

Manchester United and England football great Sir Bobby Charlton welcomed the Chilean miners who were trapped underground for two months to Old Trafford on Sunday.

Charlton, whose father was a miner in Northumberland, north-east England, was quoted by the BBC as saying: "You took it in your stride and the whole world was very proud of you."

Omar Reygadas, a 56-year-old bulldozer operator, said: "It's an honour to be at Old Trafford. It's the theatre of dreams and we have only seen it on television."

- AFP



SPORT

DHAKA TUESDAY DECEMBER 14, 2010, E-mail: feedback@thedailystar.net



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Teammates converge to congratulate Sabina Khatun (L) after she scored the second goal against Sri Lanka in the SAFF Women's Football Championship at the Cox's Bazar Stadium yesterday.

Hosts start well India put 18 past Bhutan

ATIQUA ANAM from Cox's Bazar



Bangladesh got their SAFF Women's Football Championship campaign off to a comfortable start with a 2-0 victory over Sri Lanka in their Group A encounter at the Cox's Bazar Zilla Stadium yesterday. Meanwhile, favourites India got off to a rollicking start after they put an unbelievable eighteen unanswered goals past a hapless Bhutan side in the day's first game.

For Bangladesh, a first half strike by Suinu Pru Marma, doubled by Sabina Khatun in the second half meant the scoreline from the SA Games earlier this year was repeated in the seaside city.

The match got off to an explosive start as striker Suinu scored an astounding goal even before the crowd had settled into their seats. Collecting the ball from midfield, she unleashed a left footer from twenty yards out that eluded the keeper's hands and nestled into the top corner of the net.

Minutes later, Suinu once again created havoc in the Sri Lanka defence when she cut back from the right wing, danced past a defender before releasing a cross that was all too difficult for the Lankan keeper, the fumbled fist was headed back by Aung Mrachin but eventually cleared off the line by the defence.

Bangladesh created a few more chances in the first half, but could not increase the lead.

The second half saw Sri Lanka press harder while Bangladesh seemed to sit back a little. Just after the restart, Lankans came close to reducing the margin as Erandi Kamudamala's diving header missed the top of the bar by a whisker.

Bangladesh defence came under severe pressure and a 65th-minute attack was barely foiled at the death by the tall and agile custodian Sabina Akter.

However, somewhat against the run of play Bangladesh scored again on the 71st minute through Sabina Khatun. It originated from a counterattack as Sabina took the ball on her own from inside her own half, danced past a defender, cut back inside another, took the ball on the right foot before sliding it in under the diving goalkeeper.

The rest of the game was dominated by Bangladesh although

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Up close with Frisk

Swedish defender and well-known female footballer Johanna Frisk was in Cox's Bazaar as a FIFA representative for the opening ceremony of the SAFF Women's Football Championship. Her trip was to encourage the women of this region to participate in football. The Daily Star Sport's Atique Anam met up with the 24-year-old three-time Swedish League Champion to discuss women's football, pay disparities, and her love for Manchester United and Michael Jackson.

DSS (Daily Star Sport): What is your impression of the women's game here?

Johanna Frisk (JF): Well, women's football here is at its beginning phase. But it's good that it has started and there are a lot of opportunities to grow. I really hope that these tournaments are held every year.

DSS: What could be done to popularise women's football?

JF: They should stick with a team, the same people to work with and find good coaches with experience. They should start with the basics and then look for the other aspects of the game.

DSS: Is it necessary to bring coaches from Europe or Latin America?

JF: Bringing coaches is an option but better to bring coaches to train coaches. It would be easier and better for the long-term if footballers work with local coaches.

DSS: How did you see the overall organisational aspects and management part of hosting such a big tournament?

JF: From what I've seen, it's been good, both in terms of accommodation of the teams and practice facilities. There are a lot of people involved with the game who are trying to do their best.

DSS: What is the state of women's football in Sweden?

JF: We have a professional league. We have a lot of players in the league. Apart from the pro league, we also have four other leagues.



DSS: When did it all start?

JF: Well, it's hard to say when it started, but it was about forty years ago when women's football started to get going.

DSS: How many women currently play in the five leagues?

JF: I don't have the number. But a lot of girls play and the organisation around the game is really good.

DSS: There is big disparity between pay in men's and women's football. Is it frustrating?

JF: Of course there is disparity, but now we have more focus from media, we can play professionally, the salaries are going up etc. Men's soccer has been around for longer, they bring in more money too and that makes it more attractive. But the more we play, the closer we get in terms of salary.

DSS: You are a long time teammate and friend of Marta. Tell us about her.

JF: Marta is a complete footballer. She doesn't have a fault. She got the head for it, she has got the skill, the speed and she also has the heart. In Brazil they call her the female Pele. You learn many things from playing with a player like her.

DSS: Who is your favourite footballer and club?

JF: I am a huge fan of Manchester United. It comes from my dad really, who was a big fan and he used to buy season tickets and that kind

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Focus now on fine-tuning

BISHWAJIT ROY



Bangladesh signed off what is likely to be their last international engagement before next year's World Cup with a comprehensive series win over Zimbabwe, even as coach Jamie Siddons expressed his desire for more international cricket ahead of the cricket's showpiece event.

