

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
 Women's Kabaddi World Cup
 Live from 3:30 pm
 AFC Asian Cup Qualifier
 Bangladesh vs India
 Live from 8:00 pm

TEN CRICKET AND A SPORTS
 Pakistan T20 Tri-Series
 Pakistan vs Zimbabwe
 Live from 7:00 pm
SONY SPORTS 1, 2, 5
 World Cup Qualifiers

Iraq vs UAE
 Live from 10:00 pm
 Live from 1:45 am (Wednesday):
 Spain vs Turkey
 Kosovo vs Switzerland
 Scotland vs Denmark

Bangladesh, India face off in battle of pride

SPORTS REPORTER

With both sides already eliminated from the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers, hosts Bangladesh and India are set to meet in what has become a battle of pride rather than a dead-rubber at the National Stadium in Dhaka today. The match kicks off at 8:00 pm.

India were initially tipped to top Group C ahead of Singapore, Hong Kong and Bangladesh, who had hoped their expatriate recruits – Hamza Choudhury, Shamit Shome and others – would boost their chances of reaching the finals for the first time since their debut in 1980. Bangladesh started brightly with a goalless draw against the group favourites, but Javier Cabrera's men faltered thereafter, following a trajectory similar to India's, leaving both teams eliminated with two matches to spare.

Having squandered their opportunity to qualify, Bangladesh are now chasing a morale-boosting win over their higher-ranked neighbours, who have lost only three of 32 encounters against Bangladesh. Bangladesh's last victory over India came 22 years ago, during the 2003



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SAFF Championship in Dhaka, following earlier wins at the 1991 and 1999 SAF Games. Since 2003, the sides have met 10 times, with India winning four and the

remaining six ending in draws—five of those in their last six meetings.

Facing India at home for the first time in 16 years, the men in red and green are

determined to claim all three points in this emotionally charged contest.

"There is a lot of emotion in this match," Cabrera said at the pre-match press conference. "It feels like a derby. We must manage those emotions and take our chance to win. We are stronger than ever and have to make it count."

Bangladesh have shown promise in recent home outings but twice conceded late goals, including in last Thursday's friendly against Nepal.

"That can't happen tomorrow if we want three points," Cabrera warned. "We handled similar situations well against Hong Kong away, but not against Nepal. We must learn from that."

India coach Khalid Jamil also expects a demanding night, especially with a full home crowd behind Bangladesh.

"There is pressure, of course, but the players must take responsibility and work hard for a positive result," said the former Indian international, who oversaw their final training session on Monday morning.

"Bangladesh are a very good team with quality players. I've watched them closely. They have improved a lot since we last met in March."



FIFA Ranking: India -136, Bangladesh -183

Last meeting: March 25, 2025

Bangladesh's last home match against India: December 11, 2009

Last win over India: January 18, 2003

Last five meetings: Four draws, one India win

Bangladesh in 2025: Played 7, won 1, lost 3, drawn 4

India in 2025: Played 10, won 2, lost 3, drawn 5

Overall: Played 32, India won 16, Bangladesh won 3, drawn 16

Both of us need to win. India are a higher-ranked side than Bangladesh, who haven't got a win over them in many years. I think both sides are eager to get those points and that's why the pressure is on both teams.

Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera

All the players of Bangladesh are good players. Not only one player [Hamza Choudhury], everybody is good. So, for us, we should not take this match lightly. We must think positive and get a positive result.

India coach Khalid Jamil

'There's no sport like football'

Being thousands of miles away from home did not stop Ireland batter Harry Tector from rejoicing in his country's recent 3-2 win over Hungary in the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers. He was even more excited with the prospect of taking part in the next ICC World Test Championship and hoped it would lead to the resumption of red-ball cricket back home. Tector said all this and more in an interview with *The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan*. The excerpts are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): First of all, on Sunday night, Troy Parrott scored a fantastic hat-trick to take Ireland to the playoffs in the FIFA World Cup. Did you see the match?

