

What to WATCH

T Sports and Nagorik TV
West Indies vs Bangladesh
3rd ODI
Live from 7:30 pm

T Sports
NCL T20

Khulna vs Barishal
Live from 9:30 am
Dhaka Metro vs Rajshahi
Live from 7:00 pm

Sony Sports 2
Europa League
Viktoria Plzen vs Man Utd

Live from 11:45 pm
Rangers vs Tottenham
Live from 2:00 am (Friday)

Sony Sports 1
Fenerbahce vs Athletic Bilbao
Live from 11:45 pm

T20s impact on ODIs hurting Tigers?

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

One thing that has been evident from the 2023 ODI World Cup is that when playing on flat decks, Bangladesh often fail to approach the game in a manner that could help them get big runs in their favourite format.

A recurring pattern was seen in the Tigers' ongoing ODI series against hosts West Indies – a few batters managed to get some runs but the burst of acceleration needed in modern cricket was amiss, seeing the team settle for middling scores.

Even while playing on good batting surfaces, Bangladesh batters wear the same look of helplessness. They lose wickets in pairs, as they did in the second ODI against the Windies on Wednesday. Having failed to defend 294 in the first game, they looked out of sorts defending an even lower total of 227 runs in the second ODI yesterday.

It is as if the Tigers' grasp on their favourite format is slipping in spite of great conditions for batting. This year they have played just eight ODIs, losing five – and it was the batting that let the Tigers down on most occasions.

Bangladesh won 2-1 against Sri Lanka in March, their only ODI series win this year. In both the games that Bangladesh won, scores they needed to chase were around the 230-240 mark.

However, exciting shot-making in T20s has made it so that the ODI batting standard has also gone up a few gears.

Over the last decade, Bangladesh found a formula they were comfortable with. They targeted scores around 250 – the norm on low and slow tracks such as those in Mirpur. The winning formula – most witnessed during Chandika Hathurusingha's first stint – is that the opposition batters generally found it difficult to time their shots on such surfaces.

But with T20s dominating the landscape of white-ball cricket for a considerable period now, batters nowadays do not always wait for the last 10 overs or the first Powerplay to score in bulk in ODIs – case in point was how Sherfane Rutherford made up for dots played in the initial overs with a flurry of boundaries to help the Windies assail the 295-run target with 14 balls to spare in the first ODI against Bangladesh.

The Tigers' only problem is not the lack of explosive innings. Even when Soumya Sarkar made 169 against New Zealand in Nelson last year, none of the other batters played around this innings – something that the Windies did in the first ODI.

Another such instance was when Towhid Hridoy scored an unbeaten 96 on a good surface in Chattogram in March this year, but the Tigers' total remained in and around their ODI threshold as they made 286 in a game that they eventually lost by three wickets. Soumya and Najmul Hossain Shanto got runs in that match but were not able to stick around for long.

In those matches, the set batter could not go for acceleration at opportune moments – another problem for Bangladesh alongside the lack of explosiveness in the batting order.

While other top cricketing nations have already adapted to the modern style of cricket, Bangladesh seem to be way beyond in terms of understanding the new pattern of cricket that the modern era demands – a sign that does not augur well for the Tigers with the upcoming Champions Trophy 2025 just over a month away.



Youngsters shone bright on the opening day of the National Cricket League T20 as top-order batters Jishan Alam and [Inset] Ariful Islam, both aged 20, set the stage aight at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. Jishan smacked 10 maximums and four boundaries for a blistering 53-ball 100 to guide Sylhet to 205-8 but it was trumped by Ariful's 46-ball 94, laced with eight sixes and six fours, which led Dhaka to a six-wicket victory. In one of the other three matches between Chattogram and Rangpur, 35-year-old Tamim Iqbal, already retired from international T20s, scored a 10-ball 13 for Chattogram, who lost by five wickets after posting 132 in 20 overs.

