

ZACS to get new training facility

SPORTS REPORTER
from Chattogram

The Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium (ZACS) in Chattogram will see a new indoor practice facility to replace the old one that was taken down by the Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) in order to build a flyover.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials confirmed that two turfs from New Zealand have already arrived while two more from Australia are on the way. "One turf will be spin oriented while the other turf will encourage pace. The other two turfs will act like flat and sporting wickets," a ZACS official told The Daily Star.

The work on the building had been stopped during peak pandemic periods but is nearing completion with officials estimating two months till its initiation.

An official requesting anonymity said that national team stars from Chattogram will have priority while U-19 sides can also schedule sessions here. The academy, which will have separate space for backroom staff and also management, is expected to house over 40 players. The academy building will be an advantage for national team and premier division players.

ICC bans Taylor

AFP, Dubai

Former Zimbabwe captain Brendan Taylor has been banned from all cricket for three-and-a-half years over breaches of the International Cricket Council's anti-corruption code. "Over such a long career, he (Taylor) participated in numerous anti-corruption and anti-doping education sessions and knew exactly what his obligations were under the ICC anti-corruption and anti-doping codes," said Alex Marshall, general manager of the ICC's Integrity Unit.

"It is disappointing that a player of his experience chose not to fulfil those obligations. However, he has accepted all charges, which has been reflected in the sanction."

Taylor revealed on Monday in a tweet that he took cocaine and accepted a \$15,000 bribe from an Indian businessman.



Tamim Iqbal slog-sweeps one on way to a scintillating century for Minister Group Dhaka during their BPL fixture against Sylhet Sunrisers at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday. (Bottom) Tamim's knock helped Dhaka win the contest comfortably despite a 65-ball 116 earlier from Sylhet's Lendl Simmons.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Domineering Tamim upstages Lendl ton

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram

A day earlier, Tamim Iqbal had announced that he was skipping T20Is for the next six months. "I hope in the six months, those who play, do so well that the team wouldn't require me for this format." How things changed in just 24 hours. Lendl Simmons, Sylhet Sunrisers' 37-year-old Caribbean had hit this season's BPL's first ton just two hours ago in the first innings against Tamim's Minister Group of Dhaka, single-handedly taking the score to 175 for five in a tremendous 65-ball 116. Tamim upstaged that magnanimous effort with one of his own.

The crucial impetus might just have come in just the very first over of the chase as Mohammad Mithun dropped Tamim at slip off Taskin Ahmed with the score on zero. The classic shots started coming off since then. Dancing down the track to Taskin, he hit Taskin over extra cover for six to show his domineering mood during an unbeaten 111 off 64 deliveries. Sylhet were guilty of letting him off the hook twice on 71 as first Anamul Haque and then Alauddin Babu dropped the left-hander in the same over. Tamim did not have to look back again. 17 fours and four sixes, 92 runs of Tamim's incredible innings had come in boundaries as together with Mohammad Shahzad (53 off 39), he put on the highest opening stand during a BPL chase of 173 in a thrashing nine-wicket win.

There was relief and pride as he completed the ton, in what was a much-needed win for Dhaka. This was Tamim's fourth T20 ton and his second in the BPL. He had hit one international ton against Oman in 2016 World Cup while he also scored a domestic T20 ton Victory Day T20



Cup against Mohammedan Sporting Club in 2013.

"Look, a guy got 116 but they also ended up on 175 and I was happy about that. The last over went for just 4 or 5. Even if they got 220, I knew the wicket was good, I knew we had every chance if we started well." Tamim said in post-match presentations.

MUSHY GETS BACK INTO RUNS
Khulna Tigers captain Mushfiqur Rahim had not been amongst the runs in his side's first two games in the Dhaka phase of the tournament. Having been dropped from the squad from the Pakistan T20Is following Bangladesh's World Cup debacle in UAE, Mushfiqur was keen on getting back into flow while also showing his leadership qualities.

Chattogram Challengers had beaten Khulna in their previous match but at Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday, Mushfiqur carried his side through the chase of 144 runs with a

commanding 30-ball 44.

"I enjoyed my batting today. In the last few innings, I didn't get much time in the middle," Mushfiqur said after the win yesterday.

BPL TRIES TO RECOVER FROM POOR ON-FIELD CALLS

The BPL governing council's technical committee has brought in a completely different system for reviewing umpiring decisions during the ongoing BPL.

There were a few decisions during the Dhaka leg of the tournament but absence of a Decision Review System (DRS) was felt by the players who could not review the umpire's call.

The new system came into effect with the match between Chattogram and Khulna in the first game of the Chattogram leg of the BPL. The committee is calling the new system ADRS, which stands for Alternate Decision Review system.

Young Tigers face familiar foes

SPORTS REPORTER

So, it is India again! The intense rivalry between Bangladesh and India at the youth level had already created a buzz in recent years and the two teams are pumped up to lock horns in the quarter-final of the ICC Under-19 World Cup in Antigua today.

It was not the best of starts for the defending champions to set their World Cup campaign in motion as the young Tigers faced a crushing seven-wicket defeat against England.

Since then however, the boys in red and green bounced back with comprehensive victories over Canada and the UAE and secured second spot from group A to qualify for the last eight.

