

## Ireland seek creativity in breaking partnerships

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

Ireland coach Heinrich Malan said they were looking to put some pressure on Shakib Al Hasan, Tawhid Hridoy, and Mushfiqur Rahim with wickets in the middle overs to thwart Bangladesh in the second ODI, slated to be played at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium today.

The visitors had bowled well early on in the Bangladesh innings on Saturday. When Najmul Hossain Shanto fell, the Tigers were in a tricky position and would have suffered if another wicket fell during that phase, but Shakib and Hridoy took the game away from Ireland's grasp during those middle overs. The 135-run stand between Shakib-Hridoy followed by the quickfire 80 between Mushfiqur-Hridoy took Bangladesh to their highest-ever ODI total.

"He [Shakib] is obviously a quality player. He showed it again yesterday. We are trying to find ways to get wickets in the middle overs of white-ball matches," Malan said.

"We picked up some wickets in the powerplay, but they built a nice partnership through the middle and allowed them to get a foundation, to have a successful death period.

"We are taking that into account, looking at tomorrow, we have to come up with one or two creative ways to break partnerships and get some quality players in the opposition under pressure," further said the Ireland coach, adding that his side's top six or seven have shown mettle in white-ball cricket. Thus, they will look to rectify what happened in the first game to keep the series alive.

"It was a nice surface. It wasn't as affected as we thought it would be. It is something that we identified and something we will rectify tomorrow."



## Shakib fulfils long-cherished dream

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has hogged the spotlights for mixed reasons in the past few days.

Amid controversy over his recent Dubai trip, Shakib played a scintillating 93-run knock against Ireland in the first ODI of the three-match series at the Sylhet International Stadium on Saturday and, in the process, reached a milestone of scoring 7k ODI runs.

On Sunday, the 35-year-old cricketer pulled off another success story by completing his graduation in BBA from the American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB).

Shakib in his speech during the convocation ceremony on Sunday said that he was delighted as he fulfilled a long-cherished dream. He was searching for words while trying to express his emotion and the Tigers talisman compared the feeling with achieving Test cap. "When you dream, you dream it big and honestly work to achieve the goal," said Shakib, who recalled his mother's inspiration behind this success.

Shakib completed his school and college from the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan (BKSP). Another national cricketer in Anamul Haque Bijoy also attended the AIUB's convocation ceremony as a graduate.



Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal curiously follows some instructions from head coach Chandika Hathurusingha during a training session yesterday. It was a rest day for the Tigers but Tamim showed up at the ground as the left-hander will be desperate to get back among big runs when they meet Ireland in the second ODI at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium today.

## Tamim looks to get in the groove

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Sylhet

Rain was in the offing at Sylhet and it rendered any outfield activities impossible yesterday for the Tigers who perhaps thankfully took the opportunity to take in the relaxing day from the team hotel.

Liton Das was watching on from a balcony in the team hotel as it drizzled away. He captured a video as soggy morning made the distant hills barely visible. Liton's opening partner and ODI captain Tamim Iqbal was the only player who showed up at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium on a previously scheduled rest day for the team with no practice.

Tamim had ignored the slumber of a day and made it to the stadium to work on his individual game, with head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, spin coach Rangana Herath and team logistics manager Nafees Iqbal coming along with the skipper.

Bangladesh had won by their biggest margin in terms of runs in ODIs just a day before. The 183-run win saw batters grab the limelight with an aggressive intent before bowlers left their mark by dismantling Ireland for 155. Shakib Al Hasan was back in his element immediately with an 89-ball 93. Debutant Tawhid Hridoy, too, missed out on a century during a productive 92 off 85 deliveries.

Mushfiqur Rahim showed sublime hitting prowess during a quickfire 26-ball 44. Liton Das and Najmul Hossain Shanto had found starts but were unable to carry on earlier during that Bangladesh innings but both have been amongst runs.

The only dark cloud in Tamim's mind may have been his own performances recently.

Tamim hit two fifties during the 2-1 away series loss to Zimbabwe in August last year but his bat has not smiled since. The left-hander had already announced retirement from

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T20Is and also sat out the India series due to an injury problem. Having returned for the England ODIs, he was not able to make an impression.

Hathurusingha had been in a groovy mood during the morning, moving his head enjoying the melody out of his headphones but the coach had a more serious purpose.

Tamim batted at the indoor nets to throwers and had a one-on-one with Hathurusingha, who displayed some shots to the captain, focusing primarily on the angle with which

his bat came down.

Fazalhaq Farooqi of Afghanistan had dismissed him with identical deliveries, shaping into the left-hander in the ODI series at home last year. After a 41 and 87 not out in South Africa, it looked like Tamim's troubles have been eradicated, but Mark Wood went through his defences beating him for pace and Sam Curran outswinger troubled him to no ends in the recently concluded England series.

At Sylhet, he nicked Mark Adair at first slip to depart for three. Tamim looked to gain back some control and talked it out with Hathurusingha.

Herath, meanwhile, celebrated his birthday at the indoor nets area with Tamim and Hathurusingha along with the staff and net bowlers. The spin coach was happy with the aggressive batting from the team.

"I think it's fantastic effort by the all-team members. Especially Tawhid and Shakib, and then Mushfiqur and also Yasir [Ali]. Their aggressive approach was fantastic. We are showing a brand of our cricket at the moment. Hopefully we will do the same thing tomorrow as well," Herath told the media yesterday.

At the moment, the team is enjoying a good moment but the weather conditions are expected to be pretty similar today, a threat to the second ODI at Sylhet. Tamim will be hoping the clouds stay away as he prepares to get back in the groove.

## 'Best in the world' Starc crushes India

AFP, Visakhapatnam

Mitchell Starc on Sunday returned figures of 5-53 with his excellent swing and seam to power Australia to a series-levelling 10-wicket win over India in the second one-day international.

Starc, a left-arm quick, rattled the Indian batting with his pace and swing to bundle out the opposition for just 117 in only 26 overs in Visakhapatnam.

Openers Travis Head, who hit 51, and Mitchell Marsh, who smashed 66 off 36 balls, then took apart the Indian bowling to romp home in 11 overs.

Australia finished the chase with 39 overs to spare and bounce back from their opening defeat to hand India their biggest ODI loss in terms of balls remaining.

"It was a great day for us," man of the match Starc told broadcasters Star Sports.

Marsh, who stood out with his blazing knock that included six fours and six sixes, praised Starc.

"It was a pleasure to watch. You know what he can do with the white-ball, especially when he is swinging it. He is the best in the world," said Marsh.

## 'Goal-machine' firing on all cylinders

STAR SPORTS DESK

Erling Haaland continued his scoring streak on Saturday night, bagging another hat-trick as Manchester City hammered Burnley 6-0 to reach the FA Cup semifinals. England legend Alan Shearer was full of praise for Haaland. 'Haaland is a beast,' Shearer stated plainly on Match of the Day's coverage of the quarter-final. 'He is a goalscoring machine. He lives and breathes goals.'



The 22-year-old Norwegian has now scored 42 goals in just 37 matches this season.

## 'Finding identity was one of my biggest challenges'

**Ruqsana Begum, former Muay Thai world champion, has made her transition into the world of Boxing as she prepares to fight for the Intercontinental Flyweight Title in Dhaka. The London-born kickboxer is of Bangladeshi origin and has returned this time to the country as a champion. The Daily Star's Shabab Chowdhury caught up with her to revisit her empowering journey as she looks to inspire Bangladeshi boxers.**

**The Daily Star (DS):** You've seen and done it all by overcoming so many obstacles. Now you've come to Bangladesh to fight for the Intercontinental Flyweight Title. What has the experience been like so far?

**Ruqsana Begum (RB):** It's an absolute honour to be back in Bangladesh; representing Bangladesh, representing the UK. Um, it's my heritage, it's my roots. And it just goes to show how boxing is so welcomed in Bangladesh and pioneering through Xcel Boxing Championships. So, I've been received really well. I did my book signing today. It's been a really warm welcome for me.

**DS:** How has the response been from your family and relatives here?

**RB:** My parents are really, really excited. I think this is the first time they've been so excited for me to be headlining a show in Bangladesh. It will definitely inspire so many women, so many male boxers, and woman boxers to kind of follow in my footsteps now. It just goes to show that we are being progressive ... and sport is accessible now.

**DS:** Many sportswomen in Bangladesh can relate to the obstacles that you've

had to face in the UK. How much has it changed?

**RB:** Ah, such a good question because I think definitely there were so many obstacles, going into a male-dominated sport. You know, even if you look at the women's football team in the UK, it's only now they're getting the platform and the recognition that they deserve, and they're excelling. You know, the country's media is behind them ... the pay gap has been closing, which is excellent for the sport.

There's equal opportunity. So, I think it's time that we did that in Bangladesh as well, that women are given that platform to excel and to empower themselves.

**DS:** As someone from Bangladesh origin, what's your message for Bangladesh women in sports? How do they take the next step?

**RB:** I think, um, you know, everyone's situation is unique to them. Yeah. And I can never give one per cent advice based on my journey or this, but what I can do is tell what it took for me to be able to bridge the gap between being Muslim, being female, being Asian, being Bangladeshi, and being British. That was one of my biggest challenges:



having to find my identity. I'm trying to be a fighter.

It took me many, many years, I would say 30 years, to get to a point where I said, this is me. And I think the best thing I did for myself is say I'm all of those things. And I think with young girls and boys, know who you are and be respectful to everyone else's

beliefs, values, and find a respectful way to communicate that and find that connection through difference ... I don't think anyone's wrong or right.

**DS:** How did you make your parents understand that you are a fighter and this is what you want to do?

**RB:** This is really interesting because I think you never set out to know exactly where you're going to be. You know, when I fought for the world title, that was a 10-year journey, 10 years of sacrifice ... of being disciplined, being focused, not losing my hunger to become a world champion.

I had to manage ... the best way to navigate my parents, my home life, my gym, my university, and my friends. It was a very delicate situation. If the balance was slightly off, I could have lost it all. When I was at home, I was a dutiful daughter. I was always helpful with my mom and I respected my parents and they knew that when I was at university, I made the grades.

I set myself small, manageable goals and as soon as I reached them, I reset my goals. So, when we became a British champion, Bill (Trainer, Bill Jude) was like: yeah, job done, you know, you can retire. And I said,

hmm, if I could become a British champion then what's stopping me from becoming a European champion, and then that's when the journey continued.

**DS:** When you won your first title, did you tell your parents then? Or were they there to see you win the title?

**RB:** I did. Once I came home with the title, I showed it to my dad and they were really proud. There were moments, it's really strange, even though my parents didn't know when I did eventually tell them that I'm doing this because I had an arranged marriage, I went through depression. And at that time, I plucked up the courage to tell my parents that.

I lost my identity through marriage. And at that point, my parents backed off and they gave me their permission, a silent consent. I realized I'm going to embrace this. Within a year, I was representing Great Britain at the World Championships. And I remember coming home from Latvia once. That was the first time when I came home with a gold medal. And I showed it to my dad and he grabbed the gold medal and showed it to my grandmother, his mom. And that was a huge sign that he was proud of me.