

SPORTS
sports**Brave CF secures major partnerships in India**

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Brave Combat Federation has announced that the Bahraini based global Mixed Martial Arts organization has secured major partnerships in India to host the twentieth edition of the event.

The organization founded by HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa has an immensely successful year in 2018 hosting 12 International events in 12 nations around the world. The massive success of Brave Combat Federation has resulted in securing major partnerships to host the event.

The latest partnerships secured by Brave Combat Federation in India include Trident Hyderabad as the official hospitality partner, CallHealth as the Health and Wellness partner, Ambrosia Foods as the Dining partner, PVR Cinemas as the Multiplex Partner, MeraEvents as the ticketing partner alongside the global partners Greenhill Sports as the official merchandise partner and Abu Dhabi Sports as the official broadcast partner.

The network of business connectivity achieved by Brave Combat Federation is till date the largest in the Kingdom of Bahrain which enabled the initiative to become the fastest growing Mixed Martial Arts organization in the world.

Brave CF has confirmed to expand operations in 2019 with an aim to reach out to additional geographies and expand the scope of the organization further.

The initiatives will support to create a sustainable global eco-system for the sport of Mixed Martial Arts. The Kingdom of Bahrain is also confirmed as the venue for Brave International Combat Week 2019.

“Brave CF has opened sustainable business opportunities and has established a reliable global platform for athletes around the world in a very short time under the leadership of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa. The growing partnerships from around the world is a testimony that highlights the commitment and progression that the initiative has achieved”, said Mohammed Shahid, President of Brave CF.

Latham double ton buries SL

● **Imperious Latham strikes epic 264 as stuttering Sri Lanka face defeat**

● **Sri Lanka trail by 276 runs with 7 wickets remaining**

AFP | Wellington

New Zealand opener Tom Latham played Sri Lanka's bowlers with an unbeaten 264 yesterday before the tourists' top order failed again, leaving them on the verge of a heavy first Test defeat in Wellington.

Latham walked off to a standing ovation at the Basin Reserve after carrying his bat and helping New Zealand to 578, a commanding first-innings lead of 296.

Seamers Tim Southee and Trent Boult then combined to remove Sri Lanka's top order, reducing them to 20 for three at stumps on day three.

Boult dismissed Danushka Gunathilaka on three, while Southee snared Dimuth Karunaratne for 10 and Dhananjaya de Silva for a duck, taking his tally for the match to eight.

The pair, along with short-ball specialist Neil Wagner, will be relishing the prospect of having two full days to attack Sri Lanka's misfiring batting line-up.

But the day belonged to



Tom Latham of New Zealand plays a shot

Latham, who added steadily to his overnight total of 121, offering no chances to the frustrated Sri Lankans.

It was the sixth best Test score by a New Zealander and the highest this year by a batsman from any nation.

His innings, which lasted more than 11 hours, also continued a horror run at the Basin Reserve for Sri Lanka, where they have now conceded double centuries to four New Zealanders.

'Enjoy the moment'

Latham said he always believed he was capable of producing such a performance but it was pleasing to achieve it on the international stage.

“These innings don't come around too often, so you have to enjoy the moment when they do,” he said.

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson helped the Black Caps reach their imposing total

**Sri Lanka, ranked sixth in the world, have lost their last five Tests against New Zealand**

with a sparkling 91, while Ross Taylor and Henry Nicholls both reached 50.

Lahiru Kumara was the pick of a Sri Lanka attack that struggled on a flat wicket, taking four for 127.

Taylor was dismissed for 50 in the first over of the day after failing to add to his overnight score, thanks to a sharp catch from Dimuth Karunaratne.

The ball was forcefully struck and initially bounced off Karunaratne's hand at silly mid-off before he recovered to grab it as he tumbled to the ground.

Henry Nicholls also went for 50 after lunch trying to take on spinner Dilruwan Perera.

BJ Watling followed without scoring when he tucked his bat awkwardly under his arm as he ducked a Kumara bouncer and the ball clipped it on the way through.

Colin de Grandhomme scored three sixes during an aggressive innings but fell on 49 attempting to bludgeon a fourth.