PHOTO: BCB

NCL T20 off to a blockbuster start

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Cricket League T20 couldn't have started in a better way as Shuvagata Hom's last-ball six ensured Dhaka Division a thrilling six-wicket win over Sylhet Division in the opening match at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The match witnessed some extraordinary power-hitting display by Sylhet's Jishan Alam and Dhaka's Ariful Islam – the former U-19 teammates who turned rivals for this tournament, striking 18 sixes combined, with the former also scoring the maiden T20 century of the competition. Jishan's effort, though, was outshone by Ariful's swashbuckling 46-ball 94, featuring six fours and eight sixes.

The highlight of Jishan's innings, which featured four fours and 10 sixes, was the 32 runs he took of the 14th over of the innings, smashing off-spinner Arafat Sunny Jr for five successive sixes following a double. The youngster reached his maiden T20 hundred off just 52 balls – joint third quickest for a Bangladeshi batter in this format – helping Sylhet post 205-4 after being sent into bat first.

Ariful's innings gave Dhaka the momentum in the massive chase but it was the unbroken 63-run stand for the fifth wicket between Shuvagata (31 off 18) and Mahidul Islam Ankon (30 off 11) and the former's hitting Sylhet pacer Tofael Ahmed for a six over long off when they required five runs off the final delivery, sealing Dhaka a cliffhanger.

The day's second game at this venue witnessed Tamim Iqbal's re-

turn to competitive cricket after a seven months but the southpaw could not make the occasion memorable as the Chattogram Division opener could only score 13 off 10 balls during their five-wicket defeat to Rangpur Division.

Rangpur pacer Mukidul Islam

Gazi made an unbeaten 32-ball 40 but those efforts went in vain as Barishal could only manage 161 for eight, losing the contest by 31 runs. Left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan of Dhaka Metro finished with 3-26.

Meanwhile, the day's last game witnessed Rajshahi winning



Mugdho was wrecker in chief with a 3-17 while Alauddin Babu took 2-9 to help their side limit Chattogram to 132-9 before Tanbir Hayder's 37-ball 41 guided Rangpur home with 19 balls to spare.

Meanwhile, Sylhet Outer Stadium produced high scores in both games on the opening day, with Dhaka Metro and Rajshahi Division coming out on top against Barishal Division and Khulna Division respectively.

In the morning contest, riding on fifties from Mohammad Naim (65 off 35) and Imranuzzaman (53 off 33), who also formed a 119-run stand for the opening wicket, Dhaka Metro posted 192 for four in 20 overs.

Fazle Mahmud then struck 77 off 52 balls while skipper Sohag

against Khulna by 11 runs in D/L method after the last few overs of the contest could not take place due to bad light.


Rajshahi were cruising to victory when the game stopped after 17.2 overs as opener Habibur Rahman Sohan's 38 ball 66 pushed them to 153-3 while chasing 173 runs.

Earlier, Azizul Hakim Tamim, who recently led the U-19 side to Asia Cup triumph in the UAE and was playing his first T20 game, struck a blistering 31-ball 53 runs while Nurul Hasan Sohan (37) and Mritunjay Chowdhury (35 not out) made decent contributions to guide Khulna to 172-7 after electing to bat first.

The second round matches will take place today.

Mbappe hits 50 as Real revive UCL defence

Real Madrid got their Champions League title defence back up and running on Tuesday after coming through a tough battle to win 3-2 at Atalanta. Goals from Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Junior and Jude Bellingham were just enough for Madrid to triumph in a red-hot atmosphere in Bergamo and move up to 18th place, on nine points from six matches. In Spain, Mohamed Salah helped maintain Liverpool's perfect record in Europe. Salah's 63rd-minute penalty proved decisive against dogged debutants Girona to extend the Premier League leaders' record to six wins in as many matches.



Kylian Mbappe netted his 50th Champions League goal when he skillfully skipped past a defender and slotted home from inside the box in the 10th minute to give Real Madrid the lead against Atalanta yesterday.

