

## No handshake, no problem for Svitolina

AFP, Washington

Ukraine's Elina Svitolina grabbed a second straight victory over Victoria Azarenka of Belarus at the WTA Tour DC Open in Washington on Monday, weeks after the duo's Wimbledon clash was marred by a handshake controversy. Azarenka was booed off court at Wimbledon earlier this month after her defeat to Svitolina, with fans apparently perceiving she had snubbed her Ukrainian opponent by not advancing to the net for a handshake. In fact, Svitolina did not offer a handshake – something she has declined to do with players from Russia and Belarus ever since the invasion of her homeland. Belarus is a key military ally of Moscow. On Monday, tournament organizers in Washington aimed to pre-empt any possible repeat of the controversy by informing fans before the match there would be no handshakes. "At the conclusion of the match there will be no handshake between the players," a message on an arena screen said beforehand. With that issue settled, it was left to the two rivals to serve up a hard-fought if error-strewn battle that saw no fewer than 17 breaks of serve before Svitolina finally prevailed 7-6 (7/2), 6-4. Svitolina clinched victory by breaking Azarenka's serve in the 10th game of the second set. A wild Azarenka backhand presented Svitolina with a match point which she duly converted on the first attempt after bludgeoning a forehand winner into the corner. Azarenka saluted Svitolina's victory with a fleeting thumbs up before heading off the court.

## Cricket won as clashing ideologies scripted an Ashes epic

ASRAR CHOWDHURY

From the first ball, with Zak Crawley striking a boundary off Pat Cummins, till the last ball on July 31 when Stuart Broad took the wicket of Alex Carey, the cricket world experienced 45 days of edge-of-the-seat cinematic action that could not have been scripted by mortals. The 2023 Ashes has been like no other Test series in living memory. It pitted two styles of cricket against each other: England's fearless Bazball versus a far more orthodox, coupled with characteristic resilience of Australia.

**"It's been an incredible six weeks... I think both sides have stayed true to their styles and that's what makes a great heavyweight fight."**

England coach **Brendon McCullum.**

The heavens, like all good scripts, had to intervene with ever-pulsating drama. Eventually, over the set of matches all worthy of five-star reviews, a 2-2 appeared a fair result even though it could have gone either way. The Aussies geared up to the Ashes with the fire in their belly, having defeated India in the WTC Final. The next target for Cummins' side was to be the first Australian side to win an Ashes in England since 2001. England also targeted to win the Ashes with Bazball, a style that has seemingly taken draws out of the equation in Tests. This has made Tests interesting at a time when the red-ball format has been under



constant threat from the sport's shortest format, aided by lucrative franchise leagues. In the series opener, Stokes' surprise declaration at the end of day one to get an early wicket didn't work. England's sloppy fielding was worse than that declaration. Dropped catches and missed stumpings gave a champion side in Australia the chance to breathe. And with their historical resilience, Cummins and Lyon pulled off an improbable victory at Edgbaston. The following Test at Lord's was played off the field as well. The 'spirit of the game' was challenged by Carey's stumping of Bairstow. And then, Stokes went on a rampage to emulate Headingley, 2019. The crowd joined in as did the members of the Long Room at Lord's. On-field controversy even induced an exchange of words between the Prime Ministers of the participants. In the end, Australia had a 2-0 cushion, but at the cost of losing their talismanic spinner, Nathan Lyon, for the rest of the series. Backs against the wall, England had to tweak Bazball to get results. With their Two Ws in Woakes and Wood, England

were unstoppable from then on and emerged victorious at Headingley. Old Trafford was where England could have levelled the series, but then the heavens had a different say. Rain has always been a 'player' in an English summer. England had the upper hand in Manchester, but the Test being washed out meant Australia had retained the Ashes. However, the two teams went to the final Test at The Oval with plenty at stake. The Oval had all the elements of theatre. Stuart Broad touched the stumps and got a wicket, the next ball two times. England had luck in a ball change. Rain breaks helped England this time. Australia uncharacteristically collapsed. Broad – who surprisingly announced his retirement on the third evening – scripted a fairytale farewell. His last bat was a six, and his last ball won an Ashes Test and levelled the series. Moeen Ali, too, had called it quits once the series drew its curtain with a fitting climactic end. Overall, it was hard to deem one superior than the other. If England won a session, Australia crawled back in the next or within the same session. Each result was close. Australia won two Tests by 2 wickets and 43 runs. England won two Tests by 3 wickets and 49 runs. The difference, however, was in the attitude. England's new-school Bazball to score runs quickly and forcefully and get twenty wickets was challenged by Australia's old-school resilience of patience, grit, and biding time. In the end, Test cricket won. The red-ball game brought new-school and old-school generations together. The young of today are bound to remember the latest Ashes edition for a long time.



