

## SPORTS

**What to WATCH**

**Star Sports Select HD1**  
ICC Women's World Cup  
England vs South Africa  
Live from 5:30 pm  
Premier League  
Bournemouth vs Fulham

Live from 1:00 am (Saturday)  
**T Sports**  
Afghanistan vs Bangladesh  
2nd T20  
Live From 9:00 pm

The first over of the team's World Cup opener, a pacer runs in with the glistening white ball, lets it rip with a proud seam, the ball swirls in the air, changing direction as it approaches the pitch, kisses the earth and zips inwards with the seam to rattle the stumps of a right-hander. Bangladesh's Marufa Akter did exactly that to Omaira Sohel (0) in the fifth ball of their opening match at the ICC Women's World Cup 2025 against Pakistan in Colombo on Thursday. In the next ball, she did it again, this time against the in-form Sidra Amin, who managed to make connection with the ball, but only with the inside edge of the willow, after which the ball crashed onto the stumps. Marufa (2-31) set the tone with that opening burst as Bangladesh eventually bundled out Pakistan for a mere 129 in 38.3 overs.

PHOTO: AFP



## Withdrawing councillors turn to 'guardian' sports advisor

SPORTS REPORTER

Rafiqul Islam Babu, one of the 16 councillors alongside Tamim Iqbal who had withdrawn their nomination from the election the day earlier alleging government influence, urged Sports and Youth Adviser Asif Mahmud on Thursday to accept their three-point proposal as "a way out" of the current turmoil in the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) polls.

Rafiqul and some other aggrieved councillors arrived at the BCB premises on Thursday, hoping to have a talk over some tea with the BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, who never arrived at the office.

Later, Rafiqul and his group spoke to the media in a press conference, outlining the three proposals.

"The first proposal is that the tenure of the existing board could be extended according to the rules and regulations, which could solve a lot of the problems. Another option is to reschedule the election.... An ad-hoc committee could also be formed to run things for a short period," he said alongside organisers Yeasir Abbas and Abdullah Al Fuad Redwan.

Interestingly, Rafiqul had earlier shown concerns that the board could be run through an ad-hoc committee, but now, he sees it as a solution.

Just a day before, Tamim, as the face of the group, said that government interference was at large in the BCB polls. But on Thursday, Rafiqul spoke in a very different tone.

"Many in the media and outsiders have created an opposition, pitting our honourable advisor against one group. That's not the case. Not just cricket, the honourable advisor is the guardian of all sports," he said.

When asked if Tamim was in agreement with the proposals, he said, "I am speaking on behalf of everyone."

Asked if withdrawing was a mistake, he said, "No, I'm not saying that. We did that as a form of protest. But there is a way out of this."

The Daily Star reached out to

Tamim, who left the country on Wednesday, but he refused to comment, saying he wanted to be left out of these events for now as he is dealing with a family emergency.

The 16 councillors withdrew nomination after former BCB president Faruque Ahmed filed a writ petition with the High Court on September 30, challenging the inclusion of councillors from 15 clubs which were under investigation by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in the BCB polls, and an HC bench stayed the order.

The 15 clubs were expected to be a vote bank for Tamim and Co in the polls for the 12 director positions in the Dhaka club category.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission had allowed councillors to take back their withdrawal by 12:00pm on Thursday, but no one did.

The BCB election is set to take place on October 6.



## Joty praises 'incredible' Marufa

SPORTS REPORTER

Just one match into their campaign in the ICC Women's World Cup 2025, Bangladesh have already matched their previous best finish courtesy of an emphatic seven-wicket win over Pakistan in Colombo on Thursday.

The Tigresses had won one game in their only other appearance in a 50-over World Cup back in 2022, which had also come against Pakistan.

"We wanted to start with a win. It gives us momentum that we can take into the rest of the tournament," said skipper Nigar Sultana Joty at the post-match presentation.

Player-of-the-match Marufa Akter set the tone in the very first over, dismissing Omaira Sohel and Sidra Amin for ducks with two wonderous in-swingers.

"I was getting good swing. There was some lovely swing on the first ball, and I maintained the line and length," Marufa said after the match.

Chasing 130, opener Rubya Haider Jhelik, making her WODI debut, made 54 not out off 77 balls laced with eight fours to take the side over the line with 113 balls to spare.

"Marufa is very young and mature. She knows her role very well, and is very confident. How she delivered was incredible. After the first innings, we talked about playing our natural game. Jhelik batted really well in her debut game," the skipper said.

With the win, Bangladesh have jumped to second position in the points-table, sandwiched between toppers Australia and hosts India, with two points and a positive net run rate of 1.623.

## 'Chess in Bangladesh needs a new role model'

ANISUR RAHMAN

At 59, Niaz Murshed, the subcontinent's first grandmaster, claimed his seventh national title by winning the 49th National Chess Championship on Wednesday. While his triumph celebrated a living legend, it also highlighted the fragile state of chess in Bangladesh.

Three grandmasters – Reefat Bin Sattar, Enamul Hossain Razib, and Abdullah Al Rakib – were unavailable for the championship, while the country lost GM Ziaur Rahman last year. Niaz's victory, achieved in the absence of other big names, testified to his enduring brilliance but also exposed a glaring void at the top level of chess in the country.

