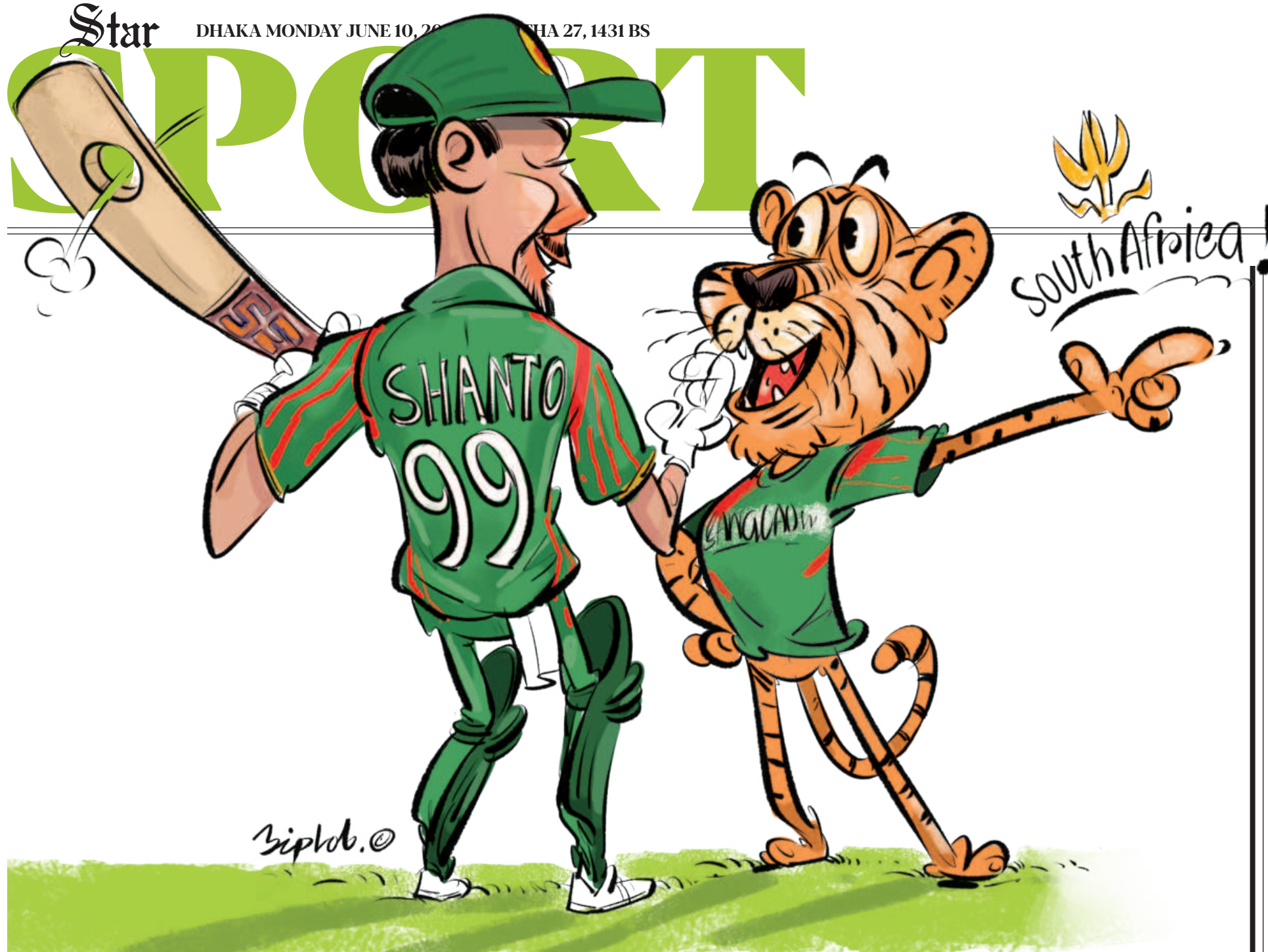


SPORTS


What to WATCH
NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1
 T20 World Cup
 Bangladesh vs South Africa
 Live from 8:30 pm

Double whammy for Paolini

REUTERS, Paris

Coco Gauff and Katerina Siniakova claimed the French Open women's doubles title on Sunday with a 7-6(5), 6-3 victory over Italians Sara Errani and Jasmine Paolini - a day after the latter's crushing loss in the singles final.

The win was Siniakova's eighth women's Grand Slam doubles crown and Gauff's first. Paolini, who suffered a 6-2 6-1 defeat to Iga Swiatek on Saturday, was left looking dejected.

The first hour of the match was largely dictated by Errani and Siniakova's struggles on serve, as both were broken twice each, with the first set going into a tiebreaker.

A quick start there gave Paolini and Errani a 5-3 lead, but Siniakova raised her game to win some key points that turned the tide in her and Gauff's favour.

The Italians began the second set with real intensity, earning four break points in the first game, but Gauff and Siniakova battled back for a crucial hold before going up a break to take a 2-0 lead.

That appeared to take the wind out of Errani and Paolini's sails, and though they were able to twice bring the second set back on serve, Gauff and Siniakova broke to take a 5-3 lead.

Gauff, who has often struggled with her revamped serve in recent months, showed no nerves when it mattered most and comfortably held on to clinch the win.

