

Star SPORT

DHAKA MONDAY SEPTEMBER 15, 2025, BHADRA 31, 1432 BS

What to WATCH

T SPORTS

NCL T20
Dhaka vs Barishal
Live from 9:30 am
Khulna vs Chattogram
Live from 1:30 pm
Asia Cup T20

UAE vs Oman
Live from 6:00 pm
Hong Kong vs Sri Lanka
Live from 8:30 pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD2
World Athletics C'ships
Live from 2:00 pm



Jamaica's Oblique Seville (No. 7) outpaces compatriot Kishane Thompson and defending champion Noah Lyles of USA to win the gold in the 100m final of the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo on Sunday – the first Jamaican to win gold in the blue riband event in 10 years. Seville timed a personal best of 9.77sec for the victory, with Thompson taking silver in 9.82sec while Lyles claimed bronze with a time of 9.89sec. (R) USA's Melissa Jefferson-Wooden took the women's 100m title with a new championship record at 10.61sec, beating Jamaica's Tina Clayton (10.76sec) and Olympic champion Julien Alfred of Saint Lucia (10.84sec).

PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS



Lankans face struggling Hong Kong

STAR SPORTS DESK



Sri Lanka will take on struggling Hong Kong at the Dubai International Cricket

Stadium today, hoping to carry their momentum with another win in the group stage of the ongoing Asia Cup.

The Lankans started the tournament with a bang, beating Bangladesh by a convincing margin of six wickets with 32 balls to spare. The win not only helped them leapfrog the Tigers to second place in the points table but also boosted their net run rate to 2.595.

With Hong Kong already suffering heavy defeats in both their matches against Afghanistan and Bangladesh, they still have a mathematical possibility of going through. But Sri Lanka will be eyeing another big win against the Associate nation, which could propel them to the top with a better net run rate than Afghanistan's 4.700.

All these equations mean Bangladesh would not only need to beat Afghanistan by a big margin tomorrow in Abu Dhabi but also hope Rashid Khan and Co suffer a defeat against the Lankans in their final group game to leave the Tigers with a chance of progressing as one of the two best teams from Group B.

Meanwhile, in Group A, UAE will face Oman in tomorrow's other match in Abu Dhabi.

Will Tigers pay for carrying a struggling Hridoy?

EKUSH TAPADER from Abu Dhabi

The ball isn't finding the middle of the bat; the timing is all wrong. This has been the story of Bangladesh's Towhid Hridoy for a while now.

On the eve of the Tigers' Asia Cup opener in Abu Dhabi against Hong Kong, Hridoy left the nets discussing the issue with Parvez Hossain Emon – perhaps seeking a solution to his struggles.

Even Hridoy admitted that he failed to find a solution. "I tried to hit, but the ball just wasn't connecting with the bat," he said after a sluggish knock in the chase against Hong Kong.

Against Sri Lanka, fortune briefly smiled on him when a catch was dropped at 4. But the very next ball, he was run out by a direct throw.

Hridoy's vulnerability outside off stump has been ruthlessly exposed, and Bangladesh are paying the price for persisting with their out-of-form right-hander.

The signs were there in the pre-Asia Cup series against the Netherlands in Sylhet. Dutch spinners Aryan Dutt and Tim Pringle quickly targeted his off-side weakness. Hridoy repeatedly tried to drag deliveries to the leg side, falling into their trap. In modern cricket, such flaws rarely go unnoticed on opposition analysts' laptops.

The numbers underline his slump: across his last 20 innings, Hridoy has managed 403 runs at a strike rate of 112.88. In the last 10 innings, it gets worse – 186 runs at 100.54. By comparison, Jakir Ali struck at a strike rate of 131 across 19 innings in the same span.



In his first 20 T20I innings, Hridoy averaged 30.87 with a strike rate of 135.34, garnering a reputation for clean hitting. But now, his T20 graph only seems to be going downward.

Bangladesh's defeat to Sri Lanka has left them vulnerable in the group stage, with a strong Afghanistan next up. Giving Hridoy another chance now means thrusting him under even greater pressure.

Yet chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu remains reluctant to abandon him. "Maybe Hridoy isn't in his best rhythm. He has more impact on wickets where the ball comes nicely onto the bat. After investing in him for so long, now is the time to get returns – otherwise, the investment itself looks questionable. Hopefully, he'll come back," Lipu told The Daily Star.

Still, concern was evident. Lipu also stressed that responsibility lay beyond Hridoy: "You can't blame only Hridoy. The entire top order failed (against Sri Lanka)."

But in reality, the middle order is expected to rescue the team when the top falters. In recent games, Bangladesh's top order had generally provided a platform, with at least one of the openers between Tanzid Hasan Tamim and Emon able to provide a good start and skipper Litton Das being a consistent scorer at No. 3.

With the Tigers losing early wickets against Sri Lanka, it was the first time in a while that the middle order was tested. That's where Hridoy was expected to play a crucial role, but he failed at the most important stage.

Options do exist. Saif Hassan, recalled after two years, impressed with a stormy knock against the Netherlands. His part-time off-spin and sharp fielding also add value. Nurul Hasan Sohan, too, is a possible alternative.

Bangladesh now face Afghanistan tomorrow, where a defeat would mean elimination. Even with victory, their fate depends on the Sri Lanka-Afghanistan result. In a high-stakes scenario, the question remains: should the Tigers persist with a struggling Hridoy when other choices are waiting?

