



Masura Parvin (L) is the toast of her teammates as her 49th-minute goal proved to be the winner in the final of the inaugural SAFF U-18 Women's Championship against Nepal at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

Cheers from Changlimithang

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh girls added a new feather to their burgeoning cap by winning the title of the inaugural SAFF U-18 Women's Championship following a 1-0 win over Nepal at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu yesterday.

Defender Masura Parvin snatched the decisive goal four minutes into the second half, cleverly heading home a long free-kick from midfielder Monika Chakma.

The all-conquering girls romped to the title with an all-win record, having scored 24 goals on the way and conceding just one. Striker Sirat Jahan Shopna became the top-scorer of the championship with eight goals.

Bangladesh went into the final as favourites having beaten Nepal 2-1 in group stages. However, the final turned out to be an even tougher contest as the Himalayan girls put up a valiant effort and fought the girls in red and green shoulder to shoulder.

Both teams were cautious in the first half and the tussle for midfield was far from decided, with chances were few and far between at either end.

Bangladesh, though, had a clear opening in the seventh minute when Krishna Rani Sarker raced onto a long-kick from goalkeeper Rupna Chakma, leaving the Nepal defence in her wake. However, with the goalkeeper halfway down the line, Krishna chipped her effort a bit too strongly and missed the target by some distance.

After a scrappy 45 minutes, the game burst into life early in the second half as both teams upped the ante, with the game stretching and chances flying in at both ends. And Bangladesh were the ones who took advantage of the end-to-end stuff, with Masura springing up as the unlikely scorer, cleverly heading in Monika's free-kick from just inside the danger zone, leaving Nepal goalkeeper Anjana Rana Magar haplessly out of position.

Nepal were unlucky not to get an equaliser just two minutes later when Rupna's fumble from a long cross deposited the ball right at the

middle of the box, but a Nepal forward's bicycle kick came off the post, much to the relief of the Bangladesh team.

Although Bangladesh showed a lack of cutting edge in front of goal, with the tournament's top-scorer Sirat Jahan Shopna not her usual self after injury, they courageously held on to the slender lead till the final whistle, sending the team and the Bangladeshi supporters into massive celebration.

The victory will erase many a painful memory for Bangladesh football associated with this venue. The most humiliating defeat for the men's team had come at this very venue two years ago against Bhutan. And while the under-16 boys' team had registered a heroic comeback win against India here last year, they fell to a virtual title-deciding defeat against the Nepalese in the SAFF U-18 Championship last year at Bhutan's national stadium. And last but not the least, the girls' under-15 team suffered a shock defeat in the final of the SAFF Women's U-15 Championship to India at this venue just two months ago.

NAT'L CRICKET LEAGUE Second round from today

SPORTS REPORTER

Following an exciting first round of the 20th National Cricket League, the second round of the domestic first class competition will begin today across four venues.

After both the Tier-1 games ended in a draw, defending champions Khulna will take on Barisal at the Sheikh Abu Nasir Stadium in Khulna while Rajshahi will lock horns with Rangpur at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi.

In Tier-2 the two outfits from the capital who won their respective first round matches -- Dhaka Division and Dhaka Metropolis -- will face off at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali stadium in Fatullah while Sylhet play against Chattogram at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar.

Solitary ODI today

SPORTS REPORTER

Following their 3-0 loss against the Pakistan women's team in the four-match T20I series, the Bangladesh women's team will look to bounce back in the lone ODI against the visitors in Cox's Bazar today.

Although they had a brilliant run after their Asia Cup triumph in June, which was followed by a successful series against the Netherlands and victory in the ICC World T20I Qualifiers, the Tigresses failed to carry that momentum back home.

The batting continued to fail as in the three matches they were bundled scores of their lowest score of 30, 81 and 77.

Clinical India clinch sixth title

SPORTS REPORTER



Much like their seniors in the recently concluded Asia Cup, an unbeaten campaign culminated in the Indian youths clinching their sixth Under-19 Asia Cup with a 144-run win over Sri Lanka Under-19 in the final at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Left-arm spinner Harsh Tyagi was the star of the show as he cut through the Sri Lankan batting order with figures of six for 38 in 10 overs as the young islanders collapsed to 160 all out in chase of India's 304 for three.

Tyagi was all over the Sri Lankans like white on rice, taking the wickets of opener Nishan Fernando, middle-order batsmen Pasindu Sooriyabandara, Kalana Perera, Nuwanindu Fernando and tailenders Sandun Mendia and

Kalhara Senarathne.

Sri Lanka reached 66 for one after opener Nipun Dananjaya was dismissed by left-arm seamer Mohit Jangra. But when Tyagi had Sooriyabandara caught for 31 in the 16th over, it started a collapse of three wickets for 13 runs with the third one being the innings top-scorer, Fernando with 49.

From then, only number six Navod Paranavithana showed any resistance with a 61-ball 48, but the rest were a procession of incoming and outgoing batsmen as no one other than the three top order batsmen and Paranavithana scored more than seven. Left-arm spinner Siddharth Desai was the other wicket-taker with two scalps.

Earlier, India's dominance started with a clinical show from the batsmen as they lost only three wickets while piling on 304 after opting to bat at the toss. All five batsmen played substantial innings, with the lowest score

being 31 from Devdutt Padikkal at number three. Openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Anuj Rawat set the tone with a 121-run stand before the latter departed for 57 off 79 balls with four fours and three sixes. A 59-run second-wicket stand followed before Jaiswal was out for the top score of 85 off 113 balls with eight fours and a six.

