

SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS BPL
Bashundhara Kings vs Saif Sporting
Live from 4:00 pm
Sri Lanka vs South Africa (3rd T20I)
Live from 7:30 pm

SONY TEN 1
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
Young Boys vs Manchester United
Live from 10:45 pm
Chelsea vs Zenit
Live from 1:00 am (Wednesday)
SONY TEN 2

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
Barcelona vs Bayern Munich
Live from 1:00 am (Wednesday)
SONY SIX **UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE**
Malmö FF vs Juventus
Live from 1:00 am (Wednesday)



'I'M JUST HAPPY TO WIN A MAJOR'

AFP, New York



Being disrupted by hecklers while serving for the match only made Daniil Medvedev's first Grand Slam title that much sweeter when it came Sunday at the expense of Novak Djokovic in the US Open final.

World number two Medvedev ripped top-ranked Djokovic 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 to deny the Serbian star the first Grand Slam sweep since 1969 and a men's record 21st career major title.

"He definitely was not at his best. We saw him playing better," Medvedev said. "Question is, if he would be, would I be able to cope up with him? We can never know now. I'm just happy to win."

The 34-year-old Djokovic was trying to become the first man in over a half-century to win all four majors (Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon, U.S. Open) in the same year.

It would have made him only the third man to achieve the feat after Don Budge (1938) and Rod Laver (1962 and 1969), who was watching from a court-side seat.

"It's a tough one to swallow, this loss, considering everything that was on the line," said Djokovic. "I was glad it was over because the build-up for this tournament and everything that mentally, emotionally I had to deal with throughout the tournament in the last couple of weeks was just a lot. It was a lot to handle."

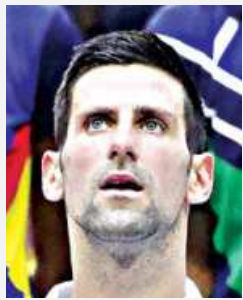
The breakthrough came in Medvedev's third Slam final after losses to Rafael Nadal in the 2019 US Open final and Djokovic in February's Australian Open final.

"A lot of happiness. That's my first Grand Slam," Medvedev said. "So I'm really happy. Means a lot to me. I'm definitely going to be celebrating the next few days."

It also came after some spectators tried to disrupt him as he served for the match in the final set. Medvedev double faulted on two match points before hitting a service winner for the triumph. "It was definitely tough. I knew that the only thing I can do is focus. They wanted to see their guy win a

"I was below par with everything, to be honest. So just one of these days where unfortunately, yeah, wasn't meant to be."

NOVAK DJOKOVIC



calendar Grand Slam," Medvedev said. Medvedev has never been ranked higher than second, but there's a sense his Slam breakthrough might inspire a fight to claim the number one spot -- one day.

"I'm just happy to win a major," he said. "That's not my first goal in my mind to try to achieve it this year. If I manage to do it one day, it's great."

Medvedev's coach, Frenchman Gilles Cervara, expects to see a higher level. "To beat Novak, in Grand Slam, it's a big thing. In final, it's another big thing," Cervara said. "I guess it will make him be at another level also. For sure it will be different."

'My aim will always remain to finish the game'

Wicket-keeper batsman Nurul Hasan Sohan's story is nothing short of a heroic tale where the 27-year-old made his comeback to international cricket after more than four years earlier this year and eventually went on to become the first-choice keeper for Bangladesh in the upcoming ICC World T20 squad. Nurul opens up and shares his philosophy towards the game along with few other topics during an exclusive interview with The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin. The excerpts of the interview are given below:



The Daily Star (DS): Since making a comeback to the national team in Zimbabwe earlier this year, things changed dramatically for you in the last three series. Now you are considered as the first-choice wicket-keeper for the Tigers in the upcoming World T20. Tell us about the new beginning.

Nurul Hasan Sohan (NHS): Previously when I played for the national team I used to think a lot about my performance whether I did well enough or not. But since I was out of the national team, during that period I just asked myself one question: am I giving my best or not after every training or match? For me, it was a great learning experience where I developed this mentality of not overthinking about everything that was beyond my control, rather I started focusing only on my process and working hard. I think it was a big lesson for me when I was out of the national team. As there are bound to be frustrations when you are out of the setup, it's important to have faith in yourself and keep working hard.

DS: Were you under pressure?

NHS: Obviously when you play for the national team there is always pressure but at the same time whoever plays for the national team receives great support from team members. Yes, there will be competition for the place but as it's a team game, those who are out of the playing eleven or otherwise, everyone tries to support each other. For example, in the last home series against Australia and New Zealand there were a lot of talks regarding the nature of the pitch. But as players, we knew that even scoring ten runs on such surfaces is equivalent to scoring thirty. So everyone realised the importance of those small contributions and kept the negative aspects aside.

DS: Considering your batting position, you must be working on becoming the finisher for the Tigers?

NHS: To be very honest, I'm not at all bothered about my individual goal rather I want to contribute for my team in any way possible. I'm not the type who'll give excuses over a situation, rather I'll take the blame if I'm not able to perform according to the demand of the situation. Scoring 50s or hundreds may be a great achievement for the batters who bat up at the top-order but for me it's different. I can't think of those milestones as being the lower-middle-order batsman whereas my aim will always remain to finish the game.

