DHAKA MONDAY NOVEMBER 9, 2026, KARTIK 24, 1433 BS

SPORT

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS
Bangladesh vs West Indies
2nd Test, Day 5
Live from 9:30 am

TEN SPORTS
Pakistan vs Sri Lanka
1st Test, Day 1
Live from 10:30 am

Butler battling cancer, BFF faces coaching call

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's national football team head coach Peter Butler has been diagnosed with cancer and will be unable to continue in his role as he requires immediate treatment, Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Tabith Awal confirmed on Sunday.

"Peter cannot continue as his cancer is confirmed and immediate treatment is required," Tabith told The Daily Star.

The federation is now facing a coaching decision ahead of the women's team's two FIFA international friendlies against Singapore on December 1 and 5, with an interim coach expected to take charge.

The women in red and green began preparations in Chattogram on October 31, but Butler, who was appointed head coach ahead of the 2024 SAFF Women's Championship after working at the BFF Elite Academy, returned to England for medical tests instead of joining the squad.



The 60-year-old had informed the federation after returning to England that he would not be available for the two friendlies.

The 60-year-old had returned to England for medical tests instead of joining the squad in Chattogram, where preparations began on October 31.

BFF Women's Wing chairman Mahfuza Akhter Kiron had earlier confirmed that Butler would miss the two friendlies against Singapore.

"Peter Butler has confirmed that he won't be available for the two friendly matches after going back to England," Kiron told The Daily Star on Sunday.

BFF technical director Saiful Bari Titu has been assigned to guide the team during preparations, while the federation looks for a coach to take charge for the Singapore matches.

Tabith had earlier said he was waiting for Butler's final health update before deciding on the next course of action. With the coach now unable to continue, the federation will have to make arrangements for the upcoming friendlies.

There has been speculation that French coach Erik Meyer could take charge of the team on an interim basis, although Tabith has not named any potential replacement.

U-17s go down 5-1 to Syria

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh made a false start to their AFC U-17 Asian Cup qualifying campaign, conceding two own goals and two penalties in a 5-1 defeat to Syria in their Group C opener at the Emirates Club Stadium in the United Arab Emirates on Sunday.

After three months of training at home followed by a two-week preparation camp in Jordan, Bangladesh had arrived in the UAE hoping to secure a place in the finals for the first time in a long while. However, their opening encounter against group favourites Syria proved a bitter experience.

Lodewijk De Kruif's charges fell behind in the 16th minute when Ahmed Al Sheikh Taha converted a penalty. Qussi Al Shalhani doubled Syria's lead in the 41st minute, also from the spot, before Aram Alhammoud extended the advantage just before half-time.

Bangladesh showed signs of a comeback immediately after the restart, with substitute Bayzit Bostami pulling one back in the 47th minute.

However, their hopes suffered a major blow in the 71st minute when midfielder Mohammad Arif was sent off, leaving Bangladesh to play the remainder of the match with 10 men.

The numerical disadvantage proved costly as midfielder Tarek Hossain put the ball into his own net in the 77th minute. Defender Maruf Ahmed then scored another own goal in stoppage time to complete Bangladesh's miserable outing.

The defeat leaves Bangladesh with work to do in their remaining group matches if they are to keep their hopes of qualifying for the finals alive.



West Indies batter Kavem Hodge wears a smile as he returns to the dressing room unbeaten on 140 at stumps on the fourth day of the second Test against Bangladesh at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. The visitors, leading the two-match series 1-0, were 345 for three, with an overall lead of 315 runs heading into the final day. (Inset) Bangladesh's players and think-tank had plenty to ponder but little success to show for their efforts, as the hosts faced the prospect of a series defeat. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

A spin plan that failed to turn

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI *from Sylhet*

While Bangladesh are putting on a brave face heading into day five, their tactical gambles have repeatedly backfired. A draw is now the most positive result they can realistically hope for in the Sylhet Test, and even that would leave them losing the series. Their decision to back three spin options has once again failed to deliver.

Sylhet's green surface initially offered good bounce and movement for pacers. Yet even the four millimetres of grass was trimmed on the morning of the Test as the hosts persisted with their spin-heavy strategy. When spin failed to make an impact in the first innings, Taskin Ahmed and Hasan Mahmud were forced to do the heavy lifting. By day four, Bangladesh were left scrambling, with Kavem Hodge's unbeaten 140 effectively ending their hopes of victory.

The spin trio of Taijul Islam, Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Nayeem Hasan bowled 58 overs on day four, conceding 224 runs. Taijul finished with figures of 2-118, unable to extract the sharp turn the team management had banked on.

Groundstaff had already cautioned that the surface might offer limited assistance to spinners, while the pitch appeared to become better for batting as the match progressed.

Taijul gave the ball more air on day four but still bowled quicker than Jomel Warrican, who had extracted some assistance during Bangladesh's innings. Taijul's average turn increased from 2.5 degrees in the first innings to four degrees in the second, but it had little impact despite his two wickets on the day.

"The wicket still looks good to us. But this is red-ball cricket. If we can get off to a good start, I think chasing is possible. First, we have to see how many runs they set as a target, and then we will plan accordingly."
TAWHID HRIDOY

"It's very difficult to put a number on that wicket. Like I said, we just have to come tomorrow and assess, keep ticking over, and I think we just have to play it by ear and keep going moment by moment. We can't think too far ahead because as we see, it's a very good cricket wicket. We don't want to leave too much out there or stay too long, but play it by ear as we go."
KAVEM HODGE

Nayeem averaged five degrees of turn on day four, yet his struggle to find the right areas was evident from the fact that he bowled only 10 overs. It revived the question of whether Bangladesh needed three spin options in the first place.

