

SPORT

What to
WATCH

STAR SPORTS 1

EPL
Tottenham vs Everton
Live from 02:00 am
(Tuesday)

SONY SIX

Pakistan vs Australia
1st Test, Day 4
Live from 11:00 am

‘Hope I live to reach 100’

REUTERS

Four months after 97-year-old amateur Leonid Stanislavskyi's dreams came true when he played with 21-times Grand Slam champion Rafa Nadal, the Ukrainian is enduring his worst nightmare in Kharkiv as Russian forces bomb the city.

Stanislavskyi, who holds the Guinness World Record as the world's oldest tennis player, also had dreams of playing Swiss great Roger Federer but now he has only one simple wish – survival.

“I hope I live to reach 100. I have to survive this frightening situation,” he told Reuters.

“The war started on (February) 24th. From the 24th till now I have practically not gone out. I've stayed at home... I have supplies, the fridge is full. I'm sitting at home, not going anywhere,” he said.

“My daughter Tanya is in Poland, she wants to take me there. But I decided to stay here. I have bad hearing so I sleep at night and don't hear anything. Last night there were



bombings, in the morning there were air-raid sirens again.”

Stanislavskyi survived the Second World War, when he was an engineer who helped build Soviet warplanes to fight the Nazis.

“I never thought that I would have to live through another, more frightening war where people from both sides are dying – mothers are losing their children, wives are losing their sons and their husbands,” he added.

“What is this? What good is it? In the 21st century there can't be war. The war needs to be stopped, an agreement has to be reached.”

For Stanislavskyi, an end to the conflict would also mean the chance to resume playing tennis – and possibly to appear at the next seniors World Championships, in Florida next month.



Shakhb Al Hasan unveils the jersey of Mohammedan Sporting Club for the upcoming Dhaka Premier League as his teammates Mahmudullah Riyad, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Taskin Ahmed alongside the directors of the club look on during a programme at a hotel in the capital yesterday. Mushfiqur was announced as the captain of the side.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

‘It would be akin to cheating the team’

SPORTS REPORTER

All-rounder Shakhb Al Hasan continued to keep the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) in limbo regarding his availability for international commitments, saying in his latest salvo last night that he was neither mentally nor physically prepared for the upcoming tour of South Africa.

“I felt like a passenger in a car [in the just-concluded series against Afghanistan], which I never want to be. I did not enjoy my performances, either in ODIs or T20Is. I tried but it didn't work out. I don't think it would be right for me to play in South Africa in this state of mind. I said this to Jalal [Yunus] bhai and I think he will think about it. I will also think about it and then a decision should be taken,” Shakhb told reporters at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport prior to his departure for Dubai.

“I believe that if I play with such a mental and physical condition, it will ultimately hamper the team's performance. It would be sad if I failed to meet my expectations or the expectations of my fans. It would be like cheating my teammates if I stay as only a passenger,” Shakhb continued.

Shakhb was supposed to join the team, slated to depart for South Africa on March 11, directly from Dubai, but he repeatedly told reporters he desperately need a break.

“Yes, I was agreed to play the series and that's why my name was included in the



squad but after the Afghanistan series I felt that I needed a break. In my current state of mind, it would be like cheating my team and my country if I play the series.”

He admitted that there would have been no guarantees that he would perform well had he gone with sound mind and body. But in this current situation, he said it would be like betraying his team. “I don't want to deprive my team,” he said.

Shakhb repeatedly said that playing would be akin to cheating his teammates, the country and himself. He also demanded a long term plan from the BCB regarding his international commitments instead of deciding on a series-by-series basis given that he is a player approaching the fag end of a long career. He added that there might be the possibility of him

playing only the Tests and skipping the ODIs or some other arrangement of that nature, but could not confirm before discussions.

“What I read in media is that I asked for a six-month break from Tests before the IPL auction, which is not true. I wanted to focus more on white-ball cricket with the next World Cup in mind. We have two World Cups. I think we can achieve big things there. That's why I wanted to focus more on white-ball cricket. That doesn't mean I will not play Test cricket. But I need a proper plan at this stage of my career,” he said.

When contacted, BCB cricket operations committee chairman Jalal Yunus said: “He rang me up today and spoke about mental fatigue. He was not motivated to play so his performances were not up to the mark in the last series. But he did not say he would not play in the South Africa series. He said that he need a break and he misses his family. I just told him to talk with me again after two days. That's it.”

The first ODI will be played in Centurion on March 18. The second and third ODIs are scheduled for March 20 and 23 in Johannesburg and Centurion respectively. The opening Test will be played on March 31 while the final Test is scheduled for April 8.

The ODI and the Test series will be part of the ICC ODI Super League and World Test Championship respectively.

Siddikur showing form ahead of Chattogram Open

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's premier golfer Siddikur Rahman showed some sign of form with a 14-under-par score in the International Series Thailand, which concluded yesterday.

