

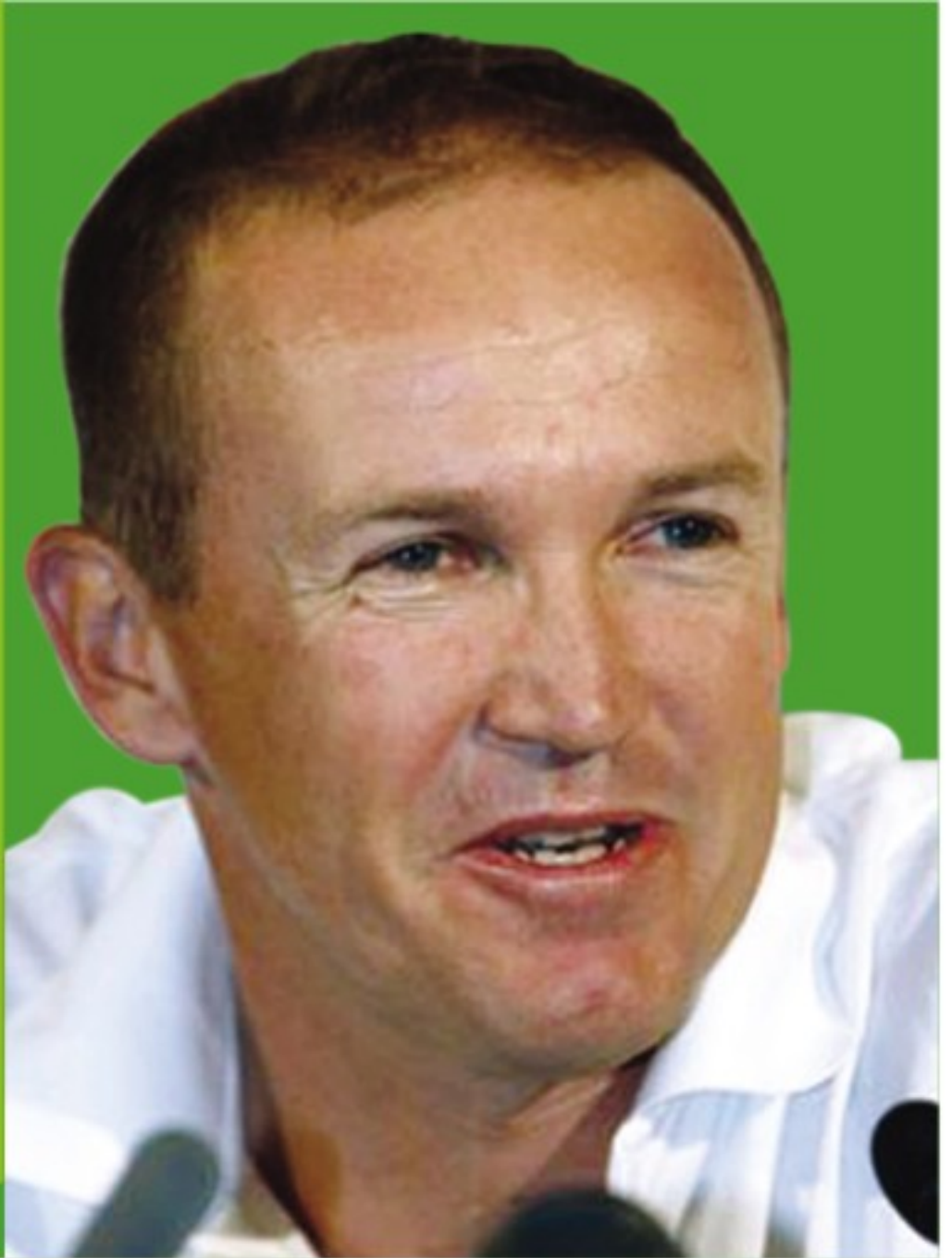
# Star SPORT

DHAKA FRIDAY DECEMBER 2, 2011, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

## Simple Flower

England coach Andy Flower said there were no "mysterious answers" to success after twice being honoured at the 2011 UK Coaching Awards. The former Zimbabwe batsman was named UK Coach of the Year and High Performance Coach of the Year having led England to their first Ashes triumph in Australia since the winter of 1986-87 at the start of this year. He then guided the team to the top of the world Test rankings with a 4-0 whitewash of India. A modest Flower said experience had taught him there are no "mysterious answers", adding "simplicity is the best place to start".

— AFP



## Bangladesh favourites

*Face Pakistan in SAFF Championship opener today*

ANISUR RAHMAN from Delhi



Their cricketing brothers might be getting a bit of stick from Pakistan on home soil but the Bangladesh football team can draw inspiration from their own run of success against their sub-continental neighbours on a football plain whey they kick start the SAFF Championship at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi today.

Bangladesh will certainly look to their 3-0 home win against Pakistan in the recent World Cup pre-qualifying game, but they will definitely miss that helpful excessive rain in an otherwise dry and cold Delhi in their pursuit to extend their unbeaten seven-match run against a tough Pakistan team that is not as talented and skillful as their cricketing brothers.

The match will start at 3:30pm (Bangladesh Standard time) with Ten Action+ providing live coverage from the venue. Last year's runners-up Maldives and Nepal from the same group will play the day's second match at the same venue.

Bangladesh are in a comparatively tough B Group, pitted against Pakistan, Maldives and Nepal, the latter two making up their lack of

pedigree with some solid preparation.

But Bangladesh will be buoyed by the fact that they have a good record in opening games having not lost a single one in the previous six editions of the tournament.

No doubt a winning start against Pakistan, who have not beaten Bangladesh in their last seven international matches will boost up the players before facing Maldives and Nepal and coach Nikola Ilievski and the players are upbeat.

