

SPORT

What to WATCH

T Sports & Nagorik TV
BPL
Sylhet vs Dhaka
Live from 1:00 pm
Rangpur vs Rajshahi
Live from 6:00 pm

Star Sports 2
Big Bash League
Melbourne Renegades vs Sydney Sixers
Live from 2:15 pm
ILT20
Eliminator

Dubai Capitals vs Abu Dhabi Knight Riders
Live from 8:30 pm
Star Sports Select HD1, HD2
Premier League
Live from 11:30 pm:

Crystal Palace vs Fulham
Liverpool vs Leeds
Live from 2:00 am (Friday)
Sunderland vs Man City
Brentford vs Tottenham



Another year lost to old habits, HOPE RESTS IN THE NEW YEAR

BISHWAJIT ROY

Bangladesh sports, as so often before, has passed another mixed year on the field – fleeting moments of promise overshadowed by structural stagnation off it. Beyond the women's football team's stupendous success of qualifying for the upcoming AFC Women's Asian Cup, there was little that redefined the sporting landscape of the country.

Yes, much has been said about the women footballers who lifted national pride, the renewed curiosity around football following Hamza Choudhury's arrival, hockey's tentative return of belief, and cricket's sporadic flashes of success.

But beneath these sporting narratives lies a far more frustrating reality: as we step into a new year, sports in Bangladesh remains shackled by the same old culture of governance.

It could have been a very different story had initiatives been taken in line with the promises made during the July-August uprising – a movement that raised hopes of systemic reform across sectors, including sports. Instead, the sporting arena appears to have inherited the same outdated practices that have long stalled

its progress.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star in September 2024, former youth and sports adviser to the interim government, Asif Mahmud Sajeed Bhuiyan, openly acknowledged the depth of the problems he faced after assuming office on August 8.

He pointed out that the constitutions governing sports federations desperately needed reform to establish democratic practices and a culture of accountability.

He spoke candidly about syndicates, corruption, political influence and the chronic lack of accountability – evils that have consistently undermined sports development in Bangladesh.

Sports, he admitted, was no exception to the decay visible across other sectors of the country. Reforming constitutions of sporting bodies, he promised, would be a top priority.

Yet, as another year closes, those much-needed reforms remain a distant dream. There has been plenty of talk about corruption, but hardly any visible initiative or investigation to unearth the truth. Promises were made, but action failed to follow.

Following the political changeover on August 5, 2024, the youth and sports ministry removed presidents of most national sports federations – excluding cricket, football, hockey, swimming and a few others.

Several general secretaries went into hiding, severely disrupting the functioning of the bodies. On August 29, the ministry formed a five-member search committee tasked with recommending reforms to executive committees, constitutions, election policies and representation in line with the 2018 NSC Act.

The committee, after numerous deadline extensions, worked for nine months, holding over 100 meetings and completing roughly 70 percent of its mandate.

It recommended reforms for more than 50 federations, leading to their dissolution and replacement with ad hoc committees. However, before the process could be completed, the ministry formed yet another committee on June 24, 2025, assigning it to draft a model constitution and redefine policies under the IOC Charter. Its recommendations were finally submitted in December.

In the midst of all this, the NSC instructed ad hoc committees to prepare for elections even before reforms were finalised – raising serious questions about intent and consistency.

The long-anticipated reform of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) constitution ended before it even began. While the Bangladesh Football Federation largely remained outside government interference, what unfolded during the BCB elections mirrored old practices and stood in stark contrast to the adviser's early promises.

By the time Asif Mahmud resigned in December, sports governance was no closer to reform than when he took office. The arena remained stagnant, burdened by indecision and half measures.

Now, as the country enters a new year with national elections scheduled on February 12, all eyes will be on the incoming government. Whether it can finally deliver genuine reform in sports governance – where so much potential has long been wasted – remains to be seen.

For now, hope persists. But hope alone, as history has shown, is never enough.

BPL's Chattogram phase cancelled

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Wednesday announced revised fixtures for the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), cancelling the Chattogram phase completely while extending the Sylhet phase till January 12.

Previously, the ongoing Sylhet phase was set to end on January 2 and the Chattogram phase was supposed to run from January 5 - 12.

After the change in schedule, the tournament will move to Dhaka after the Sylhet phase with matches starting on January 15.

Matches which were scheduled for December 30 but were suspended following the demise of former prime minister Khaleda Zia have been rescheduled for January 4.

BPL member secretary Iftekhar Rahman Mithu informed that along with logistical challenges of moving the tournament to Chattogram, the national team's departure for the ICC T20 World Cup was also a reason behind the changes.

