



What to WATCH

T SPORTS AND GTV
ICC Cricket World Cup
Bangladesh vs
England

Live from 11:00 am
Star Sports 2 and 3
Pakistan vs Sri Lanka
Live from 2:30 pm

Jamal hopes Tigers reach semifinals

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh football team's captain Jamal Bhuiyan said he hopes, like everyone else, that the cricket team will reach the semifinals in the World Cup.

The poster boy of Bangladesh football, while speaking at a press conference at the Bashundhara Kings Arena yesterday, also hoped that the cricketers will reciprocate fans' expectations.

"I'm sure everyone here wants that Bangladesh team reaches the semifinals at least. Everyone will be happy and proud if they can reach the final," Jamal told reporters when asked of his expectations of the cricket team.

The midfielder, who currently plays in an Argentine club, has recently joined the squad for a few training sessions. The team will leave for Maldives for a FIFA World Cup prequalifying match today and will host the Maldivians in the reverse fixture next week. "We support any Bangladesh team. We hope for the best from the Bangladesh team and hopefully they can do the best for us," the football team captain said.

Bangladesh cricket team will play their second match of the World Cup against defending champions England in Dharamshala today after having opened their account with a six-wicket victory against Afghanistan three days ago.

SRI LANKA'S THEEKSHANA boost against Pakistan

PAKISTAN-SRI LANKA STATS

● Pakistan boast a clear numerical dominance overall, having won 92 of 156 matches. 59 games went in Sri Lanka's favour, while one game ended in a tie and four yielded no result.

● Their World Cup encounters paint a completely polarised image, with Sri Lanka yet to win against Pakistan after seven matches in the format. Their 2019 fixture was washed out.

● In matches played on Indian soil, Pakistan lead Sri Lanka 4-3 after seven games.

● Sri Lanka emerged victorious by a slim two-wicket margin in their last meet, in the recently concluded Asia Cup.



REUTERS, HYDERABAD

Spinner Maheesh Theekshana is set to play Tuesday's World Cup match against Pakistan after recovering from a hamstring strain, assistance coach Naveed Nawaz said on Monday.

Theekshana sustained the injury during

the Asia Cup last month and missed their comprehensive defeat by South Africa in their tournament opener in New Delhi on Saturday.

"I think he should be available for this game," Sri Lanka batting coach Naveed Nawaz told reporters.

"Obviously, we didn't want to take a risk with him in the first game and didn't want to

go against the advice of the medicals."

Sri Lanka arrived with a depleted attack after fast bowler Dushmanta Chameera and spin all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga were ruled out of the World Cup with injuries.

In New Delhi, South Africa racked up a record 428-5 exposing their bowling limitations.

With Theekshana back to lead their spin attack, Nawaz said they would have a proper plan against Babar Azam's side.

"Somebody will have to come up and take wickets up front and take wickets in the middle overs as well. We have a plan under our belt for that," he said.

"With Mahesh Theekshana coming in, I think our bowling attack is going to be a little bit stronger as well."

Pakistan began their campaign beating the Netherlands but would face stiffer challenge against 1996 champions Sri Lanka.

Head coach Grant Bradburn said they would bank on the insider's knowledge provided by team director Mickey Arthur, who coached Sri Lanka between 2019 and 2021.

"We have a secret weapon, if you like, in Mickey Arthur, who has coached them before," Bradburn told reporters.

"We had our scouting meetings and video meetings this morning, and Mickey was a very, very handy addition to those meetings to be able to add in some intricate points around their batters and bowlers."



Ibrahim Nesar no more

SPORTS REPORTER

Ibrahim Nesar, a former FIFA referee and deputy chairman of the Referees' committee of Bangladesh Football Federation, passed away at a hospital in Dhaka in the early hours of Monday.

Nesar had been in life support at the hospital for the last few days after battling with cancer for five years.

He was 62. Nesar left behind a son, a daughter and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death.

Azad Rahman, the chairman of the Referees' Committee, informed that the late referee was laid to rest at the Faridabad Graveyard in Gendaria in the afternoon after his first namaz-e-janaza was held at the BFF premises and a second one in front of his house in Gendaria.

Nesar had started his refereeing career in 1987 and hung up his whistle in 2007. He had officiated in international matches from 1999 to 2004. He was appointed as a member of the Referees' Committee, where he had been working as a deputy chairman till his demise. He had also worked as a match commissioner of the BFF.

Booters shrug off controversy to embark on 'the two most important matches'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national football team will want to leave behind their off-field distractions as they leave for Maldives today to play the first match of a two-legged World Cup pre-qualifier on Thursday.

