



## BARCA EDGE CLOSER TO TITLE WITH THRILLING CLASICO WIN

Raphinha scored twice as Barcelona overcame a two-goal deficit to secure a crucial 4-3 home victory against rivals Real Madrid in a pulsating Clasico on Sunday. Kylian Mbappe netted a hattrick, taking his tally to 37 goals from 54 games across competitions, as the French forward became the player with the most goals in debut season for Real Madrid. Mbappe surpassed Ivan Zamorano's 37-goal record back in 1992/93 season. However, even a blistering Mbappe could not help Barca from extending their lead at the top of the standings to seven points over second-placed Real Madrid. With three matches remaining, one more victory will clinch a 28th league title for the Catalans.

## SAFF U-19 C'SHIP Bangladesh into semis with 3-0 win over Bhutan

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh romped to the semifinals of the SAFF U-19 Championship with a 3-0 win over Bhutan in their second and last group-stage match in Arunachal, India yesterday

Morshed Ali and Sumon Soren found the net in the first first-half to give Bangladesh a 2-0 advantage before Nazmul Huda Faysal scored in stoppage time to cap off a comprehensive victory for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh opened the scoring in the 13th minute when Faysal turned smartly in the Bhutan half and played through a line-breaking pass for Morshed who galloped into the box from the right flank before curling it in with his left foot. Morshed was at it again, creating constantly from the left, as he dribbled through and directed a low-driven cross into the box. A defender managed to poke it away, but it was picked up by Soren found the net with his left foot.

In the dying minutes of the game, the Bhutan goalkeeper fluffed a clearance near the half-way line, which was pounced on by Mohammad Manik and picked up by Morshed, who ran through on goal, evading two defenders with his pace before cutting it back to an onrushing Faysal, who produced a striker's finish.

Golam Rabbani Choton's side had squandered a 2-0 lead in a 2-2 draw in their first group match against the Maldives on Friday but managed to stage a remarkable comeback today to confirm the last four of the tournament.

## 'Life in sports is yet to return'

Since the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, 2024, the Youth and Sports Ministry formed a five-member Search Committee on August 29 to reform sports in the country. The committee was reconstructed on October 1 and was assigned to reform constitutions in sports, alongside forming ad-hoc committees of national sports bodies. After the duration of the Search Committee ended on May 10, Jubaidur Rahman Rana, the committee's convenor and former national shuttler-turned-organiser talked to *The Daily Star's* Anisur Rahman about their successes, failures, obstacles, and future plans.

**DS:** The Daily Star (DS): Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Mahmud said on Saturday that the tenure of the Search Committee in sports would not be extended further. What has your experience been over the past seven months?

**JRR:** We had hoped to accomplish many things -- drafting a good constitution, forming strong committees, and holding proper elections. I would say we achieved about 50 percent of our goals, though others may claim it's closer to 80 percent. However, our primary task was constitutional reform in sports, which remains incomplete.

**DS:** How much will the Search Committee be able to meet the expectations of reforming constitutions in sports?

**JRR:** I met with the sports advisor today [Sunday]. He said a new committee would complete the remaining work. While he didn't specify whether it would be a separate body, it's likely that the existing Search Committee members will continue the task. Around 80 percent of the constitutional reform has been completed so far.

**DS:** Did the sports advisor mention anything specific about reforming the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) constitution?

**JRR:** Yes, he emphasised the need to reform the BCB constitution. He asked me to include him and five others in the BCB constitution reform committee. He also told me that committee's name will be changed once the ad hoc committee's work is complete.

**DS:** How is reforming constitutions in sports actually done?



**JRR:** We can't impose a new constitution on anyone. Instead, we sit with all stakeholders before drafting the constitutions. These drafts are then sent to the federations for review. If they have suggestions or concerns, we address them before finalising. Many existing constitutions lack proper election procedures, and several are simply copied from other federations.

