Star SPORT
DHAKA SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 3, 2022, BHADRA 19, 1429 BS

What to WATCH

GTV AND STAR SPORTS 1
Asia Cup
Sri Lanka vs Afghanistan
Live from 08:00 pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
Premier League
Everton vs Liverpool
Live from 05:30 pm
Chelsea vs West Ham
Live from 08:00 pm
Aston Villa vs Manchester City
Live from 10:30 pm
TEN 1
Australia vs Zimbabwe
3rd ODI
Live from 05:40 am
T SPORTS
La Liga
Real Madrid vs Real Betis
Live from 08:15 pm

Real Madrid take on in-form Real Betis

AFP, *Madrid*

Real Madrid put their perfect start to the season on the line this weekend against Real Betis, the only other La Liga team with a 100% record, before kicking off their Champions League defence.

Carlo Ancelotti's side top the table on goal difference above Copa del Rey holders Betis, who like Madrid have won their first three matches of the campaign.

Madrid will play at the Santiago Bernabeu for the first time this season on Saturday as renovation work continues on their iconic ground.

Goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, who was nominated for the UEFA player of the year prize won last week by team-mate Karim Benzema, expects Betis to give them a difficult afternoon.

"Betis play really well. Last season we had some tough games against them. They play good football, they've got loads of experience and we'll have to press them well, while being careful," said Courtois.

"It's going to be a good match. Then we've got the Champions League, so I hope we can keep winning with another victory in our first home game. It'll be tough, but we'll be ready."

Madrid, the record 14-time European champions, begin their European quest away to Scottish champions Celtic next Tuesday, while Betis visit HJK Helsinki in the Europa League.

Barcelona appear to be hitting their stride, with Robert Lewandowski striking twice in each of the past two outings following a goalless draw on the opening weekend.

Having finally been cleared to make his Barca debut in the 4-0 win over Real Valladolid, France defender Jules Kounde could line up against his former club Sevilla on Saturday.

Both clubs will hope to fare better in this season's Champions League after failing to advance from the group phase last year. Barca's first assignment is against Viktoria Plzen, while Sevilla must find a way to stop Erling Haaland and Manchester City.

Atletico Madrid, Spain's fourth representative in the Champions League, go to Real Sociedad before returning home to face Porto.

Villarreal and Athletic Bilbao, who have both yet to concede a goal, aim to remain unbeaten as they take on Elche and Espanyol respectively.

Player to watch: Borja Iglesias

The chief catalyst behind Betis' impressive start, Iglesias has four goals after scoring in each of his club's first three matches -- wins over Elche, Mallorca and Osasuna.

The 29-year-old spent much of his early career with the Celta Vigo reserves before a successful loan spell at Real Zaragoza in 2017-18 brought about a move to Espanyol.

He struck 17 times in his first full season in the top flight, catching the eye of Betis who paid 28 million euros for him -- the club's most expensive transfer since forking out what was then a world-record fee for Denilson in 1998.

After netting just three goals in his debut season with Betis, Iglesias bagged a combined 32 goals in all competitions over the past two years, and has begun the new campaign in style.

Atalanta players celebrate their 3-1 win over Torino in a Serie A fixture at the Atleti Azzurri d'Italia Stadium in Bergamo on Thursday. Dutch midfielder Teun Koopmeiners scored all three goals as Atalanta moved to the top of the table with 10 points from four matches. PHOTO: TWITTER

Premier League clubs shatter spending record

AFP, *London*

Manchester United were the biggest spenders on the Premier League's transfer deadline day as they splashed out £82 million ($94 million) on Ajax forward Antony, while Chelsea's frenzied spree culminated with a swoop for Barcelona forward Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang.

Against the background of Britain's cost of living crisis, Premier League clubs showed no caution, reportedly breaking the all-time record spending total for an entire season with an incredible £2 billion changing hands in just one transfer window.

