

## Tigresses exit with heads held high

SPORTS REPORTER

England secured a place in the ICC Women's World Cup semifinals with a crushing 100-run victory over Bangladesh in their final group stage match in Wellington yesterday while India were denied a place in the final four by South Africa after a last-ball thriller in Christchurch.

Defeat spelled the end of Bangladesh's maiden ODI World Cup campaign, but the debutants did well as they finished seventh in the table and with a historic nine-run win over Pakistan to their name. The Tigresses lost all their other matches, but showed glimpses of brilliance with the ball during thrilling encounters against West Indies, Australia and South Africa. Meanwhile, players from the West Indies were seen dancing and celebrating



Prime Bank's Anamul Haque achieved the third-highest individual score in Bangladesh's List A cricket as he shone during his 142-ball 184 against Shinepukur Cricket Club at BKSP's ground 4 in a Dhaka Premier League match yesterday. However, he would be gutted to have missed out on surpassing Soumya Sarkar's record 208-run knock for Abahani in 2019.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SEMI-FINAL FIXTURES	
March 30:	Australia vs West Indies
March 31:	South Africa vs England



# Bizarre incidents in SPOTLIGHT AGAIN

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

While Bangladesh fans are allowing themselves a rare moment of joy after the Tigers' historic ODI series triumph in South Africa, the focus yesterday turned sharply back to the domestic circuit for all the wrong reasons.

While Anamul Haque Bijoy struck a magnificent 184 for Prime Bank against Shinepukur Cricket Club, it was overshadowed by the circumstances that had been prevalent in the domestic circuit for a long time. In fact, both games played yesterday were subjects of controversy.

In the 40th over of the game between Prime Bank and Shinepukur, Mohammad Mithun was batting with Anamul on 183 at the non-striker's end. Mithun skied an Alauddin Babu delivery and the batter was so sure the catch was going to be taken by wicketkeeper Mahidul Islam Ankon, he proceeded to walk away to the dressing room.

However, Ankon leisurely got under the delivery and appeared to just let the catch go, not even getting a hand on it. The wicketkeeper immediately signalled that the sunlight had hit his eyes as Alauddin stared on in disbelief.

While there is obviously no conclusive evidence of foul play, it appeared the wicketkeeper was not keen to take that catch. Mithun went on to add 30 more

runs from 16 deliveries before Prime Bank won by a massive 111 runs.

The other game saw an incredible leg-before decision being given when the ball had actually taken an inside-edge. Khelaghar Samaj Kallyan Samity were batting in chase of Abahani Limited's 261 for nine when an Arafat Sunny delivery took Hasanuzzaman's inside-edge and ran down to fine leg.

No appeal was made by the bowler, who

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instead looked to be contemplating just how close he was to getting a wicket. A few fielders went up with half-hearted appeals but on-field umpire Masudur Rahman raised the finger. Much to his surprise, Sunny turned around to find he got a wicket. The match ended in a 20-run win for Abahani at BKSP.

The two incidents became immediate topics of discussion on social media,

with the umpire's call even going viral. The latter incident also came under the notice of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM). It informed to The Daily Star that the umpiring committee had been notified and the umpire in question had been called for a hearing.

"We were notified about the incident and it also went viral on social media. The umpire in question is a very good umpire with a good track record. He has been called to a hearing tomorrow to shed light on the incident," CCDM chairman Salahuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

Incidents such as these have over the years given rise to doubts about whether the Dhaka Premier League is truly competitive.

Last year, Mohammedan's Shakib Al Hasan kicked down the stumps in anger during a DPL match. While his behaviour was admonished around the cricket community, it brought fresh realisations of the inconsistencies in the country's domestic circuit.

Anamul, who secured his 14th List A ton during a smashing 142-ball 184 and could have been the second batter after Soumya Sarkar to score a double ton in Bangladesh's List A cricket should have been the focus of the day, but DPL incidents turned attention to darker realms.