Backed by the experience of lifting the maiden World Cup title by beating India in the final of the previous edition, skipper Rakibul Hasan backs his troops to have the edge in the upcoming encounter.

"We got a break of five-six days ahead of the quarter-final game and tried to utilise this opportunity. We took part in a game-scenario session and we are in very good shape, both mentally and physically," informed Rakibul ahead of the quarter-final yesterday.

India, on the other hand, reached the last eight as the champions from group B. However, they were rattled earlier following a Covid-19 outbreak in their camp but all six affected players, including the Indian skipper Yash Dhull, had already returned negative and are expected to feature against Bangladesh.

Jahanara returns for World Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Pacer Jahanara Alam returned to the team as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced a 16-member women's team for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in New Zealand this year.

Jahanara, who was dropped from the squad from the Commonwealth Games Qualifier squad over disciplinary issues earlier this month, is the only addition as selectors kept all the 15 members from that squad which had lost to Sri Lanka in the final.

"We are very excited to take in our maiden fifty-over World Cup and I personally feel that all the players are hopeful to give their best. The squad is a mixture of experienced and young talented players who have been performing consistently for the team," captain Nigar Sultana Joty said in a video message yesterday.

Bangladesh will begin the World Cup campaign on March 5 against South Africa in Dunedin. The Tigresses will take on hosts New Zealand, West Indies and England in their next three group stage games on March 7, 18, and 27 respectively.

Squad: Nigar Sultana Joty (Captain), Salma Khatun, Rumana Ahmed, Fargana Hoque Pinky, Jahanara Alam, Shamima Sultana, Fahima Khatun, Mst Ritu Moni, Murshida Khatun, Nahida Akter, Most. Sharmin Akter Supta, Lata Mondol, Sobhana Mostary, Mst Fariha Islam Trisna, Suraiya Azmim, Mst Shanjida Akther Maghla.



Medvedev stands in Nadal's path to Slam greatness

AFP, MELBOURNE

Daniil Medvedev won a tempestuous Australian Open semi-final against Stefanos Tsitsipas on Friday and will face Rafael Nadal, who is bidding to become the all-time men's Grand Slam leader, in Sunday's final.

World number two Medvedev beat fourth-ranked Tsitsipas 7-6 (7/5), 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 to reach his second straight Australian Open final.

Earlier the 35-year-old Spanish great powered past the Italian seventh seed Matteo Berrettini 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

Nadal is level on 20 majors with his golden era rivals Novak Djokovic, who was deported on the eve of the tournament, and Roger Federer, who is absent with injury.

It gives the Spaniard an opportunity to go clear at the top in Sunday's final and add to his lone 2009 Melbourne Park crown in his sixth Australian Open final.

Medvedev was in a fiery mood and given a code warning after raging at the chair umpire during his clash with fourth seed Tsitsipas, whose father Apostolos was also given a warning for coaching from the player's box before inadvertently helping trigger his son's collapse.

Medvedev is shooting for back-to-back major titles after upsetting Djokovic in last year's US Open final.

Like in New York last September, when he stopped Djokovic from completing a calendar Grand Slam of titles, Medvedev will

strong player and I need to show my best to try and win this match."

But Nadal said the Australian Open title meant more to him than a record 21 career Grand Slams. "For me at the end it's about more than all these statistics, it's about being in the final of the Australian Open one more time. That means a lot to me," Nadal said.

"To me it's more important to be in the final of the Australian Open and fight to win another Australian Open than the rest of the statistics for the history of the sport.

"I just feel happy to be part of this amazing era of tennis, sharing all these things with another two players." "That's it. In some ways it doesn't matter if somebody achieve one more or one less."

It has been an extraordinary effort from Nadal at the year's opening major, having to modify his game to compensate for a degenerative bone disease in his left foot that ended his 2021 season last August.

He then caught Covid in December which, he said, made him "very sick". Yet Nadal brushed aside Berrettini's challenge with precision shot-making, while last year's Wimbledon finalist could not overcome his sluggish start.

Later in a stormy night semi-final under

a closed roof because of rain, Medvedev had a massive blow-up with the chair umpire during a changeover at 5-4 in the second set.

He was furious at the umpire over what he claimed was coaching from Tsitsipas's coach and father Apostolos from the player's box and the Russian received a code violation. Medvedev raged at the umpire and later said he regretted doing it.

"His father can talk every point. Can you answer my question please?" he pleaded.

"Oh my God, you are so bad man. How can you be so bad in the semi-final of a Grand Slam? Look at me! I'm talking to you!"

Medvedev was contrite after. "I regret it all the time, because I don't think it's nice. I know that every referee is trying to do their best," he said.

"I can get really emotional. I have been working on it. Helps me to win matches, I know. In the heat of the moment, I just lost it."

Tsitsipas levelled up taking the chaotic second set as tensions bubbled over and Medvedev went ahead by taking the third set to gain the edge in a titanic duel shortly after Apostolos Tsitsipas was warned for coaching.

Tsitsipas fell away after his father's warning, losing five straight games as Medvedev surged to victory to take his place in the final.



be trying to derail Nadal's tilt at making men's tennis history.

"I'm going to play against one of the greatest and someone going for the 21st Slam," Medvedev said.

"I'm ready, I know that Rafa is a very