

BEYOND THE BOUNDARY

Middle and leg, please

SHAKIL KASEM



The designer nuts and the fancy bolts are firmly in place, the circus is well and truly in town and the coming of age party for Bangladesh cricket is now about to begin. Notwithstanding the fact that on Thursday the 14 captains in this competition were ferried into the Bangabandhu Stadium on the slowest mode of transport on Dhaka streets, life promises to be frenetic and frantic over the next month and a half.

Bangladesh take on India today. The two teams had met only once in the World Cup, back in 2007. As is possible only in cricket, roles were reversed. India the potential champions of that tournament booked early flights home as chastened, dare I say the word, wannabes. Bangladesh, undisputed minnows in that competition, suddenly had its 15 minutes of fame heaped on its team. The Tigers may be endangered in the Sunderbans, but not so anymore in world cricket. And there should this story, chapter and verse end. Granted we have them in our own backyard so to speak, but this is a new day, a new age, a different format. Let's erase that memory, match from because it will be very different now. ing performance the lead up to practice matches paint interesting pictures. India utilised those two opportunities to look long and hard at its batting and bowling. Against Australia the spinners defended a modest total, while against New Zealand, the mean machine fired on most of its cylinders to post 360 odd on the board in spite of the fact that Sehwag and Tendulkar forgot to get going. Which is somewhat worrying. For Bangladesh that is. Usually payback is on somebody else's account. The new ball is likely to pose more than a few problems in the hand of Zaheer Khan, while the spin is varied and wily in the likes of Harbhajan, Chawla and Yuvraj, should he get a look in. Wonder of wonders they are even carrying Ashwin and Pathan as offies!

On subcontinental wickets men like Gambhir, Kohli, Yuvraj, Raina and Dhoni, with the explosive Pathan as back up, are more than a threat for any attack, so runs are there for the asking. What will be interesting are the sort of questions that are posed by the Tigers. The two practice matches for Bangladesh were against diverse opposition and the results

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Bangladesh pacer Shafiul Islam (C) takes part in a stretching routine during a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Shafiul prepared for big day

MOHAMMAD ISAM



Each player has his own way of preparing for a game and when it comes to the biggest of encounters, every cricketer follows a certain path; a set routine to keep their emotions in check. Those of experience and quality often remain within their comfort zones, a way to stay in touch with reality as well as calming nerves, which can be so volatile before a big occasion.

For a Bangladesh player, the occasion doesn't get any bigger than the World Cup opener against India and with the crescendo of noise and interest rising every minute on the eve of the game, it is of paramount importance that the younger players are given extra attention.

While captain Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim, Abdur Razzak, Mohammad Ashraful and Shahriar Nafees have experience of the biggest stage, how the World Cup debutants make themselves comfortable will be a good indication of their inherent characters.

Shafiul Islam is only 21 years old and after just one year of international cricket, the paceman has made himself an automatic choice for the first game. Profligate in the beginning, Shafiul has slowly made his own little niche in the Tigers dressing room and will be handed the new ball against the best opening pair. But as has been the case with the Tigers' think-tank, the effort has been to tone down the atmosphere around the team.

The Bogra lad went off to his Mirpur home in the capital to spend some time with his parents

and his expatriate brother, who only recently arrived from France.

"My mother won't be going to watch the game but father and my brother will be going," he said. "I have always wanted to play for Bangladesh and when I began playing last year, I wanted to play the next series. Once I settled myself, I eyed the World Cup."

Like Shafiul, Imrul Kayes and Junaed Siddiqui are all set to play while Rokibul Hasan made his case stronger with his 30 in the practice game against Pakistan.

