

What to WATCH

Star Sports 2
India vs South Africa
1st Test, Day 2
Live from 10:00 am
Sony Sports 1, 2, and 5
Asia Cup Rising Stars

Bangladesh A vs Hong Kong
Live from 12:30 pm
Afghanistan A vs Sri Lanka A
Live from 5:30 pm
World Cup Qualifiers
Georgia vs Spain

Live from 11:00 pm
Switzerland vs Sweden
Live from 1:45 am
(Sunday)
Denmark vs Belarus
Live from 1:45 am
(Sunday)

MBAPPE
nets record 400th

France superstar Kylian Mbappe became the youngest player after Pele (23 years and 4 days) to reach 400 career goals, hitting the milestone at just 26 years and 328 days with a brace in a 4-0 win at home in a World Cup qualifier against Ukraine on Thursday which booked France's place in next year's event. Neither Lionel Messi nor Cristiano Ronaldo had reached that total at his age. Messi did it at 27 years and 95 days, while Ronaldo arrived there at 28 years and 335 days. Mbappe reached the mark in 537 matches -- quicker than Messi (525 matches) and Ronaldo (653).

PHOTO: REUTERS



Will red card
put Ronaldo's
WORLD
CUP AT
RISK?

Cristiano Ronaldo's first-ever red card for Portugal in their 2-0 loss away from home against Ireland in a World Cup qualifier yesterday has sparked big questions about his availability for the main event next year. Sent off for violent conduct against Ireland, the 40-year-old now faces a potential multi-match ban that could roll into the World Cup itself.

Ronaldo received his first red card in 226 appearances for Portugal after elbowing Dara O'Shea in a World Cup qualifier against Ireland.

The straight red means he is automatically suspended for one match, ruling him out in the World Cup qualifier against Armenia -- a game Portugal need to win to seal automatic qualification.

Because the offence was classified as violent conduct, Ronaldo is likely to face an extended ban which would have to served in competitive fixtures.

FIFA's disciplinary code suggests a three-match suspension for "assault, including elbowing, punching, kicking, biting, spitting or hitting an opponent".

If he receives a three-game ban, he would miss:

Portugal's first two group-stage matches at the 2026 World Cup if Portugal qualify directly, or both play-off matches if Portugal drop into the play-offs.

The suspension can only be served in competitive fixtures, so friendlies don't count.

Decision will be made by the FIFA disciplinary committee, expected around early December, close to the World Cup draw (on December 5).

Joy's return, Murad's emergence
reinforce Test core

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI FROM SYLHET

The Mount Maunganui Test in January 2022, when Bangladesh beat the then ICC World Test Championship holders New Zealand in their own backyard, remains their biggest achievement in the five-day format till date.

That victory was the collective outcome of many outstanding performances, one of which was opener Mahmudul Hasan Joy's 78-run knock off 228 balls, a gutsy effort from someone playing in just his second ever Test.

Joy's fortitude did not go unnoticed as though the right-hander's form with the bat slumped, he kept getting picked



for the Test team for the next 14 series -- a string that ended in June this year when he was dropped from the Sri Lanka tour.

The 25-year-old's exodus from the Test side did not last for too long as he was recalled for the two Tests at home against Ireland. In the series opener in Sylhet, he announced his return with a career-best 171 -- a knock that helped the hosts beat the Irish by an innings and 47 runs inside four days on Friday.

"Joy was not in the team. Coming back after being dropped and playing such a big innings in the first match was actually very tough for him. But the way he batted,

it didn't even feel like he was making a comeback," skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto, who also hit a century in the first innings, heaped praises on Joy after the match.

"I think Joy has made a lot of changes to himself in terms of mindset. I hope that he plays with this mentality against all teams in the future," he added.

Seven of the first eight names in Bangladesh's playing XI against Ireland was the same as the Mount Maunganui Test, signalling a solid base in the Test side, while the names of the bowlers were different.

One of them was Hasan Murad, a left-arm spinner who made his Test debut as the third member of the team's spin trio.

Murad held his own alongside veteran spinners in Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Taijul Islam -- both with over 200 Test wickets -- and stood out with the amount of turn he produced.

Having bagged 2 for 47 in the first innings, he bagged 4 for 60 in the second, breaking Ireland's resistance on Day 4 with the wicket of skipper Andrew Balbirnie.

The 24-year-old had to wait for a while for his Test cap, having been a part of the side since the home series against New Zealand in 2023 -- the beginning of Shanto's first captaincy stint.

And the match where Shanto resumed his second stint, Murad began his journey as a Test cricketer.

"Murad was outstanding. He was sitting out for quite a few series, not getting a chance. But he plays first-class cricket every year, and performs every year. If you look at his stats, they are very good," said the skipper.

"The way he bowled after coming in was worth watching. And I hope the way he has started, he will slowly improve more and continue to contribute more to the team," he added.

Murad's smooth integration and Joy's successful comeback added dimensions to Shanto's Test squad but still the side has some way to go before earning formidability.

Asian Archery
C'ships end amid
India's dominance

SPORTS REPORTER

The Teer 24th Asian Archery Championships concluded on Friday with India dominating the medal's table. India won a total of 10 medals -- 6 gold, 3 silver and 1 bronze. South Korea secured 2 golds, 4 silvers and 4 bronzes.

Hosts Bangladesh claimed one silver and one bronze.