**DS:** The Search Committee's tenure expired on Saturday, but it only formed 29 ad-hoc committees. What about the rest?

**JRR:** We submitted ad-hoc committees for 30 federations, but the Bangladesh Shooting Sports Federation's committee has been pending for four months despite submission. We submitted committees for the remaining 23 on May 5 and will officially hand them over tomorrow [Monday].

**DS:** After working seven months to form committees for all 53 sports bodies, do you think it was a success, or are you disappointed?

**JRR:** Honestly, I don't feel we achieved success. We couldn't fully satisfy anyone. When one person does a job alone, the outcome is different than when five people are involved. All five of us were deeply involved in sports, but how did we do anything different than any random five people who probably would have taken a similar amount of time to form all these committees? Perhaps, we should be held accountable for that. We spent seven months on this -- can we return that time to the athletes?

**DS:** Why did it take seven months to form

just 53 committees?

**JRR:** There was a lack of cooperation. For example, even after discussing with around 10 to 70 people to form a committee, some of our recommended names were missing from the final list. Committees were often published weeks after we had submitted them. That's why it took seven to eight months.

**DS:** How much did the 29 new ad-hoc committees do to breathe life back into sports since the fall of the Awami League government?

**JRR:** Honestly, life in sports is yet to return. I visited several districts and divisions recently, and many playgrounds are overgrown with knee-high grass. What have we achieved? We formed ad-hoc committees with 17 to 19 members, while the actual committees should include 27 to 29. So we're short by 10 members who could have contributed meaningfully.

**DS:** When should elections in sports be held?

**JRR:** Elections should only be held after the constitutions are reformed. The government should prioritise these reforms; otherwise, the purpose of forming the Search Committee remains unfulfilled.

**DS:** Did you face any pressure while forming the ad-hoc committees?

**JRR:** Yes, there was pressure from outside, but we didn't give in to it. However, we did have to consider some internal recommendations.

**DS:** Do you have any regrets about the past seven months?

**JRR:** Not exactly regret, but we started with a much more cooperative environment. Over time, we couldn't unite under a collective vision. Eventually, individual agendas surfaced, leading to conflicts.

## What to WATCH

T Sports  
Bangladesh  
Emerging vs South Africa Emerging  
1st ODI  
Live from 9:00 am

## Liton's challenge in balancing captaincy and performance

SPORTS REPORTER

Liton Das' form has been poor for a while, not having scored a fifty in ODIs since the 2023 ICC ODI World Cup, but as a skipper he impressed with his tactics in a 3-0 T20I series sweep in West Indies last year. With Liton now officially in charge of Bangladesh in T20Is, questions are being raised over whether he can overcome the concerns over his form and other challenges that kept him away from captaincy in the past.

"We have to understand that the Bangladesh team captain is the captain of the entire country. It's a very difficult job," Bangladesh team's senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin said while addressing questions on Liton's captaincy yesterday.

"All of us have to support him. The captain will run the team, so he needs wholehearted support. If he gets that freedom, he will do well. From the outside, it may seem that captaining a team is



easy, but in reality, it isn't," Salahuddin added.

Liton carries a quiet demeanour but at times has reacted hot-headed in the media in the past. The captain's job is building morale and consolidating any issues within the side, both of these tasks require level-headedness.

"From what I had seen of Liton before to what I saw in the last series as captain — to me, it felt like night and day. If you listen to him talk now, you'll notice that a lot has changed," Salahuddin said regarding how much captaincy has opened Liton to taking more responsibility.

But Salahuddin also had warnings in regards to captaincy, especially when a player is not performing with the bat as he should. Former T20I skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto had spoken about not being able to run things as he wanted to and for Liton to succeed, Salahuddin felt that aspect needs to be ensured.

"Strength-wise, he is a good tactician, he knows about field placements and strength of the bowlers and he analyses the game well. If we talk about his weakness, since he has not scored many runs for a while, it is his weakness for the time being. But I feel he will come out of it," Salahuddin said on Liton's strength and weakness.

