DHAKA TUESDAY NOVEMBER 3, 2026, KARTIK 18, 1433 BS

SPORT



"One thing I know about Phil (Simmons) is that he will not make it easy. We'll be ready to finish this Test cycle with an away win in Bangladesh, and they are not easy (to beat) at home."

West Indies head coach **DAREN SAMMY**

NSC to earn Tk 1 lakh daily from SAFF

SPORTS REPORTER

TSA, the exclusive rights holder of the SAFF Championship 2026, will pay Tk 60,000 per day to the National Sports Council (NSC) for using the National Stadium to stage matches of the regional football tournament, NSC director (sports) Zahed Parvez Chowdhury said on Monday.

The six-nation tournament is scheduled to take place in Dhaka from November 5 to 17, but the NSC has allotted the National Stadium to TSA for 15 days, starting Monday.

In addition to the venue fee, TSA will have to pay Tk 10,000 per hour for floodlight use and bear the costs of the giant screen, public address system and digital display boards around the ground. The total daily expenditure is estimated at around Tk 1 lakh.

The NSC does not usually charge the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) for venue use and related facilities when it hosts international tournaments. However, this time TSA, in association with the SAFF secretariat, is organising the competition in Bangladesh for the first time.

"We have allotted the venue to TSA at the existing rates. Discussions are also under way regarding the royalty from gate receipts and broadcasting rights," Zahed said.

Proteas pack six pacers for Bangladesh Tests

SPORTS REPORTER

South Africa have named six fast bowlers in their squad for the upcoming two-Test series against Bangladesh, with Anrich Nortje returning after recovering from a groin injury.

Nortje missed the final Test of South Africa's recent ICC World Test Championship series victory over Australia but is back to bolster an already formidable pace attack featuring Kagiso Rabada, Marco Jansen, Dane Paterson, Wiaan Mulder and Corbin Bosch.

The six-pronged pace contingent reflects South Africa's emphasis on seam bowling for the series, with head coach Shukri Conrad expecting the Highveld conditions to offer pace and bounce.

"Traditionally, surfaces on the Highveld favour pace and bounce, although we have seen the Wanderers offer some assistance to spin in recent times. So, with that in mind, there will be greater focus on our seam-bowling options," Conrad said.

SOUTH AFRICA SQUAD

Temba Bavuma (c), Marques Ackerman, Matthew Breetzke, Corbin Bosch, Tony de Zorzi, Simon Harmer, Zubayr Hamza, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, Wiaan Mulder, Anrich Nortje, Dane Paterson, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton.

Lungi Ngidi was not considered for selection as he continues his rehabilitation.

Captain Temba Bavuma will lead the squad, which also welcomes back batters Tony de Zorzi and Zubayr Hamza. De Zorzi missed the Australia series with a hamstring injury, while Hamza's inclusion provides additional depth in the top order.

Conrad said South Africa would look to carry their winning momentum from the hard-fought series against Australia into their next assignment.

"We know the threat Bangladesh pose and we expect their quicks to be very effective in Highveld conditions," he said.

South Africa are currently second in the World Test Championship standings with 71.43 percentage points, while Bangladesh are fifth with 47.62.

The Proteas last hosted Bangladesh for a Test series in 2022, winning 2-0. South Africa will again look to make home conditions count as they continue their push towards the top of the World Test Championship table.



PHOTO: **BFF**

No warm-up, no worries?

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Bangladesh underwent another floodlit training session at the National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday, seemingly set to begin their SAFF Championship campaign against Bhutan on Thursday without having played a warm-up match.

Since the residential camp began on October 25, head coach Thomas Dooley has overseen seven days of on-field training, including two-a-day sessions on occasions, but the team have yet to test themselves in match conditions, raising questions about the adequacy of their preparations for the six-team tournament.

It has been learned that Bangladesh have not even played a 90-minute match among themselves. Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) failed to arrange practice matches against foreign opposition or local clubs, despite assurances from the National Teams Committee.

