

FROM MOGA TO SUMMIT Kaur's 1983 moment

AGENCIES

Many years ago in the fields of Moga, Punjab, a young girl with a dupatta tied around her waist sent leather thudding into turf with astonishing pace.

Her school uniform flapped as she bowled to boys twice her size, undeterred and unafraid. Coach Kamaldeep Singh Sodhi still remembers that morning jog when destiny introduced itself. "I had never seen any girl of her age bowl with that kind of pace and guile," he recalled. "I knew she was special."

That girl – Harmanpreet Kaur – would go on to redefine Indian cricket. On a glorious night in Navi Mumbai, she became India's

"1983 inspired an entire generation to dream big and chase those dreams. Today, our women's cricket team has done something truly special. They have inspired countless young girls across the country to pick up a bat and ball, take the field and believe that they too can lift that trophy one day. This is a defining moment in the journey of Indian women's cricket."

India legend **Sachin Tendulkar**



first-ever ICC Women's World Cup-winning captain, completing a circle that began in the dusty nets of Moga.

Her father, Harmandar Singh Bhullar, a district court clerk, had unknowingly foretold

her future the day she was born.

He bought a tiny shirt that read "Good Batsman." "I just did it out of joy," he once said. "But I always knew she'd be a sportsperson." The dream, however, was not easily funded.

Training in a private academy 30 kilometres away seemed impossible – until Kamaldeep promised to bear the cost himself. Thus began a partnership built on faith, sweat and unyielding belief.

From captaining Moga to nine straight Punjab Inter-District titles to breaking window panes with sixes in Patiala, Harmanpreet's rise was fuelled by a fearless heart.

Her coaches remember her learning to hit against stronger boys – an apprenticeship in courage that later produced the 91-metre six against Ellyse Perry and that legendary 171 net out against Australia in 2017. "She's been hitting sixes on her own will since the start," Yadwinder Sodhi said proudly.

That fearless spark now illuminates an entire generation. In the 2025 World Cup

semifinal, Harmanpreet's 89 in partnership with Jemimah Rodrigues symbolised calm authority and tactical genius.

And though she made only 20 in the final, her decision to toss the ball to young Shafali Verma changed the match – and India's history. As the final wicket fell, the tears that rolled down her face carried years of heartbreak and resilience.

"We have lost so much, and from every loss, we have learned something," she told the ICC, voice trembling with emotion.

When she lifted the trophy – eyes wet, smile trembling – the echoes of 1983 seemed to return. Kapil Dev's men had once shocked the world at Lord's, winning their first-ever World Cup title, and forty-two years later, Kaur's women rose in Navi Mumbai, igniting another revolution.

Batting legend Sachin Tendulkar called it "a defining moment in the journey of Indian women's cricket."

For Harmanpreet, the triumph was more than victory – it was redemption. She had played five World Cups, endured near-misses, and carried the weight of expectation on her shoulders. "I'm numb," she confessed after the win. "We only looked at our goal [and] nothing else."

Standing alongside her that night were her mentors – Jhulan Goswami, Mithali Raj, Anjum Chopra – the pioneers who paved the road she walked. "It was emotional," she said.

"We were all waiting for this. Finally, we touched the trophy."

In that moment, under the roaring lights of DY Patil Stadium, the little girl from Moga finally came home, rewriting history in her own handwriting of grit, grace, and glory.

PHOTO: ICC/INSTAGRAM

BCB counters boycott threat with relegation rule

SPORTS REPORTER

The standoff between several Dhaka-based clubs and the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) deepened yesterday, with the clubs issuing a letter to threaten a boycott of all leagues and the board responding by adding a clause guaranteeing relegation for non-participation.

A total of 43 Dhaka-based clubs from across four divisions sent a letter to the BCB after a meeting yesterday, claiming grievances over the recent BCB elections and said they will refrain from all leagues organised under the current administration.

Eight Premier Division, eight First Division, 12 Second Division and 15 Third Division clubs signed the letter which was sent to the BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury.

"We had a meeting regarding the letter we sent and discussed that we have to be united and together on this move through thick and thin," Legends of Rugganj owner Lutfor Rahman Badol told The Daily Star following their meeting at Dhanmondi on Monday.

The letter read that clubs had already lodged a formal complaint on October 22 to the BCB Chief Election Commissioner concerning "grave irregularities and procedural violations" surrounding BCB elections, demanded the current board be dissolved and a fresh elections be held.

Just hours later, the BCB endorsed a non-participation and withdrawal clause in the rules, regulations, and playing conditions of all leagues under the jurisdiction of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM).

"If any team fails to participate in the league, either in full or partially, including complete withdrawal from the competition after its commencement, such action shall result in the immediate disqualification and relegation of the defaulting team," the BCB said in a press release sent on Monday night.

The impact of this standoff could be felt in the upcoming First Division Cricket League, scheduled from November 18. The league usually consists of 20 teams, but if the aggrieved clubs follow through on their threat, it could end up becoming a 12-team competition.

Khoi Khoi, Ridoy claim Fed Cup TT titles



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SPORTS REPORTER

There may have been little noise in the gallery of the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium yesterday, but the energy on the tables was unmistakable as Khoi Khoi Marma and Mohutasin Ahmed Ridoy were crowned women's and men's singles champions in the Federation Cup.