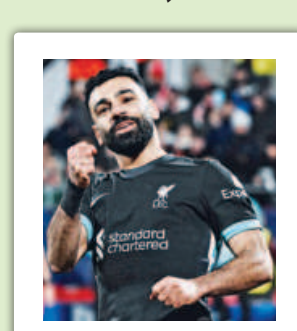
Mbappe reached the milestone at the age of 25 years and 356 days, making him the second-youngest player to this landmark after Lionel Messi, who reached a half-century of Champions League goals at just 24 years and 284 days in 2012.

Mbappe got his 50th Champions League goal in 79 appearances, becoming the fourth-quickest player to achieve this landmark. Only Ruud van Nistelrooy (62 matches), Messi (66 matches), and Robert Lewandowski (77 matches) have accomplished the feat faster.

Mbappe's goal was also the first time that Real Madrid managed to find the back of the net in an away Champions League game.

This was the first defeat in this year's Champions League for Atalanta, who sit ninth with 11 points from six matches. They had won three and drawn two other matches.

Mohamed Salah has 16 goals in 22 games in all competitions, and seven in his past six this season. It means he has the joint-most goals and assists in Europe's top five leagues this season (28 - level with Frankfurt's Omar Marmoush).



19 countries to take part in int'l badminton in Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

Since the political changeover on August 5, a number of international sporting events were moved away from Bangladesh due to the evolving situation. But the country's capital, Dhaka, is now set to host two badminton tournaments this month.

More than 200 shuttlers from 19 countries are supposed to take part in two separate tournaments – Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh Junior International Series beginning on December 13 and Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh International Challenge starting on December 17 – at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium.

Although the junior competition featuring US\$5000-prize money will be contested by only three countries including the hosts, 19 countries – India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Japan, Maldives, Thailand, Myanmar, Canada, England, Ukraine, Italy, Bulgaria, Finland, Uganda, and Bangladesh – will fight for the US\$ 15000 senior tournament. Each tournament will feature five events – boys' and girls' singles, doubles and mixed doubles.

Around 55 shuttlers from Bangladesh will compete in the junior meet while 61 shuttlers from the host country will participate in the senior event.

"We are expecting that the shuttlers will produce some good results in both tournaments as we won some medals in junior tournaments in the past," Bangladesh Badminton Federation's acting president Qurrun Nahar Dana said at a press conference at the BOA auditorium yesterday.

Tournament director and executive member Taptun Nasrin said that they have taken all preparations to make both tournaments successful, including ensuring security for the players.

Elina Sultana and Mohammad Javed, former national women's and men's champions respectively, have been given the responsibility to guide the female and male shuttlers of Bangladesh.



BFF dissolves 29 elected DFA bodies

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday dissolved 29 elected bodies of district and divisional football associations (DFAs), citing unavailability and resignation of association officials as well as inactivity of the said associations.

The decision was taken at the second meeting of the BFF executive committee after a four-member DFA monitoring committee recommended to form ad-hoc committees in those associations. The DFA monitoring committee was also dissolved at the meeting.

BFF's media committee chairman Amirul Islam Babu said after the meeting that the ad-hoc committees will be formed immediately and that they will hold elections within 90 days.

Most of the dissolved bodies, formed during the regime of Kazi Salahuddin, casted their votes on BFF October 20 elections as well as tie-breaking elections on November 30.

Babu also informed that the executive committee decided to increase fees for the referees to Tk 5000 from Tk 4000.



Saudi Arabia confirmed as 2034 World Cup host

AGENCIES

Saudi Arabia will host the men's football World Cup in 2034 while the 2030 edition will be held in Spain, Portugal and Morocco, with one-off matches in three South American countries, FIFA confirmed on Wednesday.

The decision was announced by FIFA President Gianni Infantino following a virtual extraordinary Congress. The 2030 and 2034 World Cups each had only a single bid and both were confirmed by acclamation.

However, Amnesty International and 20 other organisations said on Wednesday that FIFA's decision to award the 2034 World Cup to Saudi Arabia "puts many lives at risk" due to its "well-known and severe risks to residents, migrant workers and visiting fans alike".

The 2030 World Cup will take place across three continents and six nations.

Saudi Arabia will become the second nation from the Middle East to host the quadrennial tournament in 2034, 12 years after neighbours Qatar staged the 2022 edition.