

SPORT

DHAKA FRIDAY JANUARY 27, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Eusebio turns 70 in style

Former Portugal and Benfica striker Eusebio, considered one of the best players of all time, turned 70 on Wednesday and said he could celebrate with a glass of wine after recovering from a recent health scare.

"I never thought I would make it to 70, but thank God here I am and I hope to spend many more years in shape," Eusebio, who has recovered from a bout of pneumonia that required a stay in hospital at the end of last year, told Portuguese daily *Diario de Noticias*.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Rafael Nadal roars after yet another win over his great rival Roger Federer. This time it was in the Australian Open semifinal where Rafa's brute force prevailed over Federer's artistry in a pulsating four-setter in Melbourne yesterday.

Rafa rules Roger again

AP, Melbourne



Rafael Nadal beat Roger Federer 6-7 (5), 6-2, 7-6 (5), 6-4 in an Australian Open semifinal on Thursday night, the long time rivals playing with the intensity they normally display when they meet in Grand Slam finals.

Though the stars who have met in eight Grand Slam finals were on the same side of the draw for the first time at a major since 2005, they played as if the title were at stake.

This time, though, only Nadal will have the opportunity to win another championship on Sunday night when the Spanish left-hander plays the winner of Friday's semifinal between defending champion Novak Djokovic

and Andy Murray.

Nadal, who holds a 6-2 edge in Grand Slam finals against Federer, made the key service break in the ninth game of the fourth set, making an incredible cross-court forehand winner from well behind the baseline, then watching as Federer hit a backhand wide to give Nadal a 5-4 lead.

Serving for the match, Nadal moved two points away from the win when Federer sent a backhand long. He won on his second match point when Federer floated forehand long.

At the end, Nadal smashed a ball up high in the stadium, almost clearing the roof. He then applauded along with the crowd when Federer walked off.

Two weeks ago, Nadal injured his right knee and wasn't sure he'd be able to start the tournament. Now, he can

barely believe he's in the final.

"If you tell me that two Sundays ago, I really cannot imagine," Nadal said. "For me, it's a dream to be back in a final of the Australian Open."

The 25-year-old Spaniard won the 2009 Australian title but lost in the quarterfinals in his next two trips to Melbourne Park. Federer hasn't added to his record 16 Grand Slam titles since he won the 2010 Australian Open.

When the often enthralling play was suspended for 10 minutes late in the second set for an Australian Day fireworks display, Federer seemed to be affected most. Nadal led 5-2 at the time, and Federer lost his serve in the next game to give the Spaniard the set. In all, the Swiss dropped 11 points in a row.

The capacity, 15,000-strong crowd

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It's Sharapova v Azarenka

AP, Melbourne



PHOTO: INTERNET

Maria Sharapova overcame Petra Kvitova to set up a women's final against Victoria Azarenka at the Australian Open.

Sharapova broke Kvitova's serve in the last game to finish off a 6-2, 3-6, 6-4 Thursday, and third-seeded Azarenka beat defending champion Kim Clijsters 6-4, 1-6, 6-3 to set up a Saturday night final at Rod Laver Arena that also will decide the No. 1 ranking.

Sharapova lost to second-ranked Kvitova in the Wimbledon final last year, her first major final since returning from an injury layoff following a shoulder operation in 2008. She has won three majors, but none since the Australian four years ago.

"In the third set, I felt she always had the advantage because I was always down on my serve," said Sharapova, who served five double-faults in the third set and 10 in the match. "I just told myself 'You just gotta go for it, don't let her finish off the points like she likes to.'"

Azarenka won the first semifinal after twice recovering from periods when a resurgent Clijsters seemed to have the upper hand, to secure victory in only her second appearance in a major semifinal.

"I felt like my hand is about 200 kilograms and my body is about 1,000 and everything is shaking, but that feeling when you finally win is such a relief. My God I cannot believe it's over. I just want to cry," Azarenka said as she choked back tears, then buried her face in a towel.

"It was just trying to stay in the moment. Kim really took over the second

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14 named for 4th one-dayer

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 14-member U-19 team for the 4th one-day match against England.

The match will take place at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium tomorrow.

The home side is leading the series 2-1.

