

Star SPORT

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Tomic's dream comes true

Bernard Tomic once sat glued to the TV watching his hero Roger Federer but on Sunday he'll be on the other side of the net, battling the Swiss for a place in the Australian Open quarterfinals. The Australian teen sensation has knocked over two seeds on his way to the round of 16 and now faces a player he rates as the greatest of all. Tomic, 19, has already played the Swiss in the Davis Cup in Sydney last September, losing in four sets, but the rising star now faces the 16-time grand slam champion on the biggest stage.

- AFP



Biman will leave a 'vacuum'

SPORTS REPORTER

The cricket and table tennis fraternities have regretted the decision of Bangladesh Biman authorities to halt their teams in the two disciplines.

The board of the national carrier took the decision after an investigation revealed wrongdoings regarding free tickets issued to players. Biman managing director air commodore (ret'd) Zakiul Islam told The Daily Star last week that the airline could not "afford to bear the expenses". Although the Biman MD attributed cash crisis for the closure of the two sporting units, on January 3 the board adopted the resolution after it was revealed that 239 tickets were issued to the players free of charge, flaunting its rules.

Despite the issue being internal, the ripple effect has been significant on the two sports. Table tennis and cricket have had a long association with Biman dating back to over three decades, with players being benefited immensely.

If the decision stands, domestic cricket will lose a stable Premier League team which will not only harm the players but also create a vacuum at the top.

"If they don't continue, their will be no existence for Biman," said Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) chairman GS Hasan Tamim. "In that case, nobody will be able to play as Biman since they have come into cricket as an organisation."

What Tamim means here is that even if the "club" is bought by a second party, it has

to continue under the name Biman for two seasons, a situation that can't be worked out as it is a separate entity altogether.

"If they don't participate, there will be a vacuum in the Premier League," he added, not ruling out the possibility of an 11-team competition next season.

Former chief selector Rafiqul Alam pointed out that Biman's absence will be felt in various ways in the game.

"It will be harmful for the Premier League overall. They always made a competitive, strong team in the competition and it is a fact that it is one of the safest places for players to get their contract money," said the former national cricketer.

"When I played, I saw a cricketing atmosphere there which was cordial and harmonious for any cricket team. Players have found it a friendly team with no added pressure," he added.

The country's table tennis legend Zobera Rahman Linu has termed it a sad state of affairs.

"It is very sad to hear of such news. There aren't many teams in table tennis and to have a team like Biman go away will be detrimental to the overall economy of the sport," she said.

"Teams like Bangladesh Ansar and Biman have supported players with not just pocket money but job security. I think the whole process, whatever it is, has to be given a second thought. It must be solved," said

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CENTRE OF ATTENTION: Victoria Sporting Club's Al-Amin Hossain celebrates his fourth wicket against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club in their Premier League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

PREMIER CRICKET DOHS stay on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Old DOHS outclassed Brothers Union by eight wickets yesterday at BKSP in a curtailed match to stay in top spot in the Premier Division Cricket League.

It was DOHS's fifth win in six matches while big-spending Victoria also registered their fifth win when they handed a 21-run defeat to Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

At the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, Prime Doleshwar secured a comfortable 72-run victory over the winless Surjo Tarun Club to notch their third win in six matches.

OLD DOHS V BROTHERS

The dense fog in the morning saw the match reduced to a 39-over-a-side affair. Brothers Union chose to bat first only to suffer a batting collapse, being dismissed for 88 in 33.2 overs. Shuvagoto Hom was the wrecker-in-chief, picking up four wickets for 20 runs while Nabil Samad and Mohammad Ashraful claimed two wickets each.

Mansoor Amjad scored

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Good and bad news for BPL

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SPORTS REPORTER

It was a mixed day for the Bangladesh Premier League as an international cricketer turned down the chance to play the competition's inaugural season. At the same time, the proposed link with a major television channel could boost the Twenty20 tournament.

West Indies captain Darren Sammy has put his own country's domestic and international commitments first, despite being acquired by Sylhet Royals for 55,000 dollars.

"I am both humbled and honoured by this recognition of me as a professional cricketer," Sammy told AFP on Friday. "I have informed the BPL and the Sylhet Royals that I am unable to accept it at this stage. While I enjoyed playing cricket in front of the enthusiastic and passionate Bangladeshi fans, the BPL's schedule clashes with that of the West Indies Cricket Board's Regional 4-Day tournament."

Azhar Mahmood will replace Sammy, the veteran Pakistani all-rounder

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Charity T20 in April

SPORTS REPORTER

Madrid Cricket Club will hold a charity cricket Twenty20 tournament for the fourth time at the La Manga Club from April 19.

European cricket clubs will participate and will contribute to various charity organisations in Bangladesh. This year, for the first time, there will also be a netball event in partnership with the Madrid Netball Club.

The tournament will also host celebrity chef Tommy Miah and former India wicketkeeper Farokh Engineer.

Sheikh Jamal in final

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club moved into the final of the Grameenphone Federation Cup for the second consecutive time, beating Sheikh Russel KC 2-0 in the second semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The last edition's runner-ups had to wait until the 87th minute to break the deadlock. Nigerian striker Assogba Allen converted a spot-kick to give his side the lead before his compatriot Kester Akon made it 2-0 two minutes later to bury the hopes of Sheikh Russel's maiden final.

Sheikh Jamal coach Saiful Bari Titu, who made his first final in domestic circuit, expressed his satisfaction over the team's performance.

"I'm happy with the performance. We kept the possession throughout the match and defended well which is always an advantage."



Sheikh Jamal striker Kester Akon (L) tries to force his way around Sheikh Russel defender Abbas Inusah during their Federation Cup match at the BNS yesterday.

The match started at a

very slow pace as both teams adopted a cautious approach. Although Sheikh Russel enjoyed possession early on, it was Sheikh Jamal

who made all the promising moves with their Nigerian attacking midfielder Femi

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U-19s kick off with win

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 drew first blood in the seven-match series when they posted a 44-run victory against the visiting England Under-19 side in the first one-day at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

The local side put in a strong batting display, scoring 265 for eight in 50 overs after being put in to bat first, thanks to a 114-run fifth wicket partnership between Mosaddek Hossain and man-of-the-match Al-Amin.

The two batsmen capitalised on a solid start by Anamul Haque (22) and Liton Kumar (40) who contributed 44 runs for the opening stand.

Mosaddek hit 81 off 84 balls with the help of eleven boundaries while Al-Amin smote six boundaries to make 50 off 41 balls.



Bangladesh U-19's Mosaddek Hossain celebrates his fifty.

PHOTO: STAR

A team's 1st T20 today

SPORTS REPORTER

The first T20 match between Bangladesh A and the visiting England Lions will be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

The match will kick off at 12 noon.

The national selectors announced a 15-member squad for the two T20 matches and Jahurul Islam was named captain.

Alok Kapali and Shabbir Rahman will however be available only for the second and final match which will take place at the same venue tomorrow.

SQUAD

Jahurul Islam (captain), Imrul Kayes, Nazimuddin, Shuvagoto Hom, Nasir Hossain, Mohammad Mithun, Sohrwardi Shuvo, Mosharraf Hossain, Alauddin Babu, Mukter Ali, Sohag Gazi, Nazmul Hossain, Rony Talukder, Alok Kapali and Shabbir Rahman.

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