

Two senior US officials due next week

To discuss security, other issues

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Two high-level US delegations are due in Dhaka next week to discuss wide range of issues, including security, transparency, governance and countering extremism, with top government officials and civil society representatives.

Sarah Sewall, US under secretary of state for civilian security, democracy, and human rights, is scheduled to visit Bangladesh on March 29-31.

The other delegation led by Alan Bersin, US assistant secretary for international affairs and chief diplomatic officer at the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Policy, is due to tour Bangladesh on March 30-31 to discuss aviation and airport security and countering terrorism and extremism.

However, a delegation which was expected to arrive in the city this month has postponed its visit. A fresh tour schedule will be announced soon, said diplomatic sources.

US diplomats in Dhaka said the top US officials will visit Dhaka to strengthen collaboration between the two countries on security, democratic rights, labour and trade.

Thomas Dukes, deputy coordinator for cyber issues at the US State Department, was scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on March 22 on a two-day visit. But the tour was postponed due to urgency at home.

The DHS is a cabinet department of the US federal government, created in response to the 9/11 attacks with the primary responsibilities of protecting the US territory from terrorist attacks and responding to natural disasters.

Breaking

FROM PAGE 1
One of the trainees was Delwar Hossain Dulal, an assistant teacher at Bakal High-Songlogno Government Primary School in Agailjhara of Barisal.

"This training is very essential for people like us. Without computer, we cannot think of anything now, be it education or entertainment," he said.

Delwar, who teaches Bangladesh O Bishwa Parichoy (Bangladesh and Introduction to the World) to students of class-III and IV, said that upon returning to the school, he would develop digital contents on a chapter titled "Victory Day", using images of Pakistan army's surrender on December 16, 1971.

"It will help my students learn easily and effectively," he added.

Ummay Tanzila Chowdhury Munia was quick to respond to the instructions.

She was downloading a video on "Boishakhi Mela" from YouTube as she wanted to clip a part of it and project it while giving lessons.

"It will be fun teaching students with multimedia," said Tanzila, who teaches at Mohsina Model Government Primary School in Patia, Chittagong.

There are many institutions training people with eyesight, but such training to visually challenged people is unheard of, said Rashedujaman Chowdhury, a trainer and programme officer of YPSA.

"It is a big opportunity for them," he added.

There will be a positive impact as the teachers go back to their schools and teach students using computers and multimedia, said Rashedujaman, who is blind himself.

Multimedia classrooms have been set up in 20,500 secondary and 5,400 government primary schools across the country to facilitate modern methods in teaching 4.2 million students. The classrooms have been equipped with laptops, projectors and internet modems, government data shows.

The progress of the trainees in developing digital contents is encouraging, said Mirza Mohammad Didarul Anam, a lecturer at the Teachers' Training College.

He was explaining to them how to use technology to improve their teaching methods.

Didarul, who works on e-learning method and policy, said the training was on how to blend ICT skills, pedagogy and subject knowledge together to make classroom materials.

He, however, cited some challenges the visually challenged teachers face.

