

SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
T20 World Cup
Australia vs Zimbabwe
Live from 11:30 am
Canada vs UAE
Live from 3:30 pm

Netherlands vs USA
Live from 7:30 pm
Women's Asia Cup Rising Stars
Nepal vs Pakistan
Live from 8:30 am

Italy's historic cricketing moment

Italy, a nation widely known for its footballing heritage, romped to a historic 10-wicket victory in their T20 World Cup 2026 Group C encounter against Nepal at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai yesterday. The lowest-ranked side in the 20-team event, Italy bundled out Nepal for 123 in 19.3 overs before the Mosca brothers -- Anthony (62* off 32) and Justin (60* off 44) -- stitched together a record 124-run stand to steer the football-crazy nation to a dominant win in just 12.4 overs.

- The win marked Italy's first-ever victory in T20 World Cups, having made their debut in this edition of the tournament.
- It was only the second 10-wicket win by an associate nation in the tournament's history, after Oman's similar-margin victory over PNG in 2021.
- This was Italy's first 10-wicket win and Nepal's second 10-wicket defeat in T20Is (after vs WI in 2025).
- Italy won with 44 balls remaining -- the most in an associate nation's victory in T20 World Cups. It is also the third-most in a successful 120-plus chase in the tournament's history.
- The Mosca brothers' 124-run stand is the highest partnership between siblings in T20 World Cups, surpassing Kamran Akmal and Umar Akmal's 96-run partnership for Pakistan against Australia in the 2014 edition.
- Anthony's 62* is the highest individual score by an Italian in T20 World Cups.
- The win lifted Italy to third in Group C and pushed England down to fourth, with West Indies leading the group. Nepal, meanwhile, remained at the bottom of the table, a far cry from the side that ran England close on Sunday.



“It's pretty extraordinary really. It's something a lot of people in Italy, a lot of people in this group, have dreamed of.”

— Harry Manenti
Italy's stand-in skipper

Italy's Anthony Mosca celebrates after the win. PHOTO: AFP

SHANAKA HITS 19-BALL FIFTY AS SL CRUSH OMAN



SPORTS REPORTER

In a match that saw the fastest half-century by a Sri Lankan in T20Is and the joint-slowest fifty ever in T20 World Cups, co-hosts Sri Lanka outplayed Associate side Oman, completing a one-sided 105-run win in their Group B match at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka hit a 19-ball 50 -- overtaking his own record of a 20-ball fifty against India in 2023 -- while Kusal Mendis made 61 off 45 balls, and Pavan Rathnayake struck a 28-ball 60 as Sri Lanka piled on 225/5 in their 20 overs, the highest score in the ongoing T20 World Cup.

“Very pleased the way we batted today,” Shanaka said after the match. “We used the conditions very well. Kusal and Pavan planned the innings well, Kamindu [Mendis] and myself gave the finishing touches. It is the more of the way we wanted to play.”

Sri Lanka then restricted Oman to 120/9, to complete their second win in as many games in the tournament.

Oman's Mohammad Nadeem scored an unbeaten 53 off 56 balls, reaching his half-century off 52 balls -- the joint slowest in the Men's T20 World Cup, alongside Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan, who had done so against Canada in 2024. At 43 years and 161 days, Nadeem is now also the oldest to score a fifty in any ICC tournament, overtaking Netherlands' Flavian Aponso (43y 121d), who scored 58 against Pakistan in the 1996 ODI World Cup.



PHOTO: AFP

Ishan Kishan's 24-ball 61 powered India to 100 in just 6.5 overs -- the fastest-ever team century in T20 World Cup history -- during their group game against Namibia in Delhi yesterday. They overtook the Netherlands, who did it in 7 overs against Ireland in Sylhet in 2014. On their way to posting 209-9, India amassed 85-1 in the first 6 overs -- their highest Powerplay score in T20 World Cups, surpassing 82-2 against Scotland in 2021.

Australia, Netherlands, UAE chase crucial wins

AGENCIES

Three intriguing contests headline today's T20 World Cup action, with Australia taking on Zimbabwe, USA meeting Netherlands, and UAE clashing with Canada in matches that could shape the race to the Super Eight.

Australia vs Zimbabwe sees the five-time champions looking to build momentum after a turbulent build-up overshadowed by injuries and off-field distractions.

Australia answered critics with a clinical demolition of Ireland, showcasing their depth as Nathan Ellis marked his return from injury with a sharp spell and the batting unit fired in unison.

However, uncertainty remains over captain Mitchell Marsh's availability, leaving Australia slightly unsettled. Zimbabwe, meanwhile, arrive brimming with confidence after crushing Oman in their opener. Though Australia will start as favourites, Zimbabwe's renewed energy and belief make them a potential threat in Colombo.