After their last ASEAN Cup match against Indonesia on October 2, local players returned to their clubs and featured in at least four Bangladesh Football League matches, while overseas-based players resumed their respective domestic campaigns.

With Dooley introducing several new faces and dropping some members of the ASEAN Cup squad, former national players and coaches believe practice matches would have helped build understanding within the team and allowed the coach to fine-tune his playing style.

"Playing practice matches actually depends on the head coach," former captain Mamunul Islam said. "If he wanted them but the federation could not arrange them, then you can blame the federation. But we still don't know whether the coach wanted it.

"However, a couple of matches would have helped because some players came into the squad while others are likely to be left out. They could have built communication and understanding among the players and given the coach an opportunity to set his approach."

Former national forward Zahid Hasan Emily shared Mamunul's concerns.

"Bangladesh should have played a couple of practice matches before going into a big mission like the SAFF Championship," he said. "The coach could have identified the team's strengths and weaknesses and worked on them. It is a bit of a setback that he has missed that opportunity, especially when the team need to build understanding and combination under a new coach."

Former national player-turned-coach Shafiqul Islam Manik, however, saw a positive side to the lack of warm-up matches. "I believe the team played practice matches among themselves," Manik said. "The coach has probably made up his mind about the playing eleven against Bhutan and does not want to reveal it through a practice match."

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS
ABG Cup Football Final
Live from 5:00 pm

SONY SPORTS 1, 2, 3, 5
Champions League
Galatasaray vs Stuttgart
Live from 11:45 pm
Shakhtar vs Sporting
Live from 11:45 pm
Live from 2:00 am
(Wednesday):
Atletico vs Bayern
Barcelona vs Aston Villa
Man Utd vs Roma
Villareal vs PSG
Feyenoord vs Inter

Kane carries depleted Bayern to Madrid

STAR SPORTS DESK

Matchday 4 of the Champions League delivers a blockbuster slate of fixtures, headlined by a high-voltage showdown at the Wanda Metropolitano as Atletico Madrid hosts an injury-ravaged Bayern Munich. Elsewhere, a perfect Aston Villa face Barcelona, while defending champions PSG travel to Villarreal.

Atletico welcome Bayern to a stadium where Diego Simeone's men remain unbeaten this season (W5 D1). Having bounced back from a shaky start (2L,1D in five matches), Atletico are on a stellar 10-game unbeaten streak featuring nine wins and six clean sheets in all competitions. They currently sit second in La Liga following Saturday's 2-0 win over Levante. Historically, Atletico have never lost at home to Bayern (W2 D1), drawing 1-1 in their only Metropolitano clash in December 2020.

Bayern arrive leading the Bundesliga on goal difference but engulfed in an injury crisis. Head coach Vincent Kompany is unlikely to be on the sidelines as he recovers from a late-October training ground collapse. Luis Diaz is out, while Michael Olise, Manuel Neuer, and Jonas Urbig are doubts, leaving Sven Ulreich to potentially start in goal. With Serge Gnabry and Ismael Saibari injured against Dortmund on Saturday (a 2-2 draw), Alphonso Davies and Lennark Karl may be forced out wide.

The spotlight again falls heavily on Harry Kane (10 goals, 8 assists in all competitions). Bayern have drawn their last two UCL matches against Viking and Arsenal; a third consecutive UCL draw would be their first since 2006.

Barca vs Villa: Perfect in the UCL, Villa visit Camp Nou -- the site of Unai Emery's most ignominious defeat. Emery holds a dismal 10% win rate against Barca (W3 D6 L21). Rebounding from consecutive defeats to PSG and Real Madrid, Hansi Flick's Barca, meanwhile just thrashed Alaves 6-1, handing Flick his 100th win in 131 matches. Lamine Yamal (12 goals, 11 assists) needs just one UCL goal to break his tie with Kylian Mbappe (13) for the all-time teenage record.