PHOTO: STAR

that it's a big learning ground for them and testing ourselves because we only get to play high-level teams like these during the Asian Games or the World Cup Qualifiers," Titu told The Daily Star over the phone after conducting his first training sessions with the two teams at the Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club ground yesterday. Ranked 11th in the world, former

World Cup winners Japan have already progressed through the group stages of this year's showpiece event while Vietnam, ranked 32nd, are making their debut appearance in the 32-team event. Bangladesh, ranked 140th, will be making their debut Asian Games appearance against these two powerhouses alongside Nepal, ranked 101st in the world.

## Captaincy issue still at large?

SPORTS REPORTER

While the national team players are undergoing a few medical tests to assess their conditions ahead of the Asia Cup camp, the meeting between Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan and the three national team selectors at the BCB president's office became a focal point for media at Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday. It appears that with the Asia Cup just around the corner, the BCB president was keen to get up from the current limbo that had been set since the onset of Tamim's retirement saga. Tamim returned to the country on Monday following his medical treatment in England. The matter of Tamim's return to the team, however, still remains very much at large. Following his return, it was learned that the left-hander would have little time to assess during the camp on whether the pain reappears again. While talking to The Daily Star, the BCB president Nazmul informed that they needed Tamim's opinion regarding his own return before anything else. "We have to know what he [Tamim] thinks regarding the Asia Cup and whether he will play. If he plays, we will definitely ask for his opinion. Even if he communicates that he won't be able to play, we have to think of alternatives and also ask for his opinion. We are hoping he will sit with us in the next one or two days," the BCB president said yesterday. "We need to know details of what doctor has prescribed. We need to know when he can join practice or what rehab plans from doctors are and when he can play with full strength. Maybe we can think about upcoming steps in one or two days." Coach Chandika Hathurusingha is set to return on August 8 before Asia Cup squad is finalised. Nazmul mentioned that captaincy is not an issue as the vice-captain, in this case Liton, would take over responsibility. While BCB president suggested captaincy is not an issue, it was learned that both Liton and all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan have an aversion to taking on the role until the current situation finds clarity.

## England, Denmark book last-16 spot

AGENCIES

European champions England swept past shell-shocked China 6-1 yesterday and into a Women's World Cup last-16 clash with Nigeria. It equalled England's biggest-ever World Cup victory and booked them top spot in Group D, while China's tournament ended at the group stage for the first time and in humbling fashion. "Again, another day of what dreams are made of," said England forward Lauren James who struck two on the night at the Hindmarsh Stadium in Australia. Elsewhere, Denmark – playing at their first World Cup since 2007 – beat Haiti 2-0 in the other group game to finish second and line up a knockout-round meeting with co-hosts Australia. Along with former champions Japan – one of Bangladesh's oppositions in upcoming Asian Games in China – England are the only team to win all three group games so far, reaffirming their status as among the favourites to win the World Cup.



The Netherlands produced a statement victory yesterday with a 7-0 crushing of Vietnam – one of Bangladesh's opponents in upcoming Asian Games in China. The Dutch registered the biggest margin of victory of the ongoing Women's World Cup to top Group E ahead of defending champions USA, who survived a scare from Portugal following a goalless draw yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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7th convocation of Eastern University will be held on **19 September 2023**. Students who completed all requirements of graduation from **Fall 2019 to Spring 2023**, are eligible for the Convocation.

Last Date of Registration: **30 August**.

Registration for Spring 2023 students begins on **16 August**.

Venue: **Noboratri, International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB)**  
Kuril Bishwa Road, Next to 300 ft, Purbachal Express Highway, Dhaka

For online registration and details, please visit  
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