The build-up to the crucial matches against their South Asian rivals have been marred by the suspension of five players, who were initially suspended by Bashundhara Kings over disciplinary issues and later excluded from the national team over the same issue.

Three of those five players - goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico, defender Topu Barman, forward Sheikh Morsalin - are regular starters in the national team and played key roles in the team's run to the semifinals of the SAFF Championship in India in June this year.

Zico had been adjudged the goalkeeper of the tournament while Morsalin was the spark in the attacking line, with his two goals helping the team register 3-1 wins against Maldives and Bhutan.

Cabrera, who decided not to include those players, feels he has players ready to step up in absence of those three.

"This is an unexpected situation, unfortunately. The team was doing very well in June and in September but we

have to make sure that the team is not affected by the absence of other players," Cabrera said at a press conference at the Bashundhara Kings Arena following a lengthy training session yesterday evening.

The coach included defenders Hasan Murad and Shakil Hossain and midfielder



Jayed Ahmed for the first time in the senior squad, all of three having taken part in the recent Asian Games campaign. Cabrera believes the good work that his team has done in recent times, including the run to the semifinals of the SAFF Championship and the two draws at home against Afghanistan last month, will not be tempered by the off-field issues.

"It will definitely be a very tough playoff," Cabrera said. "Both the teams

have played each other four times, if I'm not wrong, in the last two-three years. So it's a very exciting situation and moment for everyone. You can feel it in the dressing room."

While Bangladesh have played two friendly matches since the SAFF Championship, Maldives have not played a single match since June, reportedly due to financial issues. Whether this will be an advantage for Bangladesh or not can only be gauged after the two matches but skipper Jamal Bhuyan was confident his team can return with a good result.

"These are the two most important matches of this year. We were in a similar situation five years ago when we played against Laos. We will try to get the best result in Maldives and a positive result in Dhaka too," Jamal said, adding that he believes the performance of

Faisal Ahmed Fahim and Mitul Marma in the Asian Games will help them step up for the Maldives matches.

The second match will be held at the Bashundhara Kings Arena in Dhaka on October 17, with the winners on aggregate to advance to the group-stage of the World Cup Qualifiers. The losers, meanwhile, will play another two-legged playoff to qualify for the group stage of Asian Cup Qualifiers.



City win 'gives Arsenal belief'

AFP, London

Gabriel Martinelli says Arsenal's inherent belief will be boosted by beating champions Manchester City as Mikel Arteta's men seek to go one step further than last season.

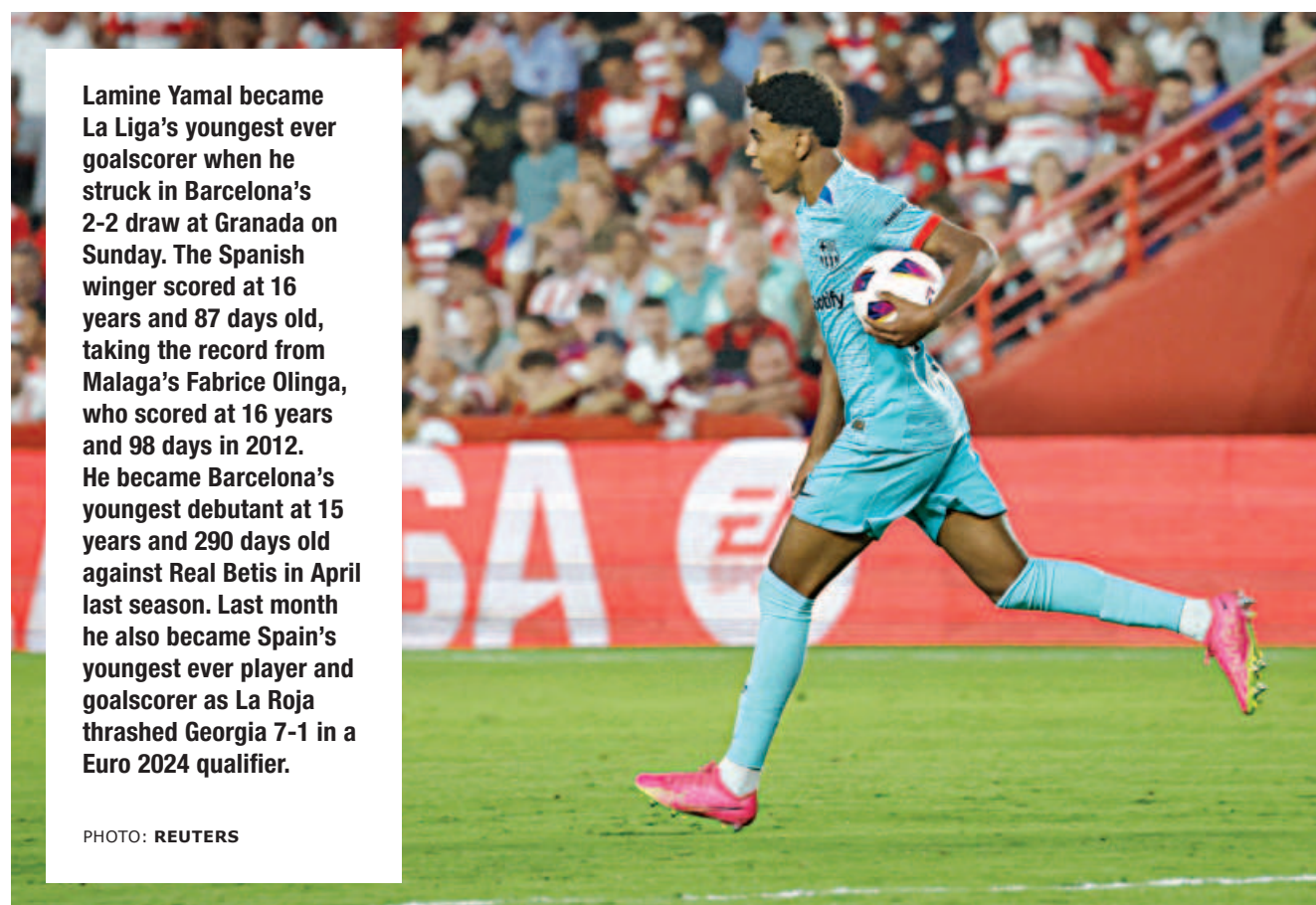
The Gunners looked set to win their first Premier League title in nearly two decades in 2022/23 before Pep Guardiola's side reeled them in to win a third straight title.