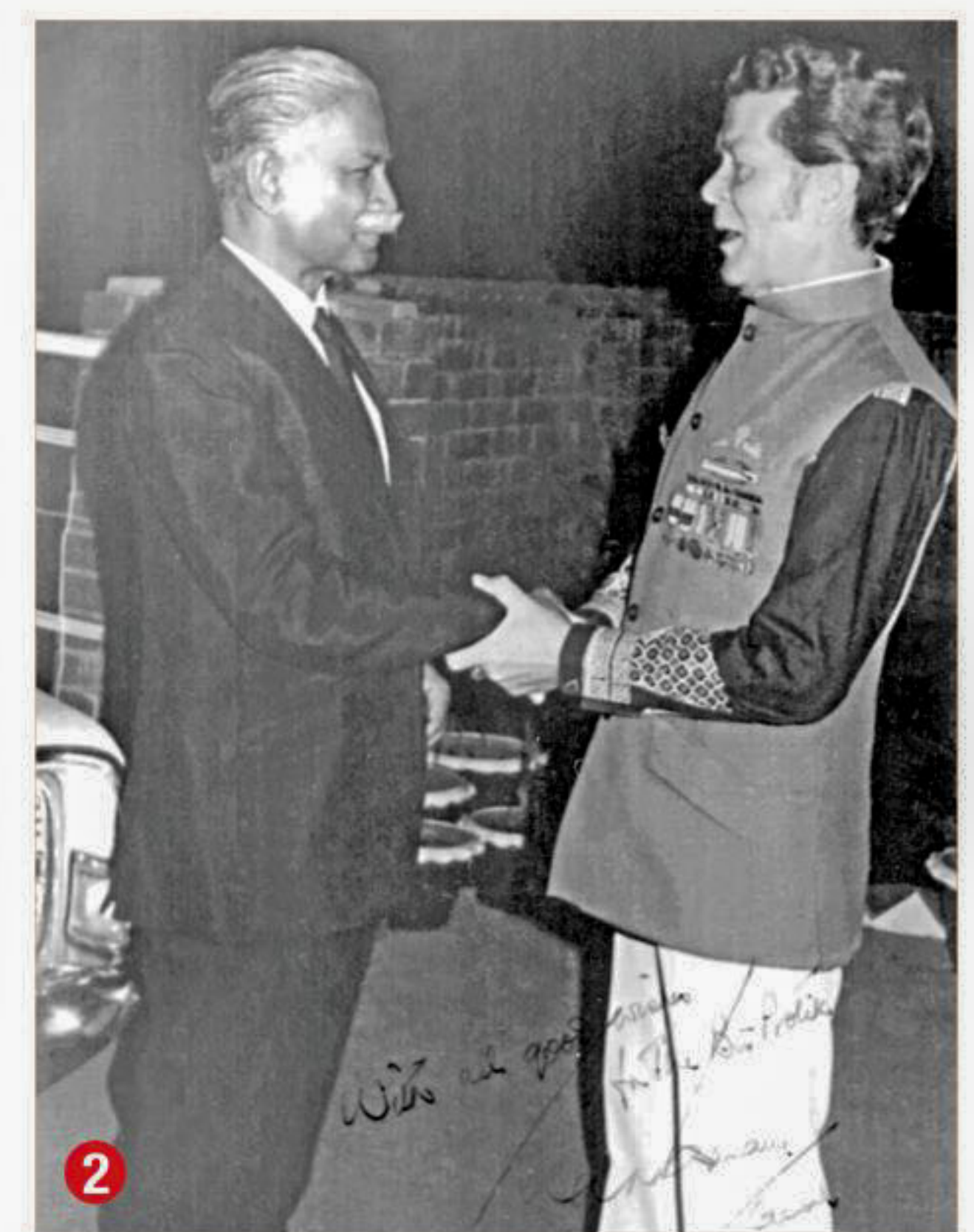
First is the selection of images and videos, for which they need support of a sighted person. Secondly, the screen reader software sometimes conflicts with other software programmes.

However, Vashkar, of a2i, who too cannot see, said the training would help remove communication barriers between visually impaired teachers and their students.

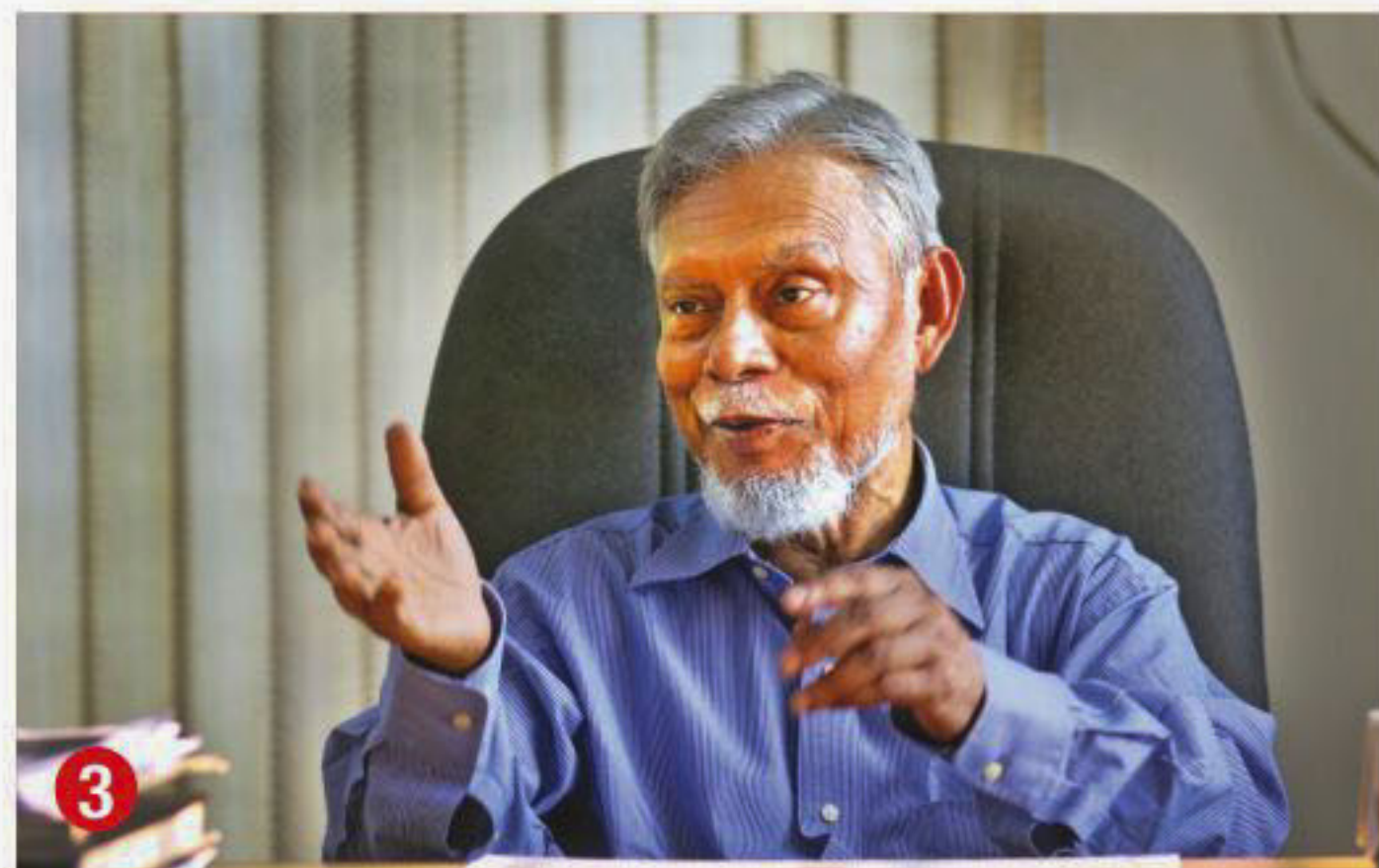
"It is not possible for them to get back their sight, but with the knowledge of computer and information technology, they will become capable like others."



