



## Shock decisions rock women's football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's football was rocked to its core yesterday after the departure of two of the most important members – the team's successful coach Golam Rabbani Choton and prolific striker Sirat Jahan Swapna.

Choton expressed his desire to leave the national and age-group teams in the afternoon soon after Swapna had relayed that she was retiring from professional football through a social media post.

The announcements come at a time when Bangladesh football is already reeling from a number of scandals, including FIFA's suspension of BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag, a hullabaloo over the federation's decision not to send its women's team to the Olympic Qualifiers and BFF president Kazi Salahuddin's disrespectful remarks about journalists.

Although neither explicitly expressed the reasons behind their sudden decisions, it is believed that a lack of rewards and matches had led to the surprise decisions.

Choton, who led Bangladesh to the senior SAFF Championship title after leading the age-group teams to a number of trophies and remarkable results in South Asia and beyond, said he wanted to take a break.

"I have been working continuously for women's football for the past seven-eight years. I am tired. I want to take a break and give more time to my family," the successful coach told The Daily Star.

Choton also said he would relay his intention in writing at the end of this month to the BFF and that he might work in club football again soon, but will not return to BFF.

BFF women's wing chairman Mahfuza Akter Kiron said she was not informed about the coach's decision.



A partial view of the under-construction Dhaka Elevated Expressway. The project has made a major progress as the authorities have already asphalted one of the two lanes of the expressway in the capital's Khilkhet area. After changing the project deadline for several times, the authorities now want to open a section, stretching from the airport to Tejgaon, to traffic by November this year. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO SK ENAMUL HAQ



FILE PHOTO

Choton's decision came right after Swapna announced her retirement through social media.

One of the national's team most reliable strikers, Swapna had played a major role in the senior team winning the SAFF Women's Championship title by scoring four goals in Nepal in September last year.

"I am retiring from professional football of my own accord. I have been fortunate enough to play professional football for about eight years. I got a lot of things after coming to football. Thanks and gratitude to Almighty Allah for everything. I have met many people through the game. So if knowingly or unknowingly I have hurt someone, take that with forgiveness. And everyone pray for me," Swapna's post on her personal Facebook account read.

If Swapna sticks to her decision, she would become the third footballer from the team that lifted the SAFF title to quit the game after Anuching Mogini and Sajeda Khatun.

It is believed that Swapna, who is now 22, took the decision due to frustration over not being able to play matches. The senior team have not played a single game since winning the SAFF title.

The BFF had said it would arrange international friendlies against Cambodia and Singapore, but failed to stay true to its words.

It has been learnt that Swapna had offers to play in the Indian Super League but could not accept that due to the proposed Bangladesh Women's Super League, the details of which are yet to be ironed out.

The striker could not be reached for a comment as she turned off her phone after giving the social media post.

## Russian rocket hits Ukraine clinic

Two killed, 23 injured in Dnipro; Kyiv shoots down 10 missiles; Moscow sees long war ahead

REUTERS, Kyiv

A Russian missile hit a clinic in the eastern Ukrainian city of Dnipro yesterday, killing at least two people and wounding 23 in an attack that President Volodymyr Zelensky described as a crime against humanity.

Video footage showed a devastated building with smoke pouring out of it and rescue workers looking on. Much of the upper floor of what appeared to be a three-storey building had been badly damaged, as had cars parked nearby.

"Another (Russian) missile attack, another crime against humanity," Zelensky wrote on Twitter. "The buildings of a psychological clinic and a veterinary clinic in the city of Dnipro were destroyed."

"Only an evil state can fight against clinics. There can be no military purpose in this. It is pure Russian terror," he said.

Russia has denied repeated accusations that its soldiers have committed war crimes in Ukraine.

Ukrainian officials said earlier yesterday that air defences had shot down 10 missiles and more than 20 drones launched by Russia in overnight attacks on the capital Kyiv, Dnipro and eastern regions.

Meanwhile, a senior ally of President Vladimir Putin said yesterday the conflict in Ukraine could last for decades and that negotiations with Ukraine were impossible as long as Ukraine's Western-backed Zelensky was in power.

"This conflict will last for a very long time. For decades, probably. This is a new reality," Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies.