Tamim's opening partner has snuck up as a regular member of the team through his performance over the last two years, ending up as the fifth highest scorer in ODIs in 2010. Junaed too has finally staked a claim to the pivotal No 3 position

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ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP 2011 SCHEDULE

DATE	MATCH	VENUE	TIME
Feb 19	India v Bangladesh	Dhaka	2:30pm
Feb 20	New Zealand v Kenya	Chennai	10:00am
Feb 20	Sri Lanka v Canada	Hambantota	3:00pm
Feb 21	Australia v Zimbabwe	Ahmedabad	3:00pm
Feb 22	England v Netherlands	Nagpur	3:00pm
Feb 23	Pakistan v Kenya	Hambantota	3:00pm
Feb 24	South Africa v West Indies	New Delhi	3:00pm
Feb 25	Australia v New Zealand	Nagpur	10:00am
Feb 25	Bangladesh v Ireland	Dhaka	2:30pm
Feb 26	Sri Lanka v Pakistan	Colombo	3:00pm
Feb 27	India v England	Bangalore	3:00pm
Feb 28	Zimbabwe v Canada	Nagpur	10:00am
Feb 28	West Indies v Netherlands	New Delhi	3:00pm
Mar 1	Sri Lanka v Kenya	Colombo	3:00pm
Mar 2	England v Ireland	Bangalore	3:00pm
Mar 3	South Africa v Netherlands	Mohali	10:00am
Mar 3	Pakistan v Canada	Colombo	3:00pm
Mar 4	Bangladesh v West Indies	Dhaka	2:30pm
Mar 4	New Zealand v Zimbabwe	Ahmedabad	10:00am
Mar 5	Sri Lanka v Australia	Colombo	3:00pm
Mar 6	England v South Africa	Chennai	10:00am
Mar 6	India v Ireland	Bangalore	3:00pm
Mar 7	Kenya v Canada	New Delhi	3:00pm
Mar 8	Pakistan v New Zealand	Pallekele	3:00pm
Mar 9	India v Netherlands	New Delhi	3:00pm
Mar 10	Sri Lanka v Zimbabwe	Pallekele	3:00pm
Mar 11	West Indies v Ireland	Mohali	10:00am
Mar 11	Bangladesh v England	Chittagong	2:30pm
Mar 12	India v South Africa	Nagpur	3:00pm
Mar 13	New Zealand v Canada	Mumbai	10:00am
Mar 13	Australia v Kenya	Bangalore	3:00pm
Mar 14	Bangladesh v Netherlands	Chittagong	9:30am
Mar 14	Pakistan v Zimbabwe	Pallekele	3:00pm
Mar 15	South Africa v Ireland	Kolkata	3:00pm
Mar 16	Australia v Canada	Bangalore	3:00pm
Mar 17	England v West Indies	Chennai	3:00pm
Mar 18	Ireland v Netherlands	Kolkata	10:00am
Mar 18	Sri Lanka v New Zealand	Mumbai	3:00pm
Mar 19	Bangladesh v South Africa	Dhaka	9:30am
Mar 19	Australia v Pakistan	Colombo	3:00pm
Mar 20	Zimbabwe v Kenya	Kolkata	10:00am
Mar 20	India v West Indies	Chennai	3:00pm



GROUP A

Australia
New Zealand
Pakistan
Sri Lanka
Zimbabwe
Canada
Kenya

GROUP B

Bangladesh
England
India
South Africa
West Indies
Ireland
Netherlands

Mar 23 1st quarterfinal
A1 v B4 Dhaka 2:30pm

Mar 24 2nd quarterfinal
A2 v B3 Ahmedabad 3:00pm

Mar 25 3rd quarterfinal
A3 v B2 Dhaka 2:30pm

Mar 26 4th quarterfinal
A4 v B1 Colombo 3:00pm

Mar 29 First semifinal
Colombo 3:00pm

Mar 30 Second semifinal
Mohali 3:00pm

APR 2 FINAL MUMBAI
3:00PM

ALL TIMES ARE
BANGLADESH TIMES

A little less glow due to politicisation

ATIQUE ANAM



History and politics are so much ingrained into each other in this part of the world that a manifestation of heritage and culture usually involves a projection of the political history of the country. So, it was a moment of great pride for any Bangladeshi to witness the rich political history of the nation and the endeavour of its people to gain independence being portrayed so prominently in the opening ceremony of the ICC Cricket World Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Thursday.