The previous £1.86 billion record from 2017-18 was surpassed because United and their domestic rivals found no outlandish fee or wage demands beyond them.

As of last Thursday, gross spending by the 20 Premier League teams stood at £1.5 billion, surpassing the 2017 record of £1.43 billion spent by English clubs in one close-season window.

United manager Erik ten Hag has been responsible for a large chunk of the spending after returning to his former club Ajax to sign Antony.

The 22-year-old Brazilian is the fourth-most-expensive player in Premier League history.

"This is an incredible moment in my career to be joining one of the most iconic clubs in the world," Antony said.

United had a busy window, signing Casemiro for £60 million from Real Madrid and Lisandro Martinez from Ajax for £56 million.

Ten Hag sealed another less expensive deal on Thursday as Newcastle keeper Martin Dubravka arrived on a season-long loan to serve as back-up to David de Gea.

Even United's spending pales compared to Chelsea, who splashed out around £240 million as their new American owners made a significant statement in their first window.

Having finally landed Leicester defender Wesley Fofana for a reported £70 million on Wednesday, Blues boss Thomas Tuchel reunited with Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, who thrived under the German during their time at Borussia Dortmund.

The 33-year-old cost £10.3 million as he returned to the Premier League nine months after leaving Arsenal following his rift with Gunners boss Mikel Arteta.

"I'm really happy. It's an honour to be part of this team and I can't wait to start. I have some unfinished business with the Premier League so it's good to be back and really exciting," Aubameyang said.

Manchester City strengthened their injury-hit defence by signing Swiss international Manuel Akanji on a five-year deal from Dortmund.

Akanji will provide the Premier League champions with extra defensive depth after recent injuries to centre-backs Aymeric Laporte and Nathan Ake.

"City have been one of the best teams in Europe over the last few seasons. Coming here feels like the perfect next step in my career," said Akanji, who cost City a reported £17 million.

Akanji is City's second raid on Dortmund this summer after their £50 million deal for Norway striker Erling Haaland.

Liverpool made a late move by signing Arthur Melo on a season-long loan from Juventus in response to their midfield injury problems.

The 26-year-old Brazilian said: "I'm really happy to be here wearing this great shirt with this famous badge that represents so much in world football. It's a dream."

Bairstow out, Roy dropped for T20 World Cup

REUTERS, *London*

England batter Jonny Bairstow was ruled out of the rest of the summer and the Men's T20 World Cup following an injury.

Bairstow sustained the lower limb injury in a freak accident whilst playing golf in Leeds on Friday. An announcement over who would replace bairstow in the squad will come shortly, said a message from England and Wales Cricket Board.

Meanwhile England, earlier in the day, dropped out-of-form opener Jason Roy and welcomed back fit-again seamers Chris Woakes and Mark Wood in their squad for the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia beginning next month.

Roy has been an integral part of England's white-ball squad and his explosive batting at the top of the order embodied the team's aggressive approach as they won their maiden 50-overs World Cup title in 2019.

The 32-year-old has struggled for runs this summer and hit 76 runs in total in his last six Twenty20 Internationals which made his position untenable for the World Cup and the preceding seven-match Twenty20 series in Pakistan.

Woakes and Wood, both of whom last played for England during the test tour of the West Indies in March, have recovered from their respective injuries to be in both squads.

The World Cup squad includes Chris Jordan (finger) and Liam Livingstone (ankle) who will skip the Pakistan tour to continue their rehabilitation.

Jordan Cox, Tom Helm, Will Jacks, Olly Stone and Luke Wood are the five uncapped players named in the England squad for the Pakistan series which begins on Sept. 20 in Karachi.

