

## What to WATCH

**Sony Sports 2,3, and 5**  
Australian Open  
Second round  
Live from 6:00 am  
**T Sports**  
India vs Afghanistan

3rd T20  
Live from 7:30 pm  
Asian Cup  
Lebanon vs China  
Live from 5:30 pm  
Tajikistan vs Qatar

Live from 8:30 pm  
**Star Sports 2**  
Australia vs  
West Indies  
1st Test, Day 2 Live from  
5:30 am (Thursday)

## Comilla's BPL future uncertain

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Four-time champions Comilla Victorians are the most successful team in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). Under owner Nafisa Kamal, they have been able to establish some form of a brand value, something that the country's lone franchise T20 tournament is yet to see the light of day.

Nafisa feels that BPL franchises do not get the rights that are afforded in other franchise leagues around the world, adding that it will not be possible for Comilla to play the next BPL without revenue-sharing rights, for instance.

As things stand, the broadcasting rights are still difficult to sell and franchises do not have a share of tickets which hinders branding.

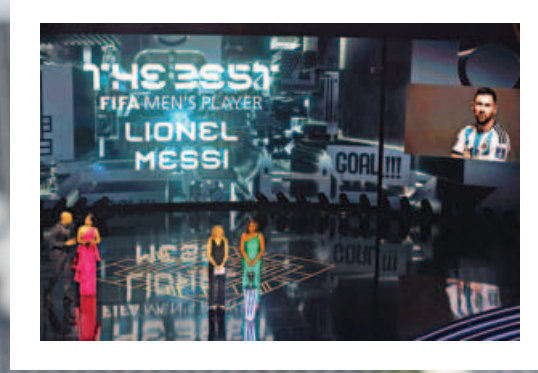
"Not a ticket would remain unsold if we had 50 percent of the ticket selling rights. BCB does not give us the rights, neither media nor ground rights," Nafisa said during a talk with reporters.

"The way a franchise tournament should run on paper, in concept, is not at all applicable to the BPL. We don't get any of the rights that a franchise should have," she added.

At the time of filing this report, a title sponsor was yet to be announced for the BPL. There has been no continuity of title sponsors, unlike what is seen elsewhere with Tata Indian Premier League or KFC Big Bash.

"How does it not hamper? Our task would have been easier if BPL had proper brand value in the market, or had BCB gotten a consistent sponsor for 10 years," she continued.

Nafisa regrets the fact that the leading team owners



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi was voted as FIFA's best men's player for 2023 on Monday night but the three-time winner of the award was not present in London to receive the trophy as he was occupied with Inter Miami's pre-season training in Florida. He left behind Manchester City striker Erling Haaland and PSG forward Kylian Mbappe in the race for FIFA's best. PHOTO: AFP

### COMPLETE LIST OF WINNERS

- MEN**  
**Best player:** Lionel Messi  
**Best coach:** Pep Guardiola  
**Best goalkeeper:** Ederson  
**Puskas award:** Guilherme Madrugá  
**Fair play award:** Brazil men's senior team  
**Team of the year:** Thibaut Courtois, Kyle Walker, John Stones, Ruben Dias, Bernardo Silva, Jude Bellingham, Kevin De Bruyne, Lionel Messi, Erling Haaland, Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Junior
- WOMEN**  
**Best player:** Aitana Bonmati  
**Best coach:** Sarina Wiegman  
**Best goalkeeper:** Mary Earps  
**Team of the year:** Mary Earps, Olga Carmona, Lucy Bronze, Alex Greenwood, Keira Walsh, Alessia Russo, Lauren James, Ella Toone, Aitana Bonmati, Alex Morgan, Sam Kerr

- Lack of continuity with title sponsors has resulted in BPL failing to increase brand value.
- There has been no meeting with Comilla since 2015 to discuss revenue-sharing and other rights afforded to franchises in major leagues.
- According to the last EOI, franchises were bound for three BPL but Comilla could yet not participate in the last year of that agreement.

## How Messi again became THE BEST

STAR SPORTS DESK

In a rather surprising turn of events, Lionel Messi was declared FIFA's best men's player for 2023 in the early hours of Tuesday (Bangladesh time).

The current Ballon d'Or holder was a surprise winner, edging past Erling Haaland and Kylian Mbappe, considering he hadn't done anything substantial since winning the FIFA World Cup with Argentina in 2022, which was not considered for this award.

FIFA's selection criteria for the 2023 men's awards were based on achievements during the period from December 19, 2022 to August 20, 2023.

The 2022 awards had covered the 2022 FIFA World Cup, which ended on December 18.

Still, Messi edged Haaland in the voting by the barest of margins.

There were four separate votes conducted, with each contributing 25 per cent of the overall result.

The journalists voted overwhelmingly in favour of Haaland. The Norwegian also topped in the votes of the national team coaches while Messi topped among the national team captains.

Every coach and captain under FIFA could vote for three players, awarding five points to their first pick, three to their second and one to their third.

