

Star SPORT

DHAKA SUNDAY AUGUST 6, 2023, SRABAN 22, 1430 BS

What to WATCH

T SPORTS

FIFA Women's World Cup
Netherlands vs South Africa
Live from 8:00 am
Sweden vs USA

Live from 3:00 pm
GT20 Canada final
Live from 10:00 pm
SONY SPORTS 2
Durand Cup
Delhi FC vs Hyderabad

Live from 3:00 pm
East Bengal vs Bangladesh Army
Live from 5:30 pm
FA Community Shield
Manchester City vs

Arsenal
Live from 9:00 pm
DD SPORTS
West Indies vs India
2nd T20I
Live from 8:30 pm

Lyon 'didn't really see Bazball'

ICC

Australian spinner Nathan Lyon has said that he "didn't really see Bazball" during the two Tests he played against England in Ashes 2023.

Lyon played the first two Tests of the thrilling Ashes series — at Edgbaston and Lord's — before a calf injury ruled him out.

The spinner was brutal in his assessment of England's style of play under Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum, famously dubbed 'Bazball', and played down the hype around it. "I know everyone keeps talking about Bazball, to be honest, I didn't really see Bazball... throughout my two Tests against them," Lyon told SEN Cricket.

The Australian said that the aggressive brand of batting deployed by England should be complemented by the flexibility to change gears when needed.

"I'm 2-0 in my Tests against Bazball," Lyon said, reminding that Australia did not lose both Tests he featured in during the Ashes. "I look at the Australian cricket team and the batters we've had, David Warner for example. I've seen him score hundreds in a session and that's off playing an attacking brand of cricket."

"I think there's a lot of smoke and mirrors with Bazball, if I'm being honest with you, and I feel like if you're going to play an aggressive brand of cricket anyway, it's about being able to go up and down in gears and understanding the moments in the game."



Recipients elated with sports award



PHOTO: BSS

Legendary hockey player and organiser Abdus Sadek received a lifetime achievement award from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the Sheikh Kamal National Sports Council Award at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital yesterday.

SPORTS REPORTER

Sports personalities from different disciplines have expressed their elation after receiving Sheikh Kamal National Sports Council Award from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital yesterday.

Ten sports personalities and two organisations were handed over the awards in eight categories in recognition for their outstanding contribution to sports at the programme, organised by the NSC and the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Among the recipients were legendary hockey player and organiser Abdus Sadek, women's football team captain Sabina Khatun and cricketer Taskin Ahmed.

Each of the awardees received Tk 1 lakh, a crest and certificate.

Sadek, the legendary hockey player who also played football, recalled his affection towards Sheikh Kamal, the eldest son of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, after whom the award has been named.

Sadek received the national sports award in 1996. Now he has won the NSC award for his lifetime contribution to sports and took the award from the same person 27 years later.

"I received both the awards from the Prime Minister. But this award is special as it is named after Sheikh Kamal. I was the captain of Abahani's first football team, so I have many memories with

Sheikh Kamal," Sadek said in his reaction.

Footballer Sabina, who led the Bangladesh team to the title of the SAFF Women's Championship last year, said this award is special since it is an individual award.

"I have received many awards in the past and I have also accepted awards from the honourable Prime Minister. But today's reward is above all," she said.

Cricketer Taskin, who has been in terrific form in recent times, was overjoyed with getting his first national award.

"For the first time I have received a national award, it is a matter of great pride for me to receive the award from the honourable Prime Minister," Taskin said, adding: "She was asking what matches we have ahead. Honourable Prime Minister herself was saying that Asia Cup, World Cup are ahead, good luck to all, play well."

Among the others to receive the award were: South Asian Games gold medallist weightlifter Ziarul Islam, young table tennis player Muhtasin Ahmed Hridoy, young hockey player Amirul Islam, cricketer-turned-commentator Athar Ali Khan, veteran photojournalist Khandakar Tarek, grassroots hockey organiser Ustad Fazlu, Kalsindur Govt School and College's principal Mala Rani Sarker, Bangladesh Archery Federation and Bangladesh Association of Banks.

The youth and sports ministry introduced the award in 2021.

Opening spot under scanner

MAZHAR UDDIN

As a lingering back injury forced Tamim Iqbal to sit out the upcoming Asia Cup, once again the Bangladesh selectors are faced with a new challenge: to find a replacement for the experienced cricketer in crucial opening position.

With Liton Das primed to take the major responsibility at the opening position in Tamim's absence, it will be interesting to see who will be his partner in the regional tournament, approaching in less than a month's time.

The opening pair of Tamim and Liton had mostly featured in the last year or so. Interestingly, with or without the vastly experienced left-hander, the opening stand remained a vulnerable aspect for the Tigers. Although there were a few bright performances from the duo in the last 18 ODIs, consistency was lacking from both Tamim and Liton.

The team management did try different opening pairs in Tamim's absence. The likes of Naim Sheikh, Anamul Haque, Rony Talukdar and even Najmul Hossain Shanto were featured in the opening stand alongside Liton in different games.

After Tamim announced his sudden retirement after the first ODI against Afghanistan last month, Naim got the opportunity following a prolific run in the Dhaka Premier League. The left-hander, though, failed in both matches and the selectors stayed in a limbo as they look to finalise the Asia Cup squad.

According to national opener Imrul Kayes, it will be important for the selectors to back whoever is given opportunities in the coming days.

"Look, someone like Tamim was not made overnight. If I talk about Liton even,



"Obviously, losing Tamim is a setback. With Tamim on board, we previously looked for a back-up opener but now we have to look for a proper opener as well. We, however, do have a few options in mind. Let's see what happens."