This year's focus was on the younger generation – IM Fahad Rahman, IM Manon Reza Neer, FM Tahsin Tajwar Zia, and FM Shakline Mostafa Sajid – especially after Neer's national triumph last year. Fahad finished runner-up, while Niaz, who had only aimed for a top-five finish to secure a place in the national team for the upcoming Chess Olympiad, eventually ended up making it all the way.

According to Niaz, Bangladesh's failure to produce a sixth grandmaster since 2008, when Enamul last earned the title, stems from outdated strategies and flawed planning.

"They [Fahad, Neer, Tahsin, Shakline] have been stuck at a certain stage for two reasons – our own problems and worldwide rating depletion," Niaz explained. He noted that FIDE's new rating system has lowered scores across the globe, further complicating progress for local talents.

In preparation for the Chess World Cup in India from October 31 to November 27, the Bangladesh Chess Federation (BCF) is planning to bring in a Russian grandmaster to train Fahad, Neer, and a few other prospects. Niaz,

however, criticised this approach.

"Hiring foreign coaches for one or two months has never worked. It's poor planning," he said. "Young players need quality tournaments and long-term training. They can learn plenty from me as well. They [BCF] are repeating the same mistakes."

Bangladesh's five existing grandmasters all won multiple national championships before achieving GM title, but among the current



prospects, only Neer has one such national title. That fact alone explains why the wait for a sixth GM has dragged on for 17 years.

Still, Niaz remains hopeful that the breakthrough will eventually come from the current pool of players – a milestone he believes could help revive chess in the country.

"You can't attract players without a role model. I was a role model for the last generation, not this one," Niaz said. "We need a new role model. If Fahad or Neer had become grandmasters at 15 or 16, it could inspire many to take up chess. But we've failed to create that new icon."

## TIGERS SURVIVE RASHID SCARE TO EDGE AFGHANISTAN

Bangladesh almost snatched defeat from the jaws of victory after losing six wickets for nine runs following a 109-run opening stand between Parvez Hossain Emon (54 off 37 balls) and Tanzid Hasan Tamim (51 off 37), before came knocks from Nurul Hasan Sohan (23 not out off 13) and Rishad Hossain (14 not out off nine) earned them a four-wicket win over Afghanistan in the first of three T20Is in Sharjah on Thursday. Earlier, a disciplined bowling effort restricted the Afghans to 151-9. The openers then put the Tigers on course of victory before Rashid Khan's four-wicket haul nearly flipped the fate of the match. Eventually, an unbroken 35-run stand off 18 balls between Nurul and Rishad got them over the line. The second match will take place at the same venue today.



## PSG's young core hints at bright future

REUTERS, Paris

Paris St Germain's 2-1 victory at Barcelona on Wednesday bore all the hallmarks of a statement win as the Champions League holders leaned on a blend of academy graduates, fringe players and established names to show their depth.

The French champions travelled to Spain shorn of several key players, with Ousmane Dembele, Desire Doue, Marquinhos, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, and Joao Neves all sidelined.

"I want to feel our DNA as a team and as a club," coach Luis Enrique said. "Whatever the players, whatever the problems, we are here, like the supporters."

After an early Barca opener from Ferran Torres, PSG's response came from unlikely sources, Senny Mayulu – a 19-year-old midfielder pressed into service as a centre forward – grabbing the equaliser before the break.



Ibrahim Mbaye, 17 and making his first start in the competition, helped set up the move with a sharp link-up with Nuno Mendes.

Quentin Ndjantou, 18, was introduced for only his second professional appearance and

showed enough energy and daring in a late cameo to underline why Luis Enrique trusted him in such a setting.

"The pride is to see so many Titis (young Parisians) in a match like this," Mayulu said. "We work

hard every day, the coach trusts us, he puts us in the starting 11, and we have to give that back."

Portugal striker Goncalo Ramos eventually sealed the victory in the closing stages, extending his knack for scoring goals in decisive moments as a late substitute.

Midfielder Vitinha hailed the collective effort.

"It was an incredible match and I'm proud of this team," he said. "We had five regular starters missing, and players who don't often play stepped up and gave a great response."

The victory not only strengthened PSG's position in the Champions League after two wins in as many games, but also vindicated the club's restrained approach in the transfer window.

With fewer big-name arrivals than in previous summers, Luis Enrique has leaned heavily on homegrown talent, accelerating the development of Mayulu, Mbaye and Ndjantou.

বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ড  
পরিচালনা পরিষদ নির্বাচন-২০২৫

Bangladesh Cricket Board

তারিখঃ ০৩রা অক্টোবর, ২০২৫

**বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ডের পরিচালনা পরিষদ নির্বাচন-২০২৫ নিম্নে বর্ণিত তারিখ, সময় ও স্থানে অনুষ্ঠিত হইবে (শুধুমাত্র স্ব-শরীরে ভোট প্রদানে অগ্রহী ভোটারদের ক্ষেত্রে প্রযোজ্য) :

দিন ও তারিখ : সোমবার, ০৬ অক্টোবর, ২০২৫ খ্রি.।  
সময় : সকাল ১০ঃ০০ টা থেকে বিকাল ৪ঃ০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।  
স্থান : বলরুম, হোটেল প্যান প্যাসিফিক সোনারগাঁও, ঢাকা।

প্রধান নির্বাচন কমিশনার  
বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ড পরিচালনা পরিষদ নির্বাচন-২০২৫