As expected Shakib Al Hasan's men won the series, 3-1, against the bottom-ranked Zimbabwe after a first match hiccup but there are still some areas the coach will try to rectify during the upcoming Premier Division Cricket League as the focus shifts to the domestic circuit.

But even before the fine-tuning begins, the one thing the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) must resolve as soon as possible is decide on the captain for the showcase event which will be co-hosted by Bangladesh along with India and Sri Lanka.

The BCB's manner of handling over the captaincy to Shakib Al Hasan for the Zimbabwe series was thoroughly unprofessional; it brought nothing good and instead created an unnecessary imbalance in the team, the net result of which was a nine-run defeat in the first game.

So, the expectation is that the game's governing body will not dilly-dally over the captaincy issue this time. The most important thing is that the captain has to have his opinion while picking the squad. The authority must

understand that the captain ultimately calls the shots out on the field and hence needs to be comfortable with the players at his disposal. And it is not only for on-the-field role, but also off-the-field that a captain plays a vital role.

From Siddons's point of view, it was however nice for the Australian to see his team winning the series quite comfortably despite an embarrassing loss in the first game and the abandonment of the fourth game due to a wet field in Chittagong. Nothing could be better than going into an event like the World Cup on the back of a winning run.

Many believed that Bangladesh's success in the 2007 World Cup in West Indies had ensued because they went

Tigers are going to play the 2011 World Cup with stupendous 4-0 series victory against New Zealand and 3-1 against the Africans behind them.

Captain Shakib was his usual swash-buckling self both with bat and ball while left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak was simply outstanding, nabbing 13 wickets in four games. But the most refreshing fact for the team think-tank was the return of pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

The 'Narail Express' was ordinary in his bowling in the first two games but he got back his rhythm in the last two games, which definitely comforted the team management ahead of the World Cup because Bangladesh cannot rely on

TOP FIVE BOWLERS				
Player	Country	Wkts	Average	B/B
Razzak	Ban	13	8.92	5/30
Shakib	Ban	9	21.2	4/39
Price	Zim	6	22.67	2/29
Mpofu	Zim	6	25.17	3/25
Utseya	Zim	5	27.8	4/38

TOP FIVE BATSMEN				
Player	Country	Runs	Average	H/S
Tamim	Ban	162	44.67	95
Shakib	Ban	156	52	73
Ervine	Zim	134	44	46
Utseya	Zim	132	40.5	67 n.o
Siddiqui	Ban	121	40.33	56 n.o



PARTNERS IN CRIME: Tamim Iqbal (L) and Abdur Razzak (R) were the highest run-scorer and wicket-taker in the series against Zimbabwe.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

Premier Cricket League delayed

SPORTS REPORTER

The Premier Division Cricket League will not start today, as per earlier schedule, due to a problem with the grounds.

"The Fatullah Stadium is not ready as there are few problems in the players' dressing rooms while the NSC [National Sports Council] has asked to suspend matches at Mirpur for at least ten days to complete the work on the floodlights. That's why it will not be possible to start the league tomorrow [Tuesday]," informed GS Hasan Tamim, chairman of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM), yesterday.

"Only BKSP is ready but we cannot start the league only at one venue. We will meet with the club officials tomorrow [Tuesday] to fix a new date for the league," he added.

The delay means that the national players will be available for the most coveted 50-overs-a-side domestic competition from the very first game.

The CCDM has earlier decided not to hold the Premier T20 League.

SPORTS POLL

Do you think Bangladesh will win the ongoing series against Zimbabwe?

Yes 56.9%

No 43.1%

TOTAL VOTES: 459

WEEKLY QUESTION

Do you think the Tigers should play another series before the World Cup?

Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote

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ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP HISTORY

Australia do the double

The World Cup returned to England after 16 years for the ICC Cricket World Cup in 1999. There were twelve teams, with three associate and nine Test nations. Bangladesh and Scotland made their World Cup debuts, while Kenya were playing their second Cup. The group divisions were the same as in 1996: two groups of six each. The big change was that in 1999, the Super Six was introduced.

The top three teams from each group would progress to the Super Sixes, a round robin stage where each of the three qualifying teams from Group A will play each of the three qualifying teams from Group B. Points won in the group stage from wins against the other two qualifiers from the group would be carried through to the Super Sixes. The top four teams at the end of the group stage would contest the semifinals.

Champions: Australia

Australia, by then had become the undisputed best team in the world under the captaincy of Steve Waugh. Halfway through the group stage though, it was far from certain that they would progress to the next round as they lost two of their first three matches, and were left needing to win both their last two to have a chance. All systems clicked into gear thereafter, as they progressed undefeated over the rest of the tournament. They needed to be

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V-Day sports

SPORTS REPORTER

To mark the Victory Day, a one-day sports competition with the participation of street children, organised by Population Services and Training Centre, was held yesterday at the ground adjacent to the Kisholoy School in Mohammadpur.

The competition got underway through hoisting of the national flag with former Bangladesh cricket captains Habibul Bashar and Khaled Mashud attending the ceremony.

Bashar urged the street children not to feel neglected as the whole country was with them. He also hoped that future leaders of the country would come from this group of people.

Mashud called the street children to look after their security first and then look forward to availing the opportunities they would get in future.