DS: There has been plenty of buzz over your competition with Mushfiqur Rahim for the wicket-keeping spot during the New Zealand series. How did you take that?

NHS: Mushfiq bhai [Mushfiqur Rahim] has been playing international cricket for more than 16 years now, so there is no point in talking about the competition between us. To me, he is one of the best wicket-keeper batsmen in world cricket. If he didn't sacrifice his keeping, I would've never been able to play. I tried to stay honest



not just with Mushfiq bhai but also with everyone and gave my best. Mushfiq bhai remained supportive towards me and he has always been like this to any youngsters over the years. There may have been a lot of talks outside the team or on social media so I even deactivated my Facebook during that time. To be honest, what is said outside the team hardly matters to me and there is nothing to prove to them.

DS: How do you see Bangladesh's chances in the upcoming World T20?

NHS: Once again I will say there might be a lot of talk over the pitch we played at home recently but the wins over Australia and New Zealand will surely boost our morale in the world cup. If it was an individual game then it would've been different but as it's a team game you definitely want the self-belief which can only arrive by winning matches together. So I honestly believe that we can work wonders in the upcoming World Cup if we are able to perform as a unit.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Raja names Hayden, Philander as Pak coaches

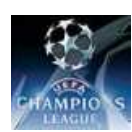
Former Pakistan captain Ramiz Raja has been elected the new chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for a tenure of three years after winning an unopposed election, the country's cricket board announced on Monday. Raja also announced that former Australian opener Matthew Hayden and former South African all-rounder Vernon Philander were signed up as head coach and bowling coach respectively for the Twenty20 World Cup that begins next month. Hayden and Philander replace Misbah-ul-Haq and Waqar Younis after both coaches stepped down from their respective roles shortly after the World Cup squad was named last week.

Taylor retires from international cricket

Zimbabwe batsman Brendan Taylor has announced his retirement from international cricket, posting on social media that Monday's 50-overs match against Ireland in Belfast will be his last. The former captain engineered a number of stunning wins for his embattled team, scoring 60 not out in a Twenty20 international upset against Australia in 2007 and an unbeaten 105 in a Test against Bangladesh, which ended a six-year hiatus in the longest format. The 35-year-old has scored 2,320 runs in 34 tests and 6,677 runs in 204 ODIs, notching 17 international centuries, the most of any Zimbabwean.

New starts for Messi, Ronaldo

AGENCIES



The 2020-21 UEFA Champions League gets underway tonight with holders Chelsea among 32 teams aiming for the final in Saint Petersburg. Matchday 1 offers some world-class clashes.

Following his arrival in Paris this summer, Lionel Messi can play his first game for his new side when they kick off away to Club Brugge on Wednesday.

Cristiano Ronaldo could play his first European game for Manchester United since a 2-0 defeat in the 2009 final against Messi's Barcelona. Ronaldo leads Messi 134-120 in the competition's all-time scorers list.

Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, however, said he will carefully manage Ronaldo's playing time. "It's not impossible to leave him out. He is 36. Mason (Greenwood) is 19 so it's the same, I have to manage his minutes and I have to manage a



36-year-old's minutes as well," he said. Ronaldo, who scored a brace on his second debut in Saturday's 4-1 win against Newcastle, was included in the 22-man squad.



Chelsea return to the fray with a home game against Russian champions Zenit, whose Gazprom Arena will stage this season's UEFA Champions League final.

Barcelona face Bayern again, without Messi, after year of upheaval and change. "We need change from top to bottom," Gerard Pique said but even he could not have predicted what followed as Barcelona, without Lionel Messi, reunite with Bayern Munich on Tuesday, a year on from the defeat that changed everything.

After the 8-2 loss by Bayern in the Champions League quarter-finals, Pique said Barca needed change of all kinds, "not just players and coaches, but structurally", insisting "new blood" was needed. "We are not able to compete in Europe," he said.

Amazingly, Matchday 1 brings only the third competitive meeting for AC Milan and Liverpool. The first was Liverpool's shoot-out success in the 2005 UEFA Champions League football: the 'Miracle of Istanbul', in which the Reds hauled back a 3-0 deficit to triumph. Milan fans, though, will remember the last encounter more fondly, the Rossoneri beating the Reds 2-1 in the 2007 decider in Athens.



BENZEMA GRABS TREBLE AS REAL WIN SEVEN-GOAL THRILLER

Real Madrid's Karim Benzema netted a hat-trick as they capped their return to the refurbished Santiago Bernabeu stadium with a thrilling 5-2 comeback win over Celta Vigo in LaLiga on Sunday. The Frenchman was unplayable at times as Madrid were reunited with their fans for the first time since March 1, 2020. They played the whole of last season at reserve team Castilla's Alfredo Di Stefano ground at their training complex. "It's a special night for us with the fans here and the atmosphere. It was a little strange to be playing in front of fans again, but they got right behind us. We need their support and they gave us everything today," said Benzema.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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