



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

West Indies head coach Darren Sammy spent a long time in discussion with Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium's head curator Tony Hemming after arriving in Mirpur for training yesterday. Sammy observed the wicket keenly for an extended period, appearing intrigued -- even surprised -- by its dark appearance. So much so that he took several photos from different angles, seemingly trying to gauge how it might behave come game time tomorrow. The surface will also serve as a litmus test for Hemming, who recently replaced long-serving curator Gamini de Silva as part of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's effort to move away from Mirpur's traditionally low-and-slow pitches. Yet, it remains to be seen how the wicket ultimately turns out, especially given the Tigers' preference for tricky home surfaces that have often acted as banana peels for visiting sides.

## Will Ankon join the ODI merry-go-round?

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

The lack of depth in the player's pipeline is an oft-repeated cliché in Bangladesh cricket and was on display yet again by Thursday's squad announcement for the upcoming ODI series against West Indies, starting on October 18.

Following a disastrous 3-0 ODI series defeat in the UAE against Afghanistan, changes were expected in the 16-man squad, and two were made.

Bangladesh dropped underperforming opener Mohammad Naim and with Litton Das out injured, in again out again opener Soumya Sarkar returned to the setup. Pacer Nahid Rana was also axed, and in his place, middle-order wicketkeeper batter Mahidul Islam Ankon earned his maiden callup into the ODI squad.



SQUAD

at Basseterre.

He was in the T20I plans but after failing to recover from a back injury, he lost his place in the UAE and Pakistan T20Is. Subsequently, without any justification of performances, Soumya was dropped from the ODI series against Sri Lanka and then Afghanistan.

"Many are playing well in his position," the chief selector had explained back then. Those "many" included Naim, the latest batter to get dropped after failing to emulate his domestic performances at the international stage.

Domestic performances have rarely been an indicator for international success in Bangladesh. It was seen with opener Anamul Haque Bijoy too recently. Parvez Hossain Emon was also dropped from ODIs due to inconsistency.

**Mehidy Miraz (C), Tanzid Tamim, Soumya Sarker, Saif Hasan, Najmul Shanto, Towhid Hridoy, Mahidul Ankon, Jaker Ali, Shamim Hossain, Nurul Hasan Sohan, Rishad Hossain, Tanvir Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Tanzim Sakib, Hasan Mahmud.**

Interestingly, the creaky middle order was left unchanged with only Ankon added to the mix, a clear indication of a dried-up pipeline.

"By bringing in Ankon, we have increased depth, which will give the team management and the captain a choice. We can now give one or two of the batters who haven't batted very well a break for a few matches," chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu said in a video message on Thursday.

Soumya, who missed the Afghanistan T20Is due to visa complications, last featured in ODIs during his sole appearance in this year's ICC Champions Trophy against India. Before that, he had appeared in three ODIs against West Indies, making a run-a-ball 73 in the third ODI

Given the scenario, Soumya returned not because of his performances, but because he is not the only option left.

Meanwhile, Ankon had made 431 runs in the last Dhaka Premier League (DPL) at an average of over 47, far behind Bijoy, Emon and Naim -- the top three run-getters -- who averaged 79.45, 61.38 and 61.80 respectively. All three are now out of the ODI fray.

Like a game of musical chairs, the same group of names have come in and gone out of the squad, but the changes have not created any sustainability.

Now with Ankon, the question is whether he too would become another name in this vicious cycle or break free from it.

## Tigresses' record total no match for Australia

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh posted their highest ever total against Australia in WODIs but could not pose any challenge to the seven-time world champions, and were handed a crushing 10-wicket defeat in their fifth match of the ICC Women's World Cup 2025 in Visakhapatnam, India on Thursday.

Riding on a career-best unbeaten 66 off 80 balls from Sobhana Mostary and a gritty 44 from Rubya Haider Jhelik, Bangladesh posted 198-9 after opting to bat first.

However, any hopes of making Australia sweat quickly faded as Australian openers, skipper Alyssa Healy and Phoebe Litchfield, forged an unbroken 202-run partnership to seal the victory in just 24.5 overs. Healy smashed an unbeaten 113 off 77 balls with 20 boundaries, while Litchfield remained not out on 84.

