

# Star SPORT

DHAKA MONDAY JANUARY 20, 2025, MAGH 6, 1431 BS

## 'Too old but still here!'

REUTERS, Melbourne

Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova wrote "Too old but still here!" on the camera as she left court after beating Donna Vekic to reach her fourth Australian Open quarterfinal on Sunday.

The Russian 27th seed said she was surprised to make it to the last eight but thought the question of whether 33 was too advanced an age to compete was better directed elsewhere.

"I'm just having fun this year with this signing and calling myself too old to be on tour, which kind of part of it is true," she said.

"The question is to the young girls, because I'm still here and I'm in the quarterfinal."

Pavlyuchenkova said she sat her team down last year and explained that she would be taking a different approach to preparations for her 20th season as a professional.

## Djokovic sets up blockbuster ALCARAZ clash

**Irrepressible 10-time champion Novak Djokovic set up a blockbuster Australian Open quarterfinal Sunday with Carlos Alcaraz after downing Czech Jiri Lehecka. The 37-year-old Serb, who is gunning for a record 25th Grand Slam title, beat the 24th seed 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) on Rod Laver Arena.**

Djokovic has now made it into the last eight at Melbourne Park for the 15th time, a record he now shares with Roger Federer and one ahead of Rafael Nadal and John Newcombe.

Djokovic also extended his own all-time mark to 61 for most quarterfinal appearances at majors, three ahead of Federer.

In a blockbuster quarterfinal on Tuesday, Djokovic will square off against Alcaraz, who progressed after Jack Draper retired hurt during their last-16 match when the Briton was losing 7-5, 6-1.

Djokovic and Alcaraz have played each other seven times with the

Serb leading 4-3, including victory in their last clash in the Paris Olympics final.

Alcaraz is already a four-time Slam winner aged 21 but has never gone beyond the Australian Open quarterfinals.



## What to WATCH

**SONY SPORTS 2 AND 5**  
Australian Open  
4th round  
Live from 9:00 am  
**T SPORTS**  
BPL

Dhaka vs Sylhet  
Live from 1:30 pm  
Chittagong vs Rajshahi  
Live from 6:30 pm  
**STAR SPORTS 2**  
SA20  
Paarl Royals vs Joburg

Super Kings  
Live from 9:30 pm  
**SELECT HD1**  
Premier League  
Chelsea vs Wolves  
Live from 2:00 am  
(Tuesday)

## Allowance hike for Swadhin Bangla Football Team members

SPORTS REPORTER

National Sports Council (NSC) on Sunday decided to increase the monthly allowance from Tk 3000 to Tk 20,000 for the living members of the Swadhin Bangla Football Team, following a directive from the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Currently, 19 members of the Swadhin Bangla football team are alive.

The decision will come into effect from today. The Ministry of Youth and Sports formed a three-member committee comprising its joint secretary Dr Sheikh Mohammad Jubayed Hossain, deputy secretary of Ministry of Liberation War Affairs and NSC's finance director Saidur Rashid in regards to the matter.

The NSC has been disbursing a monthly allowance of Tk 3000 to the living members of the Swadhin Bangla Football Team from its own funds for the last 21 years but many members of the team had requested for a hike in the allowance.

The committee, which was formed on December 23, 2023 and submitted the report on January 13, 2025, said in its report that Tk 3000 allowance is negligible considering the current economic situation and inflation. The committee pointed out the fact that the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs disburses Tk 20,000 to each listed freedom fighter.

## Competing leagues and exodus of stars creating humdrum BPL

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Chattogram

Rangpur Riders star Alex Hales played his last game for the franchise in the current edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) on January 9 in Sylhet. Just three days later, he appeared for Desert Vipers against Abu Dhabi Knight Riders in the IIT20 in Abu Dhabi.

This is the life of a franchise cricketer in the current cricketing climate, one day you are here, the next day you are in some other place. Priorities change quickly for players while competition amongst leagues to attract the best players grows more intense every year.

"Alex would have stayed for the whole tournament if there was no scheduling clash with IIT20," a source close to the development said.

Even though Hales made just six appearances for Rangpur in this edition, he left his mark by scoring 218 runs at an average of over 54 and a strike rate of 140. The Englishman also scored an unbeaten 113 which lit up the tournament early on.

Hales' departure was another drawback to the excitement factor for the BPL which already suffers from a dearth of renowned T20 stars.

The Big Bash League, SA20 and IIT20 are the three marquee T20 leagues currently clashing with the BPL, of which the latter two have become the preferred destination



**Fortune Barishal opener Dawid Malan, one of the few big foreign players in the Bangladesh Premier League, helped his side to their fifth victory with a match-winning unbeaten half-century against Chittagong Kings in Chattogram yesterday.**

for most of the foreign stars.

Although South Africa's SA20 and the UAE's IIT20 are both relatively new leagues, they have the financial might to attract big stars, as seen with Hales.

