

Star

DHAKA FRIDAY JULY 11, 2025, ASHAR 27, 1432 BS

SPORT

What to

WATCH

T SPORTS

SAFF U20 Women's C'ship
Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka
Live from 3:00 pm
Nepal vs Bhutan
Live from 7:00 pm
Wimbledon
SONY SPORTS 1 AND 5

England vs India
2nd Test, Day 2
Live from 4:00 pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT
HD1 AND 2
Wimbledon
Live from 6:00 pm



LANKANS OUTCLASS TIGERS

It took Sri Lanka 19 overs to assail Bangladesh's mediocre 155-run target in the first T20I at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium yesterday, but the seven-wicket win for the hosts was much more convincing than the scoreboard suggests. Having limited the Tigers to 154 for five in 20 overs, Sri Lanka got off to a flying start. Openers Pathum Nissanka and Kusal Mendis stitched together a 78-run opening stand off just 28 deliveries as the Lankans accumulated 83 for one in the Powerplay -- their highest score in the first six overs in the format. Sri Lanka's scoring rate dropped in the middle overs, but it seemed as if it was their choice rather than a turnaround by Bangladesh bowlers. With five boundaries and three maximums, Nissanka scored a brisk 16-ball 42. Mendis top-scored with a 51-ball 73-run knock, guiding the hosts to the brink of victory before falling to Mohammad Saifuddin, back in the squad after more than a year, in the 18th over. The victory helped Sri Lanka go 1-0 up in the three-match series.

PHOTO: AFP



Phenomenal PSG, dazzling Dembele

Real humbled in CWC semifinal

AGENCIES

It never seemed like Ousmane Dembele was making his first start at the Club World Cup during PSG's 4-0 thrashing of Real Madrid in the semifinal on Wednesday.

Rested throughout the group stage due to a thigh injury and having only made substitute appearances in earlier knockout rounds, Dembele started against European giants Real Madrid and made an immediate impact. He assisted Fabian Ruiz for the opening goal in the sixth minute before finding the net himself three minutes later at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Dembele, a player who struggled to fulfill his potential at Barcelona and was often sidelined



PHOTO: REUTERS

due to injuries, has become a lethal weapon in Luis Enrique's PSG side.

His goal to make it 2-0 was his 35th for PSG in 52 games across all competitions since last August -- making him the frontrunner for the Ballon d'Or, especially after helping PSG move to the brink of their fifth title this season.

Winners of Ligue 1, the French Cup, the Trophée des Champions, and the Champions League, PSG could complete a clean sweep this season by beating Chelsea in Sunday's final at the same venue.

Enrique's comments after the game perfectly summed up Dembele's impact, which goes beyond just the goals he scored.

"For me, when it comes to the Ballon d'Or, I must say that the players who can win it have to not just score goals and set up goals, but help their team to win trophies. Ousmane Dembele does those things more than any other player," Enrique said.

Consider the way PSG got their first two goals against Real Madrid. It was Dembele who capitalised on defensive errors from Los Blancos, pressing higher than anyone else -- something he had been doing all season.

Under Enrique, PSG have become a well-oiled machine, with collective brilliance now shining through after the departure of star names like Neymar, Kylian Mbappe, and Lionel Messi. But if one player could still be picked as the standout, it would most certainly be Dembele -- the one who helped uplift the French side while pushing for the biggest individual prize in football.

‘Culture never formed where selectors explain to players’

“As long as [Mehidy Hasan] Miraz is playing, Mosaddek [Hossain] doesn't stand a chance.” That explosive remark by chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu sparked a firestorm, casting fresh scrutiny on the national team's selection process. But how did Mosaddek Hossain himself process the comment? In an exclusive interview with **The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdi**, the 29-year-old allrounder -- with 80 international matches under his belt -- opened up about the issue and more.

The Daily Star (DS): How did the chief selector explain his remarks to you?

