

SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Federation Cup
PWD vs Rahmatganj
Live from 2:45 pm
STAR SPORTS 1
IPL
Chennai vs Kolkata

Live from 8:00 pm
SONY SPORTS 1 AND 2
Champions League
Atletico Madrid vs Barcelona
Live from 1:00 am (Wednesday)
Liverpool vs PSG
Live from 1:00 am (Wednesday)



PHOTO: BCB/FIROZ AHMED

Saif Hassan belted 138 off 133 balls for Team 'A' against Team 'B' in an inter-squad practice match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday ahead of the three-match ODI series against New Zealand, set to begin on April 17. Saif struck six fours and eight sixes as Team 'A' notched a dominating 128-run win. [Inset] Meanwhile, the first batch of New Zealand players touched down in Dhaka yesterday morning and the remaining members were expected to land at around 11:00pm later that night.

Record prize money in Women's T20 WC

REUTERS

This year's Women's Twenty20 World Cup will have a tournament-record prize pool of \$8.8 million with the winners set to earn \$2.3 million, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Monday.

The 12-team competition will be held in England and Wales from June 12, with New Zealand set to defend the maiden title they won in 2024.

"The runners-up will receive \$1.17 million. Both losing semi-finalists will earn \$675,000 each," the ICC said in a statement, adding that every participating team was guaranteed a minimum prize of \$248,000.

T20 WORLD CUP TEAMS

Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Scotland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, West Indies

The prize pool will be smaller than those at the men's and women's World Cups held in the Indian subcontinent in the last three years.

Last year's 50-over Women's World Cup in India and Sri Lanka had a prize pool of \$13.9 million, the highest pot at an ICC event, and a 297% increase from its previous edition in 2022. Champions India took home \$4.5 million.

The 2023 edition of the men's 50-over World Cup, held in India, had a prize pot of \$10 million, while this year's men's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka offered \$11.25 million in prize money.

"The continued rise of women's cricket through increased investment and opportunity reflects the growing influence and impact of female athletes on the global stage," the ICC's CEO Sanjog Gupta said.

Mountains to climb for Barca, Liverpool

STAR SPORTS DESK

Will Tuesday night produce yet another incredible chapter of Champions League comeback, or will it see a predictable script?

Barcelona, traveling to the Spanish capital to face Atletico Madrid, and Liverpool, welcoming defending champions PSG to Anfield, will definitely hope for the former to come true. But for that, both sides would need to climb mountains, having lost their respective first-leg quarterfinals by identical 2-0 margins.

For Barcelona, the task appears particularly daunting as they head to the Metropolitan, where Atletico have been formidable. Hansi Flick's side were stunned at home in the first leg, undone by a red card and ruthless finishing, despite dominating large spells. History offers little comfort -- only twice has a team overturned a two-goal first-leg home defeat in a knockout tie in the competition's history.

Yet Barca arrive with renewed confidence after a 4-1 league win over Espanyol, with Lamine Yamal and Ferran Torres in fine touch, while Marcus Rashford -- who scored off the bench in that game -- could again prove pivotal. The England forward, who missed a string of chances in the first leg, insisted Barcelona have the



belief to turn the tie around. "This team is always going to create chances... on another day, they go in," Rashford said, adding that their "mindset and intent" must be at its peak to engineer a comeback.

Flick will once again rely on attacking intent, even if that approach leaves them vulnerable. Barca have struggled defensively, conceding in 14 straight



Champions League games, while Atletico boast one of the most potent home attacks in the competition. Julian Alvarez, who opened the scoring in the first leg, remains their biggest threat, alongside the ever-dangerous Antoine Griezmann and Alexander Sorloth.

At Anfield, Liverpool will bank on history and atmosphere as they attempt to overturn their own 2-0 deficit against

PSG. The Reds were comprehensively outplayed in Paris, failing to register a shot on target, as goals from Desire Doue and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia handed the holders control of the tie.

But Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk believes another famous European night is possible.

"We are at home, and we have to show belief... it needs a special performance," said Van Dijk, who was part of the side that famously overturned a three-goal deficit against Barcelona at Anfield in 2019.

