

Youth and Sports Ministry to get Tk 2,423 crore

SPORTS REPORTER

The Youth and Sports Ministry received an allocation of Tk 842 crore more for the 2025–26 fiscal year compared to the ongoing fiscal year, as Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed placed a Tk 790,000 crore national budget yesterday.

Although there was anticipation that the budget for the sector would be reduced following the economic crisis, the government allocated Tk 2,423 crore to the ministry for the 2025–26 fiscal year, with an operating budget of Tk 983 crore and a development budget of Tk 1,440 crore.

The allocation is much higher than the revised outlay of Tk 1,581 crore as well as the original allocation of Tk 2,212 crore in the current fiscal year.

Bangladesh midfielder Hamza Choudhury arrived in Dhaka yesterday ahead of the Asian Cup Qualifier against Singapore on June 10 at the National Stadium. The England-based player is also expected to feature in the June 4 friendly against Bhutan as part of the team's preparations. It will mark Hamza's first appearance on home soil after debuting in March's goalless draw against India. Canada-based Shamit Shome and Italy-based Fahamedul Islam also made the squad. Tickets for the Singapore match are already sold out. "Hello, Assalamu Alaikum everyone. Just wanted to say thank you to all the fans, media and journalists for my reception again. Inshallah, we'll be successful and I'll see you all there to support us," said Hamza upon arrival.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Punjab stand in way of Kohli's IPL dream



AFP, AHMEDABAD

Punjab Kings stand in the way of Virat Kohli's dream of finally winning the Indian Premier League in Tuesday's final at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

No matter which team prevails at the 132,000-capacity venue in Ahmedabad, it will be a first – neither Punjab nor Kohli's Royal Challengers Bengaluru have won the IPL since it launched in 2008.

Punjab booked their place in the decider with a five-wicket victory over five-time champions Mumbai Indians on Sunday.

Shreyas Iyer played a captain's knock with an unbeaten 87.

Kohli and Bengaluru will have a psychological edge after thrashing Punjab by eight wickets at the start of the playoffs last week.

It is the fourth time that Kohli and his team have reached the final but they have never been able to take that last step. The vast majority in attendance will be cheering on the 36-year-old superstar batsman and icon to Indian cricket fans.

Kohli, who last month retired from Test cricket alongside Rohit Sharma, has again been Bengaluru's go-to batsman with 614 runs, including eight half-centuries, in 14 innings this season.

He has made no attempt to hide his desperation to win the IPL at the 18th attempt and add it to a long list of accolades that includes two World Cup crowns.

He has talked about his "heartbreak" of failing to win the IPL, and celebrated last week's win against Punjab saying: "One more to go."

Maxwell's ODI curtain falls, his 201 echoes through time

AGENCIES

Glenn Maxwell, the Australian maverick known as the "Big Show", has called time on his one-day international career, drawing the curtain on a format he often redefined with fearless brilliance.

While his ODI journey includes two World Cup titles and a reputation as one of the game's most dynamic finishers, it will be his once-in-a-lifetime knock against Afghanistan at the 2023 World Cup that immortalizes him.

Chasing 293 under the Mumbai lights, Australia were down and

singlehandedly dismantled Afghanistan's attack with a blend of ramp shots, flat sixes, and reverse sweeps – many on one leg. It wasn't just a match-winning knock; it was a

admitted. "I wasn't sure I'd be able to walk off the field, let alone win it." Australia would ride the momentum from that night to eventually clinch their sixth World Cup title in Ahmedabad, with Maxwell playing a crucial role throughout the campaign.

Announcing his ODI retirement at 36, Maxwell cited the physical toll of the 50-over format, stressing it was time for younger talent to stake their claim

Maxwell IN ODIS

- MATCHES: 149
- RUNS: 3990
- AVERAGE: 33.81
- STRIKE RATE: 126.70
- 50/100: 23/4
- BEST SCORE: 201*

almost out at 91-7. Maxwell, battling scorching heat and debilitating cramps, produced what many call the greatest ODI innings of all time – an unbeaten 201 off just 128 balls. Collapsing at times mid-pitch, grimacing in pain, and barely able to run, Maxwell turned to sheer timing, audacious shot-making, and defiance to flip the script.

With captain Pat Cummins holding one end (scoring only 12 in their 202-run stand), Maxwell

superhuman effort that defined grit, genius, and showmanship in equal measure. "That innings was something else – I've never felt anything like it," Maxwell later

ahead of the 2027 World Cup. "I didn't want to just hold on for selfish reasons," he said.

Selector George Bailey paid tribute to Maxwell's "natural talent, passion, and unmatched energy", and confirmed he remains central to Australia's T20 plans heading into next year's World Cup.

In the end, Maxwell's ODI career may be over, but his 201 not out against Afghanistan ensures the legend lives on.

KLAASEN retires from international cricket

REUTERS

South Africa batter Heinrich Klaasen has retired from all forms of international cricket, a blow for the country ahead of their co-hosting of the 2027 World Cup where he would have been a major draw card.

Klaasen, 33, is one of the world's most destructive batters in white-ball cricket and a mainstay of the South African limited-overs side in recent years. He is likely to maintain a presence on the global T20 league circuit.