The final day began with the recurve women's team final. South Korea claimed the gold medal with a 6-0 set-point victory over Chinese Taipei. Malaysia had already secured the bronze medal earlier by defeating Uzbekistan 6-0.

In the recurve men's team final, a thrilling contest unfolded between South Korea and India, with India eventually claiming the gold following a tie-break.

In the recurve mixed team final, Chinese Taipei earned the gold medal while Uzbekistan won silver. India's Ankita Bhakat won the gold medal in the women's recurve individual event while the recurve men's individual final saw Dhiraj Bommadevara of India beat compatriot Rahul by 6-2 to win the gold medal.

Meanwhile the Adviser for Youth and Sports, Asif Mahmud Sojib Bhuiyan, announced a cash reward of Tk 100,000 each for the three medal winners of the Bangladesh team. Bonna Akter and Himu Bachhar won a silver in compound mixed team event while Kulsum Akter Moni won a bronze medal in women's individual compound event.

Hosts flattened as
Pakistan seal WC
qualifying spot

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's struggles in the three-match hockey series continued as they were outclassed once again -- this time in an 8-0 drubbing by Pakistan at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium on Friday. The loss, following an 8-2 defeat in the opening match, effectively sealed Pakistan a place in next year's FIH World Cup Qualifiers and highlighted the gulf in quality between the two sides and underscored Bangladesh's inability to cope with Pakistan's pace, structure, and finishing.

While Bangladesh had at least managed to find the net twice in the first match, they offered no resistance on Friday. Pakistan, the four-time world champions, dominated from start to finish, converting four penalty corners and scoring four goals from open play as the hosts failed to settle into any rhythm or organisation.

Bangladesh's Obaidul Hasan Joy admitted that the team could not maintain their game plan, resulting in repeated defensive lapses.

"We tried to follow the game plan, but most of the time we failed to stick to it, and that caused many of the goals we conceded," Joy said.

Joy further acknowledged that the lack of preparation showed on the field. "Pakistan are a big team, and we are learning a lot from them. I believe with more preparation time, we could have performed better," he added.

Pakistan captain Ammad Butt, meanwhile, expressed satisfaction by saying, "Our main goal was to qualify, and we have achieved it.

Bangladesh will look to avoid another heavy defeat in the dead rubber third match on Sunday.

'India tie more than a
football match'

SPORTS REPORTER

Still reeling from the stoppage time equaliser from Nepal that denied them a win on Thursday, Bangladesh are shifting their focus to the AFC Asian Cup Qualifying tie against India.

Before squaring off against India on November 18 at the National Stadium, the men in red and green played a friendly against Nepal in Dhaka, which ended a 2-2 draw.

Javier Cabrera's charges could hardly impress with the exception of Hamza Choudhury, who struck twice inside four minutes in the second half, first with a wonderful bicycle kick and then with an audacious panenka penalty kick, that gave the hosts a 2-1 lead.

The hosts were less than three minutes away from their first win over Nepal in five years before they conceded in the stoppage time, something that has turned into a habit.

Defender Saad Uddin, however, felt they were unlucky as he termed Ananta Tamang's equaliser "unbelievable".

"We were unlucky because we defended set pieces well in the last few matches including the last away match against Hong Kong," the 27-year-old defender said. "We still can't believe

we conceded a goal like that from zero angle even with such tight marking. The blame always falls on the defenders for conceding goals but people should look at how we concede them.

"Everyone was alert in the last moments. It still seems unbelievable to us, conceding from that angle. No one can be blamed for that goal."

The Bashundhara Kings defender is now looking forward to the India tie which he labelled as 'more than a football match'.

"We have to rectify the silly mistakes we made against Nepal, and return stronger against India because the tie against India is more than a football match for us," said Saad, who scored in a 1-1 draw against India in Kolkata in 2019.

With Bangladesh and India both out of contention for a place in the main competition, the match will be a battle for pride, with Saad still feeling the 0-0 draw against India in the first leg on March 25, should have ended in a victory for his side.

"We deserved to win over India in the away match where we created three chances in the first 20 minutes while India could not muster a single shot on target," Saad said. "I think we will also get goal-scoring chances against India in the home match and if we can take an early lead within 20 to 25 minutes, then India will be under pressure."

Leonine GM
Chess back
after 21 years

SPORTS REPORTER

The Leonine GM Chess Tournament makes its comeback today after a gap of 21 years, once again offering local talents a platform to pursue GM and IM norms.

This year's round-robin tournament features 10 players, including three GMs from Bangladesh, Vietnam and Uzbekistan, along with four IMs and three FM's. IM Fahad Rahman, IM Manon Reza Neer, FM Tahsin Tajwar Zia -- who has completed IM norms but lacks rating points-- and IM Abu Sufian Shakil will all be vying for GM norms, requiring at least seven points from nine rounds. FM Sakline Sajid aims to secure an IM norm with 5.5 points.

A total prize purse of US\$1,000 will be awarded, with the champion earning US\$500, the runner-up US\$300, and third place US\$200.



India pace ace Jasprit Bumrah was at his devastating best, taking five wickets for 27 runs -- his 16th five-wicket haul in Tests -- to bundle out World Test Championship holders South Africa for 159 in 55 overs on Day 1 of the first Test at Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday. India went to stumps at 37-1 after losing opener Yashasvi Jaiswal.

PHOTO: BCCI