

What to WATCH

TEN 1  
UEFA Nations League  
Austria vs France  
Live from 12:45 am  
(Saturday)  
TEN 2

England vs New Zealand  
2nd Test, Day 1  
Live from 04:00 pm  
UEFA Nations League  
Denmark vs Croatia

Live from 12:45 am  
(Saturday)  
SONY SIX  
Pakistan vs West Indies  
2nd ODI  
Live from 05:00 pm

‘An opportunity to fare better in next match’

SPORTS REPORTER

Following a creditable performance against mighty Bahrain, Bangladesh are due for another major challenge in their next match against Turkmenistan in the Asian Cup Qualifiers on Saturday.

Although Bangladesh suffered a 2-0 defeat to Bahrain – who are 99 places ahead of Bangladesh in FIFA rankings – in their opening Group E match, the charges of Javier Cabrera earned a fair bit of praise after executing their game plan without many errors in the highly intense encounter on June 08.

Assistant coach Masud Parvez Kaiser believes that the high-voltage matches of late in the AFC Cup and the FIFA friendlies elevated the self-belief of the men in red and green to fight against the better teams till the dying minutes instead of surrendering before the final whistle.

Bangladesh’s backline, composed of makeshift defenders, did well to maintain their shape throughout the game against a side who had beaten Iran, a World Cup playing nation, in the recent past.

Defender Yeasin Arafat believes there is room for improvement against Turkmenistan.

“As a defender, we had a lot more expectations than how we ended up performing against Bahrain. However, I think we have an opportunity to fare better in the next match compared to the first match,” said the promising left-back of Bashundhara Kings.

Assistant coach Hasan Al Mamun informed that Bangladesh would stick to their existing game plan against Turkmenistan as well.

“We know the strength of opponents, so we are working on it. We want to play as a unit and keep working on the low-block defence and counter fast like we did against Bahrain,” said Mamun.



A rejuvenated England will aim to carry on from the five-wicket victory at Lord's when they face New Zealand in the second Test in Nottingham, starting today. Meanwhile, the Black Caps would dearly love a big score from captain and star batter Kane Williamson at Trent Bridge.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Focus on performance, not past failures

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh’s batters struggled immensely against the Windies pace attack against the new ball during their last tour of the West Indies. There are a few more changes in the batting line-up this time around, with Mahmudullah Riyad having retired from Tests while Mushfiqur Rahim decided to opt out of the series.

On their last tour, Liton Das had opened with Tamim Iqbal. But since then, Liton has staked his claim further down the order and struck a rich vein of form in Tests. This time, Tamim and Mahmudul Hasan Joy will have to face the early music. How hopeful are the team management that the top order, which recently failed at home against Sri Lanka, will find the right approach and get back into the runs in West Indies?

The hope is that the experienced players can finally get back amongst the runs so that the Tigers do not produce dismal Test scores such as the 53 and 80 they managed on the tour of South Africa. Or the 43 all-out they produced during that last tour to the West Indies in 2018. After the recent Sri Lanka series, even coach Russell Domingo said there may be changes to the batting order to overcome such disastrous collapses.

There is heavy presence of left-handers

in the top-order and, given the statistical evidence that lefties have been struggling against right-arm pacers for the past five years or more, the challenge will be steep for Tamim Iqbal, Nazmul Hossain Shanto, Mominul Haque and skipper Shakib Al Hasan.

“Given the tendency of right-arm pacers to now come around the wicket to left-handers, it’s a different proposition. We have seen how David Warner was troubled by Stuart Broad in recent times. I think

the top-order has been struggling a bit but some have also been amongst the runs so I wouldn’t say it’s an overtly worrying factor,” selector Habibul Bashar told The Daily Star yesterday.

“Yes, it’s becoming a thing in our line-up that there are three left-handers in the top four, but if you look at Mathew Hayden and Justin Langer, both were lefties but opened the innings and dominated. At the end of the day, it’s about performances. In terms of tactical or strategic changes, the management will decide how to get the best out of the players. The batting coach will be working with the lefties about the incoming deliveries and whatever can be done better before the Tests.”

Bangladesh are missing a bit of

experience in the middle order but there is Yasir Ali, Liton and Shakib to provide resistance. Crisis management will be an issue. “We will definitely miss Mushy. Apart from Yasir, other batters are being watched for that position,” he said about the middle order.

The West Indies announced their squad for the first Test, including a couple of young faces such as Devon Thomas and Gudakesh Motie. The Windies are still waiting on a fitness update to Kemar Roach, who has been very successful against Bangladesh over the years.

“We know that they have a good pace attack but we can’t go by the opposition’s strengths, we have to ensure we get the best out of our players,” he added.

One of the bigger issues is whether former skipper Mominul can find his feet after a dismal run. “We know Mominul’s calibre as a batter. He has the most Test centuries in the line-up. Captaincy is never easy and it might have had an impact. I am hopeful that he will be able to find his form because there was a clear gap in his average before and after captaincy,” Bashar concluded.

The Tigers began skills training yesterday and will play one three-day warm-up match against CWI President’s XI, starting from June 10, to acclimatise to conditions in Antigua before the first Test on June 16.

Bangladesh Test captain Shakib, who is set to join the team today, may not be part of the opening day’s play in the warm-up game.

