



## 'Not having a permanent job is my biggest regret'

**Sraboni Mallick** is one of the most experienced figures in Bangladesh women's kabaddi. She recently led Bangladesh Police to their maiden National Women's Kabaddi Championship title, ending the reign of former champions Bangladesh Ansar & VDP. A key member of Bangladesh's bronze winning squads at the Women's Asian Kabaddi Championship and the Women's Kabaddi World Cup, Sraboni spoke to *The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman* about the national championship, the progress of women's kabaddi and her personal journey. Excerpts from the interview are as follows:

**DS:** How did it feel to be named the best player of the National Women's Kabaddi Championship?

**SM:** Playing kabaddi always makes me happy, but being named the best player added something extra. This happiness is greater than before because Bangladesh Police became national champions for the first time after I joined the team. The tournament was very competitive as Police, Ansar & VDP and BGB all had strong teams with national players.

**DS:** You were previously part of Bangladesh Ansar & VDP. Why did you move to the Police team?

**SM:** I played for Ansar & VDP from 2017 to 2023 and was part of their championship-winning team twice. During that time, I also represented Ansar in athletics and wrestling. I won seven consecutive gold medals in shot put and five gold medals in the 70kg wrestling category. I applied several times for a permanent job, but it did not materialise. That is why I joined Bangladesh Police, hoping for job security. At least I am now earning a better salary than before.

**DS:** Will you continue playing multiple disciplines for Bangladesh Police?

**SM:** Playing three disciplines together has become very difficult, especially as I am a key kabaddi player now. Let's see how things go in the coming days.

**DS:** Do you keep track of your medals in different disciplines?

**SM:** I started competing at national level in 2014 and also represented my home district Narail. I believe I have won more than 100 medals, including gold medals in both individual and team events.

**DS:** Moving on to Bangladesh kabaddi, what do you think separates Bangladesh from the top teams?

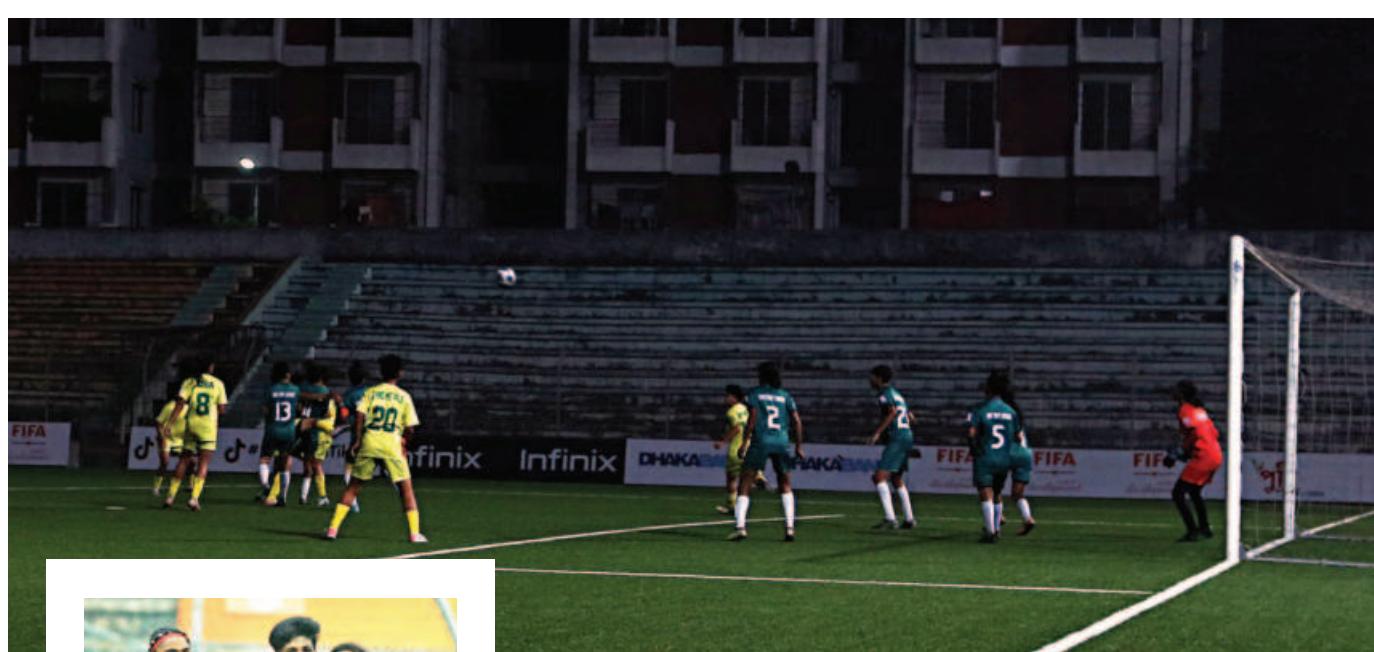
**SM:** Our long-term training helped us win bronze medals, but we still lag behind in fitness, skill and physical strength. Our biggest weakness is defence, especially holding the opponent's ankles, and failing to secure bonus points during raids. We must improve these areas.

