

SPORT

What to WATCH | T SPORTS AND GTV
 Bangladesh vs South Africa
 Second Test, Day 3
 Live from 10:00 am



Bangladesh winger Ritu Porna Chakma celebrates with her teammates after silencing the crowd with the winning goal in the 81st minute of the SAFF Women's Championship final at the Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu yesterday. Ritu Porna's wonderful goal helped Bangladesh beat the hosts 2-1 and retain their crown.

PHOTO: SAFF

Best Player: Ritu Porna Chakma (Bangladesh)

Top Scorer: Deki Lazom (Bhutan)

Best goalkeeper: Rupna Chakma (Bangladesh)

Fair play award: Bhutan

I'm feeling so good. This is the first time I've received this award. I can't believe it, this feels like a dream. I want to thank my family. They have supported me so much. I want to thank the people of Bangladesh who have supported us and prayed for us.

BANGLADESH WINGER RITU PORNA CHAKMA

Women 'make it happen' with SKILL AND TENACITY

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Sabina Khatun stated that clinching back-to-back titles at the SAFF Women's Championship is evidence of their consistent good performance over the last two years.

In 2022, when the women in red and green earned their maiden title, many skeptics had credited luck for the success. However, beating hosts Nepal 2-1 yesterday and securing the SAFF Women's Championship title again proves that their triumph is no accident, especially after having broken the dominance of subcontinental powerhouses India and Nepal.

"The countrymen were eagerly waiting for the trophy, and the girls have proved that they can play good football because no one can say that we won the maiden trophy by chance. The girls deserved the trophy, and they achieved it," Sabina said in a video message sent by Bangladesh Football Federation.

The 30-year-old captain expressed her delight in defending the title. "I really feel good because we were able to keep the honour of the countrymen intact, and that is a big satisfaction for us. The journey has been very hard because the team comprises young players who also played in front of full-house crowds," she added.

Vice-captain Maria Manda said the



girls are "dedicating this trophy to the countrymen", while Maria's midfield partner Monica Chakma revisited how their confidence grew following a 1-1 draw against Pakistan. It was Monica who voiced concerns that head coach Peter Butler favoured senior players, prompting the English coach to field more experienced players.

"We were confident that we could win

the match because we progressed match by match to come to this stage. Before the final, we discussed that we would play our hearts out," Monica explained.

"We never gave up, despite Nepal levelling the margin, because there was ample time on our hands. We kept our cool and restored the lead."

For match-winning scorer Ritu Porna Chakma -- adjudged the tournament's

most valuable player -- winning the championship was a "dream come true".

"I really feel good... Our target was to play in the final, and we will now be returning home with the trophy," Ritu said, thanking her family and the supporters for their encouragement.

Forward Tohura Khatun also celebrated the victory, as she was instrumental in the team's success.

"I squandered a chance at the beginning but never thought that we would not win the final," Tohura noted, acknowledging Nepal's strong performance.

"The strike from Ritu was a lifetime goal, but Nepal did not give up as they fought till the last minute. Monica's strike was also excellent, and I want to thank everyone for praying for us," said Tohura, who netted five goals, including a hat-trick, in four matches.

Ritu was optimistic about a victory, but not quite after just striking the winning shot far from the left.

"I never thought that my cross would go into the back of the net, but my mind was telling me that we would be champions, and we are happy to make it happen."

The triumph of Sabina, Maria, Monica, Ritu and teammates reflect their hard work and unity, establishing them as a rising force in South Asian football, and inspiring pride among their countrymen as the golden girls continue to dazzle.



They just have to understand the situation," Mushtaq admitted.

It is clear that the South Africa batters had that understanding of the game situation that Mushtaq talked about. After Tony de Zorzi, Tristan Stubbs had notched maiden Test tons on Day 1, Wiaan Mulder (105* off 150) got his first-ever Test century yesterday. There were two fifties from the Proteas as well.

Even though the day's play had to be called off early due to bad light, Bangladesh's struggles with the bat were still apparent in that brief period as 13 of the 38 managed by the Tigers were courtesy of extras.

Mushtaq, however, was adamant that Bangladesh batters' skill was not an issue.

"I disagree with you saying lack of skill. Maybe patience level can be better.

"Don't forget the Pakistan series. They won from 26/6 [in the second Test]. I am sorry to be repeating these things, but those are the evidence we have as coaches to tell them," Mushtaq added.

Mushtaq's apparent helplessness is understandable as coaches of Bangladesh usually have very little to draw inspiration from. And now that the Tigers are trailing by 537 runs with the prospect of a humiliating innings defeat looming large, perhaps, that's all that the team management can hope for -- a stunning turnaround, even though how unlikely it may seem.



Papon's BCB directorship cancelled

SPORTS REPORTER

The directorship of former Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon, along with 10 others, has been cancelled following a board meeting at the BCB headquarters in Mirpur yesterday.

Papon remained as a BCB director even after resigning as president.

Manzur Kader, A.J.M. Nasir Uddin, Sk. Sohel, Advocate Anwarul Islam, Shaiful Alam Chowdhury Nadel, Muhammed Ismail Haider Mallick, Tanvir Ahmed, Obeid Rashid Nizam, Gazi Golam Murtoza, and Nazib Ahmed are the others who had their directorship cancelled in accordance with the BCB Constitution due to their absence from three or more consecutive meetings, according to a BCB press release.

