Star SPORT
DHAKA WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 29, 2025, KARTIK 13, 1432 BS

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
ICC Women's World Cup
1st semifinal
England vs South Africa
Live from 3:30 pm
T SPORTS, NAGORIK TV
Bangladesh vs West Indies
2nd T20I
Live from 6:00 pm
ESPN SONY 1
Australia vs India
1st T20I
Live from 2:15 pm

'A month-long training can't produce results'

Bangladesh volleyball team finished fourth in the just-concluded six-team CAVA Cup in Mirpur, despite early wins. In an interview with *The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman*, captain *Horosit Biswas* cited the squad's inexperience, lack of practice matches among the key factors, and he also discussed the team's prospects at next year's South Asian Games and more. The excerpts of the interview are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): How do you assess Bangladesh's performance, having set out to be champions?
Horosit Biswas (HB): We had good performances in the first three matches, but a close 3-2 defeat to Turkmenistan in the fourth match let everyone down morally, and we could not recover from it... It seemed that we went down before suffering defeat.

DS: What factors contributed to the team's inconsistent performance?
HB: The current squad consists mostly of young players who played in the Asian Men's U-20 Volleyball Championship in 2022, with only two to three senior players, including me. We also took part in an international tournament after a two-year gap.

DS: Having emerged champions and runners-up in the Asian Central Zone International Volleyball C'ship since 2015, what does this fourth-place finish indicate?
HB: We are still good... A team cannot produce good results on the back of only a month of training. We were previously given opportunities to play warm-up matches in Iran, but this time we could not get such facilities.

DS: Where does Bangladesh stand in the subcontinent ahead of next year's South Asian Games?
HB: Our main target is to play the semifinals of the SA Games. After this tournament, we got ideas about Nepal, Maldives, and Sri Lanka, and we can beat them again. However, India are now a strong side, but I think we will be able to fight well against Pakistan.

DS: How would you evaluate the impact of new coach Ryan Masajedi compared with Ali Pour Aroji?
HB: Ali Pour usually worked on technical aspects... and his decisions during the game were decisive. The new coach is now working a lot on our weaker areas.

DS: What is the team's next action plan leading up to the SA Games and beyond?
HB: Since only two months are left before the SA Games begin, an opportunity to train in Japan for one month can help us achieve our target of winning the silver medal. Overseas training will also help for next year's Asian Volleyball Championship, in which we participated in 2023 after a 30-year gap.

Tigers and the 150-BARRIER

SPORTS REPORTER

Having suffered a 16-run defeat in the first T20I against the West Indies in Chattogram on Monday, Bangladesh will be looking to keep the three-match series alive with a win in today's second game at the Bir Shrestha Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Motiur Rahman Cricket Stadium.

However, with the T20 World Cup scheduled for February-March next year, the Litton Das-led side must worry about more than just saving the series as they look to stay on course for a fifth successive T20I series victory.

In 2025, Bangladesh won 13 of the 25 T20Is they played, with one match yielding no result. The figures appear even more impressive when considering games where Bangladesh batted second, winning nine and losing six of 15 matches -- a 60 percent success rate.

Although the numbers may look promising, a deeper analysis reveals a worrying trend that could haunt the Tigers in the upcoming T20 World Cup.

During this period, Bangladesh were set targets of over 150 runs on seven occasions, winning only twice. Interestingly, one of those victories came while chasing just 151 against Afghanistan in Sharjah last October.

In essence, whenever the target exceeded 150, Bangladesh struggled. They even failed to chase a modest 136 against Pakistan in the Asia Cup -- a game in which a victory could have taken them to the final of the continental tournament. If anything that loss highlighted was the fact that sometimes, when the stakes are high, the Tigers often fall short even of moderate totals.

After winning the ODI series on a slow, turning Mirpur pitch tailored to their strengths, Litton spoke about welcoming a different challenge in Chattogram, where the wickets tend to play true -- a necessary test ahead of the T20 World Cup.

Litton also broke from the usual post-match diplomacy, publicly criticising Shamim Hossain for his reckless batting in the first ODI against the West Indies. At the presentation, he bluntly said Shamim "can't come and just enjoy batting all the time," urging him to "take responsibility."

While Litton's boldness -- in embracing tougher conditions and calling out a teammate's shortcomings -- deserves appreciation, he must show the same courage in addressing the team's larger issue: Bangladesh's heavy reliance on their bowlers to keep opponents under 150.

At a time when top sides are breaching the 300-run mark and scores around 250 are becoming common even in the shortest format, Bangladesh's struggle to surpass 150 while chasing is almost comical -- but unfortunately, it remains a harsh reality that needs to be addressed if they are to stay competitive in the forthcoming World Cup.

'Bangladesh need explosive hitters'

Two-time T20 world champion **Samuel Badree** reckons Bangladesh's recent rise in shortest format stems from their improved bowling depth and the emergence of Rishad Hossain, but the former Trinidadian leg-spinner feels the Tigers still lack the finishing power to challenge the world's best. In a wide-ranging interview with **The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan**, Badree reflects on Bangladesh's progress, the West Indies' ongoing struggles against spin, and what both teams must address ahead of next year's ICC T20

World Cup. The 44-year-old, who previously visited Bangladesh as a player for the West Indies and in the Bangladesh Premier League, is now relishing his new role as a commentator in the ongoing white-ball series between the two sides.

"It's the batting that seems to be an issue [for Bangladesh]... Can they find someone who can be in that finisher role? They need one or two players who can hit some sixes and get that strike rate of over 200."