**DS:** What are the shortcomings in the sport?

**SM:** We do not have an exclusive gym for kabaddi players, which is a major problem because fitness is crucial. We can use swimming pools and ice baths elsewhere, but regular gym access is essential. Another issue is financial security. Many players come from underprivileged backgrounds and do not have permanent jobs, so honourariums would motivate them greatly.

**DS:** Do you have any regrets about choosing sport as a career?

**SM:** Yes, I have tried for a long time to secure a government job but failed. My parents wanted me to focus on studies, but I chose sports. Now, at 28, as my playing career nears its end, not having a permanent job is my biggest regret.



## Women's football, in light and dark

The Women's Football League kicked off at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur last Monday, with each match day featuring between two and five games. With all 55 matches scheduled at the single venue by February 3, the league offers contrasting experiences. Day matches unfold in bright sunlight, showcasing the newly installed artificial turf, while evenings bring a stark contrast, as dim floodlights cast a gloomy atmosphere that makes both playing and watching football a challenge. Snapshots from Sunday's evening fixture between Siraj Srity Sangsad and Ansar & VDP and the day match (inset) between Suddopuskorini Jubo SC and Bangladesh Police FC vividly capture this contrast.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## What to WATCH

**STAR SPORTS 1**  
The Ashes  
Australia vs England  
5th Test, Day 2  
Live from 5:30 pm  
**T SPORTS**  
BPL

Sylhet VS Noakhali  
Live from 1:00 pm  
Chattogram vs  
Rangpur  
Live from 6:00 pm  
**STAR SPORTS 2**  
Big Bash League  
Live from 9:30 pm

Sydney Sixers vs  
Brisbane Heat  
Live from 2:15 pm  
SA20  
Pretoria Capitals vs  
Sunrisers Eastern Cape  
Live from 9:30 pm

## Chattogram look the side to fear

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Sylhet

Chattogram Royals appear to have put their pre-tournament turmoil behind them and are fast emerging as the team to beat in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). Their performances on the field suggest a side growing in confidence and cohesion despite a chaotic build up to the tournament.

On Sunday, Chattogram registered their third win in four matches with a dominant nine wicket victory over Sylhet Titans, a result that lifted them to the top of the points table. The rise has been remarkable considering the uncertainty surrounding the franchise just days before the competition began.

On the eve of the BPL, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) was forced to take over the Chattogram franchise after owners Triangle Services Limited withdrew due to financial issues. The situation was further complicated by the absence of foreign players in Bangladesh before their opening match against Noakhali Express, while the coaching setup underwent multiple changes.

Following the takeover, the BCB moved quickly to stabilise the side, appointing former Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar as team director. Mizanur Rahman Babul was named head coach, with Nafees Iqbal taking charge as team manager. Chattogram also managed to recruit overseas players Mirza Tahir Baig and Masood Gurbaz to meet the league's foreign player requirements.



At the top of the order, Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Saif Hassan and captain Litton Das remain the primary options, while Tawhid Hridoy, Shamim Hossain and Nurul Hasan Sohan bolster the middle order. Opener Parvez Hossain Emon is expected to bat at No.4 after impressing in that role during the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

Bangladesh have opted for a pace-heavy attack, featuring Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Shoriful Islam and Mohammad Saifuddin. Rishad Hossain will spearhead the spin department alongside Nasum Ahmed and Mahedi Hasan.

Despite strong performances in the BPL, Test captain Najmul Hossain Shanto and pacer Ripon Mondol were overlooked, though both remain in contention should changes be required.



Off-field turbulence seemed to have little effect on Mustafizur Rahman as the left-arm pacer delivered a trademark ice-cool performance at the death to script Rangpur Riders' thrilling five-run win over Dhaka Capitals in the day's second BPL encounter at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. In his first match since recent controversies over his omission from IPL franchise KKR, Mustafizur returned figures of 1 for 23, flipping the game with a miserly penultimate over and a nerveless final over to reaffirm his status as a death over specialist in T20s.

PHOTO: RANGPUR RIDERS