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1. In an undated group photo, AKM Abdul Hai, second from left, and Uderland, third from right.
2. MAG Osmani and Uderland.
3. Abdul Hai, now 81, talking to The Daily Star.
4. A road named after Uderland in front of the Australian High Commission at Gulshan-2 in Dhaka.

PHOTO: PRIYOAUSTRALIA.COM.AU/COLLECTED/STAR

A friend in need

FROM PAGE 1
Dhaka University, to record the death and destruction and passed those on to the international media.

He had got a "curfew pass" from the military that allowed him to move around the city during the restricted hours. Besides, he used to fly the Australian flag on his Ford Fairlane car for added protection.

He had access to the top brass of the Pakistan army in Dhaka, including Lt Gen AAK Niazi, Lt Gen Tikka Khan and Maj Gen Rao Farman Ali, the officers intimately involved in the military operation and genocide.

Col (ret) Newaz of Baluch Regiment, who was the personnel and public relations manager of Bata in Lahore, introduced Uderland to Niazi and Tikka during one of his visits to Dhaka.

Making good use of his unhindered access to the cantonment and residences of Pakistani high officials, Uderland began collecting secret information and passing it on to Col (ret) Osmani, commander-in-chief of Mukti Bahini, and other senior Bangladeshi officials.

Ouderland grew up in a poor family in the Netherlands. Shoe shining was his family occupation.

He was conscripted into the national service in 1936 shortly after he got a job in Bata. During the Second World War, he was called up to serve as a sergeant in the Royal Signal Corps of the Netherlands.

Ouderland was captured by the Nazis and interned in a POW [prisoner of war] camp. But he managed to escape after a short time and joined the Dutch underground resistance movement as a spy as well as a guerrilla to drive out the Nazis from Holland.

"As I spoke fluent German and several Dutch dialects, I befriended the German high command and was thus able to help the Dutch underground movement," wrote Uderland in a letter.

This experience would come in handy when he joined the fight against another occupation force far from home.

He formed a secret group with a handful of Bata staff to secretly work with the freedom fighters. His comrades included Bata's personal manager AKM

Abdul Hai, physician Dr Hafizul Islam Bhuiyan and officials Abdul Maleque and Humayun Kabir Khan.

The Australian High Commission knew about his mission but did not stop him.

The Daily Star could contact Abdul Hai, a close confidant to Uderland.

"Ouderland was not a Bangalee but he loved the land just like any other freedom fighter," said Hai. Tears welled up in the 81-year-old's eyes, reminiscing about his foreign colleague.

At the early stage of the war, Hai said, he moved to the Bata factory area in Tongi in the outskirts of the city with his family on Uderland's advice.