## Kane moves closer to goal record

AFP, LONDON

Gareth Southgate says Harry Kane deserves to be ranked among England's all-time greats after he moved closer to becoming the Three Lions' record goalscorer with the decisive penalty in Saturday's 2-1 friendly against Switzerland.

Kane netted from the spot late in the second half at Wembley to reach 49 England goals, moving him ahead of Gary Lineker and into a second-place tie with Bobby Charlton.

Only Wayne Rooney, with 53 goals, has scored more times for England and it would be little surprise if Kane broke the record later this year.

England captain Kane, who made his international debut seven years ago this month, has reached 49 goals in just 68 appearances, while Manchester United legend Charlton took 101 to hit that total.

"The names he is amongst are incredible. He would appreciate that history and it will mean a lot to him. You would have to say he looks favourite to do that. I don't want to put a curse on it by saying anymore!" Southgate said.

While Kane admits he would love to break Rooney's record, it is the World Cup winners' medal earned by Charlton in 1966 that would mean the most to the Tottenham star.

"I always say it's amazing company to be with. I'm proud to be doing that and to be among those names," Kane said.



## West Indies clinch series with 10-wicket victory

AGENCIES

West Indies clinched the Botham-Richards Trophy with an emphatic 10-wicket victory over England in the deciding Test of the series on day four in Grenada on Sunday.

Kyle Mayers was the unlikely destroyer of England's second innings with a first-ever five-wicket haul after Joshua da Silva's maiden Test century.

Chasing a token target of 28 in their second innings, West Indies reached it without loss, captain Kraigg Brathwaite hitting the winning runs to seal a 1-0 series triumph.

It was a stunning result for the home team after being outplayed in the first two drawn Tests, and ensured another barren England trip to the Caribbean. England have only one series win in the West Indies in the past half-century, a 3-0 victory in 2003-04.

With the ecstatic home fans dancing in the stands, the England players shook hands with Brathwaite and John Campbell.

Even before the England team trudged off the field in dismay, however, commentators were calling for Joe Root to step down as captain.

Although one of the world's best batters, with a test average of nearly 50, Root has rarely looked a natural leader and has earned a reputation as an unimaginative captain.

# Onus on openers

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's openers will have a task as crucial as the pace-bowling department's, with both expected to play major roles as the Tigers seek a first-ever Test win in the tough South African conditions when the two-match Test series begins from March 31 in Durban.

Although Bangladesh have lost all six of the Tests they have played in South Africa, the recent ODI series win over the hosts raised the bar. Coupled with the historic Test win in New Zealand earlier this year, the Tigers can afford to dream bigger than ever this time around.

Mahmudul Hasan Joy showed glimpses of his ability as an opener in the Mount Maunganui Test, facing 228 deliveries during his 78-run knock in the first innings. More importantly, the 21-year-old showed great technique and temperament in dealing with a quality New Zealand pace attack,

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providing the assurance needed to negotiate the new ball.

According to selector Habibul Bashar, the team management's challenge is to find a settled opening pair for the upcoming series, a task perhaps made easier by the return of the experienced Tamim Iqbal, who played his last Test against Sri Lanka in 2021.

"Look we have got a very good opening pair in ODIs with of Tamim and Liton [Das], but we are looking to find a settled opening pair for Tests and T20s as well. Mahmudul

has just started, so it would be too early to comment on him. But Tamim's inclusion is certainly a big boost for us, not just because of his experience but the skill he offers. It will certainly help us get stability at the top," Bashar told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

The rain in Durban over the past few days continued yesterday, forcing the Tigers to spend time in the gym. Those overcast conditions may provide more assistance to pacers and the extra movement from the surface may compound the pace threat that Bangladesh will face.

"It might sound different, but it's a fact that our batters play better when the ball comes onto the bat than they do on slower tracks. If there is seam movement, the batters will have to face the challenge, but that is true for both teams.

"We are prepared for fast and bouncy tracks. It will be important to negotiate the new ball in the initial 10-15 overs because the ball can do a lot in such conditions. If we get that solid platform at the top, it will help us stamp our authority," he said.