DHAKA SATURDAY OCTOBER 10, 2026, ASHWIN 25, 1433 BS

SPORT



The reason why I joined this club is because I completely trust the owner, the CEO, the sporting director, all the organisation...and the right moment to speak about this is when we win this appeal.

Coach **ENZO MARESCA** confident about City winning appeal over financial charges.

Batting remains Tigresses' Achilles heel

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh skipper Nigar Sultana Joty was quick to acknowledge her side's long-standing batting problem after they suffered a crushing seven-wicket defeat to Australia in the opening match of the three-match WODI series in Brisbane on Friday.

"Didn't get partnerships, so we lost our way," Joty said during the post-match presentation.

"We've got to be cautious against the new ball. Can't lose so many wickets in the Powerplay. Need to be calm and patient to get control," she added.

Despite the gulf between the two sides in terms of rankings, form and history, Bangladesh's hopes of making a mark in their first-ever bilateral series in Australia largely depended on how their batters fared against the hosts' formidable bowling attack at Allan Border Field.

However, Bangladesh's batting line-up was exposed inside the first Powerplay, as they slumped to 33 for three in 7.5 overs. All three top-order batters -- Farzana Hoque (0), Sarmin Sultana (4) and Sharmin Akhter (24) -- fell to Australia's pace attack.

Sobhana Mostary (2) soon followed suit, leaving Bangladesh in deep trouble. Joty and Shorna Akter then attempted to steady the innings with a 35-run partnership off 87 balls, but their slow



scoring rate left the visitors struggling to build momentum.

Joty eventually fell to her Australian counterpart Tahlia McGrath for 29 off 86 deliveries, at a strike rate of just 33.72.

Thanks to lower-order batter Ritu Moni, who top-scored with 45 off 63 balls, Bangladesh managed to reach 166 before being bowled out off the penultimate delivery of their innings. Nahida Akter contributed an unbeaten 19, while Rabeya Khan added 11. Bangladesh's highest partnership in the innings came at eighth wicket where Nahida and Ritu added 37 off 58 balls which also summed up their batting woes properly.

The total proved inadequate as Australia chased it down in just 25.4 overs. Opener Phoebe Litchfield struck 77 off 57 balls, while Annabel Sutherland, who had earlier claimed four wickets for 30 runs, remained unbeaten on 25.

The emphatic victory gave Australia a 1-0 lead in the series and underlined the gap between the two sides.

Apart from Ritu's fighting knock, Bangladesh's other major positive was the performance of debutant pacer Habiba Islam Pinky, who claimed two wickets. Joty also praised the youngster and her teammates for their efforts with the ball.

"Lots of positives. Habiba Pinky was aggressive, attacking. Whoever got the ball in hand bowled in the right areas. Should take these with us into the next game," Joty said.

However, Bangladesh have little time to address their batting shortcomings, with the second WODI scheduled for Sunday at the same venue. Unless they produce a more resilient performance against the new ball and build meaningful partnerships, they could face another difficult outing against the formidable hosts.

PHOTO: **BCB**

Litton limits damage after meltdown

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh dominated the first session of the one-off Test against Afghanistan pretty handsomely thanks to Tanzid Hasan Tamim's carnage yesterday. They looked well on course to end the second session on a high at 200 for two but lost three wickets in the space of four runs to go to lunch five down. From a topsy-turvy day of Test cricket at Abu Dhabi's Zayed Cricket Stadium, they found relief from a familiar saviour in Litton Das.

It was neither one of Litton's most notable innings with the team at dire straits nor one that completely quells the concerns over his recent form. Yet, his fifty helped stave off the prospect of being bowled out on the opening day after a strong start.

The wicket looked ominously good for batting, indicating that a big first-innings score would be the norm. Yet, after the collapse, with the Afghanistan attack on the surge, Litton and Mehidy Hasan Miraz added 62 for the sixth-wicket stand to wrest some control back. Afghanistan won the last two sessions as the Tigers ended at 317 for eight, well short of where they might have expected to be after the first session and the collapse that followed, when Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim and Najmul Hossain Shanto went back to the hut within 18 deliveries.

From 221 for two to 225 for five, Litton came in already under pressure, on the back of three consecutive ducks. He raised his bat towards



Tanzid Tamim's blistering 83 gave Bangladesh a solid start against Afghanistan, but the visitors were reduced to 317 for eight at stumps on Day 1.

his teammates for comic relief after getting off the mark and coolly guided the innings after the collapse.

Afghanistan had got well into the game, especially with pacers Mohammad Saleem and Ismat Alam finding the right channels with the older ball and getting the bit of reverse swing on offer. After finding some rhythm with a glorious cover drive, Litton was eager to take calculated risks to put pressure back on Afghanistan.

It was Mehidy's dismissal, however, that saw Afghanistan back on top in the third session. Right after reaching fifty, Litton's short-arm jab-pull was holed out at deep square leg as he departed after an 89-ball 53. While it was not one of his more eventful knocks, like the one in Rawalpindi in 2024 or the one in Sylhet this year, it did make Afghanistan toil a bit harder towards the end.

While Litton finding some flow would have eased nerves, the Tigers' think tank will reflect on how they squandered a great start. Tanzid looked in full flow at the top of the order, carrying on from his Darwin ton. The hosts planned his dismissal, keeping the batter rooted with the keeper up. Tanzid's focus appeared to waver, preventing him from building a bigger score as his innings ended at 83 off 71 balls. Shadman Islam and Mominul Haque also showed familiar signs of starting well before losing focus and departing for 67 and 39, respectively.

Mushfiqur Rahim's scalp was taken by a fantastic Yamin delivery, while Litton could have avoided falling prey to the short-ball trap.

