

I'll get to the point right away: I'm retiring, for good. I know the process was a pretty big deal last time, so when I woke up this morning I figured I'd just press record and let you guys know first.

American football legend **Tom Brady** on his retirement



Academy Ground to get removable dome

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board has come up with a new project to tackle the challenges that hinder training during the monsoon season, revealing plans to build another indoor facility at the Academy Ground in Mirpur featuring the amenities expected of a modern indoor facility, including a removable dome.

Such structures are common in countries such as New Zealand and Australia, where the monsoon seasons put a rope on training and the BCB appears to have taken initiative to eliminate the problem that players in Bangladesh have faced for years.

Facilities include artificial turf on the ground and a dome that can cover the ground to keep the rain out.

BCB Grounds Committee chairman Mahbub Anam announced the plans on Wednesday.

"We are going to build a Greenhouse effector training facility, like the ones in New Zealand and Australia, at the BCB Academy Ground. We are going to have 20 wickets inside, where we can train as usual in the monsoon season. It will be built by June," Anam told the reporters.

"We can call it an indoor facility but, having said that, we can remove the dome in other seasons. And of course, during the monsoon season, we can install the dome and train," he added. "The important instruments will start to arrive in late March and we will have them here by April. We would install those in May and may use the facility by June. I hope we can use the facility this monsoon."



Head coach Golam Rabbani Choton and BFF's technical director Paul Smalley conduct a technical training session for the under-20 women's team players on Wednesday ahead of the SAFF Under-20 Women's Championship, which kicks off at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in kamalapur on Friday. Bangladesh will take on Nepal on the opening day.

PHOTO: BFF

Kiran loses FIFA post

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation executive committee member Mahfuza Akhter Kiran retained her post in the AFC executive committee but lost her post as a member of the FIFA Council during the 33rd AFC Congress in Manama yesterday.

The incumbent AFC president was the lone candidate in the AFC electoral congress, where six FIFA Council members, including one female office bearer, were also elected.

Kiran, who had become a FIFA Council member in 2017, was elected unopposed as one of five AFC executive female members from the South zone while Kanya Keomany of Laos was elected unopposed as one of the five from the ASEAN zone.

In a two-way battle for the post as a member of the FIFA Council, Keomany bagged 36 votes to Kiran's seven.

Meanwhile, Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa was re-elected AFC president for a third consecutive term.

The AFC Congress also awarded the hosting rights of 2027 Asian Cup to Saudi Arabia.

'Good summer planning means no need for January spending'

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid are in good shape so did not need to spend big in the January transfer window unlike clubs in the Premier League, manager Carlo Ancelotti said on Wednesday.

Premier League teams spent a record 815 million pounds (\$1.00 billion) in the January transfer window, an analysis from Deloitte's Sports Business Group said, with more than 275 million pounds spent on Tuesday's deadline day alone.

Real, second in LaLiga, did not make any signings in the winter window but nor did they sell any of their players as they make a push to retain the league and Champions League titles they won last season along with other silverware.

"We did not address the (January) market because we did not need to," Ancelotti told a news conference ahead of Thursday's LaLiga match against Valencia.

"If you do your planning well, you do not need to go the market (in January).

"If you have to address the market, it means that something went wrong. We thought that we didn't need to... because we see our squad in good shape."

Ancelotti's former club Chelsea were the biggest spenders in the Premier League, including paying an English record 107 million pounds on deadline day for Benfica and Argentina midfielder Enzo Fernandez.

"We all know what happens there (in the Premier League) with the money from the television rights that are much higher than everywhere else," the Italian added.

"And it is not going to change, it will stay this way... gives them advantages. Yet, they will still be challenged by (other leagues) in Europe."



Can ringmaster Hathuru be in his element?

SPORTS REPORTER

Following the reappointment of Chandika Hathurusingha as the Bangladesh head coach, the country's cricket awaits some exciting times in the foreseeable future.

Hathurusingha's first stint with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had ended on a sour note, with the Lankan tendering his resignation during Bangladesh's tour of South Africa in 2017 before taking over as Sri Lanka's head coach.

This time the 54-year-old agreed to a two-year deal, starting from February 2023, and will be in charge of the national team across all three formats. His first assignment is set to be the white-ball home series against England, including three ODIs and as many T20Is, starting March 1.

It will be vital for both Hathurusingha and the BCB to restore the trust which was hampered ahead of his resignation, and how the two parties cooperate this time around is likely to be a tricky process.

The likes of Steve Rhodes and Russell Domingo, who went on to take charge of the Bangladesh team after Hathurusingha, were labelled as soft characters by the BCB. The board apparently wanted to have a strict headmaster for the national team.

Before his resignation, Hathurusingha had expressed

his dissatisfaction to the BCB president Nazmul Hassan and raised questions over the mentality and commitment from some of the cricketers.

There were reports that the relationship between Hathurusingha and some of the senior players in the team deteriorated significantly during the latter part of his tenure. In his first stint as the Tigers head coach, Hathurusingha made headlines when the BCB suspended the ace all-rounder for six months for breaching the rules which, according to the BCB president, involved Shakib not obeying the coach and captain of the national team.

