DHAKA FRIDAY OCTOBER 9, 2026 | ASHWIN 24, 1433 BS

SPORT



The only shame is that the Argentines gave us nothing. No photo with Messi, no shirt. They didn't even let us into the tunnel or the dressing room.

Benin head coach **GERNOT ROHR** hits out at the treatment of his players during Lionel Messi's farewell game.

Tigresses' historic Australia series begins today



PHOTO: **BCB**

SPORTS REPORTER

There are a gulf of differences in terms of rankings, form and history between Bangladesh and Australia, but Nigar Sultana Joty remains confident that the Tigresses can spring a surprise in the historic three-match ODI series against the mighty Australians, beginning at Allan Border Field in Brisbane on Friday.

The match is scheduled to start at 9:50am Bangladesh time.

"When we play as a team and perform as a whole unit, we can surprise any team," said a confident Joty ahead of the series on Thursday, which will mark Bangladesh's return to the one-day format after nearly five months.



The series is historic for Bangladesh as it marks their first bilateral tour of Australia. However, the Tigresses face a formidable challenge against the seven-time world champions, who are ranked № 1 in the world, while Bangladesh are seventh. Australia also hold a 5-0 head-to-head advantage over Bangladesh in ODIs.

Bangladesh head into the series after suffering a 72-run defeat to Queensland in their lone warm-up match. Despite the gulf between the two sides, skipper Joty is confident that her team can cause an upset if they perform as a unit.

"So I think it's pretty important to be in the present. And we were really hoping that we can play as a whole unit, because what we believe is that we're kind of a team where, when we play as a team and perform as a whole unit, we can surprise any team," Joty said on the eve of the match.

Bangladesh have endured a difficult period both on and off the field in recent months. They had disappointing campaigns in the Asia Cup T20 and Asian Games, while Joty stepped down as T20 captain and David Hemp replaced Sarwar Imran as head coach.

Australia, who are also returning to the ODI format after five months, will be without regular captain Sophie Molineux, who will miss all three matches as she continues her recovery from a hip injury.

All-rounder Tahlia McGrath will lead Australia in the series, and she expects Bangladesh's bowling attack to provide a stern challenge.

"They've got a really talented line-up and an attack that's different to a lot of other international attacks," McGrath said.

"Marufa is all class at the top, her ability to swing the ball and then their spinners are really tricky. Bowl a little bit slower to what we're used to and get a fair bit of turn.

"We've been prepping for that and we expect a really good contest and hopefully we can combat that and produce some really big scores as a batting unit," she added.

Tigers face new challenge in first-ever neutral Test

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are gearing up for a different set of challenges as they take on Afghanistan in the one-off Test at Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi today. It will be Bangladesh's first Test at the venue and, more significantly, their first-ever Test at a neutral venue.

Warm conditions welcomed the Tigers, with a contingent of players having travelled from cooler weather in Japan from the Asian Games. Fast bowlers Ebadot Hossain and Khaled Ahmed were involved in the two-day practice game against UAE in Dubai, which should help with conditioning.

The Tigers are on the back of a historic result on their Australia tour, but skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto feels the players will adjust to the new challenges in Abu Dhabi.

"We had a good series against Australia. But I believe that is past, so this is new conditions, new opponent, so we have to plan accordingly," Shanto said at the press conference yesterday.

"And the condition, yes, obviously here it's different. Some of the players came a bit earlier and played one of the practice matches, so that will help to adjust these conditions. So I believe players are ready and they will adjust the condition and the opponent as well."

Bangladesh have lately been able to bank on their pace attack both home and away to produce results. Pacers grabbed the limelight in the Pakistan Test series at home before the Tigers drew the series in Australia courtesy of a historic win in the Mackay Test. But the UAE conditions might prove more conducive for spinners.

"I had the opportunity to see the wickets a little bit yesterday and will see it again today. From what I could see, it could be a bit slow," Shanto echoed head coach Phil Simmons's assessment from a day earlier.



PHOTO: **ACB**

"I feel that the wicket will be good for batting and hopefully it will be a really good Test match," Shanto assessed.

If spin rules the roost, the visitors are expected to use lanky off-spinner Nayeem Hasan in a three-pronged attack. Given the nature of the wicket, which is expected to break later in the Test, a good first-innings total could set up the game for either side.

Afghanistan have options in the spin department despite the absence of heavyweights like Rashid Khan. New Test skipper Rahmat Shah may opt to seek advantage from wrist-spinners Qais Ahmad or Khalil Gurbaz given the Tigers' known vulnerabilities against wrist-spin.

The Tigers have played just two Tests against Afghanistan, both at home, losing one by 224 runs and winning the other by 546 runs. This time, the UAE conditions add a different challenge.

The match will begin at 12pm Bangladesh time.

Past lingers as Proteas host Australia

Eight years after the infamous 'Sandpapergate' series, South Africa are set to host Australia for the first time since the ball-tampering scandal of 2017-18. The three-Test series begins in Durban on Friday, with memories of a bitter and controversial tour adding intrigue to a contest between reigning World Test Champions (WTC) South Africa and current WTC leaders Australia. Both camps have played down the events of 2018, with Australia captain Pat Cummins saying there is little more to add, while South Africa coach Shukri Conrad insists his side are focused on beating Australia through their skills. Yet, with the past never far from the surface, history is sure to add an extra edge to an already highly anticipated contest.



PHOTO: **CRICKET SOUTH AFRICA**

- The three Tests, scheduled to be held in Durban, Gqeberha and Cape Town, will follow the same order as the 2018 series.
- Steve Smith, one of the three Australians -- alongside David Warner and Cameron Bancroft -- who received lengthy bans following the 2018 series, also returns. Having captained Australia ten times since his leadership ban ended, he would stand in for Cummins should injury strike.
- South Africa have five survivors in their squad from that series: captain Temba Bavuma, Aiden Markram, Keshav Maharaj, Wiaan Mulder and Kagiso Rabada.
- However, South Africa's spearhead Rabada will miss the first Test as he continues his recovery from a hamstring injury sustained in June.

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS
One-off Test, Day 1
Afghanistan vs Bangladesh
Live from 12:00 pm

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OF LEGENDS
Australia vs South Africa
Live from 6:00 pm
Bangladesh Vs West Indies
Live from 9:30 pm

LA LIGA
Malaga VS Espanyol 1:00 am (Saturday)

EUROSPORT
1st Test, Day 1
South Africa vs Australia
Live from 1:30 pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 HD
2nd T20I
India vs West Indies
Live from 7:30 pm

TEN CRICKET
1st T20I
Pakistan vs Sri Lanka
Live from 7:00 pm

