

MABIA'S DOPING BAN Does it expose system gaps?

ANISUR RAHMAN

Weightlifter Mabia Akter Simanta has been handed a two-year suspension from both international and domestic competitions after the two-time South Asian Games gold medalist tested positive for banned substances in a doping test.

The ban of the 28-year-old athlete, who has competed internationally for the past 15 years and has undergone numerous anti-doping tests without any previous violations, has raised questions over whether the incident involved intentional use, negligence, or a lack of awareness of anti-doping regulations.

Following a report from the South Asian regional anti-doping organisation, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) informed the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA), which on Thursday officially notified Mabia of her suspension. The ban is effective from October 29, 2025 – the date when her sample was collected by BOA.

In preparation for the 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, scheduled for November 7–21, the BOA collected blood samples from 26 selected athletes based on performance criteria. Mabia's test reportedly returned positive for the banned substances furosemide and canrenone.

Mabia maintains that she unknowingly



PHOTO: STAR

"I was undergoing treatment for a knee injury for seven to eight months when the sample was taken," Mabia told The Daily Star, adding that she had submitted her prescription during the process but it was not given due consideration by the authorities.

She further explained: "I was on medication prescribed by a doctor and

"During anti-doping seminars, we were never told to consult the anti-doping committee before taking medication. We were only advised to keep doctor's prescriptions."

Weightlifter Mabia Akter Simanta

had no idea that furosemide is a banned substance. I was informed about this substance by the BOA anti-doping committee on January 15. I later searched online and learned that it is used to reduce water retention in the body."

Dr Islam, however, emphasised the importance of compliance with anti-doping protocols. "As per WADA policy, athlete health comes first. However, there are restricted medicines in sports, and

athletes must consult the anti-doping committee before taking them.

"If Mabia had obtained prior approval from WADA through BOA, there would have been no issue. She did not follow the same process as shooter Armin Asha did years ago, who was granted permission to use certain medications under legitimate medical conditions," he said, adding that WADA follows strict rules in such cases.

The incident has also raised broader concerns about whether federations and BOA are adequately educating athletes about anti-doping regulations and banned substances.

"During anti-doping seminars, we were never told to consult the anti-doping committee before taking medication. We were only advised to keep doctor's prescriptions. Even common medicines like paracetamol were said to be safe," Mabia said. "Why would I knowingly take something that could ruin my 15-year career?"

Mabia has already served five months of her 24-month suspension but remains eligible to appeal the decision within 14 days.

She has confirmed that she will challenge the ruling, hoping for justice, and has called on BOA, her federation, and other concerned authorities to support her in seeking a reduction or reversal of the ban.

Mohammedan part ways with Alfaz

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club on Sunday sacked head coach Alfaz Ahmed following a poor run of form that saw the club slip to seventh place in the ongoing Bangladesh Football League (BFL).

"A coach alone cannot make a club champion – he needs a complete team. The squad I had was riddled with deficiencies."

Alfaz Ahmed told The Daily Star



- Club statement (signed by director-sports Mostakur Rahman) cited frustrating performances and disappointment among board, officials, and supporters.
- Decision taken to improve performances; assistant coach Abdul Kayum Sentu given temporary charge.
- Alfaz blamed poor transfer window planning, saying the squad had major deficiencies and a coach alone cannot ensure success.
- Former national striker Alfaz became head coach in 2022-23, after serving 3 years as assistant to Sean Lane.
- He won Federation Cup (Mohammedan's first in 14 years), beating Abahani in final.
- He also won Mohammedan's first professional league title last season, ending Bashundhara Kings' dominance.
- However, Mohammedan sit just a point above the relegation zone this season. His side lost 2-1 to archrivals Abahani on Friday, marking their fifth league defeat.

Black Caps set to arrive today

SPORTS REPORTER

New Zealand are set to arrive today in two separate contingents for their white-ball tour of Bangladesh, BCB officials confirmed yesterday.

"A small group will arrive in the afternoon, while the majority will come on a second flight at around 11:00pm," a BCB cricket operations official said.

After a rest day on April 14, New Zealand will hold practice sessions on April 15 and 16 ahead of the first two ODIs on April 17 and 20 at Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium. The third ODI will be held in Chattogram on April 23.

New Zealand are sending a second-string squad for the tour, with most of their regular players currently engaged in the Indian Premier League and the Pakistan Super League.

Bangladesh have named an unchanged squad from their previous home series against Pakistan in March, as selectors opted for continuity. The series presents an opportunity for the Tigers to build on their ODI form – having won their last two home series against the West Indies and Pakistan – and strengthen their chances of direct World Cup qualification.

