

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.



Lendl Simmons scored the first century of this edition of BPL—a 65-ball 116—for Sylhet Sixers against Minister Group Dhaka at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday. (Bottom) Meanwhile, the Chattogram leg started with the introduction of Alternate DRS and foreign umpires.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SIMMONS TON lights up BPL

SPORTS REPORTER FROM CHATTOGRAM

Sylhet Sunrisers' 37-year-old Caribbean player Lendl Simmons showed that age is just a number as he became the first batter in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) to hit a ton. Following a run of dismal scores, especially in the day games of the Dhaka leg of the BPL, Simmons showed why the batters were licking their lips ahead of the Chattogram phase where good wickets are on offer.

Lendl played some tremendous shots during a 65-ball 116, laced with 14 fours and five sixes, taking the Minister Group Dhaka's attack apart seamlessly. His knock however, did not quite produce the effect that Sylhet would have hoped for as only two other batters reached double digits in their first innings total of 175 for five.

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. [Andre] Fletcher was playing well at the other end and made my job easier," Mushfiqur said after the win yesterday.



Mushfiqur will come face to face with Shakib Al Hasan's Barishal today. "The win felt good. We have more matches in front of us and a big one is ahead of us tomorrow. We are preparing well," Mushfiqur added.

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 that left teams unsatisfied but in the absence of a Decision Review System (DRS), the players 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.

Following a meeting between captains, coaches and managers of all six participating teams along with the BPL governing council, playing control team and BBPL production team, the decision to implement this system was taken, based on available technology. The ADRS was used thrice during the day match between Chattogram and Khulna.

In the first innings, Khulna unsuccessfully reviewed a caught behind appeal against Chattogram's Naeem Islam while in the second innings, Rony Talukdar successfully reviewed an out decision after there was an inside edge. Khulna then unsuccessfully reviewed a decision against Chattogram's Seekkuge Prasanna.

Pushpa celebrations all over BPL
Khulna's off-spinner Sheikh Mahedi Hasan re-introduced the Pushpa celebrations after Sylhet's spinner Nazmul Islam Apu had started a sort of revolution. After bagging the wicket of Chattogram skipper Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Mahedi did a dance number from the same movie. However, instead of a cigarette in his mouth just as in the movie, Mahedi had to resort to a pipe in his mouth while performing the dance routine.

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.

Alisson hails VAR

REUTERS, QUITO

Alisson said the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) had prevented his side from being "punished unfairly" after the Brazil goalkeeper had two red cards rescinded in Thursday's 1-1 draw with Ecuador in a World Cup qualifier.

Alisson was shown a red card after 25 minutes for a fierce tackle and another in stoppage time for felling Ayrton Preciado as he attempted to punch the ball, but on both occasions the referee consulted VAR and changed his mind.

"I think this was the first time this has



happened in the history of football," the Liverpool keeper said.

"I think that I acted properly in the moves and I think my team mates helped me a lot, they were incisive in their complaints to the referee. This shows once again the importance of using VAR in football. "I am happy with the VAR, if it wasn't for the VAR we'd have been punished unfairly."

"I think the draw was a fair result because neither of the two teams created sufficient chances to say it wasn't a fair outcome," Alisson told reporters.



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 rival 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

Medvedev stands in Nadal's path to Slam greatness

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 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 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.

