

Incredible CR7 reaches record 900th goal

Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 900th career goal -- becoming the only player ever to do so -- in Portugal's 2-1 win against Croatia in the Nations League on Thursday. Ronaldo put his side 2-0 up at the Estadio da Luz in the 34th minute when he got on the end of a Nuno Mendes cross with a tap-in volley from close range, before falling to the ground looking emotional at reaching another milestone. Ronaldo leads the all-time scorer's list while Argentina's Lionel Messi sits second with 859 career goals. Though Brazilian legend Pele claimed to have scored 1281 goals in his career, it is widely accepted that hundreds of those strikes came in tour or unofficial friendly matches, leaving Ronaldo as the all-time highest goalscorer in football history.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

RONALDO'S GOALS FOR CLUB AND COUNTRY	Team	Goals
	Real Madrid	450
	Manchester United	145
	Portugal	131
	Juventus	101
	Al-Nassr	68
	Sporting Lisbon	5



A historic first for San Marino

AFP, Paris

San Marino, the world's worst team according to the FIFA rankings, made history on Thursday by beating Liechtenstein 1-0 in the UEFA Nations League to claim their first ever competitive win.

The tiny country of barely 30,000 people came into the match at their San Marino Stadium looking for a first win since beating Liechtenstein in a friendly in 2004.



Liechtenstein had a goal disallowed for a tight offside in the first half before San Marino pounced on a defensive error to grab the winner in the 53rd minute through Nicko Sensoli.

Aged 19, he had not been born when the team who sit 210th and last in the world rankings last won a game.

The whipping boys of international football had been building up to this having claimed draws in friendly matches against Seychelles, Saint Lucia and Saint Kitts and Nevis over the last two years.

They are in the three-team Group I of the bottom tier League D in the Nations League, with Gibraltar their other opponents.

Ebadot may go with team to India

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's injured paceman Ebadot Hossain has claimed that he is likely to accompany the team for their upcoming tour of India.

Ebadot suffered an anterior cruciate ligament injury last year during the Afghanistan series and had to undergo surgery in London in August last year which put him out of action for two World Cup events. Last month Ebadot said that he was hopeful of making the India Tests. Yesterday he said he may be carried with the side to monitor his progress.

"It takes a long time to recover from the kind of injury that I had. It's a difficult time. Don't think it will take too long to recover now," Ebadot told reporters in Mirpur on Friday.

"I am following the programme that the physios, trainers and fast-bowling coach have given me. I have not been given permission to bowl with hundred percent intensity. I am bowling at 70 to 80 percent now. Maybe I will be taken with the team to India. I will get support there with my bowling, the doctors and physios will be there and will be monitoring the Bangladesh team. Maybe that's why they will take me. My fitness test will take place there and then they will make a decision," the pacer added.

BCB sources have claimed that no decision has been taken yet on Ebadot being carried with the side for the tour of India in September-October.

Pegula sets up Sabalenka final

REUTERS, New York

The cheers of home fans echoed through Arthur Ashe Stadium on Thursday as Jessica Pegula staged an astonishing comeback to beat Karolina Muchova 1-6, 6-4, 6-2 and set up a meeting with Aryna Sabalenka in her first Grand Slam final.

The prospect of an all-American final had already been scotched when Belarusian Sabalenka earlier downed Emma Navarro 6-3, 7-6 and for a while in the later match, it looked like the host nation would be unrepresented in the title-decider.

Playing in her first major semifinal, Pegula was made to look like a novice by Muchova in a disastrous opening set but somehow turned the tables on the unseeded Czech.

"It comes down to really small moments that flip momentum," said Pegula.

Sabalenka, the runner-up to American Coco Gauff last year, earlier relied on her superior power to subdue the 13th seed Navarro, sending over 34 winners and closing out the match with a satisfying overhead smash on match point.

Navarro's loss was a second disappointment for the home fans on Thursday after Italians Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori ended all-American pair Taylor Townsend and Donald Young's storybook run in the mixed doubles final 7-6, 7-5.