Mosaddek Hossain (MH): Yes, I saw him speaking about it in the media yesterday [July 9]. In Chattogram, though, he apologised to me in person and explained that his comment was mainly about the Test team. He told me not to take it to heart and that I was on their radar.

As you can understand, I was feeling very low at that time, so when someone like him, very senior to me, comes and says that, there is not much to say from my end.

DS: You came to know about his comments from the media? How did that feel?

MH: I actually came to know from social media. There was a practice match that very day, with Nathan Kelly overseeing things [for the camp ahead of the Sri Lanka series], and I bowled okay. In the next match though, my body played, but my mind wasn't there after seeing that news... I would have felt frustrated if some other player was talked about in that way.

DS: After excelling with both bat and ball (highest wicket-taker) in the Premier League, did you expect a national team recall? Your knock in the final was special.

MH: You see, Abahani or

Mohammedan always try to build strong squads, and they demand performance and consistency. It's not like I have been playing in Abahani for 13 years without a reason.

This year, it was a tough time and players had to take a 40-60 percent payout... and there was less security. Amid these issues, obviously I saw hope that maybe a chance could arrive since I performed. But after hearing those comments [from the chief selector], not only my faith but my motivation took a hit.



DS: You felt you won't make the national team ever again?

MH: Yes, the comments were like that. Would I ever want Miraz to play badly? He is Bangladesh captain and... our roles are different. I wouldn't want anything bad for my enemy, whereas Miraz is my closest younger brother.

DS: You were in contention during the West Indies tour when the 2023 World Cup squad was taking shape, but why weren't you picked?

MH: The thing is, it was about my role. I used to bat at 6-7, but at that time I was batting at 7-8... In that

series, I feel that from the bowling side, I performed as per team requirement.

DS: Did you reach out to the selectors or hear anything from them personally?

MH: In Bangladesh cricket, this culture never formed where a player asks a selector directly or they provide an explanation.

You might get a few examples, but I haven't.

There are many instances where an input from a player could be of value. We always find things from social media.

DS: Do you feel you are on the radar now?

MH: I am quite confused. This year, the India series in August was cancelled. There are a few series later this year, but no ODIs. So, what will my task be like in these six months?

DS: How do you see the team's middle order and your chances?

MH: You see, [Mahmudullah] Riyad bhai and Mushfiqur [Rahim] bhai had left, and even Sri Lanka faced such a time when some players retired... But I don't think it would take much time to get over the tough period since in ODIs we were the most confident.



Four captains -- (from L to R) Bangladesh's Afeida Khandokar, Nepal's Birsana Chaudhary, Sri Lanka's Sanduni Sewmini and Bhutan's Tshendu Tshering Pelzom -- pose with the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship trophy following a pre-tournament briefing at a city hotel yesterday. The tournament will get underway today at the Bashundhara Kings Arena with favourites Bangladesh beginning their title defense against Sri Lanka while title aspirants Nepal take on Bhutan in the day's second match at the same venue.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SHORT CORNER

BPL may shift to May window

Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) governing council's new chairman Mahbub Anam on Thursday said that the upcoming BPL may be shifted from December-January window, depending on the upcoming general elections. "We will take the next steps depending on the government's decision, and May [window] is another option [to hold BPL]," Mahbub said.

Hamza and Co slip in FIFA rankings

Bangladesh have slipped one spot in the latest FIFA rankings following their 2-1 defeat to Singapore on June 10 in the Asian Cup qualifiers at the National Stadium. Back on March 25, Bangladesh played out a goalless draw against India in Shillong in the same tournament, a result that had lifted Hamza Choudhury and his teammates two places to 183rd in the rankings. However, the loss to Singapore has now dropped them to 184th.