With the win, Australia became the first team to seal a place in the semifinals with nine points from five matches. The defeat all but ended Bangladesh's faint semifinal hopes, as they remain sixth on the table with two points from five games.

Before yesterday, the Tigresses faced Australia four times in the format with their best total being 135-6, which came in their very first meeting in a rain-affected 43-over-a-side contest at the 2022 Women's World Cup in New Zealand.

In Visakhapatnam, Bangladesh had reached 73-1 inside 18 overs, largely thanks to Rubya. But spinners Ashleigh Gardner and Alana King then struck twice each as the middle-order crumbled.

Eventually, Mostary's second fifty of the tournament took the side near the 200-run mark.

Without the injured duo of pacer Marufa Akter and left-arm spinner Nahida Akter, Bangladesh's bowling looked toothless. The fielding looked equally sloppy, as Australia sealed their fifth WODI win over Bangladesh without breaking a sweat, and showed the gulf between the two sides.

## Chronic condition of cringe culture

KHALID HOSSAIN

In Bangladesh cricket's latest flashpoint, the line between passion and poison blurred once more. After a 200 run thrashing against Afghanistan in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday, part of the national team returned home the following night to a hostile reception at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. Fans hurled abuse as players exited the terminal, and the chaos was enough to raise safety concerns. Viewed through a rational lens, this Jekyll-and-Hyde nature reveals a fanbase living vicariously through the team's fortunes. Meanwhile, as the Tigers bear the brunt of fan fury, their female counterparts' achievements have gone largely unnoticed. Unlike the men, however, the women have not been afforded the luxury of patience while taking baby steps on the world stage. It's remarkable how the sentiment around the women's team flipped in a matter of weeks; from being mocked for losing to an under-15 men's team in the World Cup build-up, to teaching the Tigers a lesson in batting application. Ultimately, the destination does not define the journey.

Read full story on The Daily Star website

## Girls aim to pass Chinese Taipei test with win

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will aim to reach the final round with a win when they face Chinese Taipei in their last Group H match of the AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers today at Aqaba Stadium in Jordan, starting at 10 pm (Bangladesh time).

Following a 1-1 draw with hosts Jordan in their opener and Chinese Taipei's 6-1 thrashing of the same opponents on Wednesday, Saiful Bari Titu's side now face a daunting challenge against a team that has qualified for the final round four times.

"We want to play with confidence since there is no other option but to win. At the end of the day, if the girls want to win, then it's possible," coach Titu said yesterday, adding that the scenario for his team would have been the same even they had won against Jordan.

To reach the final round for a third



time, Bangladesh must deliver a stronger, more composed performance than against Jordan, sustaining energy throughout and

staying disciplined in dealing with Chinese Taipei's forwards; especially Chang Hui-Hsin, who scored a hat-trick against Jordan.

## Bangladesh to host Women's Kabaddi World Cup

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation (BKF) announced yesterday that the country will host the 2nd IKF Women's Kabaddi World Cup in November this year, marking the tournament's return after 13 years. BKF General Secretary SM Nawaz Shohag shared the details during a press conference in Dhaka.

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Dates:** November 15–25, 2025

**Venue:** Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium, Mirpur

**Teams:** 14 confirmed — Bangladesh, India, Iran, Argentina, Chinese Taipei, Germany, Netherlands, Japan, Kenya, South Korea, Nepal, Thailand, Uganda, and Zanzibar; Pakistan and Poland on standby

**Budget:** Tk 10.44 crore (including Tk 5 crore from the Ministry of Youth and Sports)

**IKF Support:** 350 air tickets for participating teams

**Bangladesh's target:** Top-three finish

**Last Performance:** 5th place in 2012 (Bihar, India)



Morocco players celebrate after beating France 5-4 on penalties following a 1-1 draw in regulation time to reach their first-ever FIFA U-20 World Cup final. They will face Argentina in Sunday's showdown in Chile, after Mateo Silvetti's second-half strike sealed Argentina's first final appearance since 2007.

PHOTO: REUTERS/FACEBOOK