It will be interesting to see how Hathurusingha, this time, deals with someone like Shakib – currently the captain of the Tigers Test and T20 side.

Alongside exerting his strict nature as a head coach, Hathurusingha was forced to make huge changes in the selection process during his first tenure.

As part of a massive restructure process, Hathurusingha was further included as the member of the selection panel and the then chief selector, Faruque Ahmed, had opposed the board's decision before resigning from his post.

It will also be interesting to see whether the BCB would give Hathurusingha the same freedom in order to select his preferred team, alongside the presence of the existing Minhajul Abedin Nannu-led three-member selection committee.

There is no doubt Bangladesh emerged as a force to be reckoned with under Hathurusingha, who was successful in instilling the fearless attitude among the cricketers.

Massive successes popped up under the Sri Lankan coach: reaching the quarter-final of the ICC World Cup in 2015, making it to the semi-final of the ICC Champions Trophy in 2019, ODI series wins at home against Pakistan, India and South Africa, among others.

Even in the Test format, the Tigers registered historic wins over England and Australia at home by utilising the tailor-made pitches.

According to a few top BCB officials, the reappointment of Hathurusingha can help Bangladesh cricket to go further, while others feel that the fear-factor of the Sri Lankan can prove to be counter-productive in getting the best out of the current pool of cricketers.



'Djokovic played Aus Open with 3cm tear in hamstring'

REUTERS

Novak Djokovic played with a three-centimetre (1.2 inches) tear in his hamstring during his run to a record-extending 10th Australian Open title, tournament director Craig Tiley said on Wednesday.

The Serbian, who suffered the hamstring injury en route to winning the warm-up title in Adelaide, won the season-opening major after beating Stefanos Tsitsipas in Sunday's final for a men's record 22nd Grand Slam title, matching Rafa Nadal's haul.

"This guy I did see, he had a three-centimetre tear in his hammy," Tiley told SEN Sportsday. "Absolutely (I saw the scans), the doctors are going to tell you the truth."

"There was a lot of speculation about whether it was true or not, it's hard to believe that they can do what they do with those kinds of injuries."

"He's remarkable, to deal with it extremely professionally."

Djokovic's coach Goran Ivanisevic said after the final that the world number one battled the injury, which would have forced most players to quit.

"He's so focused on everything he does, with every single minute of the day," Tiley added. "That's what he eats, what he drinks, when he does it, how he does it."

Arsenal strengthen and strugglers buy big

AFP, London

Chelsea were the biggest spenders of a record-breaking January transfer window for Premier League clubs while relegation-threatened teams also splashed the cash on a frenetic final day.

Leaders Arsenal took a more measured approach in strengthening a number of key areas, but Manchester United and struggling Liverpool – two clubs whose owners are seeking fresh outside investment – were relatively quiet.

The Gunners are five points clear at the top of the Premier League with a game in hand – but have they done enough in January to get over the line?

Manager Mikel Arteta wanted highly-rated Ukraine winger Mykhailo Mudryk and Brighton's Moises Caicedo to turbo-charge his push for the club's first league title since 2004.

But Arsenal could not match Chelsea's bid for Mudryk while Brighton rebuffed approaches for their prized midfielder.

Instead, they have added Leandro Trossard, also from Brighton, and Italy international Jorginho, who was snapped up from Chelsea, along with Polish



defender Jakub Kiwior.

Trossard adds quality and depth to Arteta's options in wide areas, where Gabriel Martinelli and Bukayo Saka have excelled this season.

Midfielder Jorginho, 31, brings experience and trophy-winning nous after notable success at club and international level.

Arsenal's title bid may also have been aided by Manchester City's lack of activity.

The defending champions boast enviable strength in depth but added only Argentine youngster Maximiliano Perrone and shipped out one of their key players in recent seasons as Joao Cancelo joined Bayern Munich on loan.

Just six points separate Nottingham Forest in 13th from bottom-of-the-table Southampton and the race is well and truly on to escape the relegation trapdoor.

Bournemouth, currently 18th in the table, were the second biggest spenders last month.

Four of the five bottom clubs – West Ham, Wolves, Bournemouth, and Southampton – splashed out around £175 million.

Bournemouth made six signings, bringing in Ukraine defender Illia Zabarnyi from Dynamo Kyiv and Ivory Coast midfielder Hamed Traore in the final hours of the window on Tuesday.

Southampton broke their transfer record, snapping up Rennes and Ghana winger Kamaldeen Sulemana for a fee that could reportedly rise to more than £24 million.

The group of clubs hovering just above the bottom five also spent big, with Forest adding yet more new names – three on the final day – in an ongoing revolution at the newly-promoted club.

Leeds broke their transfer record in signing Hoffenheim



PHOTO: STAR

attacker Georginio Rutter, while Leicester brought in Australia defender Harry Souttar from Stoke.

But second-bottom Everton did not make a single January signing to further anger an unhappy fanbase.



Pakistani pacer Muhammad Irfan and Afghan allrounder Gulbadin Naib pose for a photograph at the team hotel on Wednesday after joining Sylhet Strikers for the final phase of the Bangladesh Premier League. Sylhet are on top of the BPL table, which resumes in Dhaka tomorrow.

PHOTO: COLLECTED