The Pakistan Army took over the Telephone Industries Corporation (TIC), adjacent to the Bata factory soon. The danger of living next to a military camp prompted Uderland to make two bunkers for his staff on the grounds of the Bata factory.

The bunkers would save the lives of more than 50 people later in December when the Indian air force attacked the Pakistani camps next door, Hai recalled.

About Uderland's intelligence gathering, he said, "Ouderland would praise the Pakistanis and criticised the Bangalees to gain the army's confidence. The officials freely shared their plans with him."

"We used to send the gathered intelligence to a den at Zinzira in Dhaka to be forwarded to Osmani."

Ouderland sent his wife and daughter away to Australia and threw open the doors to his residence to the freedom fighters.

He hid weapons in the rooftop water tank, regularly sent shoes, blankets and medicine to freedom fighters. He had a pistol that he gave to Joynul, a Mukti Bahini member of sector 2.

Ouderland engaged Bata's Dr Hafizul Islam for treatment of injured fighters.

Despite his contributions, Uderland did not get the citizenship of Bangladesh though he applied for this after the independence, said Abdul Hai.

He left Bangladesh in 1978 as his health deteriorated.

Later, some Bangladeshis in Australia started a campaign for granting citizen-

ship to this friend of Bangladesh. But before their efforts could get results, Uderland passed away in Perth in Australia on May 18, 2001.

Bangladesh invited him twice to honour him in 1992 and 1998. He could not make it because of poor health. But he donated Tk 10,000, the award money he got in 1998, to the Bangladesh Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust.

The Bangladeshi community in Australia has formed Uderland Memorial Committee. A library has been named Uderland Memorial Library at the Bangladesh High Commission in Canberra.

Bangladeshis and the high commission paid tribute to Uderland on May 24, 2001 at his funeral in Perth. They sang the national anthem of Bangladesh before his coffin draped with the red and green flag of Bangladesh, said Kamrul Ahsan Khan, convener of the memorial committee.

The road in front of the Australian High Commission in Dhaka has been named after William Ouderland, a friend who loved the freedom loving people of this country.

Independence

FROM PAGE 1
united resistance against the occupation forces.

The military junta, in a bid to stop the legitimate movement of the Bangalees, arrested him on that night following his declaration of independence. They then took him to the then West Pakistan and kept him in a prison for the entire nine-month period of the Liberation War.

Earlier on the Black Night of March 25, the Pakistani forces had brutally cracked down on the unarmed people of the then East Pakistan.

But the valiant people of Bangladesh took up arms and fought for independence under the leadership of Bangabandhu.

The long-cherished victory was finally achieved on December 16 after a nine-month struggle at the cost of blood of some three million people and untold sufferings of millions more.

A 31-gunshot salute at dawn will mark the beginning of the day's celebrations today. The national flag will be hoisted atop government buildings. Major buildings will be illuminated for a festive look.

The day is a public holiday. President Abdul Hamid and Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina will place wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar early in the morning as a mark of profound respect to the memories of the martyrs.

Leaders of different political parties, socio-political organisations, freedom fighters and people from all walks of life will also place wreaths at the memorial.

The state-owned Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television as well as private television and radio stations will air special programmes. National dailies will bring out special supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

Special meals will be served at hospitals, prisons, orphanages and other public institutions.

Some navy ships will be on display open to the public at Sadarghat in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Chittagong, Khulna, Mongla port and Barisal from 2:00pm till sunset.

Different political parties as well as socio-cultural and professional organisations have drawn elaborate programmes to observe the day in a befitting manner.

The programmes include hoisting the national flag, placing wreaths at the National Memorial, offering spe-

cial prayers, holding seminars, discussions and cultural functions.

Liberation War Museum and Abhijatri will organise a 36-km march from the Central Shaheed Minar to National Memorial at Savar from 6:00am today, as a show of love and respect for the martyrs.

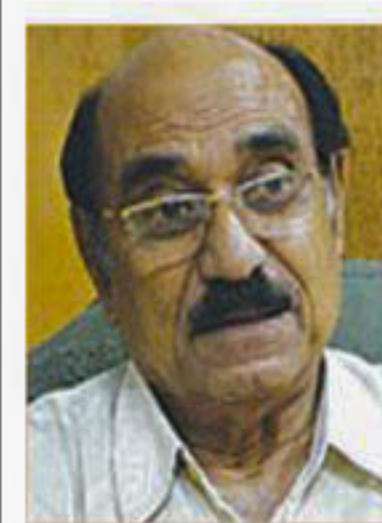
On the eve of the Independence Day, President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages yesterday.

