

# Tigresses’ historic win in St Kitts

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**Bangladesh:** 184 all out in 48.5 overs (Fargana 18, Joty 68, Mostary 23, Shorna 21; Aaliyah 3-24, Karishma 4-33)

**West Indies:** 124 all out in 35 overs (Matthews 16, Campbell 28; Marufa 2-35, Nahida 3-31, Rabeya 2-19, Fahima 2-17)

**Result:** Bangladesh won by 60 runs.

**Player of the Match:** Nahida Alter



**“I’m not thinking about the [World Cup qualification] equation as yet. What was most important was to bounce back a day after such a big defeat. Of course, the two points [championship cycle] are priceless but the win was very important for the series and in terms of gaining momentum. And if we can win the next match, it will be a big milestone for us because we have never won an away series before.”**

Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana Joty

## SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women’s team created a small piece of history when they bounced back to level the three-match ODI series with a comfortable 60-run win over West Indies in the second game at Warner Park in St. Kitts on Tuesday.

It was a historic moment for the visitors as the Tigresses secured their first victory against the Caribbean side in any format.

The win kept alive Bangladesh’s hopes of direct qualification for the World Cup, which will be held in India in August-September this year.

A total of eight teams will play in the World Cup, six of which will enter directly. Australia, India, England, South Africa and Sri Lanka have already ensured qualification while New Zealand and Bangladesh --

both currently on 21 points but on sixth and seventh positions respectively due to run-rate in the Women’s Championship cycle-- are vying for the sixth spot.

Bangladesh could ensure direct entry with a win in the last match of the series on Friday, which will also be their last game of the current Women’s Championship cycle. If not through direct entry, there will be opportunity for two more teams to go through via a qualification campaign.



**Sinner silences home crowd to reach semis: Defending champion Jannik Sinner dismissed Australian eighth seed Alex de Minaur 6-3 6-2 6-1 at a packed Rod Laver Arena to reach the Australian Open semifinals yesterday. Italian Sinner, who showed no signs of the illness that made him struggle in his last match, will take on American 21st seed Ben Shelton. “I feel like today I was feeling everything,” Sinner said post-match.**

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

## Slot unsure of top spot ‘advantage’

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool boss Arne Slot is not convinced that finishing top of the Champions League’s inaugural league phase standings will prove to be an advantage after securing progress to the last 16 on Tuesday.

The Reds beat Lille 2-1 at Anfield to maintain a perfect record of seven wins from seven games in the competition’s new format, although they were far from their flowing best against 10-man Lille.

Liverpool are guaranteed to finish in the top two, with Barcelona the only side that could pip them to first place.

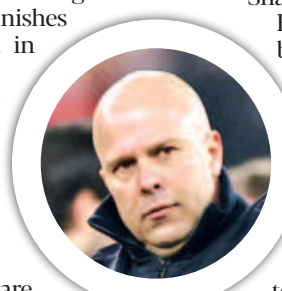
That means the Premier League leaders will face a side that finishes between 15th and 18th in the last 16.

However, Slot does not believe the table tells a true story given that each club faces a different draw of eight opponents in the league phase.

“We’re happy that we are top eight. That’s the only thing that tells me something, because this league table doesn’t tell you anything,” said the Dutchman.

“So normally in tennis, if you’re number 1, you know if you play against the number 24, he’s probably not as good as the number 16. “But here, because we play different teams, maybe the number 24 is better than the number 16, but the number 16 had an easier draw.

“We also want to be on top of the league, but I’m not so sure. We have to wait and see if it’s an advantage, let’s put it that way.”



# Who will shoulder blame for players’ sufferings?

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

For years, the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League (DPL) has been a lifeline for many cricketers, providing not just a platform for competition but also a crucial source of income. However, recent tensions between Dhaka-based cricket clubs and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) over proposed constitutional amendments have thrown the future of the league -- and the livelihoods of many players like Rafsan Al Mahmud and Shamim Sharif -- into uncertainty.

For the last seven years, Rafsan has been featuring in the DPL, representing teams like Khelaghar SKS, Partex Sporting Club, and City Club. Last year, he was part of the City Club squad, which got relegated to the Dhaka First Division Cricket League, and this year, he has been preparing for the second-tier tournament -- previously scheduled to get underway on January 20 -- to bring his side back into the top tier.

However, just a few days before the start of the first division league, the 29-year-old and other players came to know that the fate of the first division league and the following DPL hang in the balance.

“The clubs informed us to leave for home, and they will give us an update on January 26. We don’t know when the tournament will start,” Rafsan told The Daily Star yesterday.

“Most of the players wait for Dhaka leagues for our livelihood. If it doesn’t take place, we, the players, will be the only

sufferers,” he added.

Meanwhile, all-rounder Sharif, who has been playing for Azad Sporting Club for the last three years and has been featuring in the first division league for a decade, also echoed similar sentiment. “We are now passing uncertain times,” Sharif said.

Prominent club organiser Rafiqul Islam Babu, one of the key protesters of Nazmul Abedeen Fahim-led committee’s proposals on constitution amendments, believes the changes could destroy Bangladesh cricket. However, he is



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City Club cricketer Rafsan Al Mahmud

hopeful of getting a solution to this problem on January 25 following a BCB board meeting.

“The clubs had already started their practice, and it is expensive to run a camp. They need to give conveniences, food, and other practice costs. After telling this to the president [on January 18], he promised to solve the matter as soon as possible,” he added.

Meanwhile, BCB director Fahim -- currently in Malaysia for the ongoing U-19 Women’s T20 World Cup -- insisted

representing Dhaka-based clubs from 12 to four. “When we will submit it [proposed amendments] to the board, we can discuss it then,” Fahim told The Daily Star.

Although both Dhaka clubs and the constitution amendment committee are backing themselves on their stances, the reality is that their conflict and the corresponding uncertainties are causing a big headache for those cricketers dependent on the domestic circuit for their career.

## ‘It was a very crazy game’

**Barcelona manager Hansi Flick pointed to his side’s mentality as key to their 5-4 comeback win at Benfica on Tuesday that secured their spot in the Champions League last 16. Coming off a disappointing 1-1 LaLiga draw at Getafe, Barca were 3-1 down at halftime after Benfica’s Vangelis Pavlidis netted a hat-trick, with the Greek pouncing on some sloppy defending from the visitors. Although his men improved after the break, they were 4-2 down towards the end of the match before goals from Robert Lewandowski, Eric Garcia and Raphinha secured their comeback. “It was a very crazy game. The most positive thing was the mentality we had. We came back and that’s wonderful. That’s football and that’s why we love it. I don’t think I’ve ever experienced a comeback like this. It is unbelievable,” said Flick.**



PHOTO: BARCELONA