Man Utd vs Roma: Struggling United seek solace at Old Trafford, boasting a perfect 4-for-4 home record against Roma.

Villarreal vs PSG: Defending champions PSG top the table. Unbeaten in 13 UCL games (W9 D4), they can equal Lyon's French record of 14 by avoiding defeat against Villarreal.



PHOTO: **FACEBOOK**

Full-circle moment for F1's youngest champion

AHMED ABRAR JAWAD

As the engines fell silent at the Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez, Kimi Antonelli could barely see through his tears. Crossing the finish line in third place at the 2026 Mexico City Grand Prix, the 20-year-old had just secured the Formula 1 World Drivers' Championship.

At 20 years and 68 days, the Bologna-born driver shattered Sebastian Vettel's long-standing record to become the youngest world champion in F1 history. He also ended Italy's 73-year wait for a drivers' title, since Alberto Ascari's triumph in 1953.

But the podium offered something even more special. Standing between race winner Max Verstappen and runner-up Lewis Hamilton, Antonelli found himself alongside two men he had grown up admiring. For the new champion, it was a moment years in the making.

Eight years earlier, as a 12-year-old grid boy at the 2018 Italian Grand Prix at Monza, he had stood beside Hamilton, clutching his hero's arm and whispering: "Remember, you're the best, you can win this."



PHOTO: **AFP**

He had also grown up on European karting circuits, where Verstappen was already a star, meeting the Dutchman during his formative years.

Now, having inherited Hamilton's Mercedes seat in 2025, Antonelli was no longer the wide-eyed youngster looking up at his heroes. He was standing beside them as a world champion.

"I will definitely frame the picture and put it on the wall of my house, so I can see it very well whenever I go in," he said afterwards.

Hamilton and Verstappen were united in their praise, both describing his achievement as "incredible".

The title was the culmination of a remarkable turnaround. After a difficult 2025 rookie season, when Mercedes boss Toto Wolff admitted he had to "catapult" the teenager into the demands of a top-team seat, Antonelli returned a different driver.

He opened 2026 with a podium in Australia before winning five consecutive races from Shanghai, taking control of the championship ahead of team-mate George Russell.

His defining moment came at Monza in September. Starting 19th after an engine penalty, he stormed through the field, passed pole-sitter Russell and claimed a memorable home victory.

The boy who once stood beside his heroes, hoping they would win, had become one of them. And at just 20, he had made history.

IN BRIEF

Bangladesh claim first-ever point in Asian Champions Trophy

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh claimed their first-ever point in the Asian Champions Trophy after coming from a goal down to hold China to a 1-1 draw in their final Pool match in Jalandhar, Punjab, on Monday.

Having lost all their matches on their debut in the 2021 edition in Dhaka, Bangladesh arrived at the tournament's final fixture on the back of four successive defeats against India, Malaysia, Japan and Korea. Expectations were low against China, who had thrashed them 7-1 at the Asian Games in Japan.

However, the men in red and green showed resilience to earn a hard-fought draw against a side they last defeated in a shootout at the 2017 Asia Cup. Bangladesh had also beaten China 3-2 in the now-defunct Hockey World League Round 2 in 2013.



Khulna, Ctg sniff victories in NCL

SPORTS REPORTER

Mymensingh Division's Al Amin Jr struck a fine century, but Khulna Division remained firmly in control of their fifth-round National Cricket League (NCL) match at the end of the third day in Khulna on Monday.

Resuming their second innings on 57 for two, Mymensingh reached 315 for nine at stumps, taking a 135-run lead. Al Amin made 102 off 185 balls for his fifth first-class century, while Abdul Mazid contributed 59.

Chattogram were also closing in on victory against Sylhet Division, reaching 126 for one at stumps in pursuit of 227, needing just another 101 runs for their second win of the competition.