The president in his message urged all to make united efforts to accelerate the overall development and democratic advancement of the country.

"Nevertheless, we have to go a long way for achieving the desired goals of independence. I believe that sincere and concerted efforts from all strata irrespective of party affiliation are imperative to reach the goals," he added.

In her message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, "I hope that all the citizens of our country would engage themselves with utmost sincerity, honesty and dedication to build Bangladesh as a peaceful, non-communal, developed and prosperous country and help place it at a prestigious position in the community of nations."

Pro-AL lawyers win



Yusuf Hossain Humayun



AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon

FROM PAGE 1
(assistant secretaries), Khan Mohammad Shameem Aziz, Abdul Aziz Mia Minto and Nashreen Siddiqua Nina (executive members).

The other winners from JAOP are Fahima Nasrin Munni (vice presi-

dent), Kamal Hossain, Nasir Uddin Samrat, Nasir Uddin Ahmed Ashim and Rezaul Karim Reza (executive members).

The two-day SCBA polls ended on Thursday afternoon and the results were announced early yesterday.

The pro-BNP JAOP had been dominating in the elections since 2010.

Last year, the panel had won in nine posts, including those of the president and the secretary.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Supreme Court lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan, also the editor of Dhaka Law Reports, a publication of SC judgements, said the lawyers have voted for the AL-backed panel members as they wanted change.

TRUCK CATCHES FIRE

Driver, helper burnt to death in Comilla

3 more killed in Cox's Bazar road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A truck driver and his helper were burnt to death as the vehicle caught fire in an accident on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Chandina upazila in Comilla yesterday.

The dead are driver Mohon, 60, of Sayedpur village, and Polash, 28, of Dharmapur village in Sadar upazila of the district.

The accident happened around 3:00pm when a sand-laden truck lost control after one of its tyres punctured and hit a covered van from behind. The truck was heading towards Comilla city from Daudkandi, said Sergeant Moniruzzaman of Iliotganj Highway Police Camp.

The truck caught fire instantly. Failing to come out, the driver and the helper were burnt to death on the spot. The doors had got jammed due to the impact of the collision, he said.

Moniruzzaman, however, could not immediately confirm what caused the fire.

On information, police went to the

scene and sent the bodies to a nearby hospital morgue for autopsies.

No one in the covered van was hurt, added the police official.

In Cox's Bazar, at least three passengers of a CNG-run auto-rickshaw were killed after it collided head-on with a pick-up van in Maheshkhali upazila yesterday afternoon.

The dead are Razia Begum, 30, of Chakarua upazila; Nurul Alam, 30, and Mohammad Kayes, 28, of Maheshkhali, our Cox's Bazar correspondent reports.

An auto-rickshaw with four people on board and a goods-laden pick-up van had a head-on collision in Baruapara village around 3:30pm, leaving three of the auto-rickshaw passengers dead on the spot and the driver injured, said Babul Chandra Banik, officer-in-charge of Maheshkhali Police Station.

Police seized the pick-up van but its driver and the helper fled, he said.

Tigers seeking solace in Eden

FROM PAGE 1
So in that context his teammates, who are well aware of that, will try to give their mentor a perfect send-off from the World T20 stage when they face a team that they have played thrice but have never beaten.

New Zealand are the team in form in this World Cup and have already made it to the semifinals with three straight wins against Australia, India and Pakistan. This simple statistic is evident enough to see how tough a proposition it is for Bangladesh to score their only win in the tournament and return home with some sort of satisfaction in an emotional campaign, marred by the expulsion of two key bowlers and bordering

covers, the more volatile it becomes for the batsmen. However, if the sun continues to burn the way it was burning at the Eden Gardens yesterday, we can only expect a high-scoring contest.

Whatever way the wicket may behave, the post-McCullum era Kiwis under the leadership of Kane Williamson, will seek their fourth straight win to take pole position in Group B. For Bangladesh a victory will alleviate some pain from that unimaginable defeat against India. We can only hope the Tigers play with that same vein of aggression and not make the kind of blunders they demonstrated at the M Chinnaswamy in Bangalore.

Going by the last game at this very ground it will be absolutely vital for the captain to read the wicket first because of its fleeting nature. Besides, the more it remains under

brilliance and bewilderment. Mashrafe's men will still be licking the wounds of that one-run defeat from the jaws of victory against India when they will take the field at the Eden Gardens, where they suffered a stinging 55-run defeat against Pakistan ten days ago.

On that day Mashrafe lost the toss and that proved devastating for his team when Shahid Afridi returned with a rare blast from the past, something too overpowering to turn around.

Besides, the more it remains under