

(Clockwise from L) A young girl waves a Bangladesh flag in front of a heavily-guarded Chief Adviser's official residence in Dhaka during SAFF Women's Championship winning Bangladesh team's reception yesterday. Captain Sabina Khatun and the whole team pose for photographs with Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus and other prominent members of the interim government during the reception. The victorious Bangladesh team returned home from Nepal on Thursday to nationwide euphoria.

PHOTO: FROZ AHMED/CA'S PRESS WING



Twin tons boost Khulna, Sylhet show off pace battery

SPORTS REPORTER

Centuries from Anamul Haque and Amit Majumdar gave Khulna Division a strong start to their third-round National Cricket League fixture against Dhaka Metro at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The duo put on a 230-run opening stand before Anamul departed for a 169-ball 125. Amit carried on, stitching together a 96-run stand with Imrul Kayes before the latter fell to an abysmal run out after scoring 45. Amit finally departed after a 234-ball 145 laced with 14 fours and three sixes as Khulna ended the first day at 358 for six.

Meanwhile, Sylhet Division pacers showed their sizzle in Bogura's Shahid Chandu Stadium as all three pacers -- Abu Jayed Rahi, Khaled Ahmed and Rejaur Rahman Raja -- bagged three wickets each to skittle out Rangpur Division for 158. Sylhet ended the day at 24 without loss.

With Ebadot Hossain gearing up for a return in the fourth round, Sylhet's pace battery will receive a further boost and will have a host of quicks to pick from.

At Cox's Bazar's Academy Ground, Chattogram started strongly after an afternoon start due to wet outfield against Dhaka Division. Chattogram managed 107 for the loss of one at the close of play.

The other match between Barishal and Rajshahi at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar did not start due to wet outfield.

DECISION-MAKING THE CORE ISSUE

Hemp on Bangladesh's batting failures

David Hemp has been Bangladesh's batting coach for the past eight months, with 14 months remaining on his contract, but now faces criticism after recent batting failures against India and South Africa. While there have been some successes, long-standing batting issues persist, highlighting deeper problems that continue despite frequent changes in coaching staff. The 53-year-old former Bermuda opener spoke with *The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan* about Bangladesh batters' struggles in Test cricket, the impact of Shakib Al Hasan, and more. The excerpts are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): Batters' nightmarish performance against South Africa must've disappointed you.

David Hemp (DH): Of course, everyone is naturally disappointed because you lost a game of cricket. It's also disappointing because you know you have the skills but still aren't managing to perform.

DS: In both innings of the Chattogram Test, Bangladesh batings collapsed like a house of cards despite getting a great batting surface. What was the plan after South Africa enforced follow-on?

DH: If you look at this game, our decision-making wasn't as good as it has been previously and how it could be. That's the area we have to keep challenging ourselves as a batting group. Everyone had planned the way they wanted to play. Unfortunately, it didn't work out... Yes, if you have a failure in the first innings, there will always be added pressure in the second innings because you will try to rectify that, which will make you think differently. The key thing is how we practice.

DS: Did a fear of failure grasp Bangladesh batters in second innings?

DH: I don't think it was a fear factor.



People were using their feet, coming down the wickets, and playing shots... Our players, if you see them practice, play with freedom. Generally, they are making very good decisions except for transferring them into match situations... The best players in the world make really good decisions over a period of time. That's why they are the best and average 50-plus.

DS: After the Chandika Hathurusingha episode, does the coaching staff fear being treated similarly in future?

DH: I personally don't think so. None of the coaches have expressed that either. You have to continue your job, doing it

every day to try and improve these players.

DS: Did you see Najmul Hossain Shanto enjoying captaincy in the recent series?

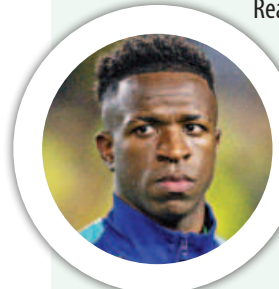
DH: I think he really enjoys that role and likes the responsibility. He has always said that captaincy hasn't impacted his batting because he makes time for it. I think it's more the mental demand of captaincy that could be challenging. As a captain, you need to do press conferences, sit for meetings -- whether it's a bowling or batting meeting -- do media work, and get pulled in different directions, all while performing.

DS: With ongoing doubts about Shakib's participation, does it make the team unsettled to some extent?

DH: If Shakib feels he can't contribute as he would like, especially with limited game time because he is only available for matches outside the country, that could potentially make it difficult. I think the selectors and Shakib will work out what's best. From a player's point of view, I appreciate having him around because of his experience and the conversations he has with the players. And, of course, he is still a very good player.