The 37-year-old golfer could only finish tied for 41st, but his scores of 67, 70, 65 and 72 gave some encouraging vibe ahead of the Mujib Borsho Chattogram Open, which will get underway at the Bhatiary Golf and Country Club on Wednesday.

In fact, Siddikur looked set to secure his first top-10 finish on the Asian Tour in three years after the third round, but a disappointing final round, where he went par for the course, pulled him back long way down the leaderboard.

The two-time Asian Tour winner eventually finished 12 shots behind winner Sihwan Kim of the USA with an aggregate score of 14-under-par (274) at the Black Mountain Golf Club on Sunday.

The effort saw Siddikur pocket 9045 dollars, which will improve his Order of Merit standing and give him encouragement ahead of the PGTI event in Chattogram where competition will come the PGTI players from India and Bangladesh. After the Chattogram Open, Siddikur will head to Delhi to play in the inaugural DGC Open, to be played at the Delhi Golf Club from March 24 to 27.



Rebooted hockey aspire glory

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national hockey team intend to emulate the fast-paced and high-intensity playing style of world's hockey giants with the title of the upcoming AHF Cup in sight, scheduled to get underway on March 11 in Jakarta.

The national team are scheduled to leave for Indonesia tonight to take part in the 10-team tournament from which top three teams advance to the Asia Cup while the top five qualify for the Asian Games.

“We want to become champions but go match by match. In last 15 days, we watched the matches of Belgium, India and other countries,” captain Sarwar Hossain told the media yesterday.

“We also tried to implement that formation [of India's and Belgium's] in our lone practice match against BKSP. Now we are looking forward to implementing that in the AHF Cup,” informed Sarwar.

After unveiling the jersey during a photo session event in Dhaka yesterday, Bangladesh Malaysian coach Iman Gobinathan Krishnamurthy told the media that he is satisfied with the overall preparation.

“The boys trained well in the last three weeks and we had three sessions including one video session every day,” informed Krishnamurthy while adding that he is not too aware of his immediate opponents.

“Obliviously, China and Oman are higher-ranked sides than Bangladesh but we don't know about China, Oman, Sri Lanka and Indonesia because all of participating teams were out of international engagement for a long time.”

Abahani claim second, Sheikh Jamal go third

SPORTS REPORTER

A stoppage-time strike from Daniel Colindres helped title contenders Abahani come from a goal down to beat Saif SC 2-1 in their Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Sylhet Stadium yesterday.

A return to winning ways saw Abahani climb to second place with 16 points from seven matches, two behind leaders Bashundhara Kings and point more than third-placed Sheikh Jamal, who yesterday handed a 2-1 defeat to Chittagong Abahani in Munshiganj to remain the only unbeaten side.

At the Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni Stadium in Gopalganj, lightweights Uttar Baridhara Club came from two goals down to stun big-budget Sheikh Russel 3-2. The triumph saw them climb to eighth, leaving Sheikh Russel at ninth position with only five points from seven matches.

In Sylhet, Abahani looked a bit dejected on the back of a 3-2 defeat to Chittagong Abahani in their previous match and lacked urgency, with the visitors dominating from the beginning.

The Sky Blues play was strewn with passing errors, which cost possession and

ceded control to Saif SC, who looked much better in terms of launching attacks.

After a barren first half, Saif SC took a deserved lead through Emery Bayisenge, who headed home a Jamal Bhuiyan free-kick from the top of the six-year box in the 69th minute.

But they could keep the lead for only six minutes as Brazilian forward Dorielton Gomes, coming on after Abahani conceded the lead, levelled by nodding home a corner kick from Daniel Colindres.

Colindres himself converted a penalty from the spot in the final minute of the three minutes of added time to deliver a fifth victory in seven matches for Abahani.

In Munshiganj, Sheikh Jamal and Chittagong Abahani waged an intense battle before Sheikh Jamal emerged victorious after Ctg Abahani Afghan forward Omid Propalzay squandered a penalty. Gambian forward Solomon King

hit a brace in the 29th and 68th minutes to put Sheikh Jamal in an advantageous position before Nigerian forward Ebimobowei Thankgod reduced the margin in the 83rd minute but it was not enough to avert Chittagong Abahani's first defeat in seven matches.



All-rounder Ravindra Jadeja starred with bat and ball to lead India to a crushing innings-and-222-run victory over Sri Lanka inside three days of the first Test on Sunday. Jadeja hit an unbeaten 175 in India's 574-8 declared and then claimed a match tally of nine wickets with his left-arm spin in Mohali. One more wicket and the left-armed would've had himself in the elite club of scoring a century and taking 10 wickets – a club where only Imran Khan, Ian Botham and Shakhb Al Hasan belong.

PHOTO: AFP