In the women's singles, promising Khoi Khoi faced experienced national player Sonom Sultana Soma in a match that stretched to a gripping fifth set. Khoi Khoi ultimately triumphed 3-2 (11-4, 9-11, 11-4, 9-11, 11-7), claiming the title for the first time.

"Actually, it was a tough fight against Soma apu, but I gained confidence after beating number one Mou in the semifinals," said Khoi Khoi, who had also defeated Soma in the women's team event.

Despite her third title in the last four competitions, Khoi Khoi remained humble, praising her seniors for their experience. "I have yet to reach the level of Soma apu and Mou... I've followed them since childhood."

On the other hand, the men's final was far more one-sided, with former national champion Ridoy

dominating current champion Ramhim Lian Bawn 3-0 (11-6, 11-8, 11-3).

"Yes, I am a bit more serious now compared to the past because I am trying to hold the position I gained before," Ridoy said. "Ramhim is a really good player but he looked a bit tired in the final and couldn't carry his semifinal performance through, which made the contest easier for me."

Both champions now shift focus to the Islamic Solidarity Games in Saudi Arabia, starting November 7, with the team scheduled to leave Bangladesh on November 5. The Federation Cup, held after a four-year gap, provided an ideal platform for preparation.

"A good number of strong teams will compete at the Games, and we will try to produce better results than the last edition, where we reached the quarterfinals," Ridoy said.

Khoi Khoi echoed the sentiment, saying her Federation Cup performance has boosted her confidence for her first appearance at the Islamic Solidarity Games. Soma also expressed optimism, noting that the competitive matches have strengthened the squad's determination to deliver a medal, whether from the men's or women's events.

Alonso returns to Liverpool with high-flying Real

Real Madrid coach Xabi Alonso returns to Anfield to face his former side Liverpool in the Champions League after an almost flawless start in Spain. While Liverpool have won just twice in eight Premier League games, Alonso's Madrid are thriving, having won 13 of 14 matches this season. A 4-0 rout of Valencia and a Clásico triumph over Barcelona highlight their intensity and defensive solidity. Stars like Mbappe, Vinicius, and Bellingham are flourishing under Alonso, who has reshaped Madrid with pressing, discipline, and a renewed identity. He aims to make his Anfield return a statement in Europe.



**Real Madrid have won seven of their 12 meetings against Liverpool in the past, with the Reds having only won four times.

**This will be the eighth time that Liverpool and Real Madrid have met in the Champions League since the start of the 2017-18 season, with the Spanish side winning five

of the previous seven.

**Liverpool have won 20 of their last 22 home Champions League group stage games.

**Mohamed Salah is set to play his 200th game at Anfield for the Reds and needs two more goals to become the first African to score 50 times in the Champions League.

Harry Kane does keepy uppies as Bayern Munich travel to European champions Paris Saint-Germain in a top-of-the-table clash of the UEFA Champions League in Paris tonight. Bayern have won 15 from 15 matches in all competitions so far this campaign, setting a new record for the best start to a season in the top five European leagues, and their English skipper has scored 22 goals in those 15 games.



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Rajshahi earn first win in NCL longer version

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi Division registered their first victory in the ongoing first-class competition National Cricket League (NCL) with a convincing seven-wicket win over Khulna Division on the third day of the second-round fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on Monday.

Chasing a modest 113, opener Habibur Rahman Sohan led from the front with a blistering 62 off 68 balls as Rajshahi comfortably reached the target in the final session.

Earlier, Khulna resumed the day on 68 for one but failed to build on their position and were eventually bowled out for 255 in their second innings.

Rajshahi's pace duo Nahid Rana and Ali Mohammad Walid picked up three wickets apiece to dismantle Khulna's batting order. Mehidy Hasan Miraz top-scored for Khulna with a fighting 48 off 62 deliveries.

In Sylhet, responding to Dhaka Division's first innings tally of 310, veteran batter Mushfiqur Rahim remained unbeaten on 93 and while captain Zakir Hasan contributed 43 as Sylhet Division reached 260 for seven at stumps after resuming on 33 without loss.

Meanwhile, persistent rain and a wet outfield disrupted play in Cox's Bazar, where the Mymensingh-Rangpur clash saw no play at all, and only 15 overs were possible in the Barishal-Chattogram encounter. Barishal moved from their overnight 115 for two to 166 for two before stumps.

SHORT CORNER

Fitness race on for Sohan, Shoriful

Fast bowler Shoriful Islam and wicketkeeper-batter Nurul Hasan Sohan are expected to recover in time for Bangladesh's three-match T20I series against Ireland later this month, according to team physio Bayjedul Islam Khan. Both players picked up injuries during Friday's T20I against the West Indies in Chattogram, with Sohan twisting his right ankle and Shoriful suffering a right hamstring strain.

Trott to step down as Afghanistan coach

Afghanistan coach Jonathan Trott will leave the position after next year's Twenty20 World Cup, the country's cricket board (ACB) said on Monday.

International cricket returns to Faisalabad

International cricket is set to return to Faisalabad's Iqbal Stadium after 17 years with the three-match one-day international series between Pakistan and South Africa from Tuesday. The central city in Punjab province last staged an international match in 2008 when Pakistan and Bangladesh played an ODI.

Oldest former Olympic champion dies

The world's oldest former Olympic champion, ex-track cyclist Charles Coste, has died aged 101, French sports minister Marina Ferrari announced Sunday. Coste won gold at the 1948 London Olympics and was a torch bearer at the 2024 Paris Games.

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