USA face a must-win situation against Netherlands after pushing India hard but falling convincingly to Pakistan. Another defeat would end their Super Eight hopes, and history offers little comfort -- they are yet to beat the Dutch in three T20I attempts. Netherlands, buoyed by Bas de Leede's all-round brilliance against Namibia and valuable preparation time in Chennai, appear settled and confident.

UAE and Canada round off the day in a clash between closely ranked sides. UAE, slightly more experienced and battle-tested against full members, will look to rebound from a heavy loss to New Zealand. Canada, also smarting from defeat, seek a statement win in only their second-ever T20I meeting with UAE.

BCL One-dayers set for return after two-year gap

SPORTS REPORTER

At a time when the cricketers are feeling the pinch of the ICC T20 World Cup exclusion, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is planning to bring back the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) 50-over tournament later this month, to help the players prepare for the home series against Pakistan in March.

The BCL one-day tournament was last held in 2023, when the Akbar Ali-led North Zone emerged as champions.

“According to our initial schedule, the tournament was slated to begin on February 20. But we may have to push back the schedule by 2-3 days as the players have been given a lengthy vacation. If the preparation goes well, we may start on the 22nd or 23rd,” a tournament committee official informed.

It was learned that national team players will start fitness training individually before getting two days of practice session in Bogura and Rajshahi, where the tournament will take place.

“We haven't had a BCL 50-over tournament in the last two years. This time, we will be using Kookaburra balls since we have the series against Pakistan coming up and most of the national team players will compete in the tournament,” the official added.

The four-team event will see each side play three matches in the league stage and the top two teams will play the final.

The BCB sources informed that they are looking to conclude the tournament by March 3, to give the national team players ample time to gear up for the Pakistan ODIs, set to take place between March 12-16 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

The Tigers last played an ODI series against West Indies at home in October 2025. However, with many ODI assignments coming up, the BCB intends to prepare sporting wickets to help the team get into ODI gear.



Milner equals all-time PL appearance record

MOST PL APPEARANCES

James Milner* - 653	Frank Lampard - 609
Gareth Barry - 653	David James - 572
Ryan Giggs - 632	Mark Schwarzer - 544

James Milner drew level with the Premier League's all-time appearance record on Wednesday, coming off the bench at Aston Villa to register his 653rd match in the competition. The 40-year-old, a two-time champion with Manchester City and once with Liverpool, matched Gareth Barry's landmark.

Milner's Premier League journey began with Leeds United on November 10, 2002, when he was just 16 years and 309 days old. He made 48 league appearances for Leeds before a move to Newcastle United, where he played 94 times. Milner later featured in 230 Premier League games for Liverpool, 147 for Manchester City and 100 for Aston Villa, while his ongoing spell at Brighton & Hove Albion has so far brought 34 appearances. His 24-year presence in the league is the longest in Premier League history. Across that span, Milner has scored 56 goals and supplied 90 assists. Milner equalled Barry but he did so having played significantly fewer minutes than Barry did over his career. In total, Barry spent 54,439 minutes on the pitch compared to 40,408 for Milner. Remarkably, almost half of the 5,094 players to have appeared in the Premier League since its inception in 1992-93 have either played with or against him.



Salah equals Gerrard, Van Dijk boosts Liverpool's UCL push



AGENCIES

Virgil van Dijk hauled Liverpool back into the race for Champions League qualification, sealing a hard-fought 1-0 win at Sunderland on Wednesday.

The Reds captain struck in the second half to hand Sunderland their first home defeat of the Premier League season.

Van Dijk rose to meet Mohamed Salah's corner in the 61st minute, his powerful header forcing Habib Diarra to nod the ball

into the roof of his own net in a desperate, but futile, attempt to clear off the line.

The assist carried Salah to 92 in the Premier League for Liverpool, drawing him level with Steven Gerrard for the most by a Reds player in the competition. Only six players sit above the Egyptian on the league's all-time list.

Van Dijk, meanwhile, continues to set his own benchmarks. Since arriving in January 2018, he has scored 23 Premier League goals -- more than any other defender in that period -- and he now stands as Liverpool's highest-scoring defender of all time.

Sixth-placed Liverpool's second win in their last eight league outings lifted them within two points of fifth-placed Chelsea and three of fourth-placed Manchester United.

Boss Arne Slot admitted it would be unacceptable if Liverpool failed to reach the Champions League, saying his side would need to be “close to perfection” in the run-in after their 2-1 defeat to Manchester City earlier in the week.

This display was far from perfect, but it proved sufficient to keep Liverpool firmly in the hunt for a top-five finish that is likely to secure Champions League qualification.



Bangladesh 'A' captain Fahima Khatun, alongside the captains of seven other participating teams in the Asia Cup Rising Stars Women's 2026 tournament, pose for a picture yesterday in Bangkok, Thailand. The tournament begins today, with Bangladesh, placed in Group B, opening their campaign tomorrow against Sri Lanka 'A'. Previously known as the ACC Women's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup, the competition was first staged in Hong Kong in 2023, with Bangladesh finishing as runners-up.

PHOTO: ACC