



The evolving sports scene in CHATTOGRAM

More opportunities on the horizon for the port city youth

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The enthusiasm around sports has always been high in Chattogram. Indeed, many in the port city prefer watching or playing sports as their favourite way to spend time over other pastime activities. You can see children and grown-ups on rooftops and the streets, all over the city playing sports like cricket, football, badminton, and so on.

Even though it can be argued that the general fixation on getting good grades over participating in extra-curricular activities has gotten in the way of young people pursuing sports, people now are more into sports than ever. Pursuing sports requires not only hard work but also facilities, guidance, and experience so that one can polish their skills and grow into an athlete who can compete at the top level.

This has been recognised by the authorities and sporting bodies and more opportunities have been created, along with steps taken to increase participation. There has been a rise in the number of academies, competitions, and opportunities to play sports like

cricket, football, basketball, table tennis, etc. This can be noticed in the football scene of Chattogram as per level-1 football referee and Chattogram Jela Football Referees Association (CJFRA) executive member Md Abdul Karim. According to him, this is being done through the introduction of more football academies and youth-centric tournaments.

"There has been an increase in the number of academies here (in Chattogram) as Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has introduced a programme, with the funding from Asian Football Confederation (AFC), to train coaches who then move on to create academies and start training local players across Chattogram," says Karim. "Along with that, BFF has also introduced the 'Academy Cup' where teams from different academies can participate. Last time, 14 academies from Chattogram took part in the tournament."

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The situation in the cricket scene seems somewhat similar, as described by Redoanur Rahman, a former academy cricket player. He says, "The number of academies has increased, so there is more scope to practise cricket now, but the fees have increased as well."