"If you don't let a captain plan the way he wants, then why make him captain in the first place? Once you choose someone as captain, you have to give him full freedom — because he's the one running the team," Salahuddin said.

Salahuddin also said that in order to succeed as a captain, Liton has to learn how to handle criticism.

"I'm trying to teach one thing — this responsibility brings fame, as well as criticism with it. He has to learn how to handle it."



## Kane's first, Mueller's last

AGENCIES

Bayern Munich's final home game of the Bundesliga season was a day of poignant endings and long-awaited celebrations, as club legend Thomas Mueller bid an emotional farewell and Harry Kane finally lifted the first major team trophy of his senior career.

The champions, who had already sealed their 34th Bundesliga title a week earlier, marked the occasion with a 2-0 victory over Borussia Moenchengladbach at the Allianz Arena. But beyond the scoreline, it was a day defined by symbolism and sentiment.

For Kane, it was a moment long in the making. The 31-year-old England captain, who had endured heartbreak in six previous finals with Tottenham, England, and Bayern, finally felt the weight of expectation lifted as he stood drenched in celebratory beer, clutching the Bundesliga shield.

"It was a long time coming," Kane told Sky Germany. "It's an incredible feeling... a lot of hard work, a lot of sacrifice in between, for moments like this — to enjoy it with the team, enjoy it with the fans. I'm loving every minute."



### MUELLER'S CAREER BY NUMBERS

2x Champions League	Bundesliga	Champions League
2x UEFA Super Cup	Matches: 502	Matches: 163
13x Bundesliga	Goals: 150	Goals: 57
6x German Cup	Assists: 178	Assists: 34
8x German Super Cup		

Kane opened the scoring with a deft header in the 31st minute — his 25th league goal of the campaign — putting him on course to finish as Bundesliga top scorer in his debut season. It also capped a week of validation for the England striker, who said he hoped this title was "just the first of many."

Amid the celebrations, Kane paid tribute to fellow England international Eric Dier, who is set to depart Bayern at the end of the season. Dier too claimed his first

career trophy, a shared milestone for two players long accustomed to near misses.

As Kane's journey of fulfillment continued, the club simultaneously turned a page on one of its most enduring chapters. Thomas Mueller, playing his 750th match for Bayern, took center stage for an emotional farewell in his final home appearance after 25 glittering years.

The 35 year old forward, who has amassed a staggering 13 Bundesliga titles and two Champions League trophies, was the first to hoist the shield aloft — a symbolic gesture handed to him by captain Manuel Neuer.

"I loved being a modern gladiator," Mueller said to a packed stadium. "For many, including myself, it is a tough moment but a beautiful one too. The appreciation you gave me is unique."

The game closed with Michael Olise sealing the 2-0 win in the 90th minute, shortly after Mueller left the pitch to a thunderous ovation.

With Vincent Kompany securing a title in his debut season as coach, Bayern now celebrates both legacy and renewal — bidding farewell to a legend while embracing the bright beginnings of others.

► Atletico Madrid striker Alexander Sorloth scored four goals inside 30 minutes, including the fastest hattrick in LaLiga history, in a 4-0 home win over Real Sociedad on Saturday.

► The Norwegian forward completed his treble in the opening 11 minutes, the earliest ever in the competition, before adding a fourth goal to seal the rout.

► Sorloth's hattrick, which came between the seventh and 11th minutes of the game with the striker taking just 237 seconds to net all three goals, was four minutes faster than Edmundo Suárez's in 1941 and Carles Best's in 1929.

► Sorloth became Atletico's leading scorer in LaLiga this season with 17 goals, two more than inform striker Julian Alvarez, who was suspended.

► The Norwegian previously scored four goals in a match in May last year, helping former team Villarreal hold champions Real Madrid to a 4-4 draw when it took him 56 minutes for all four goals.



PHOTO: REUTERS