Rain dampens spirits on NCL T20's opening day

SPORTS REPORTER

Nature had its say on the opening day of the National Cricket League (NCL) T20 as the match between Rangpur Division and Sylhet Division at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogura was wiped out by rain without a ball being bowled, while in Rajshahi, Dhaka Metro handed Rajshahi Division a seven-wicket defeat in a five-over game.

There was an air of expectation in Bogura for the return of cricket at the venue. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had released 10 thousand tickets and according to board sources, tickets worth of Tk 1,30,000 were sold.

However, the Bogura fans had to return home disappointed after the game was abandoned due to rain.

The match in Rajshahi was heavily affected by rain as well, as it kicked off at 12:50pm, more than three hours after the scheduled start.

Rajshahi Division posted 60-3, with Sabbir Rahman hitting an unbeaten 15-ball 33. Metro sealed the chase in 4.3 overs, thanks to Mahfuzul Islam Robin's 12 ball 30 not out.

With heavy rain rendering further play impossible at Bogura for the next few days, September 15 and 16's matches have been shifted to Rajshahi.

Matches at Rajshahi and Bogura will go on till September 19 before the tournament moves to Sylhet.

As this year's NCL T20 is taking part in late monsoon, rain is likely to remain a threat throughout the tournament.



Messi's Panenka pain, Ronaldo still ahead

STAR SPORTS DESK



Lionel Messi's Panenka penalty miss in Inter Miami's 3-0 defeat against Charlotte FC in an MLS encounter yesterday reignited comparisons with Cristiano Ronaldo. Messi has now taken 145 career penalties, scoring 113 and missing 32, with a conversion rate of 77.93%. Ronaldo, by contrast, has attempted 210 penalties, converting 177 and missing 33, with a higher success rate of 84.29%.

Messi's miss was his first in nearly three years during regular play, excluding shootouts. His previous failure came at the 2022 FIFA World Cup group-stage when Poland goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny denied him in an eventual 2-0 Argentina win. Since then, the Argentine had converted six consecutive in-game penalties for both Argentina and Inter Miami before Saturday's miss.

‘Others know me as a source of goals’

Minhazul Karim Shadin's journey in football began after a setback but with strong family support, he redirected his path towards football. Today, he stands out as a promising forward who helped his team, PWD, earn promotion to the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) by becoming both the most valuable player and top scorer of the Bangladesh Championship League (BCL). **The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman** spoke to learn about his past, his present and future plans. Here are the excerpts:

The Daily Star (DS): How do you evaluate your performance in the BCL last season?

Minhazul Karim Shadin (MKS): I've always been a dedicated footballer. Before the league began, I set myself the target of finishing on a high so I could make a strong case for playing in the top-tier league. Clubs want to see achievements – this was my chance to prove myself. Winning both the MVP and top scorer awards in a single BCL season is a rare accomplishment, and I believe it will play a significant role in shaping my future career.

DS: After scoring eight goals and assisting 22 in 18 BCL matches, what's your target in the BPL?

MKS: As a right winger, I'm naturally inclined to assist more than score, but my positioning and performance will ultimately depend on the coach's game plan – just as it did during our BCL campaign.

DS: How do you view the difference in challenge between the BCL and BPL?

MKS: The BPL is a whole different level. I had offers from other clubs, but I chose to stay with PWD because I believe I'll get more game time here, which is crucial for my development. Of course, the financial incentives are better in the BPL, but for me, consistent playing time matters more at this stage. However, the BPL is going to be challenging for me because everyone now knows me as a source of goals.

DS: Can PWD survive and thrive in the top-tier after finally earning promotion on their third attempt?

MKS: Absolutely. We have a balanced squad with both experienced players and a group of young, energetic players with an average age of around 23. We've been training intensively for the past 10 days, and our coach is emphasising teamwork, just like he did during the BCL. The team spirit is strong, and we're optimistic about finishing well in the BPL table.

DS: What do you think is your biggest strength?

MKS: I may not be the strongest physically since I'm only 5 feet 9 inches tall, but my strengths lie in technical skills – especially one-on-one dribbling, early crosses, and set-piece delivery. I took all set-pieces for PWD SC in the BCL, and I think

I assisted 10 to 12 goals from set-pieces alone.

DS: Tell us a bit about your journey into football.

MKS: It all started in 2014 when I failed to get admitted to Jhenaidah Cadet College due to being underweight, despite finishing third in the written and fifteenth in the viva tests. That's when I turned to football. I participated in inter-school football tournaments and was eventually spotted by coach Kazi Maruf of Shams-ul-Huda Academy in 2015. I trained there from 2016 to 2022. My father, Sergeant Fazlul Karim, played for the Bangladesh Army football team for 17 years, so football runs in the family. I was part of the U-14 squad at the BFF Elite Academy in Sylhet and later played for the Bangladesh under-16 team. Before joining PWD, I played two BCL seasons with Dhaka Wanderers Club.



Manchester City's goal-scoring machine Erling Haaland struck twice in a 3-0 Premier League thrashing of Manchester United at the Etihad on Sunday, giving Pep Guardiola's side bragging rights in the latest edition of the derby. City climbed to eighth with their second win from four, while United are 14th with just one victory.

PHOTO: REUTERS