

### A memorable Junior Hockey World Cup debut

- Bangladesh played six matches in the tournament, finishing with three wins, two losses and one draw.
- Dutch coach Siegfried Aikman's team scored 31 goals and conceded 18 in the tournament.
- Currently at the top of the scorers' list, Amirul Islam finished the World Cup with 18 goals, scoring in all six games, including five hat-tricks. He also bagged four player-of-the-match awards.
- Bangladesh's biggest win in the competition was a 13-0 drubbing of Oman while their biggest defeat was a 5-3 defeat against Australia.

I want to thank my teammates. I achieved this because of them. They always try to play good hockey. They win the penalty corners, and then I score.



Tournament's top-scorer  
Amirul Islam



Jubilant Bangladesh fly the national flag after clinching the Challenger Trophy following a 5-4 win against Austria in a thrilling fixture of the FIH Junior Men's World Cup at the Madurai International Hockey Stadium yesterday. Siegfried Aikman's charges may have only finished top of the third-tier of the 24-team event, but the performances from the debutants against mighty opponents right from the opening game has earned massive praise from all and sundry.

PHOTO: AHF

### Rangpur on verge of NCL double

SPORTS REPORTER

Rangpur moved closer to a domestic double with a commanding seven-wicket win over Khulna on the third and penultimate day of their final-round National Cricket League (NCL) fixture in Bogura yesterday.

Chasing a modest target, Iqbal Hosen's unbeaten 114, supported by Naeem Islam (45) and skipper Akbar Ali (32 not out), guided Rangpur to 231 for three. Earlier, Mukidul Islam Mugdho (5-22) and Shoriful Islam (3-47) helped bowl Khulna out for 96.

The victory propelled Rangpur to the top of the eight-team standings with 31 points from seven matches. With defending champions Sylhet (26 points) drawing against Barishal and Mymensingh (24) needing an improbable 201 runs with one wicket in hand against Rajshahi, Rangpur are all but certain to claim the four-day title for the first time since 2022-23.

In Rajshahi, Barishal finished on 212 for four against Sylhet, extending their lead to 237. Iftakhar Hossain Ifti remained unbeaten on 93, while veteran Shamsur Rahman Shuvo scored 17 in his final first-class innings. Sylhet earlier made 287 thanks to Zahir Hasan's 130, but Ruyel Miah's 5-84 kept them under pressure.

Meanwhile, Mymensingh fought back in Sylhet with Abu Hider Rony unbeaten on 97, ending the day at 227 for nine while chasing 428 against Rajshahi. Sunzamul Islam (4 wickets) and Nihad Uz Zaman (3) starred for Rajshahi, who had earlier posted 345 in their second innings with Shakir Hossain Shuvo (94) and Rahim Ahmed (57).

Elsewhere, Dhaka finished the season on a high, crushing Chattogram by an innings and 192 runs in Mirpur. Chattogram were dismissed for 158 and 191 despite Hasan Murad's 52-ball 52.

### Tanzid's quest to find the missing impact

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite being Bangladesh's most prolific scorer in T20Is over the course of the last 12 months, the jury is still out on Tanzid Hasan Tamim as an impactful performer.

Tanzid has 792 runs in 30 innings at a strike rate of 132.66 and average of 29.3 with eight fifties. However, his performance on losing causes have been significantly better than on winning occasions.

Over this period, he averaged 28.78 at a strike rate of 122.12 in matches Bangladesh won, whereas, in losing causes, he produced a better average, 29.92, and score at a significantly higher strike rate, 145.29.

In fact, since January 2024, nobody has scored more runs in losing causes in T20Is for Bangladesh than Tanzid -- 463 in 20 defeats.

"If I score runs but the team doesn't win, those runs have no value," said Tanzid, who is part of the ongoing training camp for national team batters in Mirpur.

During this period, Tanzid has averaged just shy of 40 while chasing, however, when the target is above 140, his average has slumped down to around 17 at an abysmal strike rate of 70.

Asked if he gets a better understanding of his approach

when chasing, he said: "When you have a target in front, it becomes much easier... If I can apply the same approach batting first, I think I can succeed there too," he said.

