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# ‘Nothing left to achieve’

AGENCIES

After 13 years of giving her all to her country, record-breaking Australian women’s captain Meg Lanning said she had “nothing left to achieve” as she bid a tear-shed goodbye to international cricket on Thursday.

Lanning won everything there was to win in the green and gold, leading Australia to four Twenty20 World Cup titles, one 50-over World Cup triumph and a Commonwealth Games gold – earning the nickname “Megastar” for her run-scoring exploits.

“I’ve achieved so much within the game and been lucky enough to have such a successful career and be part of very successful teams,” an emotional Lanning, who broke down in tears while thanking her close-knit family for their support, told reporters outside the MCG yesterday. “I guess I feel like now I’ve got nothing left to achieve on the international stage.”

Teammates, rivals, and key figures across the women’s and men’s game took to social media to congratulate Lanning.

Teammate Ellyse Perry said no cricketer has played the game with more purpose and “extreme skill” than Lanning.

“One of the toughest opponents I have played against,” New Zealand and Sydney Sixers veteran Suzie Bates said.

“There are a handful of batters in the game that made me stop what I was doing, just to watch them play. Meg Lanning was one,” wrote legendary Ian Bishop.

With 15 ODI hundreds, Lanning occupies the top spot in the list for most centuries in Women’s ODIs.



South Africa will have to face a trial by spin when they take on Afghanistan today in an ICC World Cup fixture at the Narendra Modi Stadium as the Afghans have Rashid Khan, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, and Noor Ahmed in their ranks. Meanwhile, South Africa's most economical bowler in the ongoing tournament, Keshav Maharaj will have his say as pitches have started to take turn.

PHOTO: REUTERS

- Afghanistan and South Africa have come across each other in ODIs only on one occasion -- when they met in a World Cup game four years ago in Cardiff. The Proteas secured a thumping nine-wicket victory in that game.
- South Africa are undefeated at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad so far, winning both their ODIs against India at this venue.
- Before this edition, Afghanistan, who now look to book a spot in the semifinals, had only one win in ODI World Cups.
- South Africa's Quinton de Kock, who has already hit four tons this World Cup, is just one century shy of equalling Rohit Sharma's record. Rohit's five centuries in the 2019 World Cup is the most by any player in a single edition of the tournament.
- South Africa have hit a total of 82 sixes so far in this tournament -- the highest by any team in a single edition of the World Cup.

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ICC Cricket World Cup  
Afghanistan vs South Africa  
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## Joty focuses on seizing series

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women’s cricket team have an opportunity to clinch their third ODI series against Pakistan as they face the visitors in the final match of the three-match series at the Sher-e Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

Skipper Nigar Sultana Joty’s match-winning boundary in the Super Over clinched a tense second ODI and got the Tigresses back level in the series last Tuesday.

Bangladesh spectacularly levelled the series 1-1 against India in their last ODI series at home with the dramatic third ODI ending in a tie as that game did not feature a Super Over. Even though the option for a Super Over will be there today, Joty made her intentions clear about not having to use it.

“I am not thinking of a draw. There is a big possibility for us to clinch the series and everything will be dependent on playing positive cricket. It will be a big achievement if we can win the series,” Joty said at a press conference yesterday.

The Tigresses, who won the preceding T20I series 2-1 against Pakistan, will hope for a repeat of the same scoreline in the ODI series but familiar batting issues have pegged them back recently.

Bangladesh were all out for just 81 in the first game with only three batters reaching double figures.

“We have been struggling with our batting. Those who are staying in the crease are staying for too long but not scoring enough or if the top-order is doing well, the middle-order is getting out quickly. If we can put on 200-plus at least in case we bat first, it will be difficult to chase,” Joty said.



## Next to impossible challenge awaits Afghans

AGENCIES

Afghanistan need a massive victory, a 438-run win to be precise, in order to better their net run rate than fourth-placed New Zealand if they hope to keep their World Cup 2023 semifinal hopes alive when they face a South Africa outfit looking to bounce back from a crushing defeat at the hands of India.

Afghanistan have been one of the surprise packets of the tournament with four stirring triumphs so far, but now have an almost impossible task ahead.

