

SPORT



Missing World Cup 'extremely disappointing'

SPORTS REPORTER

After weeks of uncertainty over Bangladesh's participation in next month's ICC T20 World Cup, Bangladesh head coach Phil Simmons left the country yesterday with sheer disappointment.

"Missing the World Cup is extremely disappointing," he told The Daily Star before leaving on Wednesday.

Simmons joined the Bangladesh team in October 2024, and under his guidance the Tigers played two major events -- Champions Trophy and Asia Cup.

This tournament could have been his first World Cup with the Tigers. Had everything gone according to plan, this would have been one of his busiest periods, travelling with the team to the venue and making final preparations.

Instead, Bangladesh's absence has been confirmed. Simmons arrived in Dhaka during the

Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) intending to prepare the side, but found uncertainty instead. During the playoffs, he was often seen pacing near the Mirpur press box, voicing concern with a faint, uneasy smile.

There is no uncertainty now. With no matches scheduled, he is returning home. "I am leaving today," he said. "Our next series is in March, so we will have to prepare again then. Hopefully, I will return at that time."

Other coaching staff have also been granted unexpected leave, as the board has no plans in place following the World Cup exclusion.

Since the end of the BPL, Mirpur has remained eerily quiet. The team will stay inactive until mid-March, when they face Pakistan in a three-match ODI series on March 12, 14, and 16, with Tests in May. Domestic cricket is also under threat, as disputes endanger the Dhaka Premier League.

What to WATCH

SONY SPORTS 1,2,5
Australian Open
Semifinals
Live from 2:30 pm
Europa League
Live from 10:00 pm (Friday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD2

South Africa vs West Indies
2nd T20I
Live from 10:00 am
PTV and A Sports
Pakistan vs Australia
1st T20I
Live from 5:00 pm

'Mission isn't complete yet'

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After confirming their place in the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup, Bangladesh batter Sobhana Mostary has made it clear that the team's "mission isn't complete yet," as they now aim to lift the trophy in the ongoing qualifying tournament in Nepal.

Bangladesh have been in commanding form throughout the tournament, winning all five of their matches so far.

Their most recent triumph -- a convincing 39-run victory over Thailand in the opening Super Six clash in Kathmandu yesterday -- ensured their qualification for the main event with two games still to play.

"Our mission isn't complete yet. We want to become champions of this tournament," Mostary said after the game.

The Tigresses were also guaranteed a top-four finish after the Netherlands defeated the USA by 21 runs via the DLS method. That result confirmed the Dutch side's maiden Women's T20 World Cup appearance as well.

Four teams from the qualifier will progress to the main tournament, joining Australia, England, India, New Zealand, South Africa, West Indies, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The Women's T20 World Cup

is scheduled to take place in England and Wales from June 12 to July 5.

On Wednesday, Bangladesh posted a competitive 165 for 8. The innings was rebuilt brilliantly after early setbacks, as Juairiya Ferdous and Mostary stitched together a crucial 110-run partnership. Juairiya scored 56 off 45 balls, hitting three fours and four sixes to register her maiden WT20I fifty, while Mostary struck 59 off 42 deliveries, including nine fours and a six.

Thailand began their chase poorly, losing Suwanan Khaoto off the first ball to Marufa Akter. Though Natthakan Chantham (46), Naruemol Chaiwai (30), and Nannapat Koncharoenkai (29) kept them in the contest, the required rate proved too much.

Bangladesh currently top the Super Six table with six points and a healthy net run rate of 1.15. Mostary, tournament's second-highest run-scorer with 182 runs, also has bigger ambitions.

"When we go to England for the World Cup, we want to win more matches than we did last time," she said, referring to Bangladesh's single win in the 2024 edition.

The Tigresses will face Scotland in Kirtipur on Friday before concluding their campaign against the Netherlands on Sunday.



SHORT CORNER

14th South Asian Games deferred to 2027

The 14th edition of the South Asian (SA) Games has once again been postponed. According to the revised schedule, the nine-day multi-sport event will now be held in Pakistan in March next year. The Games were originally scheduled to take place in March 2023.

Pakistan face Australia with T20 WC participation uncertain



Pakistan take on Australia in a three-match T20I series starting in Lahore from Thursday, despite doubts over their participation in next month's World Cup in cricket's shortest format. Pakistan are protesting over last week's decision by the International Cricket Council (ICC), which rejected Bangladesh's demand to relocate their matches out of India.