He said Russia could not trust any truce with the current rulers of Kyiv as the conflict would simply erupt again and so the very nature of the current government of Ukraine would have to be destroyed.

Top US officer General Mark Milley said Thursday that Russia will not achieve a military victory in Ukraine, while also cautioning that Kyiv is unlikely to force out all of Moscow's troops anytime soon, reports AFP.

## Pakistan should formally declare 1971 atrocities as genocide

Says head of European investigation team

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Former lawmaker of the Netherlands Harry van Bommel yesterday urged Pakistan to formally declare the atrocities it committed during the Liberation War as genocide.

Harry van Bommel, who is heading a three-member European team to investigate the genocide committed by Pakistan in 1971, also urged Islamabad to clear its position on the issue.

The two other members of the team are genocide scholar Dr Anthonie Holslag and political analyst Chris Blackburn.

"It should be wise for the Pakistani government to come to terms with reality and ... formally declare that there was a genocide in 1971," said the former Dutch MP, reminding Pakistan of its obligations as a civilised country.

"It is important for Pakistan to take a clear position regarding the 1971 genocide. ... It was not a massacre, it was genocide," he said, arguing that internationally renowned institutes have already confirmed it as a genocide using empirical methods based on UN criteria.

He also urged the Pakistani

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## US mountaineer climbs rare Everest 'triple crown'

CNN ONLINE



A renowned US mountain guide has achieved the rare Mount Everest region "triple crown" of climbing the Everest, Lhotse and Nuptse peaks in one season, a hiking firm said yesterday, as the season's death toll on the world's highest mountain hit 12.

Garrett Madison, 44, climbed Lhotse, the world's fourth tallest peak at 8,516 metres (27,939 feet) on Thursday, a day after he made his 13th ascent of Everest, at 8,849 metre (29,032 feet), said Ishwari Paudel of the Himalayan Guides company, which is helping Madison with logistics.

Madison, who owns the company Madison Mountaineering based in Seattle, climbed the smaller but technically difficult Nuptse peak, at 7,855 metres (25,770 feet), on May 8.

"It is very difficult to climb all three peaks in a single season and only a few other mountaineers have done it," Paudel said.

Separately, Department of Tourism official Khim Lal Gautam said Canadian national Petrus Albertyn Swart, 63, who fell sick in the "death zone" while going to Everest summit died on Thursday, taking the season's total death toll on the mountain to 12. At least three other climbers are missing or out of contact.

## UN honours five fallen Bangladeshi peacekeepers

UNB, Dhaka

The United Nations has awarded the "Dag Hammarskjöld Medal" to five fallen Bangladeshi peacekeepers for their supreme sacrifice in UN Peacekeeping operations.

The award was handed over at the General Assembly Hall by the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in a ceremony to honour 103 peacekeepers from 39 countries who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty in 2022.

The respective permanent representatives received the awards on behalf of their countries.

Ambassador Muhammad Abdul Muhith, permanent representative of Bangladesh to the UN in New York, received the medals on behalf of the fallen peacekeepers of Bangladesh on May 25.

The five Bangladeshi fallen peacekeepers are Sergeant Md Manjur Rahman [was serving in UNISFA, Abyei], Lance Corporal Kafil Majumder [was serving in UNMISS, South Sudan], Sainik Md Sharif Hossain [was serving in MUNISCA, Central African Republic], Sainik Md Jahangir Alam [was serving in MINUSCA, Central African Republic],

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



A view shows a clinic heavily destroyed by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Dnipro yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## MILITARY COURTS Pakistan hands over 33 pro-Imran protesters for trial

REUTERS, Islamabad

Thirty-three supporters of former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan have been handed over to the army to face trial in military courts on charges of attacking armed forces' installations, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said yesterday.

The 33 accused are among the thousands detained since Khan's May 9 arrest sparked violent protests across Pakistan.

Khan was arrested on graft charges, which he denies. While he was subsequently released on bail, his confrontation with the country's powerful generals has escalated.

"The accused who are being handed over to the military are those who trespassed and entered very sensitive defence installations," Sanaullah told a press conference in Islamabad. He said that evidence suggested the protesters damaged or stole important equipment, computers and other sources of data collection.

He said only those involved in breaching out-of-bounds areas would face trial under army laws, suggesting

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4