SHORT CORNER

Vinicius returns for Brazil, Neymar still out



Real Madrid forward Vinicius Jr and Barcelona winger Raphinha lead Brazil's squad for this month's World Cup qualifiers, while Neymar was left out of the team named by coach Dorival Jr on Friday. Brazil, who are fourth in the South American standings with 16 points, six behind leaders Argentina, play at Venezuela on Nov. 14 before hosting Uruguay five days later.

'Sometimes, people need a break': Shan backs Babar

Babar Azam could benefit from a break after being dropped from the Pakistan Test squad, red-ball captain Shan Masood said as he backed the batter to rediscover his best form. The out-of-form batsman, who gave up the captaincy for a second time last month, was then dropped for the second and third Tests against England in October after scoring just 35 runs across both innings in Pakistan's defeat in the first test.

Maresca welcomes reunion with Van Nistelrooy at Utd

Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca is relishing a reunion this weekend at Manchester United with former teammate Ruud van Nistelrooy, who is in interim charge of the Old Trafford side until Ruben Amorim takes over later this month, the Italian said on Friday. Maresca, a former midfielder, played with striker Van Nistelrooy during their time at Malaga in the 2011-2012 season near the end of the Dutchman's career.

*Read full stories on The Daily Star website



Newcastle put a huge dent in Arsenal's title aspirations on Saturday, winning 1-0 to give leaders Manchester City the chance to move eight points clear of the Gunners at the top of the Premier League. Alexander Isak scored what proved to be the winning goal in the 12th minute, heading home Anthony Gordon's pinpoint cross from the right.

PHOTO: AFP

Hridoy wants to 'stay in the present'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh batter Towhid Hridoy, though unwilling to talk about his chances of becoming the new T20I captain, was confident that the team would put behind their recent disappointments and focus at the task at hand in the forthcoming three-match ODI series against Afghanistan in the UAE.

Bangladesh would be returning to the 50-over format after a gap of seven months with the Afghanistan series beginning on Wednesday, having last hosted Sri Lanka for three ODIs back in March.

The Tigers go into the series on the back of a disastrous India tour, where they conceded convincing defeats in two Tests and three T20Is, followed by a terrible showing at home in a two-Test series against South Africa, which they lost 2-0. The last time they played Afghanistan in a bilateral ODI series was at home last year and the memories of which would not stir positive feelings among the players.

The on-field action was overshadowed by captain Tamim Iqbal's shock retirement from international cricket right after the first ODI. Although Tamim later reverted his decision, the chaos continued till the ODI World Cup, a campaign marred with off-field issues for Bangladesh.

The Afghanistan series also starts off Bangladesh's preparations for the ICC Champions Trophy, set to begin in February next year.



PHOTO: STAR

Asked about the challenge Afghanistan would pose in UAE conditions considering Bangladesh's recent run of poor results, Hridoy was adamant that the players would put off recent disappointments and start well.

"The cricketers are very professional now. I don't think there is any need to think about the past. We have to go match by match," Hridoy told reporters in Mirpur before the first group of cricketers departed for the UAE yesterday.

"But I hope we aren't thinking of recent results or what we had done, there is no time for that. Personally, what's important is that how we begin in the coming days. I want to stay in the present."

Having batted at number four or five in the beginning of his ODI career in 2023, Hridoy's batting position changed drastically during last year's ODI World Cup, where he was sent to bat at number seven on four occasions.

Without Shakib Al Hasan and Liton Das in the squad this time, Hridoy is likely to bat higher up the order against Afghanistan.

"Since the two [Shakib and Liton] won't be there, obviously the batting order could change. But it depends on the team's plans. I will know it [batting position] only on the day of the game," Hridoy said diplomatically.

"From my place, I am always prepared to bat in any position. It's a team game and whatever the team decides, that decision would take priority," he added.

Spin rules in seesaw third India Test

AFP, MUMBAI

New Zealand lead by 143 runs in their second innings, after Indian spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin triggered an opposition collapse in a keenly fought third Test on Saturday.

The tourists were 171-9 on day two after Jadeja bowled Matt Henry for his fourth wicket of the innings at the stroke of stumps on a sharply turning track in Mumbai.

Ajaz Patel was batting on seven after he took five wickets to help bowl out India for 263, with the hosts taking a slender lead of 28.

New Zealand won the first two matches to seal their first-ever Test series triumph in India and now eye a 3-0 sweep.

"To be honest it's (the pitch) turning quite sharply," Ajaz told reporters.

"I suppose inconsistent in terms of how much it does turn and bounce. It has started to turn from both ends and from a batting perspective that can be a challenge."

India's Shubman Gill, who hit 90, said: "It's all about one good partnership when you are chasing a total which is around 150-160. If you have one partnership about 70-80 runs the match is done and dusted."