'Got around 250-300 congratulatory messages'

Although volleyball was once widely practiced around the country, the sport began to lose its popularity in recent times until the men's senior national side recently started attracting attention after finishing as champions and runners-up on a few occasions in the Asian Senior Men's Central Zone International Volleyball Championship. The youth volleyball team followed in those footsteps, surprisingly finishing fifth in the just-concluded 21st Asian Men's Under-20 Volleyball Championship in Bahrain. Captain Tanvir Hossain Tonmoy was one of architects behind that success and the 6ft 2in 19-year-old spoke to The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman about their thrilling journey in the 17-nation tourney among other topics. The excerpts are below:

ANISUR RAHMAN

The Daily Star (DS): What was the team's target in Bahrain and what was the secret that helped you defy the odds?

Tanvir Hossain (TH): To be honest, we did not much hope in such a high-level competition, especially considering we were participating after a long time. Our mentality was to win one of the two group matches against Iraq or Australia to make it to the second round, but the win over Iraq in the first match changed everything. We grew a lot in confidence because Iraq finished fourth in the last edition of the championship. We barely had any idea of any of our opponents, but we started believing that we could do something. 90 people at the stadium predicted that Iraq would beat us handily but in the end we emerged as group champions and advanced to the round featuring the top 12.

DS: Was that burgeoning confidence the only factor behind those results?

TH: Actually, 10 players out of the 12 in the squad were from BKSP so we had a good understanding because we spent a lot of time together at BSKP. The bottom line is that the preparation was really good. We worked hard and had two months of training.

DS: Of your five matches, three went down to the wire and demanded a deciding fifth set. Despite that, you came out triumphant against mighty teams like Qatar and China. How did you do that under so much pressure?

TH: The players have experience in the senior national team so that helped us a lot when it came to getting out of tight situations. There were also players with experience in the premier volleyball league. Finally, we had really good preparation. I practiced for seven to eight hours per day instead of the usual six.

DS: How much did Iranian coach Alipour Aroji influence the squad?

TH: Our local coaches also did a wonderful job in the first month before Aroji conducted the practice matches. He also worked towards rectifying the mistakes we made. He basically improved our skills and made a winning combination for matches.

DS: What are your next assignments?

TH: I think five players from the U-20 team are set to join the U-23 national team, which will play an invitational tournament in Dubai this month. They will then return home to prepare for October's Bangabandhu U-23 Central Zone Volleyball Championship in Dhaka. We really want to do even better at home.

DS: How do you see the future of volleyball in Bangladesh?

TH: Bangladesh usually participate in less international competitions, so it is tougher to produce good results. Nations likes Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka did not send their teams to the Asian U-20 Volleyball Championship, but our president dared to send us on the back of good preparation. We repaid his faith. Iran, the eventual champions of the U-20 championship, have been together for last five years. So, if our U-23 team can stay together for the next three years, I believe we can also become champions in the Central Zone championship. If there are age-group teams that play international tournaments regularly, we can hope for a good future for the country's volleyball.

DS: What changes have you noticed after such a stellar showing in the U-20 championship?

TH: Today [Thursday], some people I was unfamiliar with identified me as a volleyball player. I felt almost unrecognisable despite representing the national team before, but Asian U-20 championship gave me a new identity. One person from Saudi Arabia also called me to inquire about different things. After beating Iraq, we all were allowed to use our phones for one-and-a-half hours and I got around 250-300 congratulatory messages. I still haven't read all of them. In Bahrain, I became acquainted with some Korean and Australian players while a Thai player hung out in our room before our departure. We also got a good response, especially after beating China.

Kyrgios fined for spitting, obscenities

REUTERS, *New York*

Fiery Australian Nick Kyrgios has been fined $7,500 for "spitting and audible obscenities" during his second-round win at the U.S. Open on Wednesday, tournament organisers told Reuters.

The fine was the largest handed out to a player at the tournament so far.

The Wimbledon finalist maintained a running dialogue with himself throughout his 7-6(3), 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 win over the Frenchman Benjamin Bonzi but boiled over when he was broken late in the fourth set.

He immediately spat in the direction of his players' box and swore at a man there he deemed as being insufficiently supportive.

"Go home if you're not going to (expletive) support me, bro," he shouted during the changeover. "You are not a spectator."