In the two ICC events he has featured so far, sparks flew but



there was more smoke than fire. In the 2023 ODI World Cup, he appeared in all nine matches but scored 145 at an average of 16.11 with a lone fifty against India. In the 2024 T20 World Cup, he averaged just above 10 in seven innings.

Tanzid is well aware of his failings

in ICC events and is hopeful that the mantra of low-risk run-scoring will fix his issues.

"Sometimes we take high risks in low-risk situations," he spoke about how the coaches are trying to instill the idea of playing low risk shots in the ongoing skill camp.

"Earlier, you saw that I would get good starts in almost every match but couldn't carry on and play a long innings. I would get out midway. Now I'm working on staying mentally fitter and stronger so I can convert good starts into big scores and maybe even finish games.

"It's a bit better now, but there's still room for improvement. I'm trying step by step," he said.

He is currently working in the skill camp to find the gaps with grounded shots, which could significantly help him convert his starts more as an opener.

The one problem, however, is the lack of stability in the opening pair in T20Is for Bangladesh, with the management mixing and changing it to accommodate four opening options in the top-order.

"Honestly, no one is settled here [in the opening role]. Whoever the team needs in whichever position, he will play there," he said and it is one of the issues the team management must now address to get the best out of the individuals.

### RITU PORNA thrilled with Rokeya Padak

SPORTS REPORTER

Ritu Porna Chakma expressed her overwhelming joy and profound sense of honour after being named one of the recipients of this year's prestigious Rokeya Padak. Speaking to The Daily Star, the poster girl of Bangladesh women's football said the recognition stood among the most significant achievements of her career.

Ritu Porna, who played a pivotal role in Bangladesh's maiden qualification for the AFC Women's Asian Cup earlier this year, has been selected in the Women's Awakening (Sports) category. The government on Sunday announced four laureates for the 2025 edition of the award, which honours women for their groundbreaking contributions across various fields.

"Any award or recognition is a big achievement for me, and it inspires me a lot," Ritu Porna said. "Since this is the first time a footballer is receiving the Rokeya Padak, it feels like a huge achievement. I'm very, very happy."

The ceremony will be held on Tuesday at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka, with Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus attending as chief guest. Women and Children Affairs Adviser Sharmin Murshid will chair the programme. Named after Begum Rokeya Shakhat Hossain -- a trailblazer of women's education and equality -- the award is presented every December 9 to mark Begum Rokeya Day.

Ritu Porna said she was particularly excited about receiving the honour directly from the Chief Adviser. "I'm extremely excited," she said. "This is a state award, so it feels especially meaningful."

Ritu Porna stressed that the recognition extends far beyond her personal accomplishment. "This award is not just mine -- it is an inspiration for all women in Bangladesh and will have a positive impact on the next generation."

Reflecting on the challenges athletes face, she added, "In life, everyone encounters obstacles -- boys and girls alike. We must all overcome these hurdles and keep moving forward."

Currently in camp at the BFF ahead of the upcoming Women's Football League, the left-winger hopes to continue using her growing platform for broader impact. "I'm representing Unicef, and if I get more opportunities in the future, I will take them."

### Nasrin hold Karachi to draw

SPORTS REPORTER

Nasrin Sports Academy earned their first point in the SAFF Women's Club Championship after playing out a goalless draw against Karachi City FC in their second match in Kathmandu yesterday.

Still reeling from a 4-0 defeat to APF Women's FC in their opening fixture, the Bangladeshi women's football league champions -- largely comprising players from the U-17 and U-20 national squads -- put in a spirited effort but struggled to trouble Karachi City's backline.

With one point from two games, Nasrin remain at the bottom of the five-team table, two points behind joint leaders APF and East Bengal FC, both of whom have played one match fewer.

Nasrin SA will face East Bengal FC on December 14 in their third match.

### Rundown Bandarban Stadium gears up for Gold Cup

MONG SING HAI MARMA, Bandarban

The Parbatya Zila Parishad Gold Cup Football Tournament 2025 is set to kick off today at the Bandarban District Stadium, a venue that is in urgent need of repairs after years of neglect.