Enamul Haque Jr, the assistant coach of Chittagong Kings, felt BPL had a scheduling issue.

"Definitely it's a scheduling problem since the big stars want to play in IIT20 or SA20. In 2012-13, many big stars played in the tournament here. In fact, I played alongside them for Chittagong Kings," Enamul said.

"If there is a scheduling clash with BPL, everyone would prefer to play in Dubai or South Africa. If we can shift it to December, this problem could be solved since the players would play here first before going there," he said when asked what BPL needs to do to draw bigger stars.

BCB's cricket operations in-charge Shahriar Nafees informed that a schedule change remains unlikely in the near future.

"The January-February window we use [from beginning] was approved by the ICC till 2027. So, our schedule partially clashes with SA20 and heavily clashes with IIT20. We can only change the window after 2027," he informed The Daily Star.

The excitement factor is mitigated if stars leave midway or after two-three appearances and it is one question that the BCB will have to address going forward.

## Brighton rock woeful Man Utd

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United crashed to a dismal 3-1 defeat against Brighton as Ruben Amorim's problems mounted on the day Old Trafford paid a sombre tribute to legendary striker Denis Law.

Amorim's side were hoping to mark Law's death aged 84 by producing the kind of entertaining display that was the hallmark of the United star's teams.

Instead, they crumbled to a sixth defeat in 11 league games since Amorim arrived from Sporting Lisbon to replace the sacked Erik ten Hag.

United are languishing in 13th place and although they are 10 points above the relegation zone, they are far from certain to avoid being dragged into the survival fight on the evidence of this wretched display.

Yankuba Minteh set the tone for United's moribund performance with an early opener for Brighton.

Bruno Fernandes equalised with a penalty before half-time, but second-half goals from Kaoru Mitoma and Georginio

Rutter left United in turmoil.

After a gritty draw at Liverpool, an FA Cup third round win with 10 men at Arsenal and a 3-1 win over lowly Southampton, United looked as if they might have turned a corner.

But, in truth, they were lucky to beat Southampton and all their flaws were laid bare against a dynamic Brighton team who have won six of their last seven league meetings with United.

Amorim's side have failed to keep a clean sheet in 12 matches in all competitions, with both their leaky defence and error-prone keeper Andre Onana exposed by Brighton.

It was a depressing result on an emotional day for United after Law passed away on Friday.

Law, diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia in 2021, is the third top scorer in United's history, with 237 goals in 404 appearances.

Before the match, there was a minute's applause and both teams wore black armbands throughout the match.



Off-spinner Sajid Khan celebrates with Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan after spinners ruled the roost in Multan to help hosts Pakistan thrash West Indies by 127 runs on the third day of the first of the two Tests on Sunday. Sajid took 5-50 for match figures of 9-115 while leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed snared 4-27 in the second innings as West Indies were dismissed for 123, falling well short of their victory target of 251. Pakistan spinners claimed all 20 West Indian wickets in the game, with left-armner Noman Ali claiming match figures of six for 83, while West Indies' left-armner Jomel Warrican had led the spin attack for the tourists with a career-best 7-32.

PHOTO: AFP

## PROCUREMENT OF CBS1 (95 GSM) CHEQUE PAPER

Sealed quotations are inviting from any bonafide Indentors/suppliers/manufacturers against supplying of 10,000 (Ten thousand) reams CBS-1, 95 GSM (as per Bangladesh Bank specification) sensitized cheque paper having size 29.00X21.50 inches each sheet which must be imported from abroad. The tender schedule and particulars of quotation will be available at Central Accounts Division, Pubali Bank PLC., Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A on payment of Tk. 5,000.00 (Taka five thousand) only (non-refundable) in the form of payment order favoring "Pubali Bank PLC, Head Office, Dhaka" during the office hours till 27 January 2025.

**Mohammad Liton Miah FCA**  
GM, Division Head & CFO



**পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড**  
**PUBALI BANK PLC.**

**CENTRAL ACCOUNTS DIVISION**  
Head office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.



**Kylian Mbappe was in inspired form, scoring twice to guide Real Madrid to a comeback 4-1 win over visitors Las Palmas on Sunday that lifted the defending champions to the top of the LaLiga standings. Real leapfrogged Atletico Madrid, who were stunned 1-0 at lowly Leganes on Saturday, to sit top on 46 points, two ahead of their local rivals in second.**

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Conte pleased with Napoli growth

REUTERS

Napoli manager Antonio Conte praised his side following a narrow win over Atalanta at Saturday, highlighting the significant growth the team has shown over the past few months.

Romelu Lukaku's late header secured a 3-2 victory for Napoli, boosting their Scudetto hopes and avenging their 3-0 home loss to Atalanta in November.

"I had already said before the match that this team has grown a lot. Don't forget that just over two months ago, Atalanta put three goals past us," Conte told reporters.

"I think if we'd had even more time to go through the process, we'd have done even better. The team has above all grown in dealing with difficulties, that is what I want to underline."