SQUAD: Anamul Haque, Soumya Sarkar, Salman Hossain, Asif Ahmed,

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Australia lead large after Kohli ton



AFP, Adelaide

Australia held a massive 382-run lead after dismissing India cheaply on Thursday and opting to bat again rather than enforce the follow-on on the third day of the fourth Test in Adelaide.

Rising star Virat Kohli hit his maiden Test century and India's first of the series with a defiant 116 as the tourists, facing a 4-0 series

wipeout, mustered just 272 in reply to Australia's imposing 604 for seven declared.

Australia skipper Michael Clarke chose not to send the Indians back in, giving his bowlers a breather from the sweltering conditions with a second innings declaration likely early Friday to give them time to chase another win.

At stumps, Australia were 50 for three with first innings heroes Clarke (9) and Ricky Ponting (1) at the crease.

Once again Australia lost their top three

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BPL stalls all in its wake

SPORTS REPORTER

The arrival of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 has apparently rendered everything else relating to cricket unimportant, or at any rate not as important as the money-driven venture.

The ongoing Premier Division Cricket League, the coveted limited-over competition, is set to suffer due to the BCB's new venture as Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) has decided in its meeting yesterday that some matches of the first round will be held outside Dhaka and the Super League will start only

after the completion of the BPL.

There were heated discussions at the meeting as the club officials came down hard on the league's schedule being hampered due to the BPL. The franchises have expressed their desire to have team members available from February 1 so that they can prepare before the tournament but the club officials were not ready to comply. It was learnt that the officials also demanded compensation from the board for rescheduling the league.

It is worth mentioning here that the scheduling of the country's lone first-class competition, the National Cricket

League (NCL), was earlier upset because of the Premier Division Cricket League.

"After the tenth round which will conclude on February 3, we will not get the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium and that is why we have picked Bogra (Shahid Chandu Stadium) as the third venue besides Fatullah and BKSP to complete the first round of the league," informed GS Hasan Tamim, chairman of CCDM, yesterday.

"We will continue with the Super League after the BPL, though it will clash with the Asia Cup. We can't finish the league smoothly because of BPL, so

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LOCAL snippets

SPORTS REPORTER

Social Welfare Association and Bashabo Tarun Sangha won their respective matches of the Destiny Group Second Division Football League at Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Social Welfare Association defeated Sadharan Bima KS 3-0, thanks to a hat-trick from Sajadur Rahman, who found the back of net in the 26th, 79th and 86th minutes respectively.

Bashaboo Tarun Sangha defeated Prantic Krira Chakra 2-0 with Selim Reza striking both goals for the winners in their Group B match.

School Football

Three more schools emerged as their respective Upazila champions beating their opponents in the finals to qualify for the district-level competition of the National School Football Islami Bank tournament yesterday.

Police Line High School defeated Choto Basalia High School 1-0 in the final to become Tangail Upazila champions. Jadhunath High School defeated Duburia High School 3-1 in the tiebreaker to emerge champions for Nagpur Upazila. While MA Karim Multilateral High School thrashed Borni Sufia Omar Multilateral High School 4-2 to win the Delduar Upazila title.



PHOTO: AFP

Virat Kohli gave India something to cheer, scoring his maiden Test ton in Adelaide yesterday.

BFF rejects transfer appeal



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation stuck to its decision not to allow the clubs to sign new foreign players outside the players' registration window ahead of the Bangladesh Premier League.

The professional football league committee had earlier rejected the appeal of Sheikh Russel to sign new foreign players outside the transfer window under the FIFA registration clause 6.1. But Mohammedan SC, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, Arambagh KS, Rahmatganj MFS and Farashganj SC joined Sheikh Russel KC to appeal again to reconsider their demand.

However, clubs like Abahani, Muktijoddha, Brothers Union were against the new registration outside the window as all clubs were given two-and-half months time to rope in foreign players.

The League Committee yesterday rejected the appeal again that means those clubs will have to play the Bangladesh Premier League with the foreign recruits who played in the recently concluded Federation Cup.

"We still believe if any club is given permission to sign new foreign players outside the registration period, other clubs will be deprived of equal opportunities and this rule may be misused in the future," said Professional Football

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14
 days to go...
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BPL T20