Selector **Habibul Bashar**

he too got enough opportunities before he eventually started to deliver. But if I talk about the others, did they get enough opportunities compared to Liton? I think it is very important that the selectors back everyone like they did with Liton, or even Shanto," Imrul told The Daily Star.

"Someone like Naim may have failed with the bat in the last series but he did come on the back of a brilliant run in the Dhaka [Premier] League. So, he should get more opportunities."

There were talks over including a fresh face in the opening spot. Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Mahmudul Hasan Joy or Zakir Hasan are candidates for a surprise inclusion heading to the mega event.

Former captain and selector Habibul Bashar Sumon told The Daily Star, "Obviously, losing Tamim is a setback.

With Tamim on board, we previously looked for a back-up opener but now we have to look for a proper opener as well. We, however, do have a few options in mind. Let's see what happens."

Imrul thinks "it is very important for the selectors to also groom the youngsters by keeping them in the squad, thus giving them the exposure which will help them whenever they get an opportunity".

"If I talk about Tanzid Tamim or if there are some other options in hand, then why not? But you also need to understand the type of mindset Tanzid will have. It won't be the same for Liton because he then has the responsibility to play the leading role. In that case, Liton may have to change his strategy as a batter and we have to understand that," he said.

Imrul opined that a successful opening

pair requires great understanding, and at times there are different roles to play in various situations.

"Now a days we see there are a lot of talks about the strike-rate. I would like to tell you that batters get only one chance and the bowlers have more options in international cricket. No player can bat at the strike-rate of over ninety in every game, and at times it depends on the game situation. If Liton bats at a strike-rate of over ninety, then the batter at the other end may not be able to go at the same flow, and it is natural," said Imrul.

"In world cricket, if I talk about Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan, there are very few occasions when you see both the batters scoring at the same rate in a game. So, it is important to complement each other and I feel this is one of the reasons Tamim Iqbal took the pressure on himself and tried to change his game."

BANGLADESH'S OPENING STAND IN ODIs FROM AUGUST 2022 TO 2023

Total no. of matches: 18

No. of openers and opening pairs used: 6

Tamim Iqbal - Liton Das: 10 matches (Partnerships: 33, 1, 1, 15, 42, 102*, 3, 9, 30, 119)

Tamim - Rony Talukdar: 1 (18)

Naim Sheikh - Liton: 2 (15, 2)

Tamim - Anamul Haque: 2 (71, 41)

Najmul Hossain Shanto - Liton: 1 (0)

Anamul - Liton: 2 (11, 33)

Riise praises Japan's tiki-taka style

AFP, WELLINGTON

Norway coach Hege Riise said Japan will be hard to beat at the Women's World Cup after the 2011 champions powered into the quarter-finals on Saturday with a 3-1 win.

Japan will face either defending champions the United States or Sweden in the last eight after outplaying Norway in Wellington.

Riise was full of praise for Japan's tiki-taka style -- using fast, short passes to open up the opposition.

"They are a great team with a lot of good players and tactics," said the Norway boss, whose side has never looked like repeating their 1995 title success.

"The combination of tiki-taka with direct play is hard to defend."

Even deploying five defenders, Riise said Norway struggled to cope.

The defence was "a little bit shaky in the first few minutes, after that we kind of settled, but Japan is a great side", she said.

"Credit to Japan -- how they played and how they broke us down," she added.

"Even with the plan we had, we were solid in defence at times, but not quite good enough."



Spain midfielder Aitana Bonmati (R) celebrates after scoring her team's first goal in 5-1 demolition of Switzerland in the Women's World Cup Round of 16 match in Auckland yesterday. Doubts were raised about Spain's ability to go far without a fully fit Alexia Putellas but Bonmati's starring role showed that they are not over-reliant on the current Ballon d'Or winner. [Inset] Japan midfielder Hinata Miyazawa celebrates after scoring her team's third goal during a 3-1 victory over Norway in the Round of 16 match in Wellington.

PHOTO: AFP

How can I say I don't like Liton [Das] as a captain? Liton led Bangladesh to a series win against India. But whatever the case, Shakib [Al Hasan] will be the front-runner. He has way more experience as a captain, and his intelligence would be there for consideration. But I don't want to belittle Liton. He has done really well as captain in the past. But I believe, when Shakib is in a team, he should be given the leadership. This is my personal opinion.



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) director **Khaled Mahmud Sujon**

City the 'team to beat', says Arteta

AGENCIES

Arsenal are determined to fight for all trophies in the new season as the Premier League runners-up begin their 2023-24 campaign against treble winners Manchester City today in the Community Shield, manager Mikel Arteta said on Friday.

Arsenal's title challenge crumbled last season in the face of a relentless City, who have won three successive top-flight titles before winning their maiden Champions League crown in June.

Arsenal enjoyed an eight-point lead over City until mid-March but lost it at the end of April and will now look to seek revenge in Sunday's traditional curtain-raiser to the Premier League season at Wembley.

"Very excited to play a final to win a trophy, we are playing against the team to beat," Arteta told reporters.

"This is what we want (a new era for Arsenal), fighting for every trophy. We have to prove that. What we did last year was not enough to win the big trophy, and we have to be better."

"We have to try and maintain the level and improve it for them (fans)."

But head-to-head record against City does not help Arteta's cause as the Spaniard has lost on eight occasions in the nine matches he has faced against a City side as coach, with the only win coming in the 2020 FA Cup semifinal.

In the last decade, only one side has been able to lift the Premier League after winning the Community Shield, and that was City in 2018.



PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Manchester United completed the signing of Denmark striker Rasmus Hojlund from Atalanta yesterday. The 20-year-old signed a five-year deal, giving United manager Erik ten Hag the striker he has longed for going into the new season. United play Wolves in their opening Premier League fixture on August 14.