"It is a sad day for me as I announce that I have decided to step away from international cricket," he said in a Cricket South Africa statement on Monday.

"It took me a long time to decide what's best for me and my family for the future. It was truly a very difficult decision but also one that I have absolute peace with."



"I look forward to spending more time with my family as this decision will allow me to do so."

Klaasen averaged 43.69 with four centuries and 11 fifties in 60 ODIs, and scored exactly 1,000 runs in 58 T20Is at a strike-rate of 141.84. He also played four test matches for South Africa.

SHORT CORNER

HC refuses to pass order on ex-BCB chief Faruque's petition

The High Court bench today refused to pass any order on a writ petition challenging the National Sports Council's (NSC) decisions to remove Faruque Ahmed from the post of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president and appoint Aminul Islam Bulbul as his successor.

Chinkungunya threat forces Women's Emerging Asia Cup to be postponed

The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) today announced the postponement of the ACC Women's Emerging Teams Asia Cup, previously set to commence on June 6, 2025, in Sri Lanka, owing to adverse weather conditions and health concerns related to the spread of chikungunya disease in the country.

Griezmann extends Atletico Madrid contract

France's 2018 World Cup winning forward Antoine Griezmann has extended his Atletico Madrid contract until 2027, the Spanish club announced Monday.

Griezmann, 34, is Atletico's all-time top scorer with 197 goals over two spells at the club since first joining Atletico from Real Sociedad in 2014.

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Women footballers eye victory against Jordan

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team are looking forward to finishing the tri-nation FIFA friendly series with a victory when they face hosts Jordan in the last match at King Abdullah II Stadium today.

The match will kick off at 10:00pm Bangladesh time.

Bangladesh, who held a superior Indonesia to a goalless draw in the first match, are optimistic about a better showing against Jordan, who are 59 places ahead of 133rd-ranked Bangladesh in FIFA rankings.

"We are hoping the girls will not disappoint and display another good show against Jordan. We are hoping for a victory," assistant coach

Mahabur Rahman Litu was quoted as saying in a video clip sent by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday.

The charges of Peter Butler have taken the two FIFA friendly matches as part of their preparation for the upcoming AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers from June 29 to July 5.

"Following the final preparation, we are ready for tomorrow's [Tuesday] match" said midfielder Maria Manda.

Meanwhile, midfielder Shopna Rani said that they have "taken good preparation for the Jordan match and want to implement the coach's plan."

After playing the final friendly match, Bangladesh are scheduled to head home tomorrow.



NABID YEASIN

Evolving and growing through every phase of life is a natural phenomenon. For most, this brings about positive changes. But for the Bangladesh cricket team, the exact opposite is the case, as in every new series and tour, the Tigers unlock new problem areas in their game.

The Litton Das-led Bangladesh suffered successive T20I series defeats – a humiliating 2-1 loss away to Associate UAE, followed by a clean sweep in a three-match tour of Pakistan.

Interestingly, Bangladesh ended these back-to-back tours with different concerns from the ones they had at the start.

When the Tigers left for the UAE in mid-May, their most pressing issue was top-order batting – a long-standing concern across all formats.

Not that the top-order conundrum has been completely solved – with consistency still being an issue – but for now, what seems more troubling is the Tigers' bowling, an area the team management considered a strong suit just a fortnight ago.

"We didn't bowl well and didn't field well in the last two games, but we batted well on this track. It's a good wicket, but we need to learn how to bowl to different batters and need to think about that," skipper Litton said on Sunday, after failing to defend 197 and losing comprehensively by seven wickets with 16 balls to spare in the third T20I against Pakistan in Lahore.

Getting starts with the bat hardly seemed to be a



PHOTO: AI GENERATED

problem for Bangladesh – they even saw openers Tanzid Tamim and Parvez Hossain Emon stitching together the highest partnership for any wicket against Pakistan for Bangladesh in T20Is, 110, in the final game.

But the bowlers seemed clueless about how to operate on flat wickets like those in Sharjah and Lahore. Slower deliveries from pacers were picked early or landed too short, offering ample time to

opposition batters. The spinners looked ineffective and erratic without any assistance from the surface, while sloppy fielding made things worse.

Rishad Hossain, the Tigers' only leg-spinner, conceded over 10 runs per over in every game. On top of it, he looked like an ordinary bowler, getting consistently targeted by opposition batters, likely due to his tendency to either bowl too full or too short.

Pacers Tanzim Sakib and Hasan Mahmud leaked runs during crucial phases that allowed Pakistan to regain momentum even after early setbacks. Both Sakib and Hasan had economy rates north of 10 in two of the three matches. In fact, captain Liton's decision to stick with spinners for three of the final four overs in the first T20I speaks volumes about the ineffectiveness of these pacers on such tracks.

Bangladesh did face setbacks in the pace department, before and during the series – pace sensation Nahid Rana withdrew from the tour, Mustafizur Rahman missed the entire series due to a finger injury, and Shoriful Islam missed the final game after getting injured in the previous match.

Still, for a team that found success on the back of their pacers not so long ago, a lack of depth in this department is an ominous sign for the future. But more importantly, what seems most concerning is that the Tigers' roulette of problem areas continues to stop on a new issue in every series. It also won't be a surprise if a new problem area emerges in their upcoming full tour of Sri Lanka later this month.