Upbeat Tigers look to carry momentum

SPORTS REPORTER

Conditions have been far from the norm at the Nassau County International Stadium, the venue for Bangladesh's second group game in the T20 World Cup against South Africa today.

Bangladesh players, who reached New York on Sunday, are breathing easy after a two-wicket win in their opening match against Sri Lanka and would look to carry momentum going into their last game in the USA. However, the Tigers have never beaten South Africa in the T20I format, having played eight matches, and there are big question marks on the conditions on offer.

At a press conference ahead of their clash against Pakistan at the same venue where Bangladesh would take on South Africa, India skipper Rohit Sharma had commented about the unpredictability of the wickets at the venue and it would likely be a similar case for the Tigers.

"These wickets are challenging, even the curator was confused about how they will behave," Rohit had told reporters.

So far in the three World Cup games played there, Rohit was the only player to hit a half-century, against Ireland. The invariable bounce on offer was accompanied by swing and seam movement. Batters were getting hit by deliveries that rose sharply from a length too.

The outfield conditions also did not allow scoring opportunities as usually is

● **Bangladesh are yet to win a T20I against South Africa, having played eight matches against them.**

● **Bangladesh have faced South Africa three times in T20 World Cups, suffering convincing defeats each time.**

● **Bangladesh's 104-run defeat against South Africa in Sydney in the 2022 T20 World Cup is their biggest margin of defeat in the tournament.**

● **With 13 ducks in 83 innings, Bangladesh opener Soumya Sarkar is now tied at the top of the unwanted list for most ducks in T20Is with Ireland's Paul Stirling, who also managed the same number of ducks in 143 innings.**



seen in the T20I format and it led to the ICC making a statement on working hard to improve the conditions.

Tigers will definitely be taking notes from the high-voltage India-Pakistan game on Sunday before their game against

the Proteas.

Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto had said that the Sri Lanka fixture was the most tense game of his career but winning a pressure game of that level would help the Tigers regain the belief in

themselves, especially following dismal performances in their World Cup build-up series in which they lost to co-hosts USA in Houston.

The pressure was telling when Sri Lanka got off to a moderately good start and were carrying on with momentum. The Bangladesh bowling unit mustered the required skill and experience, and above all, the courage to hold Sri Lanka back.

The batting unit, however, stuttered as usual but the contributions of Liton Das, Towhid Hridoy, and Mahmudullah Riyad at the death allowed the team to get over the line in a very tight game.

"As we managed to win this game, everyone will have extra confidence. And if we can go into the second game with this confidence then it will help. I hope something good will happen in the second game," Shanto hoped.

Bangladesh have crossed the first hurdle of their World Cup campaign and a mental barrier has been crossed which would allow them to settle in against a superior South Africa.

Shanto, however, was not taking anything for granted after their plans came to fruition against the Lankans.

"We will have to come back with a new strategy [against South Africa]. There is no other way than to play good cricket. If the batters can contribute we will have something good," he said, knowing that batters would need to pull their socks up and be counted in another vital game.

Booters battle Qatar heat ahead of Lebanon tie

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh football team are trying to acclimatise to the scorching heat in Qatar, where they are set to take on Lebanon in their final match in the FIFA World Cup qualifiers at the Khalifa International Stadium in Al Rayyan on Tuesday.

Th charges of Javier Cabrera arrived in Al Rayyan on Saturday, fresh off their spirited performance against Australia, where they suffered a 2-0 defeat at the Bashundhara Kings Arena on Thursday.

The booters are charged up after the stern resistance they showed against the Socceroos but for now, adapting to the sweltering heat in Qatar is the biggest challenge for Cabrera's charges.

"The visiting team usually struggles to adapt to the weather so soon after arrival. The temperature in Qatar is about 45 to 48 degrees in the day, but it comes down to 36 degrees after the sun goes down.

"Adaptation is a challenge for the

boys, but we are hopeful that the boys will adapt to the weather before the match against Lebanon," said assistant coach Hasan Al Mamun in an audio message sent by Bangladesh Football Federation.

Bishwanath Ghosh, who missed the tie against Australia due to



suspension, is also optimistic about both adaptation and the outcome of the match.

"Very recently we had the similar weather in Bangladesh. I don't see much difference between the weather in Bangladesh and Qatar. We also

don't want to focus on this issue, rather we have to start the work in a bid to realise our objective in Qatar," Bishwanath said.

"Our preparation is good because we came here after playing a big match against Australia. We might have lost the match but we are hopeful with the positive things we did in the Australia match. If we can repeat the performance against Australia, we can return home with something good from Qatar."

Bangladesh are currently at the bottom of Group I with just one point in five matches, which came from a draw against Lebanon in the first leg at the Bashundhara Kings arena last year.

The booters are targeting to secure at least one point in the second leg against Lebanon to end their campaign on a positive note.

"We want a win. Lebanon will also be wanting to win but our objective is to secure either full three points or at least one point in our last match of the World Cup Qualifiers," said Mamun.



Carlos Alcaraz outlasted German Alexander Zverev to win a maiden French Open, becoming the youngest man to capture Grand Slam titles on all three surfaces with a 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-1, and 6-2 victory in a nail-biting final on Sunday. While the 21-year-old has won all of his three major finals, the defeat prolonged Zverev's frustration at Grand Slams, with the German still chasing a first title despite reaching the last four eight times.

PHOTO: REUTERS