Manager Arne Slot echoed that sentiment, calling on the Anfield crowd to inspire his side. "Anfield has shown many times that it can lift the team to another level and we need that again," he said.

Liverpool's recent 2-0 win over Fulham -- featuring goals from youngster Rio Ngunmoha and Mohamed Salah -- offers some momentum, but questions remain over consistency and defensive solidity.

PSG, meanwhile, arrive well-rested and in ruthless form, with Kvaratskhelia continuing a remarkable scoring streak in knockout matches.

Whether it is Barcelona's attacking gamble in Madrid or Liverpool's reliance on Anfield magic, Tuesday night promises high stakes -- and the possibility of another unforgettable chapter in Champions League folklore.

58 DAYS TO GO



Finals decided in style

The highest-scoring World Cup final took place in 1958, when Brazil thrashed hosts Sweden 5-2 to claim their first-ever title. Two other finals were decided by a three-goal margin: Brazil's 4-1 win over Italy in 1970 and France's 3-0 triumph against Brazil in 1998.

**** Visit The Daily Star's website to also read: 'Tardelli's scream'**

WOMEN'S ASIAN GAMES QUALIFIERS 'Tough task' awaits Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's hockey team have been placed alongside strong sides Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong and Uzbekistan in Pool A of the upcoming Women's Asian Games Qualifiers, scheduled to be held from April 23 to 29 in Jakarta, Indonesia, as the Asian Hockey Federation disclosed the schedule yesterday.

Pool B consists of Singapore, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka and hosts Indonesia, with the four semifinalists set to qualify for September's Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in Japan.

Although the senior women's team have yet to feature in this or any international tournament in their brief journey, Bangladesh's U-21 and U-18 sides produced impressive results last year. The U-21 team finished runners-up in the Junior (U-21) AHF Cup in Singapore, while the U-18 side clinched bronze at the Women's U-18 Asia Cup in China.

The senior squad is largely made up of those players, with the majority coming from BKSP, where they have trained together year-round over the past three-and-a-half years.

Preparations for the qualifiers began on February 1 with a 36-member training

FIXTURES

April 23
Bangladesh vs Chinese Taipei
April 24
Bangladesh vs Uzbekistan
April 26
Bangladesh vs Hong Kong

camp, including 12 players from outside BKSP.

With hopes of reaching the Asian Games, the Bangladesh squad is scheduled to leave for Jakarta on April 19.

"Our target is to qualify for the Asian Games by reaching the semifinals, though it will be a tough task," women's team coach Zahid Hossain Raju told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Chinese Taipei are a very strong team, having played hockey for the last 20 years, and their U-21 side also became champions in the Junior AHF Cup. Hong Kong and Uzbekistan are also good opponents, but we have a good opportunity to reach the semifinals if the girls can deliver their natural performance," added the BKSP head coach.

DPL players' transfer set for April 18-19

SPORTS REPORTER

The Dhaka Premier League (DPL) Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) announced the dates for players' transfer yesterday.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) issued a press release on Monday, declaring that the players' transfer will be held on April 18 and 19. The BCB also announced the names of the 12 participating teams.

Of the 12 teams, there were concerns over Legends of Rupganj's participation after the team's councillor Lutfar Rahman Badal had told The Daily Star on Friday that he was yet to decide whether they would take part.

However, when asked yesterday, Badal answered in a more optimistic tone, saying, "I have spoken with president Tamim Iqbal and since he has requested, we will consider it."

Meanwhile, Brothers Union's stance on the matter has remained vague. An official from another club informed that they have not been able to reach any officials from Brothers Union to know of their position.

The tentative starting date for the league is May 4.



Denzel Dumfries is the toast of his teammates as his brace fired Inter Milan to a 4-3 win over Como in a topsy-turvy Serie A fixture at the Giuseppe Sinigaglia Stadium in Como on Sunday. The league leaders fought back from two goals down to beat Cesc Fabregas's charges -- and take a massive step towards reclaiming the Scudetto. The win took the Nerazzurri nine points clear at the top with six games remaining, while Como dropped to sixth position, two points behind the fourth Champions League slot.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK