



The Bangladesh cricket team reached Chattogram yesterday to start preparation for the first of the two-match Test series against Sri Lanka, who arrived in the capital yesterday. The first Test will start from May 15, after which the two teams will head to Dhaka for the second and final Test, beginning on May 23.

PHOTO:BCB

# ‘Proper use of available weapons is key’

During the meeting between the Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan and the three captains and coaching staff yesterday, players’ mentality was in the midst of discussion. According to veteran coach Mohammad Salahuddin, the combination of both mental and technical aspects could assist the Tigers in becoming more consistent. The Daily Star’s Mazhar Uddin spoke to the esteemed local coach about the challenges ahead of the upcoming Sri Lanka series during an exclusive interview, the excerpts of which are as follows:

**The Daily Star (DS): Do you think the time has come for Bangladesh to regularly win Test matches at home?**  
**Mohammad Salahuddin (MS):** Considering the current situation of the Bangladesh team, I think we possess the ability to beat any side at home. We do have enough ammunition in our ranks to scalp twenty wickets in a Test match, especially considering the pace bowling department has evolved a lot. So, if we can bat well, it isn’t impossible to win the series.

**DS: Is it the mental aspect that needs upgrading to combat our tendency of collapsing horribly in Test matches?**  
**MS:** It’s vital to adjust with the pitch and it won’t happen only by the mental aspect, as you also need to be technically sound. When you believe that you can stay and bat in the wicket, then you actually can but if you feel it’s hard to survive, then it creates doubt in your mind.

**DS: What could be the biggest challenge against Sri Lanka?**  
**MS:** The strategy should be simple. But since I’m not part of the team, it won’t be justified no matter what I say as the team will surely have their own strategy. I think the proper use of available weapons is key. At the same time, a lot also depends on the current form of batters. Ultimately, the combination and execution would decide things. Speaking of challenges, I



think it’ll be important for the players to rather play according to the strategy, in order to facilitate a high chance of success. Spin suits a lot on our wicket, and therefore I think we should take the home advantage since we have a good idea about the pitch and conditions and are aware of our ability. If the batters can play a long innings, especially the top six, we will have a great chance, in my

taller South African spinners extracted good bounce with turn, which was a huge factor.

In my opinion, it’ll be important to see what type of bowlers can suit us here. Plus, we know which length to bowl, which is a key factor as well. You must grab the home advantage, I reckon.

I’d also like to appreciate the pace bowlers, who have improved considerably of late. When your quicks do well, it automatically puts a positive impact on the batting front since a total of even 300 runs on the board makes you stay in the game. Since the bowling department is firing and along with Shakib’s inclusion, I think we’ll have a huge advantage.

**DS: Do you think the expectation level is relatively higher on the younger players in the team?**  
**MS:** Young or old, there will be eleven players on the ground representing the team, and so everyone needs to contribute. It’s important to know the role in whatever position you bat, regardless of whether you are a newbie or have been playing for a long time.

Suppose, whoever bats at number three, even if he is young, he is the best player for that position. Therefore, it’s important to bring the best out of him. Instead of categorising seniors and juniors, it is important to let the eleven players play as per their roles for the betterment of the team.

## Archers fire on point in Iraq

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh archers are on the verge of tasting glory in three events of Archery Asia Cup Stage-2 world ranking tournament as they booked their last hurdle clashes against India after beating their respective rivals in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq yesterday.

Bangladesh men’s recurve team, women’s recurve team and compound men’s team reached their respective event’s finals, scheduled to be held on May 11, while Bangladesh compound women’s team had to remain content with advancing to the bronze-medal match after losing to Kazakhstan in the semi-finals.

Ruman Sana, Hakim Ahmed Rubel and Abdur Rahman Alif, of the men’s recurve team, initially clean-swept Iraq 6-0 in the quarterfinals before notching a hard-fought 5-4 victory over Iran in the semi-final, where the men in red and green overcame the tiebreakers with a 29-24 win following a 4-4 score-line after four sets.

The women’s recurve team then followed Ruman and Co’s footsteps as Diya Siddique, Nasin Akhter and Beauty Roy thumped Iraq 6-0 in the quarterfinals before thrashing Uzbekistan 5-1 in the last-four hurdle.

