

## Bangladesh celebrate Asian Cup berth with 7-0 win

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh team had reserved their celebration of clinching Asian Cup berth till the last match of the campaign. Yesterday against Turkmenistan, they celebrated the epic achievement with a resounding 7-0 victory, ending the Asian Cup Qualifiers campaign with an all-win record at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon.

Turkmenistan (141), on paper, were the weakest team of the group, 13 places below Bangladesh. But Bangladesh's comprehensive wins against higher-



ranked Bahrain and Myanmar had already proved that rankings can be deceptive. However, there was hardly any doubt about the outcome of the game – the only matter of speculation was how big the margin of victory would be.

And soon as the match kicked, it became clear that it was going to be a one-way traffic as the side from Central Asia hardly had an answer to what Bangladesh were throwing at them. The goalfest started in the third minute,

thanks to a thunderous strike from Sapna Rani Mondal from outside the box.

The Central Asian side were hit by the eye of a storm over the next 17 minutes as Bangladesh smashed five more goals, with Shamsunnahar Jr bagging a brace while Monika Chakma, Tohura Khatun and Ritu Porna Chakma getting one apiece.

The fifth goal from Ritu Porna in the 18th minute was a disaster as the ball slipped through the goalkeeper's grasp,

warranting a change of keeper. However, life for Turkmenistan's second-choice keeper didn't start well as she conceded a goal a minute after being subbed in.

There was a lull of 20 minutes as Bangladesh failed to increase the margin before Ritu Porna's trademark left-footed screamer from outside the box found the top-right corner of goal.

While there was anticipation among the Bangladesh fans of a likely breach of Bangladesh's biggest victory – a 9-0 win against Bhutan in Cox's bazar in 2010, Turkmenistan came out with a much more disciplined performance after the break to keep the women in red and green at bay. They successfully blocked the passing channels in the final third as Bangladesh, with Ritu Porna and Sapna Rani both subbed out early in the second half, found it hard to break the final hurdle.

The substitute keeper, too, put in a much better performance as the scoreline remained unchanged but Bangladesh were happy to go to the dugout with a convincing win and start their long-awaited celebration.

**We are all very happy. We want to improve and get better results like this day by day. I would thank all my teammates because it was a team effort. I would also like to thank all my fans for continuing to support me.**

MONIKA CHAKMA, BANGLADESH MIDFIELDER

## India's Bangladesh tour deferred to September 2026

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Saturday confirmed that India's white-ball tour of Bangladesh, originally scheduled for next month, has been postponed to September 2026.

The announcement puts an end to recent speculation surrounding the fate of the series.

"The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) have mutually agreed to defer the white-ball series, three ODIs and three Twenty20 Internationals, between Bangladesh and India in August 2025 to September 2026," a BCB press release read.

BCB also mentioned that the decision was made keeping in mind the international cricketing commitments and scheduling convenience of both teams.

India were initially set to arrive in Dhaka on August 13 to play three ODIs and as many T20Is. The matches were to be held between August 17 and 31 in Dhaka and Chattogram, as part of the ICC's Future Tours Programme (FTP).

Recent reports had suggested that BCCI was "wary" of the security situation in Bangladesh, raising concerns that the series could be postponed.

BCB also mentioned that the revised dates and fixtures for the tour "will be announced in due course."

## Middle order spoils decent start

SPORTS REPORTER

"We need to learn from our mistakes." This statement is the staple of Bangladesh players, uttered almost every time they lose a game.

However, barely anyone gets to see the true reflection of these words.

Such was the case on Saturday as well, with Bangladesh once again suffering a batting collapse in their second of the three ODIs against hosts Sri Lanka at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo.

For the second consecutive time, Bangladesh's middle order spoiled a decent start provided by their top order in yet another woeful batting show.

After losing the opening match due to losing seven wickets for just five runs, it was expected that the Tigers would learn from their mistakes.

Opener Parvez Hossain Emon's maiden ODI fifty, in only his second ODI, gave the visitors a much-needed early momentum.

However, their lack of game sense and poor shot selection in the middle overs saw Bangladesh fold before playing the full allotted 50 overs. They were bundled out for 248 runs in 45.5 overs.

Emon (67 off 69 balls) falling prey to a brilliant googly from legspinner Wanindu Hasaranga reduced the visitors to 110-3 in the 20th over, with the onus shifted to Towhid Hridoy, skipper Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Shamim Hossain, and Jaker Ali Anik to utilise the start.

Miraz, promoted one place up in the order, threw away his wicket once pacer Dushmantha Chameera tested him with a



short ball, which the Bangladesh skipper didn't even try to keep down.

It was clear that Miraz hardly had anything planned to overcome this aspect of his game, despite falling prey to similar ploys in recent international matches.

Shamim, who replaced out-of-form Litton Das, looked solid during his short stay. But despite having more than 21 overs, he fell to the same short ball ploy, losing his wicket to pacer Asitha Fernando after making 23-ball 22.

