already, was well earned by the Tigresses, but the narrow four-run loss to West Indies in their previous outing means that Bangladesh must pull off three consecutive upsets against India, Australia and England, in that order, to qualify for the last four.

India had an inconsistent run so far. Despite huge wins over Pakistan and West Indies, losses to New Zealand, England and Australia caused their fate to no longer be in their own hands.

South Africa, so far, gathered eight points, which may well be the threshold for semifinals qualification. Thus, the West Indies will look to reach the checkpoint by beating Pakistan while New Zealand, with four points, and England, with two points, cannot afford to lose as they lock horns today.

PACE BATTERY finds its footing



MAZHAR UDDIN

The biggest threat to any side visiting South Africa has arguably always been the fast and bouncy nature of the tracks, conditions the hosts consistently utilise to undo opponents across the formats. For Bangladesh, those wickets not only presented a challenge to the batsmen, who had to contend with two pacers who feature among the top 20 ODI bowlers in Kagiso Rabada and Lungi Ngidi. It was also a big ask of the Tigers' pace-bowling unit to match the hosts.

In the end, Bangladesh's pace bowling trio of Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam and Mustafizur Rahman did not just match the hosts' efforts but saw the Tigers come out on top. Credit must go to the Bangladesh team management, undoubtedly helped by the presence of the South Africans in the coaching panel, including head coach Russell Domingo and new pace-bowling coach Allan Donald.

After being asked to bat, Bangladesh openers Tamim Iqbal and Liton Das negotiated Rabada and Ngidi cautiously. In their first

spells, Rabada conceded twenty from six overs while Ngidi gave away 18 runs from five overs respectively. The plan to hold onto their wickets saw Bangladesh post their best opening stand in South Africa as Tamim and Liton put on 94.

But after an initially conservative approach, the batters let loose. Rabada went on to concede 37 runs from his last four overs while Ngidi gave away 57 runs from his

allowed Bangladesh's batters much more room.

Taskin was far and away the standout on Friday, ending with three wickets for 36 runs from 10 overs, including a maiden.

The tall quickie bowled faster than the others in terms of average speed while maintaining a tight line and length, which saw him restrict the hosts and accumulate 40 dot balls.

In fact, 78 per cent of Taskin's deliveries hit the length against the right-handers, which earned him the wicket of the dangerous Rassie van der Dussen. Among the 13 per cent of his deliveries that found the fuller-length were the balls that got the better of Kyle Verreynne and Aiden Markram.

Shoriful also proved a valuable component in the pace battery and did not shy away from hitting the deck and testing the hosts.

Although 68 per cent of his deliveries against right-handers were length deliveries, 15 per cent found the back of the length. He ended with two wickets for 47 runs from eight overs. And while Mustafizur Rahman may have not picked up a wicket, his experience emboldened Taskin and Shoriful.

It took a while for Bangladesh's pace-bowling unit to take shape after first showing promise in the historic Test win in New Zealand earlier this year and it will be interesting to see how Donald chooses to chisel any rough edges and equip the Tigers with a venomous pace attack that can win matches abroad.

SEAMERS AVERAGE SPEED (KPH) IN THE FIRST ODI

Taskin Ahmed—	138.0 (Fastest 141)
Kagiso Rabada—	135.5 (Fastest 147)
Shoriful Islam—	135.1 (Fastest 140)
Mustafizur Rahman—	133.3 (Fastest 141)
Marco Jansen—	131.4 (Fastest 142)

next five overs.

Jansen also remained on the expensive side, conceding 57 runs and picking up two wickets, while fourth seamer Andile Phehlukwayo recorded 63 runs for one wicket in ten overs as the Tigers posted a huge 314 for seven in their allotted overs.

One of the biggest differences between the sets of pacers on Friday was line and length. Bangladesh seamers bowled a lot closer to the batters while the South African seamers



» We can win the series. We have to give ourselves every chance. They will be eager to bounce back: Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal.

» Sunday is a must-win game for us. We have to up our game in all departments: South Africa captain Temba Bavuma.

» Bangladesh will have their eyes on the bigger picture today, said all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz ahead of the second ODI. "You have to dream big to achieve something big, and we are dreaming big as a team. We are looking forward to win away series, like the home series. We want to win Asia Cup, World Cup and we are planning accordingly."

» A resolute and resourceful Bangladesh side not only won their first-ever ODI in South Africa, as they beat the hosts by 38 runs at the SuperSport Park on Friday, but also extended their lead at the top of Super League table to 15 points over second-placed England (95) while South Africa (35) occupy 10th place, 15 points behind the eighth-placed West Indies.

» South Africa need to win the second ODI today at the Wanderers to stay alive in the series and get crucial Super League points in order to keep their hopes alive for qualifying in the upcoming ICC ODI World Cup.

Nasrin leads archers' gold hunt

SPORTS REPORTER

Led by Nasrin Akter Bangladesh stormed to three gold medals in archery's Asia Cup World Ranking Tournament, Stage-1, in Phuket yesterday.

Nasrin was involved in all three gold medal wins as Bangladesh won the top prizes in recurve mixed team event, recurve women's team event and recurve women's individual event.

The first gold came in the mixed team event when Nasrin, pairing up with the country's best male archer Roman Sana, beat their Indian counterparts - Ridhi Salunkhe and Parth Sushant - in 5-3 sets in the gold-medal match.

Minutes later, Nasrin grabbed her second gold medal of the event, this time pairing up with Diya Siddique and Fahmida Sultana Nisha in the recurve women's team event. This time too, the opposition were India. Bangladesh won the match in 5-4 sets.

The last one was recurve women's individual event, where Nasrin was up against Diya, who had participated in the Tokyo Olympics last year. However, Diya failed to put up much of a resistance as Nasrin swept to the gold medal with a 6-2 sets victory.

Even though Bangladeshi women excelled expectations in this competition, there was a bit of disappointment in the men's draw as Bangladesh lost three bronze medal matches.

Men's recurve team lost against Malaysia; Hakim Ahmed Rubel lost against his Kazakh opponent in recurve individual match while men's compound team lost against Iran - all in the bronze-deciding matches.

However, the three gold and one silver medal were enough to see Bangladesh go top of the medals tally of the six-nation event, which concluded yesterday.



Bangladesh players catch an England raider during the opening day's play of the 2nd Bangabandhu Cup International Kabaddi Tournament at the Shaheed Noor Hossain National Volleyball Stadium yesterday. Defending champions Bangladesh got off to a flying start with a 46-15 points victory over England in the eight-nation tournament.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BD qualify for Asia Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh ensured their Asia Cup berth while moving into the final of the AHF Cup following an 8-1 thrashing of Kazakhstan in the second semifinal in Jakarta yesterday.

Ashrafur Islam scored four goals while Khorsheedur Rahman added two as the three-time defending champions cruised into Sunday's final, where they would meet Oman, the latter beating Sri Lanka 2-1 in the first semifinal earlier on Saturday.

All those six goals were scored from penalty corners before Rasel Mahmud Jimmy and Sohanur Rahman Sabuj added two field goals. Kazakhstan scored a consolation goal in the fourth quarter of the match.

Bangladesh, the three-time defending champions of AHF Cup, will meet Oman in the final today. Bangladesh had beaten Oman 3-2 in the group stages.