## Can Babar emulate Sangakkara’s record today?

AGENCIES

After becoming the first batter to have notched three consecutive hundreds in ODIs on two separate occasions, Pakistan skipper Babar Azam has now his eyes set on yet another record.

Thanks to Babar’s ton and Khushdil Shah’s late cameo on Wednesday, Pakistan beat West Indies by five wickets in Multan to go 1-0 up in their ongoing three-match series.

The 27-year-old had scored two consecutive centuries in his last two ODIs against Australia at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore and followed it up with a ton against West Indies, making him the first-ever batter in history to score three consecutive ODI hundreds on two occasions.

He first scored three back-to-back ODI hundreds (120, 123 and 117) during Pakistan’s ODI series against the West Indies in the UAE in 2016.

Babar’s 103-run knock also saw him become the quickest player to notch 17 ODI centuries and the fastest to complete 1,000 ODI runs as captain.

Pakistan will take on the Windies in the second ODI today at the Multan Cricket Stadium, and another ton for Babar today will see him match the heights of Sri Lanka great Kumar Sangakkara.

Sangakkara is the only player to hit four consecutive ODI centuries during the 2015 World Cup in Australia-New Zealand. And not many would put achieving the feat past the 27-year-old Babar who is seemingly still on an upward trajectory in his career and recently targeted becoming the first player to be ranked number 1 in all formats.



## Youth and Sports to get Tk 1282 crore

SPORTS REPORTER

The Youth and Sports Ministry received an allocation of Tk 18 crore more for the 2022-23 fiscal year compared to the ongoing fiscal year when finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal placed a Tk 6,78,064 crore national budget.

Although there was anticipation that the budget for the youth and sports sector would be reduced following the economic downturn, the government allocated Tk 1282 crore to the ministry for 2022-23, with an operating budget of Tk 876 crore and a development budget of Tk 406 crore.

The allocation is higher than the revised outlay of Tk 1264 crore as well as the original allocation of Tk 1122 crore in the current fiscal.

“We emphasised two things in the sports budget: to create employment for the younger generation by conducting training, increasing the amount of training, organising more competitions and participating in more overseas tournaments,” State Minister for Youth and Sports Jahid Ahsan Russel told The Daily Star after the budget was placed.

“We had a Tk 32 crore budget for sports training and participating in tournaments both locally and internationally. We are expecting to get Tk 10 crore more for the same purpose,” Russel said.

# What Bend It Like Beckham meant for Yasmin and UK women’s football

THE GUARDIAN

When Yasmin Hussain was a child growing up in Manchester in the 1990s, she was football mad. At first she played the sport with boys, but when she turned 13 her parents told her she needed to find a women’s team to continue. The problem was, there wasn’t one.

At that time, women’s football was a niche sport rarely depicted on screen. When Bend It Like Beckham came out in 2002 – telling the story of Jesminder and her battle to play football against the wishes of her parents – Hussain was left thinking: “She’s lucky, she had a team to join. I didn’t have one.”

Twenty years later, fans are celebrating the anniversary of the groundbreaking film on Tuesday and looking forward to the biggest ever year for women’s football in the UK as England host the Euros this summer.

When Bend It Like Beckham came out, women’s football was not a professional sport and rarely appeared on television. This year, tickets for the final at Wembley sold out within an hour.

But the film ignited an early spark for many women, and especially British Asians, who saw their own experiences

of wanting to play the game but struggling to find a way to reflected for the first time.

The landscape has since changed dramatically. In 2020, the Football Association reported that 3.4 million girls and women now play football, and a 54% increase in affiliated women’s and girls’ teams since 2017. Football is now the most popular sport among women and girls in the UK.

Hussain’s experience mirrors the trajectory of women’s football: after giving up the game, she trained as a coach five years ago, aged 33, reluctant to abandon “the only thing that gives me joy”. She now coaches Frenford & MSA, a team of 80 female players.

“I’d never seen a film about a young British south Asian woman, let alone one who did sport. It meant so much to me in so many ways because it was representation I’ve never seen before or since. It’s more of a cultural moment than a film for me,” journalist Miriam Walker-Khan said. Although considerable progress has been made in women’s sport since the film came out, Walker-Khan said stigma and stereotypes still hold back many south Asians.

Visibility has been a key driver of

the sport’s rapid growth in popularity in recent years, said Stacey Pope, an associate professor of sport at Durham University. This started in 2011, with the creation of the professional Women’s Super League, and reached a turning point in 2015 when the Women’s World Cup garnered widespread, serious media coverage for the first time.

This created role models and inspiration for women, and helped shed the sport’s image as a “bastion of masculinity”, which had been reinforced by a ban on women’s football that lasted until 1971, she added.

Sophie Downey, who runs Girls On the Ball, which has promoted women’s football since 2012, said that, as well as the professionalisation of the game, the biggest changes in recent years have been at grassroots level.

“It’s about young girls having the knowledge they can play for fun and join in, and that access just wasn’t there 20 years ago,” she said. “I think we’re at the tip of the iceberg, we’ve got the Euros this summer and that will be the biggest moment in history for the sport in this country. There’s a lot of room for it to grow but it’s looking really positive at the moment.”

