

BEYOND THE BOUNDARY

# Middle and leg, please

SHAKIL KASEM

**ICC Cricket World Cup 2011**  
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 a new day, a new format. Let's match from because for will be very now.

ing performing the lead up matches paint pictures. India 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 Shafiqul Islam (C) takes part in a stretching routine during a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Shafiqul 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, Moshfiqur 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.

Shafiqul 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. Proligate in the beginning, Shafiqul 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 Shafiqul, 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

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## 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.

### What to WATCH

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)

### DAY'S EVENT

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



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### 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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