As the last recognised batting pair, Hridoy and Jaker had plenty of time to play according to the situation. They even started well to take the Tigers' score past the 200-run mark, but once Jaker (24 off 40) failed to negate Asitha's knuckle

ball, Bangladesh's batting crumbled – slipping to 218-9 from 204-5.

Bangladesh had the last hope with Hridoy, who was the second highest scorer on the day with 51 runs and also became the joint second fastest with Soumya Sarkar to complete 1000 ODI runs for Bangladesh in his 33rd innings. However, a terrible mix-up with Taznim Hasan Sakib saw him fall to a run-out.

Had Sakib not played an unbeaten 21-ball 33-run cameo, adding 30 runs for the final wicket with Mustafizur Rahman, Bangladesh would have been bundled out for a much cheaper score. And the blame would need to be shouldered by the ones who consistently fail to live up to their words of "learning from mistakes".



FIDE Master Tahsin Tajwar Zia, son of the late Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman, plays his opening game at the inaugural GM Zia Memorial 2025 chess tournament, which commenced at the Bangladesh Chess Federation (BCF) Hall Room in Paltan, Dhaka, yesterday. Behind him, his mother, Tasnim Sultana Labony, watches quietly: a poignant image of a family continuing a legacy on the first anniversary of a legend's untimely passing. PHOTO: STAR



## Hockey teams enjoy goalfest in China

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's team registered a massive 13-0 win against Sri Lanka to boost their chances of qualifying for the semifinals of the Men's U-18 Asia Cup Hockey in Dazhou, China yesterday.

This was the first meeting at this level and Moududur Rahman Shuvo's charges toyed with their South Asian opponents, scoring three goals in the first quarter and then adding four more in the second.

While the boys in red and green could only score one goal in the third quarter, Sri Lanka's slight resistance broke down in the fourth and final quarter as Bangladesh shipped in five more goals.

Mohammad Abdullah scored four goals while Ismail Hosen scored a hat-trick. Din Islam and Sajedul Islam bagged a brace each while Bishal Ahmed and Mohammad Mehedi scored a goal apiece.

The win, followed by a 3-0 win against Hong Kong in their first match, took Bangladesh, runners-up of last edition, to the top of Pool A and they will look to confirm their last-four berth with a win against China on Sunday.

Mohammad Abdullah was adjudged player of the match.

Meanwhile, there was good news from Bangladesh women's team too as they bounced back from an opening match thrashing by Japan with a 3-0 win against Uzbekistan.

Kona Akter, who was adjudged the best player, scored a brace while Airin Riya scored one goal for Bangladesh, who will all but confirm their last-four berth if they beat Hong Kong tomorrow.



Skipper Shubman Gill celebrates after notching up his second century of the match as India piled on the runs during Day 4 of their second Test against England at Edgbaston yesterday. Gill, who scored 269 in the first innings, followed it up with a 162-ball 161, propelling the visitors to 427-6 declared and setting England a target of 608 runs. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Hercules' will, Silva's wish

STAR SPORTS DESK

On Independence Day in the United States, Fluminense's Hercules carved his own freedom: from the bench to the scoreboard with a match-winning strike that powered the Rio club into the Club World Cup semifinals yesterday (early hours of Saturday in Bangladesh).

Having already stunned Inter Milan in the round of 16, the 24-year-old defensive midfielder struck again as a substitute; his goal sealed a 2-1 win over Saudi giants Al Hilal in Orlando.

Hercules put Fluminense in front for good in the 70th minute; his persistence was rewarded after an initial long-range effort was deflected high into the air. However, he kept running forward – and into the danger zone – as teammate Samuel Xavier won the next header, which landed at his feet.

Hercules then took a sublime first touch to control the ball before firing a right-footed shot into the bottom left corner, prompting jubilation from yet another largely pro-Brazilian crowd.

At the heart of it all stood Thiago Silva: the 40-year-old captain who marshalled the backline and watched his post-match wish unfold.

"I'm rooting for Chelsea," he had said. Later that evening, the Blues defeated Palmeiras 2-1, setting up an emotional semifinal clash with Silva's current and former clubs on opposing ends.

With four Brazilian clubs reaching the round of 16 and Fluminense now among the final four, this Club World Cup has become a celebration of Brazil's footballing heritage: past, present, and what lies ahead.



Ruben Neves on Saturday serves as a pallbearer for Portugal and Liverpool forward Diogo Jota, who died alongside his younger brother Andre Silva following a car accident in Spain on Thursday morning. Neves and Joao Cancelo, both of whom had featured in Al-Hilal's 2-1 loss to Fluminense in a Club World Cup quarterfinal clash in Orlando, United States, just hours ago, flew to Portugal for the funeral of their former teammate. Jota did not hesitate when he mentioned Neves as his "best friend" in a video that went viral on social media platforms since the former tragically passed away, and it was telling how close the duo were as both Neves and Cancelo broke down into tears during the minute's silence observed in their game against Fluminense. PHOTO: REUTERS