There was also a public vote, which Messi won by a landslide.

After the voting, Messi and Haaland were tied on 48 points while Mbappe had 35.

picked Haaland as his first choice, followed by Kylian Mbappe, who finished third, and fellow countryman Julian Alvarez.

Mbappe, who also voted as the captain of France, named former PSG teammate Messi as his first choice, followed by Haaland and Manchester City midfielder Kevin de Bruyne.



As per FIFA's tie-breaking rules, Messi was then declared the winner because he had received the highest number of five-point scores from the votes cast by the men's national team captains.

**WHOM MESSI AND MBAPPE VOTED FOR**  
 Messi, the Argentina captain,

Haaland couldn't cast a vote as he is not the captain of Norway.

In the coach's category, Messi picked his former Barcelona coach and the current Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola as the first choice, who won in the category, followed by current Barca coach Xavi and Italy coach Luciano Spalletti.

## Nasir slapped with two-year ban

AGENCIES

Bangladesh all-rounder Nasir Hossain was banned by the ICC from all cricket on Tuesday until April 2025 after accepting charges of breaching the ICC Anti-Corruption Code while playing in the Abu Dhabi T10 League in 2021.



Nasir, who was charged by the ICC in September 2023, admitted to three charges and has been handed a two-year ban, with six months suspended.

The ban follows an investigation into seven other players and officials for reported breaching of anti-corruption rules and alleged match-fixing during the tournament.

The 32-year-old failed to tell anti-graft officials of the "receipt of a gift" of a new iPhone 12, valued at \$750, and the "full details of the approach or invitation he received to engage in Corrupt Conduct" via the phone, the ICC said.

He also admitted he had "failed or refused" to cooperate with the anti-graft officials in the probe into possible corruption.

"Subject to him satisfying the conditions in respect of the suspended part of the sanction, he will be free to resume international cricket on 7 April 2025," an ICC statement read.

Nasir will be free to resume international cricket on April 7, 2025, provided he satisfies the conditions in rest to the suspended part of the sanction.

He played 115 matches for Bangladesh across formats between 2011 and 2018, scoring 2695 runs and taking 39 wickets. He has since featured largely in the domestic circuit, most recently turning out in the Dhaka Premier League for Prime Bank Cricket Club.

### SHORT CORNER

#### Scaloni to stay on as Argentina coach

Lionel Scaloni will stay on as Argentina's coach at least until the end of this summer's Copa America, where the country will defend their title, local media reported on Monday.

The news comes after the Argentina FA President Claudio Tapia met with Scaloni to discuss the national team's upcoming friendlies in China ahead of the June 20-July 14 continental tournament in the United States.

Scaloni had cast doubt over his future in the post in November, saying: "It's complicated to keep going and it's complicated to keep winning."

#### Roma sack Mourinho

Jose Mourinho has been sacked as coach of Roma, the Serie A side announced Tuesday, saying it was "in the best interests of the club".

Mourinho, whose contract was due to expire in June, would leave the club alongside his technical team "with immediate effect", Roma said. The 60-year-old Portuguese took over in 2021 and guided Roma to the inaugural Europa Conference League trophy in 2022 and the final of last season's Europa League.

However Roma have struggled this campaign and currently sit ninth in Serie A. Former Roma captain Daniele De Rossi replaced the Portuguese in the Roma hotseat.

#### Washington hits season's first hat-trick

Brazilian forward Washington Brandao scored the season's first hat-trick as Abahani began their Federation Cup campaign with a 6-0 demolition of Brothers Union at the Bashundhara Kings Arena yesterday. Cornelius Stewart scored twice while Nabib Newaj Jibon scored the other for the Sky Blues. Defending champions Mohammedan, meanwhile, earned a 2-1 win over Chittagong Abahani.

\*\*Read the full stories on The Daily Star website



Ahead of the start of the 15th edition of the ICC U-19 World Cup on January 19, captains of all 16 participating teams met for a traditional photoshoot also known as Captains' Day. All the teams have been divided into four groups of four. Bangladesh, India, Ireland and USA make up Group A, while Group B consists of England, Scotland, South Africa and West Indies. Group C features Australia, Namibia, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe while Group D includes Afghanistan, Nepal, New Zealand and Pakistan.

PHOTO: ICC

## 'The World Cup is on'

STAR SPORTS DESK

The captains of the 16 participating teams at the ICC U-19 Men's World Cup were given a true South African welcome on Monday, as teams relished a vibrant and colourful Captains' Day in Broederstroom, north of Johannesburg.

Bangladesh captain Mahfuzur Rahman Rabby was impressed with the experience.

"I think it was one of the most interesting pre-event experiences I have had with all then captains assembling. Suddenly you feel a different sense of pride and responsibility as the captain of your country. Also, I felt like 'this is it, the World Cup is on!'" Rabby later said.

"It was such a privilege to meet Anrich Nortje in person and to listen to him. He is one of the most exciting fast bowlers in world cricket and his interaction was very inspiring," Rabby added.