Ahead of the week-long tournament, the rundown stadium is undergoing some last-minute renovations -- the first in recent memory -- but the extent of the decay remains evident.

A day before the tournament, a worker was seen operating a grass-cutting machine at the ground under the midday sun. However, the iron-grilled gallery remained draped in vines, with knee-high grass in various spots.

A waterlogged pit lied on the southern side, and the bush growing along the inner fence was yet to be cleared. Parts of the

gallery appeared severely dilapidated, in need of immediate fixing.

According to District Sports Education Officer Md Rezaul Karim, the stadium is managed by the local District Sports Association (DSA).

Deputy Commissioner Shamim Ara Reeni, president of the Bandarban DSA, acknowledged the longstanding neglect of the stadium.

"The gates used to remain locked. Some even built makeshift homes under the gallery. After taking charge, we removed the illegal occupants. We have now taken initiatives to renovate the entire field," she said.

"This is the only major sports ground in Bandarban. Once the renovation is completed, children, youths, and adults will again have access to sports and physical activities," she hoped.

A total of eight teams -- including seven upazila teams and the Bandarban Sadar team -- will compete in the tournament.

"Our aim is to keep the youth away from drugs, inspire the next generation to engage in sports, and promote athletic activities," Bandarban Parbatya Zila Parishad Chairman Prof. Thanzama Lushai said at the press conference on Sunday ahead of the event.



Real Madrid suffered a shock 2-0 defeat to Celta Vigo in LaLiga on Sunday, finishing with nine men after Williot Swedberg scored a cheeky back-heel opener and added another in stoppage time, leaving the hosts four points behind leaders Barcelona. Defenders Álvaro Carreras and Fran García were both sent off after receiving second yellow cards in the second half. The result gave Celta their first win at the Santiago Bernabéu in 19 years, while Real remain on 36 points from 16 games.

### Inter await chaos-ridden Liverpool

STAR SPORTS DESK

Liverpool's season of chaos, on and off the pitch, takes them to the intimidating San Siro on Tuesday night, where Inter Milan await in the Champions League. The Reds sit 13th in the league phase table with nine points from their opening five games, while the Nerazzurri, beaten for the first time on matchday five, are fourth.

Liverpool's turbulent campaign worsened at the weekend as they squandered a two-goal lead in a 3-3 Premier League draw at Leeds United. Ao Tanaka's 96th-minute strike left Arne Slot's side with just one win in six across all competitions, a run that includes a surprise 4-1 home defeat to PSV in Europe.

Adding to the unrest, Mohamed Salah -- benched for a third straight match -- cast doubt over his future with scathing post-game comments about the club and his manager. The Egyptian, who signed a new two-year contract in April, has managed only five goals this season. With Brighton visiting Anfield on Saturday, these two fixtures may see the end of his future on Merseyside.

Inter, meanwhile, have conceded only three goals in the competition this term, two of which came in a 2-1 loss to Atlético Madrid last time out. They sit among four

teams three points behind leaders Arsenal. Serie A title contenders Inter are unbeaten in 18 Champions League home games (W15 D3), the longest active run in the competition. Cristian Chivu's men have responded to their Madrid defeat with three consecutive wins, scoring 11 times, including a 4-0 rout of Como on Saturday.

Lautaro Martínez, who scored three times in his last two appearances, has found the net in all five of his 2025 Champions League matches at San Siro, tallying eight goals. Another strike on Tuesday would see him join Andriy Shevchenko as the only players to score in six consecutive home UCL games for an Italian club.

Elsewhere, Atalanta and Chelsea -- both on 10 points from five matchdays -- meet in Bergamo. Chelsea sit three places higher thanks to superior goal difference, yet consistency remains elusive. After an impressive 3-1 win over Barcelona and a resilient 1-1 draw with Arsenal, Enzo Maresca's young side slumped to a 3-1 defeat at Leeds and a dull 0-0 draw with Bournemouth.

Atalanta, 12th in Serie A, also arrive on the back of a setback -- Saturday's shock 3-1 loss to Hellas Verona -- though the Champions League has offered them welcome respite this season.

