

## Mustafizur's BPL return in doubt?

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh paceman Mustafizur Rahman, who was hospitalised after being hit on the head by a ball during a practice session for his Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) team Comilla Victorians on Sunday in Chattogram, has been moved to his team hotel in Dhaka and is being kept under observation, according to the franchise.

There is, however, still some dark clouds hovering on Mustafizur's participation in BPL's remaining fixtures despite being out of danger. The player underwent a second CT scan on Monday night.

"We will continue dressing for next 3 days. And then will consult with neurosurgeon again on February 23," team physio Zahidul Islam was quoted as saying in a press release from the franchise.

The upcoming consultation with the neurosurgeon would decide Mustafizur's availability for BPL and the Sri Lanka series.

"We want to let you know that, given the condition we had Mustafizur in and with any head injury, it takes seven to forty days minimum to recover," neurosurgeon Dr. Moinuddin Mahmud briefed the media on Mustafizur, adding that Mustafizur's condition is improving.

"It's important for him [Mustafizur] to keep away and not be contaminated by having people near him," he added. BCB doctor, however, was not keen on suggesting the Mustafizur would miss all the remaining matches, further informing that the player will be under observation and if there is no infection, the stitch would be cut in three to four days.



Tanzid brought up his century in 58 balls as he hit eight sixes and as many fours for a 65-ball 116-run knock -- the edition's highest -- which helped his side to a thumping 65-run win, ensuring a playoff spot for Chattogram. The powering knock also propelled him to the top of the run-getters charts with 382 runs.

### HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES IN 10TH BPL

- 116 Tanzid Tamim
- 108\* Towhid Hridoy
- 108\* Will Jacks
- 91\* Avishka Fernando
- 91\* Towhid Hridoy

Chattogram Challengers opener Tanzid Tamim perhaps took a sigh of relief before looking to the heavens after he produced a statement knock, notching up his maiden T20 hundred in a Bangladesh Premier League fixture against Khulna Tigers in Chattogram yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Former Pakistan cricketers Ramiz Raja and Aamer Sohail were amongst others in the Bangladesh Premier League's commentary panel to have dressed in black and white designer punjabis with printed Bengali letters on the eve of the International Mother Language Day at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday. The commentary panel for the Chattogram phase posed for a photo near the centre wicket and a few wore black armbands that teams have also been wearing throughout the month of February.

## Bashar 'inspired' by women's team's recent results

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national selector Habibul Bashar assumed a new role yesterday as the head of Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) women's wing.

Women's wing chairman Shafiqul Alam Chowdhury Nadel expected good things going forward, having greeted Bashar yesterday on his new appointment.

"Yes, he would be in charge of the whole women's wing. I am the chairman and he would be the operational head," Nadel told The Daily Star.

"Yes, and obviously very happy and given his track record, he will do well here. He's a good person and everything concerned, he will do well," he added.

Previously, Bashar and chief selector Minhajul Abedin had been replaced in the selection panel after the latest meeting of the board of directors.

Bashar himself was focused on the nature of his work going forward, with a T20 World Cup to come this year.

"There is a scope to work in this field. Certainly, the recent result of the women's team inspired me to take up the job.

There is a world cup and there are also domestic cricket so just trying to understand the requirements of my work for the time being," he said.

"I think if we can have school cricket for women it will be a huge step forward considering nowadays only few women cricketers are playing the game. I would like to go to different schools and try to promote women's cricket," he added.

As BCB are planning to include women's franchise cricket, Bashar said more matches will create more opportunities.

"If the franchise cricket takes place the focus will increase on women's cricket. The more matches we play the better because it will create opportunities for everyone," he said, adding that he is eyeing to have scholarship for women's cricket.

"I am happy to have David (Moore; BCB program head) with me. Now will see we can have scholarship like the way we had for men's cricket when we send some cricketers outside the country for better training, so that they can develop and perform and have many such plans like this," he concluded.



## A coming-of-age knock from Tamim

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite being rated highly by pundits and fans for a long time, Tanzid Hasan Tamim was unable to live up to the expectations. But yesterday the youngster made quite an impression with his maiden T20 century as Chattogram Challengers booked a playoff spot with a 65-run win over Khulna Tigers in a Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) League match at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram.

The 23-year-old was a surprise inclusion in Bangladesh's ICC ODI World Cup squad last year, but despite showing glimpses of his ability, Tamim largely underperformed throughout the tournament.

But the cricketer from Bogura, who had smashed two half-centuries earlier in the BPL this season which included a 70 in the previous game against Durdanto Dhaka, announced himself boldly yesterday with a 65-ball 116, an innings that featured eight sixes and as many fours. The innings helped Tamim become the third centurion of the season after Towhid Hridoy and Will Jacks.

Riding on Tamim's century, Chattogram posted 192 for four. In reply, Khulna were bundled out for 127.

Tamim, who later dedicated his maiden century to his nephew, said that he never planned to score a hundred but was willing to convert his starts into a big one.

"I have a little nephew and I always talk to him, even the day before coming to the field for the games. He can signal sixes and even raise his finger when he is asked to show how a batter is dismissed. I would like to dedicate the century to him," Tamim told the media at the post-match press conference.

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Tanzid Tamim

Previously I was getting dismissed despite being set at the crease, so I was trying to carry through if I got a good start. I tried that today (yesterday)," the left-handed batter added.

Tamim reached his fifty off 32 balls before doubling the score in the next 28 deliveries. He targeted Khulna's left arm spinners -- Nasum Ahmed and Arif Ahmed -- hitting them for 54 runs.