Grief and financial strain test Tahsin Zia's dream

ANISUR RAHMAN

It was once a different world for the father-son duo of GM Ziaur Rahman and FM Tahsin Tajwar Zia, who happily travelled the globe together to participate in various chess tournaments.

Tahsin was initially reluctant to learn the intricacies of chess from his father, but his interest grew during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, when, confined to the house, he spent a great deal of time learning from his renowned father.

As a result, the duo proudly represented the red and green flag, making history as Bangladesh's first father-son team to compete in the 44th Chess Olympiad, held in India in 2022. That same year, Tahsin achieved the title of FIDE Master.

The 19-year-old chess prodigy is now aiming to secure the title of International Master, having already earned one of the three necessary IM norms, thanks to the relentless efforts of his father, who always aspired to guide his only son along his own successful path, despite knowing the financial uncertainties ahead.

However, everything changed Tahsin after the tragic death of his father, who breathed his last on the chessboard during the 12th round of the National Chess Championship on July 5.

The top five finishers of the National Chess Championship were set to represent Bangladesh in the

45th Chess Olympiad, starting on 10 September in Hungary. Zia had occupied joint-fourth position overall, despite missing two rounds. Eventually, his untimely passing opened the door for his son Tahsin, who finished sixth, to represent Bangladesh for the second time in a row at the Chess Olympiad, alongside FM Manon Reza Neer, IM Fahad Rahman, GM Enamul

It has been two months since Zia's passing, and Tahsin is still struggling to recover from the shock, though he is trying to focus on the upcoming Chess Olympiad as well as three more international tournaments in Budapest.

"His father was Tahsin's best friend, and Tahsin is still in shock, often visiting Zia's grave. He told me he talks



Hossain Razib, and GM Niaz Murshed. Initially, Zia and Tahsin had planned to represent Bangladesh together for a second consecutive time.

In pursuit of helping Tahsin achieve the highest titles in chess, Zia had always managed to secure funding or sponsors for Tahsin's participation in international tournaments. Last year, they competed in four international tournaments in Greece and the United Arab Emirates during July and August.

to his father, saying he still has many things left to discuss with him because theirs was a very special relationship," Tahsin's mother, Tasmin Sultana, told The Daily Star on Thursday, adding that Indian GMs have been helping Tahsin prepare online for the Chess Olympiad over the last three weeks.

"You all know that a lot of money is needed to participate in GM or IM chess tournaments abroad, for entry fees, airfare, accommodation,

food, etc. Zia always managed the funds for himself and Tahsin by playing in domestic and international tournaments or finding sponsors," said Sultana, who accompanied Zia and Tahsin to every tournament, both at home and abroad, and will do so in four upcoming international tournaments.

"Without Zia, I am now in deep water trying to manage funds for the family and Tahsin, as my son wishes to fulfil his father's dream of becoming a Grandmaster," Sultana continued.

"The Bangladesh Chess Federation is funding his participation in the Chess Olympiad, but he still needs nearly Tk 1.5 lakh out of an estimated budget of Tk 3 lakh to ensure he can compete in the three additional international tournaments beyond the Olympiad.

"You all know Zia ran his family by playing chess and providing chess training, so he could hardly save anything for us. After Zia's death, the federation, sponsors, and individuals promised to raise Tk 1 crore for a deposit scheme, but that promise has not been fulfilled.

"I am struggling to support the family, and Tahsin also needs financial assistance to continue his A-Level studies. I don't know how I will be able to give him the support he needs to become a Grandmaster without help from others," she said, urging the government, federation, and sponsors to step in for the sake of the country's greatest chess player, GM Ziaur Rahman.



Before their 2026 World Cup Qualifier against Chile in Buenos Aires on Thursday, Argentina players throw Angel Di Maria in the air -- in a gesture of tribute to the winger who retired from international football after the Copa America triumph in July. Argentina, who were without injured captain Lionel Messi, had no trouble dispelling Chile as they cruised to a 3-0 home win, with goals from Alexis Mac Allister, Julian Alvarez, and Paulo Dybala, to strengthen their grip on top of the South American World Cup qualifying standings.

PHOTO: AFP

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