Padikkal was third out with the score on 194 in 40.5 overs, and Simran Singh and Ayudh Badoni then plundered 110 runs off the last 55 balls in an unbroken stand.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA U-19s: 304 for 3 in 50 overs (Jaiswal 85, Anuj 57, Padikkal 31, Simran 65 not out, Badoni 52 not out; Perera 1-55, Senarathne 1-45, Wellalage 1-24)

SRI LANKA U-19s: 160 all out in 38.4 overs (Fernando 49, Sooriyabandara 31, Paranavithana 48; Desai 2-37, Tyagi 6-38)

Result: India U-19s won by 144 runs. Player-of-the-match: Harsh Tyagi.



PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

It was a battle between two unbeaten sides in the Under-19 Asia Cup final, but it was ultimately India who clinched their sixth crown with a dominant display against Sri Lanka at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Shakib's 2019 WC in jeopardy

MAZHAR UDDIN



A left little finger injury that just a month ago seemed to be a minor one has now worsened to the point that ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan's participation in the 2019 ICC World Cup, set to begin on May 30 in England, is currently in jeopardy.

The latest updates from doctors after assessing his injured area is that the cricketer will not be able to undergo surgery at least for the next six months, until the infection fully subsides and has been observed to not have any traces in the bone. Further details of his current state will be known after test results arrives in the next few days.

The cricketer, who is in 72-hour observation under doctor Greg Hoy at Epworth Hospital in Melbourne, will have to stay in Australia for at least eight days.

The doctors have started administering antibiotics and injections again. Shakib is expected to return to the field after three months to test whether the infection recurs.

"Since there is no chance of doing surgery till around six months elapse, because of the infection. If that [infection] remains [when the surgery is done] then the hand will be ruined, so no one will take that chance. We have to wait till it's a hundred per cent sure that the infection is gone.

"When the medication stops after one-and-a-half to two months we have to wait for one or two months to see if the infection increases. I will also have to play to see if the infection increases. When all the tests are done and we are sure that there is no chance of the infection coming back or increasing, we can go for surgery. It may take six months or one year. Doctors are thinking six months to a year," Shakib told The Daily Star yesterday.

There is little chance of Shakib avoiding the surgery altogether, if the pain miraculously disappears after the medication ends. Even after surgery the finger will be in a fixed position with little to no movement, but it is expected to be in a state suitable to play cricket..

Shakib injured his finger in the final of the tri-nation series against Sri Lanka in January this year.

After returning from the Caribbean in August, Shakib said that he will have to undergo surgery, but Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan expressed a desire that he postpone the operation till after the Asia Cup.

Shakib return from the UAE mid-way through the Asia Cup and had to undergo immediate surgery to remove the pus from his finger in Dhaka and flew for Australia on October 5.

SHAKIB'S RACE TO THE WC IN CASE OF SURGERY

When the medication stops then we have to wait for one or two months to see if the infection increases. Doctors are thinking six months to a year. The medication will end after a month and a half to two months from now; I have to start playing a month after the medication ends to see whether the infection is still there, whether the virus has remained in the bone. If the pain goes away miraculously, there will not have to be a surgery, but chances of that are minuscule.

SHAKIB AL HASAN

after consulting with doctor in Melbourne

2 months (December 2018) -- medication ends for Shakib

3 months (January 2019) -- Shakib starts playing to see whether or not infection recurs

4/5 months (February/March 2019) -- Tests to see if the infection recurred

6 months (April 2019) -- Surgery, if no infection found. Six to eight weeks to recover

7 months (May 2019) -- approximate deadline for final World Cup squad submission

8 months (June 2, 2019) -- Bangladesh's first match of the 2019 World Cup



Bangladesh's star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan starts treatment for an infected left little finger in a Melbourne hospital. Shakib cannot undergo surgery until the infection subsides.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Ton-up Hafeez puts Pak on top

AFP, Dubai



Opener Mohammad Hafeez celebrated his recall with an impressive century as Pakistan dominated the opening day of the first Test against Australia in Dubai on Sunday.

Pakistan were 255 for 3 at the close of play, with Haris Sohail unbeaten on 15 and nightwatchman Mohammad Abbas one not out as Australia's bowlers toiled away with little success on a flat Dubai Stadium pitch.

Hafeez, a late inclusion in the squad after a double hundred in a domestic match, led the run-feast with a knock of 126 -- his 10th Test hundred -- during a 278-minute stay at the crease and put on 205 runs for the opening stand with Imamul Haq, who made a career best 76.

Pakistan skipper Sarfraz Ahmed won the toss and decided to bat, and Hafeez and Imam laid the platform for a big first innings as Australia's pace-spin attack was held wicketless before tea.

Hafeez, whose last of 50 Test appearances came in England two years ago, brought up his hundred by

pushing spinner Jon Holland for two after hitting a pair of boundaries off Mitchell Starc the previous over.

He was given a life on 74 when Mitchell Marsh could not hold on to a



In his first innings after being recalled to the Pakistan Test side, opener Mohammad Hafeez hit a century on the first day of the first Test against Australia in Dubai yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

tough chance on the boundary off the bowling of Holland having covered some 20 yards in the outfield.

Hafeez, whose innings included 15 boundaries, was finally trapped leg before wicket by Peter Siddle by a ball which beat him on the front push.

Hafeez, who turns 38 later this month, was thrilled to be able to aid the team on his comeback.

"I am really happy to score this hundred and helping the team," said Hafeez. "We back ourselves to score 250 more runs and then put pressure on Australia."

Hafeez admitted the last few months were very tough on him, having missed out on selection for the Asia Cup held in the UAE last month and then initially in the Test team.

"There were too many problems and I came to a stage where I was ready to take a drastic step (by retiring) but my wife and (former Pakistan bowler) Shoaib Akhtar stopped me. I would have been doing something else had I not been stopped."

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: First innings 255 for 3 (Imamul 76, Hafeez 126; Siddle 1-23, Lyon 1-63, Holland 1-72)