But on Sunday Arsenal beat City in the league for the first time since 2015, building on their Community Shield shootout triumph against the treble winners. Martinelli, introduced as a half-time substitute after three weeks out with a hamstring injury, hit a late winner that deflected off Nathan Ake to seal a 1-0 victory.

"We know how hard it is to play against them," the 22-year-old Brazil international said. "It was a great performance from the team and a great win."

"Of course (it gives us more belief we can win this season's title). We are Arsenal and we are always believing about the title. "To win against a big side like them is great and we just need to carry on."

Arsenal are unbeaten in eight league matches and are second in the table behind Tottenham on goals scored. "When you play for Arsenal you have to always believe and this is what we do," Martinelli said, as the club target their first Premier League title since 2004. "We play for Arsenal and we always believe we can win the titles."



Lamine Yamal became La Liga's youngest ever goalscorer when he struck in Barcelona's 2-2 draw at Granada on Sunday. The Spanish winger scored at 16 years and 87 days old, taking the record from Malaga's Fabrice Olinga, who scored at 16 years and 98 days in 2012. He became Barcelona's youngest debutant at 15 years and 290 days old against Real Betis in April last season. Last month he also became Spain's youngest ever player and goalscorer as La Roja thrashed Georgia 7-1 in a Euro 2024 qualifier.

PHOTO: REUTERS

2030 WORLD CUP FIFA to 'mitigate environmental impact'

REUTERS

FIFA will take measures to "mitigate the environmental impact" of the three-continent 2030 World Cup, world soccer's governing body said.

FIFA last week named Morocco, Spain and Portugal as hosts of the 2030 tournament, while Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay will also host the opening matches to mark the tournament's centenary.

The decision to host the tournament across three continents attracted criticism from climate activists, who cited emissions related to the additional travel required.

On its website, FIFA highlighted the fact that just three games would be played in South America, adding: "Morocco, Portugal and Spain will be the hosts of the FIFA World Cup 2030."

"Therefore, for 101 games, the tournament will be played in a footprint of neighbouring countries in close geographic proximity and with extensive and well-developed transport links and infrastructure."

Saudi submits letter of intent to host 2034 WC

REUTERS

Saudi Arabia announced it took the second step to bid for 2034 World Cup by submitting a letter of intent to host the event to world soccer governing body FIFA on Monday.

"Last week we announced our ambitions to host the 2034 FIFA World Cup, and this official submission continues our journey to make the dreams of our people a reality," Yasser Al Misaal, President of the Saudi Arabian Football Federation SAFF said in a statement.

"We are extremely committed to presenting the most competitive bid possible that will also help unite the world through football," he added.

SAFF said that once they declared their intention on Wednesday to bid for the tournament, "over 70 FIFA Member Associations from across different continents have publicly pledged their support for the Kingdom."

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