"They didn't have an off spinner in the playing eleven, and since I was the set batter, my aim was to go for boundaries if I got the ball in my zone," Tamim said.

Although Tamim was not included in the T20I side for the upcoming Sri Lanka series, the youngster said he was not bothered as he is willing to continue scoring runs and perform whenever he gets the opportunity.

### SHORT CORNER

#### World Cup winner Brehme dead at 63

Andreas Brehme, whose 85th-minute penalty sealed victory for West Germany over Argentina in the 1990 World Cup final, died overnight into Tuesday at the age of 63, his former club Bayern Munich said. A versatile left-back, Brehme spent two seasons with Bayern Munich between 1986-88, winning the Bundesliga in 1987. Brehme left a mark for teams across Europe, playing for Kaiserslautern and Inter Milan, as well as Bayern, Saarbruecken and Real Zaragoza.



#### Marufa wins Cricinfo award

Young Bangladesh women's team pacer Marufa Akter's match-winning spell against India was named the best bowling performance in Women's ODIs in 2023 by ESPNcricinfo yesterday. Marufa claimed 4 for 29 against India at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka on July 26 to help the hosts seal a 40-run win, their first against India in Women's ODIs.

#### McCullum backs struggling Bairstow

England's Jonny Bairstow has come in for criticism after scoring just 102 runs in three matches in India but coach Brendon McCullum said it was important to show faith in the batter and that he has no plans to drop him for the fourth Test in Ranchi.

\*\*\*Read full stories on The Daily Star website

### What to WATCH

#### SONY SPORTS 5

Sri Lanka vs Afghanistan  
Third T20I  
Live from 7:30 pm

#### STAR SPORTS

SELECT HD1  
English Premier League  
Liverpool vs Luton Town  
Live from 1:30 am (Thursday)

#### SONY SPORTS 2

UEFA Champions League  
Porto vs Arsenal  
Live from 2:00 am (Thursday)

#### SONY SPORTS 1

Napoli vs Barcelona  
Live from 2:00 am (Thursday)

## Morsalin to miss Palestine matches

SPORTS REPORTER

Promising forward Sheikh Morsalin is all set to miss out on the home-and-away fixtures of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers against Palestine in March, informed national team coach Javier Cabrera.

After missing out on the home-and-away matches against Maldives in pre-qualifiers due to disciplinary reasons, Morsalin came back to the fold in the home match against Lebanon and scored the equaliser to help Bangladesh come out with a 1-1 draw against the higher-ranked side in November last year.

"Obviously unfortunate for him [Morsalin] that he is going to miss the windows and the games [against Palestine]," Cabrera said at the BFF House while talking to the reporters about the team's preparation.

"But when someone isn't there, it's an opportunity for others. What we say is there is no special player in our team; what makes us strong is the collective effort and I am sure someone will come [in place of Morsalin] and outperform and it is a good opportunity for others to prove



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Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera

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Morsalin sustained an injury on nerves of his right leg during a Federation Cup match against Fortis FC in late December. Since then he not played a single of game for Bashundhara Kings. He

has been in rehabilitation under the club physio and is likely to need another month to be fully match fit.

Cabrera informed that they have been working on finalising the last details of the preparation camp in Saudi Arabia and trying to arrange at least two practice matches either against other national teams preparing in the region or local clubs before heading to Kuwait for the away match against Palestine on March 21. The home match will take place on March 26 at the Bashundhara Kings Arena.

The Spaniard also said that some under-23 players may get opportunity in the preliminary squad.

"We are quite happy with the improvement and development of several U-23 and U-20 players and some of them might be in the list and some of them will probably wait to keep progressing. I think the list will have several U-23 players," Cabrera said, adding that he is likely to call up 35 players primarily but 26 to 28 players are likely to fly out for the two-week preparation camp in Saudi Arabia.

## Barca face Napoli in pride-restoring clash

AGENCIES

Xavi Hernandez left Barcelona in 2015 after lifting a glorious treble, but his hopes of a second triumphant farewell as coach have been whittled away.

The former midfield great's last real chance of silverware this season is in the Champions League, with the Catalans visiting Napoli in a last 16, first-leg clash on Wednesday.

Eight points off leaders Real Madrid in La Liga, it seems like only a European run can bring Xavi and his beleaguered Spanish champions some respite.

In the past two seasons Barcelona had failed to make it out of their group, and although he led Barcelona to La Liga last season, the football did not convince and this term the team have stalled, leading Xavi to announce his second exit.

Since his announcement, Barcelona have won three league games and drawn one, although their performances have not been impressive.

"I think we can do better in the Champions League. In Napoli we have to play for 90 minutes well in defence and attack," said striker Robert Lewandowski, who has found form at a crucial moment of the season, with four goals in his last three games.

Napoli, meanwhile, are in the midst of a relatively greater crisis than Barcelona as they are a whopping 27 points behind

⚡ Napoli have never won a major European match against Barcelona, in four attempts.

⚡ The last time the two sides met in the Champions League, Barcelona won 4-2 on aggregate in the last 16 fixture in 2019-20.

⚡ Barcelona, however, are winless in their last three Champions League games against Italian opponents.

league leaders Inter Milan and their chances of qualifying into next season's revamped Champions League are slim.

With the Italian champions in a worse position than they were under the first casualty of this campaign, Rudi Garcia, Walter Mazzarri was sacked on Monday night after just three months in charge.

To replace him Napoli's outspoken owner Aurelio De Laurentiis has plumped for Francesco Calzona, who has guided Slovakia to Euro 2024.

Nevertheless, forwards Victor Osimhen and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia will relish facing a Barcelona defence which has caved in badly in this campaign.