Read the full interview on The Daily Star website

No Fortune Barishal for next BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

Fortune Barishal will not participate in the upcoming edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) director and BPL Governing Council member secretary Iftekhar Rahman Mithu confirmed the development at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

On the final day of submission, ten interested parties submitted their Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for franchise ownership. The BCB had outlined ten potential franchise regions: Barishal, Chattogram, Cumilla, Dhaka, Khulna, Mymensingh, Noakhali, Rajshahi, Rangpur, and Sylhet.

Among the interested franchises, Rangpur Riders, Dhaka Capitals, Khulna Tigers, and Chittagong Kings were the only teams that featured in last season's BPL. Rangpur Riders will continue under Bashundhara Group, while Walton and Remark Harlan have applied for the Dhaka Capitals franchise rights.

Desh Travels has submitted an application for the Rajshahi Kings franchise. Despite previous financial disputes with the BCB, Chittagong Kings have also expressed interest in continuing, with SQ Sports applying for their ownership rights.

The BCB plans to stage the country's lone franchise-based T20 tournament in the December–January window.

Meanwhile, the BCB has also acknowledged receipt of the independent inquiry committee's 900-page final report on integrity matters in the BPL 2024–25 (11th Edition), thanking the committee for its independent, evidence-based work addressing corruption concerns, operational gaps and a roadmap for reform.

PHOTO: BCB

Kalam Siddiki Aleen celebrates his brilliant 119-ball 101 as Bangladesh U19s edge Afghanistan U19s by five runs (DLS) in the first Youth ODI at the Shahid Chandu Stadium in Bogura yesterday. Bad light halted play with Bangladesh on 231 for four, needing 35 off 24 balls to chase 265-9. The second match will be held at the same venue on Friday before the series moves to Rajshahi.

Cricket in Chattogram at a standstill

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN *from Ctg*

Chattogram, a regular host of international fixtures and the ongoing Bangladesh-West Indies ODI series, has long been one of the country's main cricketing centres.

While local fans frequently get to enjoy international matches, they have been deprived of regional competitions -- once a hallmark of the port city's cricketing culture.

In recent years, only a few districts outside Dhaka have maintained regular domestic leagues. Chattogram, which produced stars like Akram Khan, Minhajul Abedin Nannu, Aftab Ahmed, Nafees Iqbal, Tamim Iqbal, and Mominul Haque, had long been an exception.

For decades, the city successfully hosted its own premier league and lower-tier tournaments every year without interruption.

That legacy, however, has come to a halt. Since the fall of Awami League government, cricket in Chattogram has been at a standstill. This year, the city's premier league could not be organised, and even the second-division league -- which was midway through the season during the political unrest -- was postponed with only a few matches left. More than a year later, it has yet to resume.

Although a regional franchise-based T20 competition was held in August–September, featuring 11 districts from the Chattogram Division, it did little to satisfy local players, organisers, and fans.

According to members of the city's cricket fraternity, strained relations between the former deputy commissioner and club officials played a major role in halting activities. The dissolution of District Sports Association following the regime change and the inactivity of the current ad-hoc committee have only deepened the crisis.

"The previous deputy commissioner didn't have much interest in sports. The club association wanted to convey their need to resume the leagues, but she wasn't keen to listen," said a Chattogram club official. The cricketers have been the biggest sufferers -- many now facing severe financial hardship.

"Players are losing significant income. In Chattogram, players are paid better than in Dhaka -- top players earn Tk 9-10 lakh for just 12 matches. Isn't that a big loss?" said wicketkeeper-batter Jasim Uddin, who represented Bandar Sporting Club in the last edition of the premier league and also regularly plays in the Dhaka league.

"Players like Irfan Shukkur and Yasir Ali also play here. Around 240 players represent 12 teams in the premier league, and many more compete in the lower divisions. Some club officials even went into hiding after August 5 due to financial issues," he added.

PHOTO: STAR

Efforts are now underway to revive cricket in the city. With assistance from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), Chattogram club officials are attempting to rebuild ties with the current administration. To that end, BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul is visiting Chattogram today.

Bulbul is scheduled to attend the inauguration of the Mayor Challenge Cup Football Tournament at the M. A. Aziz Stadium, where he is also expected to meet Deputy Commissioner Saiful Islam and Chattogram Mayor Shahadat Hossain to discuss possible solutions to the crisis.

Ahsan Iqbal Chowdhury, one of the two BCB directors from the Chattogram Division and a veteran local organiser, expressed optimism about Bulbul's visit.

"We are hopeful of settling the matter soon," Ahsan told The Daily Star. "My first priority is to restart district club cricket and then launch the premier league in January. We lack umpires and coaches, so I've requested the board to arrange training programmes for both in Chattogram."

He also emphasised the need to expand cricket beyond the city.

"We need to revive district leagues in all 10 districts of the division. Noakhali doesn't even have a proper cricket ground, and other districts lack facilities and infrastructure. Outside Chattogram, only Cox's Bazar hosts a league -- which they jokingly call the 'World Cup' because it happens once every four years," he said.

"We must build basic infrastructure and practice facilities before restarting the leagues; otherwise, we won't progress sustainably."

While Chattogram does not face the venue shortages that plague many districts, the challenge now lies in restoring coordination and confidence. Whether the city can bring cricket back to the field remains to be seen -- but hopes are once again rising in Bangladesh's cricketing heart outside Dhaka.