Harry Tector (HT): It was amazing. Five or six of us were watching it together in Andrew Balbirnie's room. We obviously knew we needed a win and then we were 2-1 down. We were obviously worried. Then they somehow managed to get that second goal which was brilliant. And then the third goal was just amazing. We went crazy in the room. We were shouting, roaring and hugging in the spirit. There's no sport like football. So excited that they set up a chance to qualify for the World Cup.



DS: Coming back to cricket, Ireland have three wins in 11 Tests since their inaugural Test in 2018. How do you rate Ireland's growth as a Test-playing nation?

HT: I certainly didn't think we would have three wins this early in our Test careers because we don't play any domestic red-ball cricket at home. Playing Test matches from no basis is really hard. The fact that we've managed to do as well as we have is a credit to the team and a credit to the support staff. That first win against Afghanistan was brilliant and then particularly winning home and away against Zimbabwe last year and at the start of this year was brilliant too. It would be great to get another one.

DS: Can you enlighten us about the red-ball cricket structure in Ireland?

HT: There isn't one. We don't play first-class cricket. The time before we played against Zimbabwe, we played Emerald Challenge – a best v best series in a first-class game. But we haven't played domestic first-class cricket since 2019. I don't know why it didn't take place after that, maybe because of budget constraints. Our domestic teams just play List A and T20s.

DS: There were recent reports that the ICC is planning to include all 12 teams in the next Test Championship Cycle. How do you see if it gets approved?

HT: I think it'll be huge for cricket in Ireland. We would need to invest a lot in our domestic game to produce Test cricketers because playing at the World Test Championship would be really challenging. You're going to come up against top teams and you're going to play a lot of Test cricket if you're in it. So, you need to invest in the domestic structure to make sure that you're producing players who are ready to play. But to even be thought to be included in that is incredibly exciting.

DS: You will be playing in India and Sri Lanka in ICC T20 World Cup in a couple of months. Do you feel the upcoming three T20Is against Bangladesh will help you prepare for that?

HT: Yes, it's very important for us. We played against England in a T20I series before we came here. It's very much at the forefront of our preparation as a team and we will use these games as a real marker for where we are right now.



A FLYING START

Bangladesh players catch an Uganda raider during the opening match of the 2nd Women's Kabaddi World Cup at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The hosts breezed through a 42-22 points victory. In the other matches of the day, Iran beat Poland 55-11, Nepal thrashed Zanzibar 58-16 while Chinese Taipei brushed aside 38-16.

PHOTO: STAR

SHORT CORNER



Barishal clinch Women's NCL title

Barishal Division clinched the 14th Women's National Cricket League 2025-26 title after securing a 13-run win over Rangpur Division in their final league match at BKSP-3 yesterday. Barishal capped off a dominant campaign, winning six of their seven matches, while Khulna Division finished runners-up with 10 points. Barishal skipper Rabeya Khan was named player of the league for her all-round performance. She scored 179 runs and claimed nine wickets. Player. Photo: BCB

Mymensingh, Rangpur stay unbeaten with dominant three-day wins

Mymensingh Division and Rangpur Division maintained their unbeaten runs with commanding victories inside three days in the fourth round of the National Cricket League yesterday. In Chattogram, Mymensingh's thumped Chattogram by 251 runs, while Rangpur Division cruised to an eight-wicket win over Barishal Division in Bogura.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website.



Ireland were on the verge of another World Cup miss, stuck on just four points from their first four qualifiers. But centre-forward Troy Parrott refused to let the dream fade. Ireland needed to beat Portugal at home and Hungary away, and Parrott delivered. He scored twice in Dublin to outshine Cristiano Ronaldo, then hit a dramatic hat-trick in one of the qualifiers' most dramatic performances on Sunday, sealing the winner in the 95th minute. Almost single-handedly, he has carried Ireland to the brink of their first World Cup since 2002. They now await Thursday's draw for two single-legged play-offs in March. Meanwhile, on Monday, Erling Haaland struck twice as Norway maintained their perfect record with a 4-1 win over Italy in Milan, securing their first World Cup appearance since 1998. The Azzurri, however, now face the play-offs, risking a third straight absence from the World Cup.

PHOTOS: FACEBOOK/AFP