"It is important for us to make a winning start and we are looking forward to starting the tournament with a victory," said Nikola after the official press conference at the



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"Pakistan may have a lot of changes in their squad that played against Bangladesh in the World Cup pre-qualifiers but we are well aware of it and the players are ready to take the challenge," said the Macedonian coach.

Striking duo Zahid Hasan Emily and Mithun Chowdhury were the key in Bangladesh's 3-0 home win over Pakistan in

SEE PAGE 17 COL 6



**BEGINNING OF THE ROT:** Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal trudges back to the dressing room after being dismissed on the very fourth ball of the innings, effectively signaling that the hosts would never recover in their opening one-dayer against Pakistan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Another no match

MOHAMMAD ISAM



The Bangladesh batsmen are well on their way to confine 2011 as their worst year in recent memory after yet another sub-100 score in the five-wicket defeat to Pakistan yesterday.

The first day-night one-dayer at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium was over as a contest by the first two hours after the Tigers were all out for 91 runs in 30.3 overs. The only consolation was the visitors' losing five wickets in the 25.4 overs they took to reach the target.

And it was spin that did almost all the damages with Shahid Afridi picking up a five-wicket haul, his fourth this year. It wasn't as if the leg-spinner revved up the wrists, rather the turn was quite easy to find on the Mirpur surface, already established by Mohammad Hafeez who bowled a crucial first-spell after opening the bowling for Pakistan.

Hafeez removed Tamim Iqbal quite easily before Umar Gul and Shoaib Malik took care of Naeem Islam and Mushfiqur Rahim by the twelfth over. Then it was Afridi's turn to wade into the Tigers.

Shahriar Nafees, who had plodded for 51 minutes for seven runs, was put out of his misery by an Afridi delivery that jumped on him. After taking out Mahmudullah Riyad, caught behind, and Shakib Al Hasan, who also mistimed a cut off a bouncy delivery, Forhad Reza's ODI return after three years was also cut short by the leg-spinner. His seventh ODI five-for was completed when Shafiul Islam was caught behind in the 31st over; Bangladesh finishing up below one-hundred for the fourteenth time in ODI history.

Perhaps inspired by his teammates' wretchedness or by his own batting enterprise, Rubel Hossain bowled two inspiring spells that gave him two wickets. Hafeez edged one to Nafees at slip off the Bagerhat paceman while Sarfraz Ahmed top-edged a short one to Shakib, who himself took two wickets.

The left-arm spinner's spell of 9.4 overs was evident enough of the state of the wicket, Shakib removing Younis Khan and then pinging the stumps by going between Umar Akmal's bat and pad.

But 91 is not a score for this, or any, bowling attack to defend and it is now down to the Bangladesh batsmen to validate their status in the country's cricket.

## Not at home at home!

SPORTS REPORTER

Mushfiqur Rahim remarked after the five-wicket loss to Pakistan yesterday that he hadn't seen much "home advantage" since October. But the more telling comment was that the Tigers are not entirely sure what score is good on the surfaces they are being served at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

The Bangladesh captain's confusion on what is a good score and the visitors' lack of confidence with the bat are indications of the quality of wickets.

There has been a change of boss at the Mirpur venue as Gamini de Silva, the chief curator, has been put in charge after the West Indies series. It was learned that the Bangladesh Cricket Board wasn't exactly happy with

SEE PAGE 17 COL 8

## False start by Siddikur

SPORTS REPORTER

It was a day of disappointment for Bangladesh on international sporting front. Bangladesh cricket team were bowled out for 91 by Pakistan in a one-dayer on home turf. Away in Hong Kong, the country's lone professional golfer Siddikur Rahman got off to a worst possible start in UBS Hong Kong Open with a five over 75.

And unless he improves his game dramatically Siddikur, who is holding the 106th position with nine other players after the first round, he is destined to miss the cut.

Meanwhile, world number two Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland brilliantly launched his quest for a first victory in Hong Kong Open with a masterful six-under-par 64 for the joint first round lead on Thursday.

The reigning US Open  
SEE PAGE 17 COL 3

## One step forward & going two back

BISHWAJIT ROY



Another meek surrender by the Bangladeshi batsmen to versatile Pakistan bowling attack in the first one-dayer of the three-match series simply compelled home team skipper Mushfiqur Rahim to bring up old question regarding Bangladesh's progress in the highest level of the game.

Following Bangladesh's dismissal below hundred runs and Pakistan top order batsmen's struggle in chase of the paltry target, questions were raised about whether the pitch was ideal for over-limit cricket and a bamboozled Mushfiqur also expressed his disappointment at the nature of the pitch saying that he still could not understand what "home advantage" meant.

But the home captain however had more important issues to address after yet another poor batting show and he didn't hesitate to say: "We can hardly claim that we have improved much and that's why we cannot say that there is any difference between old

Bangladesh and new Bangladesh. I think we are probably taking one step forward and going two back." It can be mentioned that Bangladesh have been dismissed below hundred three times this year.

Rather than blaming only the pitch the wicketkeeper-batsman identified lack of application as the main problem behind the Tigers' inconsistent batting in international cricket and he also confessed that there is a difference between the teams in the skill level. "So we have to work on it," said Mushfiqur.

The Bangladesh captain's sentiment was that batting was tough against this kind of a bowling attack on such a bowling-friendly pitch but it never justified their score of 91 in 30.3 overs. Man-of-the-match Shahid Afridi, who wrecked the Bangladeshi batting by taking five wickets, also said that the conditions were perfect for the spinners but still batting was not too difficult.

"It's [the pitch] not that difficult. If the batsmen want they can survive. You can take singles, rotate the strike and play yourself in. Maybe because of T20 cricket now batsmen don't have the temperament," observed the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

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