In the men’s compound event, Bangladesh progressed to semi-finals after getting a bye in the quarterfinal, after which the team of Ashikuzzaman, Mithu Rahman and Newas Ahmed Rakib beat Kazakhstan 231-228 in the semi-final to also book their final encounter against their superior Indian counterparts.



## ‘It’s not a funeral’

REUTERS

Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp told his side to stop behaving as if they had attended a funeral after a 1-1 draw against Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday dealt a serious blow to their title challenge and handed the advantage to Manchester City.

Luis Diaz rescued a point for Liverpool as they went top of the Premier League on goal difference but City can open up a three-point gap with a win against Newcastle United on Sunday.

“First and foremost, we should stop behaving like it is a funeral,” said Klopp. “I didn’t say that to the boys but it’s a little bit the mood here. We still talk about football and these kinds of things can happen. In my life, much worse things happened and I’m still here.”

The German added that he did not expect champions City to slip up with four matches remaining.

Liverpool, who have already won the League Cup, are chasing a quadruple of trophies this season after reaching the finals of the FA Cup and Champions League.

Meanwhile, Tottenham Hotspur manager Antonio Conte said his side were worthy contenders for a spot in the Premier League top four.

“There are three games to go for us, four games for Arsenal. “Not easy for us, not easy for Arsenal.” Conte told reporters.

“We deserve to stay in this race, because I think in November, not many people believed that Tottenham could fight until the end for a place in the Champions League. Now we are in the race and we are deserving of this.”



## Diabate rescues MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

A hatrick from Suleymane Diabate helped struggling Mohammedan avoid defeat and eventually eke out a 3-3 draw against Chittagong Abahani in a chaotic encounter of the Bangladesh Premier League at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Dutta Stadium in Cumilla yesterday.

Following a second-half penalty decision in favour of Chittagong Abahani by referee GM Chowdhury, the Black and Whites refrained from play for more than five minutes and their Nigerian midfielder Obi Moneke argued with the referee and got into a scuffle with compatriot Ebimobewe Thankgod of Chittagong Abahani after the final whistle. The incident also led to brawls among the fans and officials of the two sides before cops intervened to calm the situation.

Chittagong Abahani were on the verge of victory but Malian forward Diabate spoiled their party by equalising – in the process completing his hatrick – in the stoppage time of the second half with a



header. The draw kept Mohammedan’s unbeaten run in the league against the port city outfit intact for three successive seasons. Diabate gave Mohammedan a brisk start, rising high to head in a cross from Abid Hossain in the second minute but the lead last only 10 minutes as Shakhawat Hossain Rony equalised for Chittagong Abahani.

Rony gave the port city side the lead in the 26th minute with a powerful shot from inside the box before Thankgod converted a spot-kick just before the hour-mark after Macedonian defender Jesmin Mecinovicj pushed the Nigerian inside the box.

Mohammedan mounted pressure and Diabate reduced the margin in the 67th minute before completing his hatrick with another header in stoppage time. Chittagong Abahani are now in fifth position with 23 points, one point ahead of Mohammedan.

In the day’s other match, Uttar Baridhara beat newcomers Swadhinata KS 2-0, with Mostafa Kaharba scoring both goals.



Tunisian Ons Jabeur became the first African player to win a WTA 1000 title after defeating American Jessica Pegula 7-5, 0-6, 6-2 in an entertaining Madrid Open final on Saturday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## ‘Pace of Umran hard to be ignored’

AGENCIES

India’s cricketing establishment has over the years shown patience in grooming a pack of world-class bowlers but in near future, the genuine pace of Umran Malik will be hard to ignore, according to former Australia captain Ian Chappell.

In a column for ESPNcricinfo, Chappell wrote, “India’s pace-bowling revolution shows no sign of abating, and the name on IPL watchers’ lips is currently that of the pacy Umran Malik. In the past India has displayed patience in developing its fast-bowling group but the genuine pace of Malik will be hard to ignore.

“In a world where fast bowling is a valuable commodity, India are now a shining light,” the Aussie legend added.