The schedule for the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) was also announced following the board meeting. The eleventh edition of BPL will begin on December 30 with the final scheduled for February 7, 2025.

ABDULLAH AL MEHIDI

Faruque Ahmed was officially announced as the president of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on 21 August. Yet, just two months in, governance issues are already surfacing within the board. While former president Nazmul Hassan Papon ran operations like a one-man show, Faruque appears to be centralising operations similarly, as seen in skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto's captaincy situation.

Despite three board meetings and an emergency session under Faruque's tenure, no standing committees have been formed, leaving 12 directors inactive and raising concerns about BCB's effectiveness. The National Sports Council (NSC) has also questioned the absence of certain board directors, who reportedly fled after the fall of the Awami League government, urging BCB to clarify its position on forming a committee to amend its constitution.

Faruque attended a press conference yesterday and discussed agendas related to the NSC and other matters, but addressing the media ahead of the board meeting resulted in no significant decisions being discussed. "Yes, there are agendas [to be discussed in the board meeting], but the way you are asking, it's as if five-six months have gone by. We went through three board meetings in 10 days, and it's the fourth meeting today," Faruque said, adding that the board is undertaking the task of forming the com-

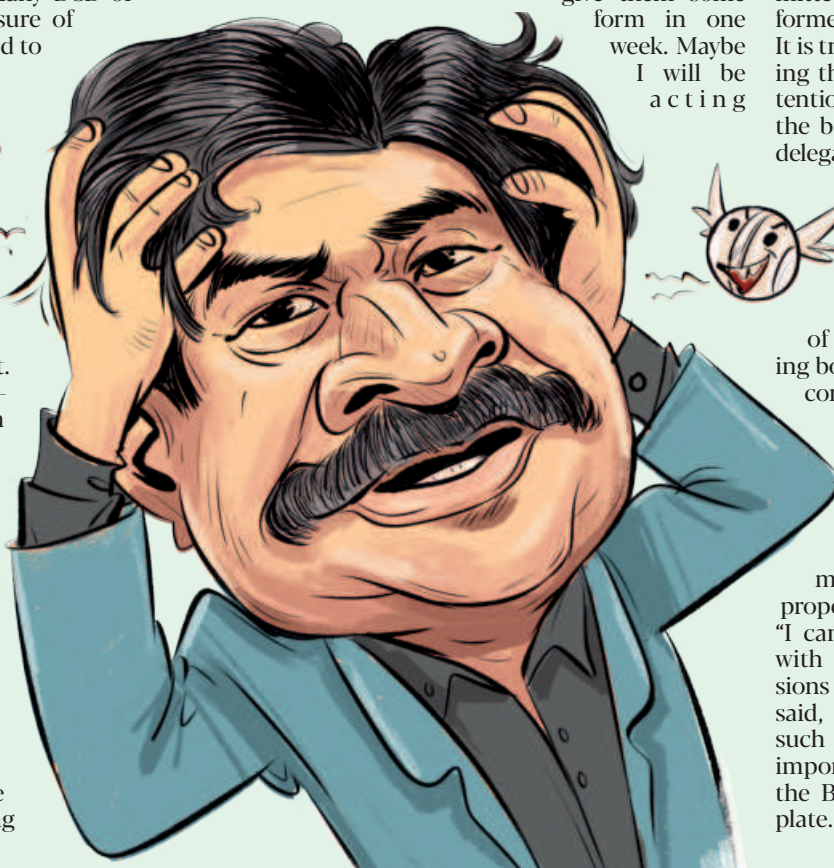
mittee to amend the constitution. Increasingly, it appears the functions of particular departments are not running as they should. Many BCB officials remain unsure of decisions they need to

many departments' functions "on an ad-hoc basis".

"These standing committees, we will try to give them some form in one week. Maybe I will be acting

make until consultation with the BCB president. BCB sources inform that even meeting agendas and minutes are not being provided before or after meetings. Faruque informed there are seven to eight directors now working and admitted they could not form the committees, and he himself is heading

LEADERSHIP GAPS hamper BCB operations



head of four departments, and with me, I will have a member secretary, as per rules from councillors, and try to form committees, those that are important," he informed.

It is true that the BPL scheduling and shaping the tournament had taken a lot of attention. However, as there is too much on the board president's plate, the failure to delegate matters has also been felt.

Jalal Yunus resigned, and so did Khaled Mahmud Sujon. One was the cricket operations chairman and the other the vice president. While office functions did not stagnate, decisions have. The case of Bangladesh captain Shanto, informing board officials that he does not want to continue as captain, highlights the ineffectiveness around BCB.

Players are required to report any issues to the cricket operations department. Many times in the past, former president Papon faced criticism for handling these matters personally, often bypassing proper channels of communication. "I can't understand anything unless I sit with him [Shanto]. You can't make decisions based on reading newspapers," he said, underlining that a key department, such as cricket operations, regarding this important matter, also stagnated because the BCB president had too much on his plate.