When the language movement, the famous speech of 7th March by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the War of Independence were showcased, every Bangladeshi citizen wherever he was, felt a stirring of enormous pride.

But it must be said that in their rendition of the history, the organisers at times seemed a little overzealous in their ideas, for example when the marchers in the procession of the language movement put on some conspicuous black coats to distort history a little bit.

The overwhelming feeling amongst the spectators was that the opening ceremony was a grand spectacle which however lost some of its lustre and became almost embar-

rassing at times due to the hardly covert political undertones of some of the speeches delivered by the speakers.

The BCB president, AHM Mostafa Kamal and the state minister for youth and sports, Ahad Ali Sarker for instance seemed oblivious to the fact that it was a platform to champion the causes of a global event and Bangladesh cricket rather than a speech that was being made to a political rally. Their speech, although less than five minutes in length, seemed much longer due to the somewhat cringe worthy choice of phrases. In the stands, almost everyone looked a little embarrassed. But perhaps that is a risk you run when political entities hold positions in such internationally involved sports bodies.

However, not all blame should be dumped on the politicians. The legendary Runa Laila's choice of song raised a number of eyebrows around the stadium. In this age of political correctness, her decision to sing her hit number 'Dama dam mast Kalandar', especially in the month of February was perhaps not a universally popular choice, although rumour has it, it was enforced on her by the organizers. But in their defence it might also be said, that this is a World Cup for the sub-continent, and her song is best representative of a unified region, due to its popularity across the borders.

TALES OF THE FIRST GAME

June 7, 1975 at Lord's
England beat India by 202 runs
Sunil Gavaskar's mind-numbing 36 off 174 balls stole whatever show the first-ever World Cup game could've been.

June 9, 1979 at Edgbaston
West Indies beat India by 9 wickets
Gordon Greenidge's unbeaten 106 walked the giants home, West Indies making it certain that they would begin a successful campaign on the right track.

June 9, 1983 at The Oval
England beat New Zealand by 106 runs
Alan Lamb announced himself to the world with his century and England continued to start off World Cups in fine style only to fizzle out in the end.

Oct 8, 1987 at Hyderabad
Pakistan beat Sri Lanka by 15 runs
A young Aravinda de Silva threatened to pull off a huge surprise but Pakistan prevailed through Wasim Akram's pace.

Feb 22, 1992 at Auckland
New Zealand beat Australia by 37 runs
Innovative New Zealand caught Australia dozing, Martin Crowe hitting an epic ton to see the Kiwis home.

Feb 14, 1996 at Ahmedabad
New Zealand beat England by 11 runs
Nathan Astle attacked England's seamers out of the game, followed by Dion Nash's 3-wicket haul.

May 14, 1999 at Lord's
England beat Sri Lanka by 8 wickets
Alan Mullally swung Sri Lanka out with his 4-for, later it was Alec Stewart's 88 that saw the hosts home on what was a forgettable day.

Feb 9, 2003 at Cape Town
West Indies beat South Africa by 3 runs
Lance Klusener almost won it for the hosts but Brian Lara's supreme 116 was the cornerstone in the West Indies' fighting win.

March 13, 2007 at Kingston
West Indies beat Pakistan by 54 runs
Six wickets between Dwayne Bravo and Dwayne Smith took West Indies home in an opening game few would remember.

SPORTS POLL

Do you think India will be under pressure against the Tigers?

Yes 75.7%

No 24.3%

TOTAL VOTES: 486

WEEKLY QUESTION

Should the WC opening ceremony be any different?

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

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ESPN/STAR Sports/
STAR Cricket
ICC Cricket World Cup
Bangladesh v India
Live from 2:30pm
TEN Action+
La Liga
Real Madrid v Levante
Live from 2:00am (Sunday)



ICC Cricket World Cup
Bangladesh v India
Time: 2:30pm
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur



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