Tigresses balance ODI push with T20 World Cup build-up

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's team are set to depart for Rajshahi on Monday for a three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka which will kickstart their campaign in the ICC Women's Championship 2025 29 cycle, the qualifying competition for the next Women's ODI World Cup.

However, focusing solely on ODIs is not an option for Nigar Sultana and Co as right after the ODI series, which will begin on April 20, they will play three T20Is against the same opponents in Sylhet from April 28, which would kickstart their preparations for this year's ICC Women's T20 World Cup in June-July.

The Tigresses had narrowly missed out direct qualification to the 2025 Women's ODI World Cup in India after finishing seventh. They equalled sixth-placed New Zealand on points, who received the last direct spot, but finished placed one slot below as the White Ferns had one more win than them.

Bangladesh eventually qualified for the World Cup through the qualifiers, but would be hoping to steer clear from that this time. Even though the ODI World Cup still seems far away, starting the campaign on the right foot at home will be crucial.

"There are points up for grabs. Last year we had to play the qualifiers... We want to play good cricket so we don't have to play the qualifiers again," batting coach



BANGLADESH SQUAD:
Nigar Sultana Joty (c), Nahida Akter (vc), Farzana Haque, Sobhana Mostary, Fahima Khatun, Sharmin Akter Supta, Ritu Moni, Shorna Akter, Rabeya Khan, Sarmin Sultana, Marufa Akter, Fariha Islam Trisna, Sultana Khatun, Shanjida Akther Maghla, Juairiya Ferdous
Stand By: Dilara Akter, Shorifa Khatun, Farjana Easmin, Tajnehar

Nasiruddin Faruque Shojib told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Tigresses underwent a camp at BKSP till April 8 as part of their

preparations for the upcoming ODIs and T20Is. Team management sources confirmed that alongside ODI-centric work, T20 specific work too had also been done in the camp.

"Our priority right now is the ODI series against Sri Lanka. So, this camp was ODI-based. Additionally, we worked on small details, focusing on match-ups between ODIs and T20s to bridge that gap," Nasiruddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced the 15-member squad for the ODI series yesterday night, where Juairiya Ferdous, who played in the T20 World Cup qualifiers this year, received a maiden ODI call up. Top-order batter Sarmin Sultana, a 32-year-old who last played ODIs for the Tigresses in 2019, was also included.

"Juairiya is a next generation player and has good power-hitting abilities. Sharmin is making a return after a six-year gap. What has improved recently is her strike-rotation and ability to play shots. We are focusing on the same areas as we are slow in the Powerplay and want to improve on that aspect in ODIs to get 250-plus scores," national team chief selector Sajjad Ahmed Shipon told The Daily Star yesterday.

With the T20I World Cup preparations going into full swing, women's team's busy schedule is set to continue after the Sri Lanka T20Is with a camp in Dhaka before a tri-nation series in Scotland.

59 DAYS TO GO



Oldest to glory

The record for the oldest coach to win the World Cup belongs to Vicente del Bosque. Under a 59-year-old Del Bosque's guidance, Spain lifted their first-ever World Cup title at the 2010 tournament in South Africa, edging the Netherlands 1-0 in extra time in the final.

**** Visit The Daily Star's website to also read: 'Klose: The goal machine who left his mark of greatness with quiet steps.'**

THE BAVARIAN JUGGERNAUT

Bayern Munich smashed the record for the most goals ever scored in a single Bundesliga season as they hammered St. Pauli 5-0 in Hamburg on Saturday. They are now 12 points clear at the top, with just five games remaining.

- Jamal Musiala's opener was Bayern's 101st league goal, matching the long-standing record set in 1971-72, also by Bayern.
- Further strikes from Leon Goretzka, Michael Olise, Nicolas Jackson and Raphael Guerreiro took the tally to 105.
- Bayern's goal difference stands at a staggering +78.
- Vincent Kompany's side have scored at least twice in 27 of their 29 league games.

BAYERN TOP SCORERS IN BUNDESLIGA
Harry Kane (31)
Luis Diaz (15)
Michael Olise (12)
Serge Gnabry (8)
Lenient Karl and Nicolas Jackson (5)



PHOTO: REUTERS

Sinner topples Alcaraz to reclaim No. 1 spot

Jannik Sinner beat Carlos Alcaraz in straight sets to win the Monte Carlo Masters for the first time on Sunday and reclaim the world number one ranking from his Spanish rival. Sinner dethroned Alcaraz 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 to capture his third ATP 1000 title of the year after completing the "Sunshine Double" last month with victories in Indian Wells and Miami.