British-Bangladeshi owner of Lankan team sentenced over match-fixing

A Sri Lankan court handed the British owner of a Premier League team a four-year suspended sentence on Wednesday over match-fixing in the domestic T20 cricket tournament, a judicial official told AFP.

** Read full stories on The Daily Star's website



Match officials walk off after overseeing Ansar & VDP Football Club's 12-0 win over Kachari Para Akadas Unnayan Shangstha in the ninth and third-to-last round of the Women's Football League 2025-26 in Kamalapur on Tuesday evening. While an all-woman referee panel is not new to the league, this edition has seen 38 of the 45 matches so far officiated solely by women. The remaining fixtures, including a few high-stakes contests, were handled by mixed-gender panels.

PHOTO: BFF

'There is no chain of command in BCB'

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is currently beset by multiple issues, which former national captain Khaled Mahmud Sujon -- who has held many positions within the board in the past -- addressed in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdi. The excerpts are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): How do you view the way the BCB is operating currently?

Khaled Mahmud Sujon (KMS): Simply put, it is not in a good state; there are too many complaints regarding the board directors. The biggest issue is that people without a cricketing background or organisational skills are there. Hence, this existent situation is natural. You can't run a cricket board in corporate style.

DS: Did you think there was a diplomatic failure in the BCB-ICC impasse?

to the World Cup.

DS: The board discussed Shakib Al Hasan's return on the day ICC replaced Bangladesh in the World Cup. Should it have been done?

KMS: Discussing Shakib's inclusion was not warranted at the time. Without talking about these things, they should be setting example through their work. If Shakib does not get cleared from the government level, the BCB cannot change that decision. This was the moment for a discussion on the World Cup instead. Maybe it was a diversion.

DS: Insiders have confirmed M Najmul Islam's reappointment as Finance Committee chairman, even as the BCB has yet to officially announce it. How do you view this ambiguity and players' expressing a lack of trust in the BCB?

KMS: No one can save cricket except the board. If they don't admit this, they are making a mistake. Players are being disrespected by the board at every step. The board is the highest authority and has the jurisdiction to give a post to anyone. When they speak, they must be united and speak in unison. The biggest issue is that the board is not united. There is no chain of command in the board.

DS: Is BCB failing to solve the club cricket crisis?

KMS: Yes, there is failure. But if the clubs and organisers of the Dhaka [First Division Cricket] League do not want to play, the board can do little. So, I will not just blame the board. The clubs are also wrong. Even if a club is relegated, the councillor remains a councillor, but no one is thinking about the damage to the players caused by the quarrels.

DS: Given the gap in the Bangladesh team's schedule till March, what should be done now?

KMS: They should perhaps organise a 50-over tournament, so that every player can play.



KMS: We all felt disrespected regarding the Mustafizur [Rahman] issue. Since the government said we can't go, we all have to accept it, and rightly so, because it really hurt our honour. I can't say how much the BCB was able to achieve through diplomacy with the ICC, though they did try to play in Sri Lanka. Perhaps the situation was such that the ICC could not manage it either; truthfully, you cannot blame just one person, if you do that, you would have to blame everyone. For cricketers and those who hold the game in their hearts, this feels like bleeding. It hurts that we are not going



Novak Djokovic's march towards history took a fortunate turn on Wednesday as he escaped his Australian Open quarterfinal after Lorenzo Musetti retired injured while holding a commanding lead. The Italian fifth seed had outplayed the 38-year-old, racing ahead 6-4, 6-3 but trailing 3-1 in the third set on Rod Laver Arena before a leg injury forced him to quit. Djokovic openly admitted he was lucky to survive, conceding he was "on his way home" before the twist of fate intervened. But the Serb now faces an even sterner test in the semifinals against another Italian, reigning champion Jannik Sinner, who swept aside Ben Shelton and looms as the favourite in a daunting showdown. Despite holding a 6-4 win-loss record over Djokovic, including victories in their last five encounters, Sinner downplayed the favourite tag, saying Djokovic is an "inspiration" and that he hopes to "learn something" from him.

PHOTO: AFP

CORPORATE BOOKING

Fantasy Kingdom and Water Kingdom will be reserved on 29th January (Thursday), 2026 for Corporate Booking.

From 30th January (Friday), 2026 Fantasy Kingdom and Water Kingdom will remain open for all.

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