Spin could become a challenge as the match progresses, but Bangladesh failed to maintain their momentum after gaining the upper hand. At a neutral venue, in conditions where they have struggled, the lesson for Bangladesh is to apply themselves better when opportunities such as the UAE track are on offer.

Excitement resumes as club football returns

STAR SPORTS DESK

Club football returns after an almost three-week international window, with a packed weekend across Europe. Arsenal must respond to their first Premier League defeat of the season, Manchester United and Tottenham meet amid mounting pressure, while Barcelona and Real Madrid resume their contrasting title campaigns ahead of the Clasico on October 25.

Reigning champions Arsenal host unbeaten Leeds United on Saturday, seeking a response to their 3-0 defeat to Brighton -- their heaviest loss in more than three years and only the second time in 158 matches they have conceded three goals.

Their injury concerns have deepened during the international break, with Kai Havertz and Christos Tzolis suffering hamstring injuries, while Ezri Konsa withdrew from England duty with a knock. All three are doubts, with Havertz and Tzolis potentially sidelined for weeks.

Manchester United and Tottenham both need a result at Old Trafford on Saturday. United have managed just one win and five points from their opening five games, leaving them 12th and 10 points behind leaders Manchester City. Spurs sit bottom with two points and are still searching for their first league win.

Head coach Roberto De Zerbi has taken responsibility for Tottenham's poor start and urged his squad, bolstered by more than £300 million in summer signings, to show more "fight".

Spurs face defensive concerns with first-choice centre-backs Micky van de Ven and Jan Paul van Hecke injured. Summer signing Carlos Baleba could make his long-awaited United debut, offering Michael Carrick a potential boost.

Barca aim to extend lead, Real seek revival

In La Liga, leaders Barcelona will look to maintain their advantage but must do without captain Raphinha for Saturday's clash against Getafe and Tuesday's Champions League meeting with Galatasaray after the Brazilian suffered a hamstring injury on international duty.

Barcelona have won all seven of their LaLiga matches and scored 31 goals. Raphinha has played a big part in that, having scored 14 goals in eight matches across competitions, making him the top scorer in Europe's major leagues.

Real Madrid, meanwhile, trail Barcelona by six points after defeats to Real Betis and city rivals Atletico left them fourth. They host Villarreal on Saturday before facing Sevilla, Roma and RB Leipzig ahead of the Clasico.

Jose Mourinho wants more from Vinicius Junior, whom he has defended while admitting the Brazilian is not at his "killer" best. Superstar Kylian Mbappe, who has seven league goals, is expected to return after a knee issue, while Ibrahima Konate is also expected to be available. Federico Valverde faces a late assessment on his ankle injury.

Inter, Roma and Bayern in action

In Serie A, leaders Inter Milan host Parma on Saturday, while Roma, level with Inter on 13 points, visit Cesc Fabregas's in-form Como on Sunday.

In the Bundesliga, Bayern Munich, two points behind leaders Borussia Dortmund, travel to Augsburg on Saturday.

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS
Afghanistan vs Bangladesh
One-off Test, Day 2
Live from 12:00 pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
Premier League
Arsenal vs Leeds
Live from 5:30 pm
Chelsea vs Bournemouth
Live from 8:00 pm
Man Utd vs Tottenham
Live from 10:30 pm



A DUCK, YET A REMARKABLE STORY

Australia ended the opening day of the first of their three-Test series against hosts South Africa at 187 for six in 65.2 overs, but beyond the scoreboard, another intriguing personal story unfolded at Kingsmead yesterday. Australia batter Nic Maddinson returned to Test cricket after almost a decade, only for his 33-ball innings to end in a duck -- making him the Australian opener holding the record for facing the most balls and getting dismissed for a duck in Tests. Maddinson's journey back to the Australian side followed a life-threatening battle with testicular cancer. Diagnosed in April 2025, the disease had spread to his lungs and lymph nodes. He underwent nine weeks of chemotherapy, completing treatment in July before gradually rebuilding his fitness and returning to training in September. His recovery eventually led to a domestic comeback, before injuries to Josh Inglis and Cameron Green saw him get recalled at short notice. While his scoreless innings was disappointing, his return after cancer treatment marked a remarkable personal victory.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Newcomer Sabbir joins hattrick roll

SPORTS REPORTER

Newcomer forward Sabbir Hossain struck a hattrick as Bashundhara Kings thrashed Dhaka Wanderers Club 7-1 to register their first win of the 2026-27 Bangladesh Football League yesterday, while Fortis FC and City Club also won to remain joint leaders.

Fortis and City Club have seven points from three matches, three ahead of Kings who have played two matches. Bangladesh Police FC are second with six points from two.

At the Kings Arena in Dhaka, the defending champions bounced back from a 1-1 draw against Arambagh KS by scoring twice in the opening five minutes through Manish Dangi and Sabbir. Kings added five more after the break, with Sabbir striking twice more, becoming the season's second hattrick scorer after Fortis FC's Onyekachi Okafor. Rakib Hossain scored a double and Mohammad Abdullah also got his name on the scoresheet.

At Gopalganj District Stadium, Fortis thrashed hosts Brothers Union 6-0, scoring all six goals after the break, with Pa Omar Babou netting twice and Mohammad Ibrahim, Insan Hossain, Stephen Chukwudu and Rafayel Tudu each finding the back of the net.

Meanwhile, City Club beat Chittagong City FC 2-1 at Shaheed Barkat Stadium in Gazipur,



with Enamul Islam and Rafiqul Islam scoring in the first half before Kenta Hara pulled one back after the break.

Elsewhere, Rahmatganj MFS drew 1-1 with PWD SC after Rifat Kazi cancelled out Jamir Uddin's seventh-minute opener in the 17th minute.