"The Bangladesh team are set to depart on 26th and we need to give the national team some time with the coaches before they depart," he told The Daily Star.

While the matchdays remain the same, fresh match schedules have been announced in the revised fixture. Sylhet Titans will now play nine of their 10 league phase matches in Sylhet while Chattogram Royals will have to play their last three league matches in Dhaka at a stretch. The corresponding matchdays for qualifiers and the eliminator also remained unchanged alongside the final which is slated for January 23.



ARSENAL END 2025 ON TOP

Premier League leaders Arsenal slammed the door shut on charging Aston Villa with a 4-1 home thrashing of Unai Emery's side on Tuesday that put them five points clear at the top of the table going into the New Year. Goals from Gabriel Magalhaes and Martin Zubimendi early in the second half put the Gunners in control of a contest that had looked fraught with danger against a Villa side riding an 11-match winning streak. Leandro Trossard then struck from the edge of the area before substitute Gabriel Jesus capped a flowing move to seal the rout. Ollie Watkins, who missed good chances in the first half, pulled one back for Villa in stoppage time. Arsenal now have 45 points from 19 matches, five ahead of second-placed Manchester City.

PHOTO: REUTERS

WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2026

JANUARY

- Dec 21 – Jan 18: Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON)
- Jan 13 -26: SAFF Men's & Women's Futsal Championship
- Jan 15 – Feb 6: ICC Under-19 Men's Cricket World Cup
- Jan 18 – Feb 1: Australian Open FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY

- Feb 6 – 22: Winter Olympic Games (Milano-Cortina)

Feb 7 – Mar 8: ICC Men's T20 World Cup



MARCH

- Mar 1 – 21: AFC Women's Asian Cup
- Mar 26, 31: FIFA World Cup Qualifier Play-offs (Final 6 spots)
- Mar 27: Finalissima (Spain Vs Argentina)
- Mar-Apr: Bangladesh men's cricket home series vs Pakistan (Dates may change)
- Mar 31: Bangladesh men's football match vs Singapore (AFC Qualifiers)
- TBD: Bangladesh women's cricket home series vs Sri Lanka

APRIL

- Apr 1 – 18: AFC Women's U20 Asian Cup
- TBD: Bangladesh men's cricket home series vs New Zealand

MAY

- May 16: FA Cup final
- May 20: UEFA Europa League Final
- May 27: UEFA Conference League Final
- May 30: UEFA Champions League Final
- May 18 – June 7: Roland Garros (French Open)
- May – June: Bangladesh men's cricket home series vs Australia

JUNE

June 11 – July 19: FIFA World Cup 2026 (USA, Canada, Mexico)



- June 12 – July 5: ICC Women's T20 World Cup (England)
- June 29 – July 12: Wimbledon

JULY

- TBD: Bangladesh men's cricket away series vs Zimbabwe
- July 19: FIFA World Cup final (New York-New Jersey)
- July 23 – Aug 2: Glasgow Commonwealth Games

AUGUST

- TBD: Bangladesh men's cricket Ireland tour (3 ODIs & 3 T20Is)
- TBD: Bangladesh men's cricket tour of Australia (2 Tests)
- Aug 31 – Sept 13: US Open

SEPTEMBER

- Sep 19 – Oct 4: Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games
- TBD: SAFF Championship (proposed)

OCTOBER

- TBD: Bangladesh men's cricket home series vs West Indies
- TBD: Bangladesh women's cricket away series vs Australia
- Oct 31- Nov 13: Dakar Youth Olympic Games

NOVEMBER

- TBD: Bangladesh men's cricket Away Series vs South Africa
- Nov 28: Copa Libertadores final

DECEMBER

- TBD: Bangladesh women's cricket away series vs New Zealand

Damien Martyn 'in induced coma'

AFP, Sydney

Former Australian Test batsman Damien Martyn has been rushed to hospital in an induced coma after being diagnosed with meningitis, media reports said Wednesday.

The 54-year-old, who played 67 Tests between 1992 and 2006 and 208 one-day internationals, was admitted on Boxing Day last week after falling ill while lying down.

Australian media said he was being treated for meningitis, which can be deadly.

Meningitis is an inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord.

"He is getting the best of treatment," Test great and close friend Adam Gilchrist told The Australian newspaper.

Known as one of the game's great strokemakers, Martyn became a key figure in Steve Waugh's all-powerful Australian side, hitting 13 centuries and averaging 46.37.