The pace department also struggled. Taskin and Hasan, who had been impressive in the first innings, appeared less effective in the second after bowling a combined 45 overs in the first innings.

The momentum generated by Tawhid Hridoy's commanding 242, a rescue act on day three, never translated into a dominant bowling effort. Ironically, a team management official described the wicket as "good enough for play to take place for another five days".

From Mirpur to Sylhet, Bangladesh's reading of the conditions has reflected misplaced priorities in their bid to level the series. Head coach Phil Simmons had admitted on day three that the spinners had not shown their "true qualities" in Dhaka or in the first innings in Sylhet. Hridoy, however, struck a defiant note after day four.

"We don't have regrets," Hridoy insisted. "We had a clear plan, since the head coach, captain and selector made up the team and decided what the best eleven would be. We are trying heart and soul, but execution didn't go well. We believe something good is possible from here."

Reality, however, paints a far grimmer picture.

With a commanding 315-run lead, the West Indies can effortlessly bat the hosts out of the contest within the morning's first hour. From there, they will back their own spinners to exploit a fifth-day surface with the ruthless, suffocating control the hosts have so glaringly lacked.

Taibur leads Dhaka's charge with career-best 211

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Division's Taibur Rahman stole the show with a career-best 211 off 294 ballsagainst Khulna Division on the second day of the sixth round of the National Cricket League (NCL) at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Resuming overnight on 128, Taibur, who had last scored a double century in 2017, finally ended his nine-year wait for another as Dhaka declared on 513 for five. Khulna reached 132 for two at Stumps.

Meanwhile, Chattogram's Irfan Sabri Takrir marked his first-class debut with a 212-ball 104 against Rangpur at the Khulna Divisional Stadium. The youngster, who had played for Chattogram's NCL second XI just a week earlier, struck 13 fours and a six as Chattogram reached 304 for five. Sadikur Rahman scored 90 after Chattogram had bowled Rangpur out for 166 on day one.

At Bogura, Nasum Ahmed claimed five for 43 to bowl Rajshahi out for 192 despite skipper Pritom Kumar's 105. Sylhet reached 63 without loss to take a 208-run lead.

At Chattogram, Abu Hider Rony took five for 35, his seventh first-class five-wicket haul, as Barishal slumped to 136 for eight in reply to Mymensingh's 386. Fazle Mahmud Rabbi top-scored with 80, while debutant Mosabbek Hossain had earlier made an unbeaten 69.





Sri Lanka and Bhutan players contest an aerial ball during their SAFF Championship Group A fixture at the National Stadium yesterday. Bhutan took the lead through Dawa Tshering in the 34th minute, but Oliver Kelaart equalised a minute later. Ahmed Razeek put Sri Lanka ahead on the stroke of half-time before Chencho Gyeltshen missed a penalty. The Bhutanese forward made amends with a 76th-minute equaliser for a 2-2 draw, a result that sent hosts Bangladesh into the semifinals. PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh, Pakistan in semifinals

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh and Pakistan booked their places in the semifinals of the SAFF Championship yesterday.

Hosts Bangladesh, who beat Bhutan in their opening Group A match on Thursday, were ensured a final-four spot after Bhutan held Sri Lanka to a 2-2 draw during the second game of the day at the National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday.

Whether Bangladesh will finish top of group and who will the other team from the group to qualify will be decided after Bangladesh play against the Lankans on Wednesday.

Earlier. Pakistan bounced back from their opening-match defeat to India to secure a semifinal berth with a convincing 3-0 victory over Maldives in their second and final Group B match.

Having suffered a 3-2 defeat against India, Pakistan had no option but to win to keep their hopes of reaching the last four alive. Nolberto Solano 's charges responded with a commanding performance to finish their group campaign with three points and a goal difference of plus two.

Pakistan made a flying start, with Aroon Abdullah converting a penalty in the fourth minute before Najeeb Ullah doubled the lead five minutes later. The 19-year-old forward then put the result beyond doubt with a superb individual effort in the 24th minute.

India also have three points but a goal difference of plus one from their solitary outing. They need only a draw against Maldives to finish as group champions. However, a heavy defeat could put the nine-time champions in danger of elimination, with head-to-head records and then goal difference determining the standings among teams level on points.

Messi first to win consecutive MLS Golden Boots

AGENCIES

Lionel Messi added another trophy to his already crowded collection, becoming the first player in MLS history to win consecutive Golden Boot awards after scoring a league-leading 26 goals for Inter Miami this season.

Messi, 39, is also the sixth player to lead the league in goals in multiple seasons. He also led MLS in 2026 with 43 goal contributions. Last season, the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner claimed the Golden Boot with a 29-goal campaign.

FC Dallas forward Petar Musa finished second to Messi with 22 goals, one ahead of Nashville SC striker Sam Surridge, who scored twice Saturday as the league's regular season ended.

Messi and Inter Miami finished second in the Eastern Conference and will host the №7 seed, the Columbus Crew, in a best-of-three first-round playoff series. Miami also secured a berth in the CONCACAF Champions Cup for the fourth year in a row.

Messi, who retired from Argentina's national team in October, is the front-runner to win a record third consecutive MLS MVP award. If he wins, he would become the first three-time recipient.

"I have no doubt that he's the best of all," Miami coach Cristian "Kily" Gonzalez recently said of Messi.