Sri Lanka, ranked sixth in the world, have lost their last five

Sri Lanka 1st innings 282 (A. Mathews 83, Dickwella 80; Southee 6-68)	
2nd innings	
M. Gunathilaka lbw Boult	3
F. Karunaratne c Boult b Southee	10
D. de Silva b Southee	0
K. Mendis not out	5
A. Mathews not out	2
Extras	0
Total (three wickets, 12 overs)	20
New Zealand	
1st innings (overnight 311 for two)	
J. Raval c Dickwella b Kumara	43
T. Latham not out	264
K. Williamson c Rajitha b de Silva	91
R. Taylor c Karunaratne b Kumara	50
H. Nicholls c Rajitha b Perera	50
BJ Watling c Dickwella b Kumara	0
C. de Grandhomme c Rajitha b Silva	49
T. Southee run out (Chandimal)	6
N. Wagner c de Silva b Lakmal	0
A. Patel b Perera	6
T. Boult c Dickwella b Kumara	11
Extras (lb5, nb2, w1)	8
Total (all out, 157.3 overs)	578

Tests against New Zealand and suffered a 3-0 home Test series whitewash against England last month.

They have faced upheaval in their coaching and selection ranks in recent weeks and arrived in New Zealand low on confidence.

In contrast, the fourth-ranked Black Caps entered the two-match contest buoyed by their first away Test series win over Pakistan in 49 years.

The New Zealanders are looking for a fourth straight Test series win after also defeating England and the West Indies in the past 12 months.



Najam Khan

Najam Khan overcomes odds to fight his first bout overseas

TDT | Manama

Najam Khan made it to the headlines when he won an inspiring bout at Brave 17 hosted in Lahore, Pakistan in the final seconds of the final round. Najam Khan overcame polio at a very young age which made it hard for him to pursue his passion to be a martial artist.

Khan who worked as a gardener in his hometown in Pakistan overcame challenges he faced, physically, financially and socially in pursuit of his dream to become a professional Mixed Martial Artist.

By sheer willpower, not only did he overcome the challenges but also competed professionally

in the International level and bringing victory to Pakistan.

Khan trains at Team Fight Fortress and had won his professional debut in Brave Combat Federation to be elevated to the status of a national hero. He will return to action at the promotion's biggest Mixed Martial Arts event for the year 2018 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The bout marks the first time Khan is competing outside Pakistan. It makes it even special as Khan is the only fighter from Pakistan to compete in the first Mixed Martial Arts event in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

“In life, there will be obstacles, but if you are determined and focused no goal is too far.

I have the support of my fight team and my nation. This motivates me to push the limits and to work hard to realize my dream. I am glad that there were many positive comments about my performance. Brave 17 created a change in my nation that Mixed Martial Arts is gaining immense popularity. I am glad to represent my nation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia”, said Najam Khan.

Khan will face Mostafa Rashed from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 28th December at the King Abdullah Sports City Indoor Sports Hall. Rashed has a professional record of 4-3-0 and trains out of MMA Jeddah Club in Saudi Arabia.

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Kantaraj believes global attention will transform Indian MMA

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Kantaraj Shankar will make his promotional debut at Brave Combat Federation on 22nd December in Hyderabad. Kantaraj Agasa hails from Karnataka and has won the national championship in Judo before he embarked on a career in Mixed Martial Arts.

The Indian fighter who com-

peted in the 2015 IMMAF World Championship will face Jalal Al Daaja from Jordan who is also a national Kickboxing Gold Medalist in Jordan.

The bout is one of the most crucial in the career of the undefeated Indian fighter who has a professional record of 10-0-0, which is till date the best in Indian Mixed Martial Arts.

“I come from a tradition-



Kantaraj Agasa

al wrestling background and adopted Judo in the past. In our tradition, we are taught to always respect our opponents”, said Kantaraj.

Kantaraj comes from a family that produced some of the noted wrestlers in Karnataka. After embarking on a career in MMA, Kantaraj not only embraced his family legacy but was also hailed as a statewide hero.