H a s h m a t u l l a h Shahidi’s side looked on track to clinch a critical fifth win in their last encounter until coming across a rampaging Glenn Maxwell who took the game away singlehandedly.

Victory in that clash, which would have been Afghanistan’s fourth on the trot, would have pushed the emerging side into the top four and two points ahead of fellow semifinal contenders New Zealand and Pakistan.

But as it stands, Afghanistan enter this contest at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad today sitting in sixth place and crucially well behind on net run rate, in the race for the last place in the knockout stages.

South Africa, who have been impressive in most games, present a daunting challenge for Afghanistan, who can now take pleasure in beating three world champions -- England, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka -- in

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this edition.

The Proteas also only had words of praise for an inspiring Afghan side.

“They’ve been really, really good to watch,” said South Africa batter David Miller of Afghanistan. “They’re a team that’s certainly growing in confidence. They’ve shown that they can compete. I mean this World Cup they’ve done really, really well, beaten some big teams.”

He added: “It’s been good to watch the Afghanistan group going the way that they have with the spinners that they’ve got, the batters up front.

“They have a chance to make the semifinals. That’s the joy of the World Cup. You see different teams doing well, people that don’t necessarily rate a certain team exceeding in a certain phase of the World Cup.”

Temba Bavuma’s side have little to play for with a semifinal showdown with Australia already assured.

Miller admitted players were excited at the prospect of a World Cup semifinal against Australia as he hailed “X-factor” Maxwell for his “really special” 201-run masterclass against the Afghans.

When Australia and South Africa met in the group stage at Lucknow four weeks ago, Maxwell was out for three and the Proteas romped to a 134-run victory.

“We know what to expect. They’re always a competitive team. They’ve got some incredible players and match-winners amongst their team,” said Miller.



New Zealand pacer Trent Boult celebrates after dismissing Sri Lanka batter Charith Asalanka in their ICC World Cup fixture in Bengaluru yesterday. Boult returned figures of three for 37 from his 10 overs to help his side bundle out the Lankans for 171 in 46.4 overs. His other two scalps were Kusal Mendis and Sadeera Samarawickrama as the left-arm pacer took his tally to 13 wickets in the tournament so far. The Kiwis all but ensured their semifinal spot with a five-wicket win.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Cabrera welcomes Australia trial

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh head coach Javier Cabrera welcomes the challenge of facing Australia in the opening match of their FIFA World Cup Qualifiers campaign and believes his team can bring home a ‘positive experience’ from their trip down under.

Cabrera’s charges are scheduled to leave for Australia tonight ahead of their Group I match against the hosts in Melbourne on November 16.

Australia, who have competed in all editions of the World Cup since 2006 and played in the round of 16 in the Qatar World Cup, dominated Bangladesh in their two previous meetings, winning by 5-0 and 4-0.

Having to face Australia in the first match of their qualifiers campaign is a daunting prospect for Bangladesh as a thrashing against the Socceroos could deflate the momentum the Jamal Bhuiyan-led side has built up in the last few months.

But Cabrera viewed the match as a great chance for his team on their path to elevating themselves to the next level.

“It is a great opportunity for us to go to the next level. We are



Australia, Bangladesh will then host Lebanon in Dhaka on November 21.

The Spanish coach believes that a good showing against Australia, regardless of the outcome, would put Bangladesh in a good position mentally for their match against Lebanon.

“We are pretty sure we can do well in Australia and bring a positive experience to Bangladesh and then we will face Lebanon at home...There is a positive and good energy around the national team and we are hoping we can achieve something important,” said the 39-year-old coach.

“I think we should not become obsessed with the result. As I said before, it is a great opportunity for us and a great achievement as what we did before gave us the opportunity to play in such a huge context,” he added.

Cabrera also wanted his players to focus on themselves and take the field with the same positive approach that helped them knock off the Maldives in the pre-qualifiers.

“We should not put any extra pressure on ourselves. I think more than ever we need to be ourselves. We should not change our approach.

“We have to make sure we are a better team collectively and individually when we come back from Australia and that will allow us to reduce the gap with Lebanon and Palestine,” said Cabrera.

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