***Read full stories on The Daily Star's website*



England batter Joe Root plays a shot during the opening day's play of their third Test against India at Lord's on Thursday. England reached 251 for four in 83 overs at Stumps. Root, unbeaten on 99, stitched together an unbroken 79-run fifth-wicket stand with skipper Ben Stokes, who scored 39 not out, to help the hosts recover from 172 for four.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Sinner stands in Djokovic's road to 25

STAR SPORTS DESK

Wimbledon's men's singles semifinals promise high drama on Friday, with the headline act featuring a blockbuster showdown between seven-time champion Novak Djokovic and world number one Jannik Sinner.

But before that, two-time defending champion Carlos Alcaraz will face American Taylor Fritz in the first semifinal.

Alcaraz, riding a 23-match winning streak and unbeaten at Wimbledon since 2022, is chasing a third consecutive final at the All England Club.

Jannik Sinner will face Novak Djokovic for the ninth time, holding a narrow 5-4 edge in their head-to-head record.

Carlos Alcaraz and Taylor Fritz have met twice before, with the Spaniard winning both matches comfortably.



While he's dropped four sets this tournament, the Spaniard looked dominant in a straight-sets quarterfinal win over Cameron Norrie.

Opponent Fritz, in his first Wimbledon semi-final, will hope to ride the momentum of his hard-fought five-set wins earlier in the tournament.

Yet it's the second semifinal that takes centre stage. The 38-year-old

Serb is bidding for a record 25th Grand Slam title and an eighth Wimbledon crown to equal Roger Federer's mark. Despite a minor injury scare after a fall in his quarterfinal win over Flavio Cobolli, Djokovic is determined to go the distance.

"I just try to focus on recovery now," Djokovic said. "It's going to take the best of me to beat Jannik."

Sinner, meanwhile, has enjoyed a strong run despite elbow concerns, which surfaced during his fourth-round match against Grigor Dimitrov.

The Italian, now into his second Wimbledon semifinal, dismissed Ben Shelton in straight sets and seems ready for the physical and mental test ahead.

The 23-year-old leads Djokovic 5-4 in their head-to-head and won their most recent meeting at Roland Garros. However, Djokovic has defeated Sinner both times they've met at Wimbledon, including a four-set victory in last year's semi-final.

"We know each other well," Sinner said. "But I've never beaten him here. It will be a very tough challenge."

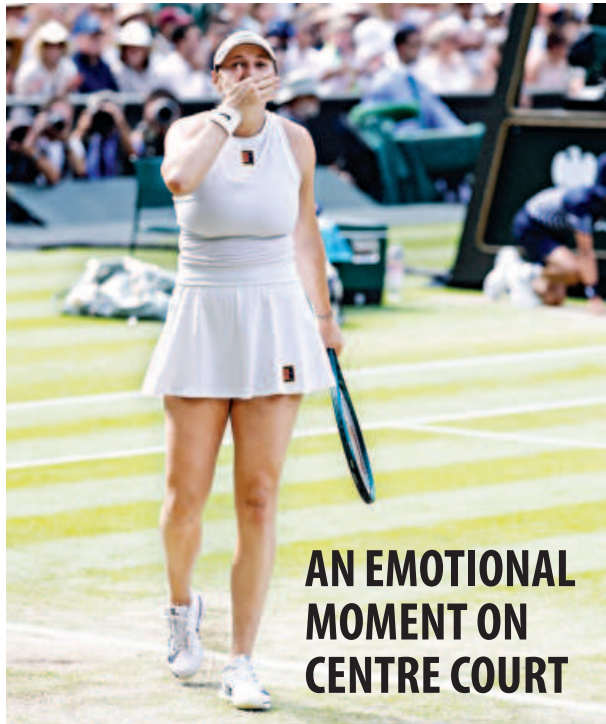


PHOTO: REUTERS

Amanda Anisimova blows a kiss to the crowd, overwhelmed with joy and disbelief after reaching her maiden Wimbledon final by outclassing world number one Aryna Sabalenka 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 yesterday. Anisimova will face Iga Swiatek, who will also be making her first appearance in a Wimbledon final after blazing past Belinda Bencic 6-2, 6-0 in the other semifinal.