



# Time to step out of stalwarts' shadows

**SHABAB CHOWDHURY**

There is little room for Bangladesh's young players to hide behind the curtains, with the majority of their stalwarts out of action for the three-match ODI series against the West Indies, starting today in St Kitts. There is no escaping the limelight now, as the Tigers' new breed must step up without relying on the likes Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiquir Rahim, or Mustafizur Rahman -- all of whom were instrumental in Bangladesh's 2-1 ODI series win in St Kitts during their last Caribbean tour. While most of these senior players are expected to return for the ICC Champions Trophy next year and

remain primary options in their respective positions, a few spots in the batting department are still up for grabs. The absence of seniors has created an excellent premise for the likes of Tanzid Tamim, Parvez Hossain Emon, Jaker Ali -- or even for the experienced yet unpredictable Soumya Sarker -- to seize the initiative as the build-up to the marquee event heats up.

The positive thing for the Tigers is that, in trying to perform without the 'Big Five', they do not have to look too far back for inspiration. Bangladesh's series levelling win in the second and final Test against the Windies in Jamaica last week saw several young players refusing to assume sidekick roles.

Bangladesh's fastest bowler, Nahid Rana, who is also in the ODI squad, cracked the game wide open with his maiden five-for, while Jaker Ali Anik, batting down the order, took the

attack to the opposition with some swashbuckling gusto, just missing out on his maiden Test ton.

Middle-order batter Shahadat Hossain Dipu also made a valuable contribution, and the leader of the pack, stand in captain Mehedi Hasan Miraz, displayed genuine bravado. What makes the fightback even more remarkable is that it came at a time when the Tigers were hammered in the first Test in Antigua and were on the edge during the initial stages of the second.

The burning question has been whether these cricketers have what it takes to step out of the shadows of their senior compatriots. Regardless of the outcome of this Caribbean assignment, a golden chance to show their mettle is there for the taking. Can the young guns back up their promise with initiative and execution?

# HEAD-ACHE returns to haunt India

**REUTERS**

Australia's Travis Head has been a perennial thorn in India's flesh and it was more of the same on Saturday as the left-hander produced a match-defining hundred to deflate the tourists in the day-night second Test in Adelaide.

Head produced match-winning hundreds on both occasions when Australia beat India in the finals of the World Test Championship and the 50-overs World Cup last year.

The 30-year-old reprised the India tormentor's role at the Adelaide Oval where he wowed 51,642 fans with a breakneck 140 that put Australia on the verge of a series-levelling victory.

"It was a tough wicket to bat on and at certain stages, they bowled really well," the middle order batter said after the second day's play.

"Nice to take my luck where I got it and put the guys in a really good position fast-forwarding the score.

"At the moment, the game's got moving pretty quickly, but feels like we're in a great position."

Head got two reprieves in his entertaining knock - Mohammed Siraj spilled a tough chance in the deep and one of his edges flew between the wicketkeeper and the fielder at first slip.

The feisty southpaw particularly targeted Ravichandran Ashwin, hitting India's premier off-spinner for three sixes in what he later called a calculated move. "When they've got the quality of quicks that they've got, I guess you've got to target something," Head said of his approach. "I felt like I navigated through his spells really, really well, and was able to get the quicks back at certain stages into that new ball."

Head took a single off Ashwin to bring up his hundred at his home ground and gestured to his wife, daughter Milla and newborn son Harrison in the stands.

"I did it when Milla was born so I would have got a bit of stick from the missus if I didn't do that when Harrison was born," Head said of his rock-the-baby celebration.



PHOTO: AFP

# Tigresses pay the price for poor Powerplay batting

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Bangladesh women's cricket team had to pay a heavy price for losing too many wickets in the Powerplay, succumbing to a 47-run defeat in the second WT20I against Ireland yesterday and subsequently suffering their first ever series defeat against the Irish side in the shortest format.

Chasing 135, the Tigresses lost four wickets in the Powerplay for just 22 runs. Sharmin Akhter then showed some fight in her 38-run knock, but it proved insufficient as the hosts got bowled out for 87 in 17.1 overs to go 2-0 down in the three-match series.

In comparison, Ireland, opting to bat first, put up 34 runs for the loss of one wicket in the Powerplay.



PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Later, riding on decent efforts from Laura Delany (35) and Orla Prendergast (32), who also took 3-13 and was named player-of-the-match for her all-round performance, they posted 134-5, which proved to be a winning total.

"They [Ireland] lost only one wicket in the first six overs and scored 35 [34] runs. We lost four wickets in the first six overs. I think we lost the contest here," Bangladesh women's team's bowling coach Robiul Islam Shiblu told reporters after the match.

"Their pacers bowled slowly in this wicket. They used leg cutters and off cutters and got success. In the second innings, the ball also turned. I think we couldn't use the wicket," he added.

# Suman grabs opportunity in Abahani's 1-0 win

**SPORTS REPORTER**

National discard Suman Reza started his journey with Abahani with a memorable strike as the six-time champions handed a 1-0 defeat to Dhaka Wanderers Club in their Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla yesterday.

Suman, drafted into the starting XI for the first time by coach Maruful Haque, brilliantly headed a well-judged corner from Kamal Hossain into the far post in the 58th minute after stepping up from the middle of the box.

Despite no foreign players in the squad, Abahani have now registered back-to-back victories to join leaders Mohammedan and Rahmatganj on six points.

"I am happy to repay the faith of the coach," Suman said, adding that the team's target is to secure full points every match regardless of the margin of victory.

"I want to prove myself with consistent performances. We don't have any foreign players, but the locals have the mindset of playing against 11 foreign players," said Suman, who had scored only three goals for Sheikh Russel last season.

In another match of the day, Bangladesh Police came from behind to thrash promoted Fakirerpool Young Men's Club 4-1, with Al Amin striking twice while Joyonto Kumar and Manik Hossain Molla netting one goal apiece. Akobir Turayev scored a consolation goal for Fakirerpool.

Meanwhile, Brothers Union were held to a 1-1 draw by Fortis FC as Pa Omar cancelled out a first-minute strike from Brothers' Zakaria Darboe in the 18th minute to share points.



# Atkinson, the 43rd hattrick man in Tests

Gus Atkinson took a hat-trick as England coasted towards a dominant victory in the second Test against New Zealand in Wellington on Saturday, reaching 378 for five at the close of play on day two with an imposing lead of 533.

He is the 43rd player to get a hattrick in 147 years of Test cricket, the first since 2021 and the first by an England bowler since spinner Moeen Ali achieved the feat against South Africa at the Oval in 2017. Atkinson was the 15th England player to achieve the feat.

"To get a hattrick ends the year nicely," said Atkinson, who took a 12-wicket haul on his Test debut against West Indies in July and scored a century against Sri Lanka in August.

# ACC MEN'S U-19 ASIA CUP India stand between Jnr Tigers and title defence

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Bangladesh U-19 team will aim to retain the ACC Men's U-19 Asia Cup title as they take on their Indian counterparts in a potentially engrossing final at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium today (11:00 am, Bangladesh time).

The young Tigers, who tasted maiden glory in the competition last year after defeating hosts UAE by 195 runs in the title decider at the same venue, have enjoyed excellent form this time as well.

Having started their campaign with back-to-back wins over Afghanistan and Nepal before losing to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh finished as Group B runners-up to progress to the last four.

In the semifinal, the defending champions outplayed Pakistan in all departments, securing a seven-wicket victory to qualify for the final for the second consecutive time.

Skipper Azizul Hakim Tamim has been leading from the front, amassing the third-highest 224 runs in four



innings at an average of 112, which includes one century and two fifties.

On the bowling front, the pace duo of Al Fahad and Iqbal Hossain Emon have been outstanding throughout the competition's 12th edition, jointly leading the wicket-takers' chart with 10 scalps each.

India, on the other hand, are back in the final after one edition and will be aiming for a record ninth Asia Cup title this year. Despite losing to Pakistan in their tournament opener, they bounced back with commanding wins over Japan and UAE in the group stage before dominating Sri Lanka in the last-four fixture, registering a seven-wicket victory.

India's 13-year-old batting prodigy Vaibhav Suryavanshi, who has already been picked for next season's Indian Premier League, has impressed with two swashbuckling innings following a subdued start. Neutralising his threat will be a key challenge for the likes of Fahad and Emon in this much-anticipated encounter.



Rangpur Riders players rejoice after the Bangladesh Premier League team defeated Australia's Cricket Victoria by 56 runs in the final of the inaugural Global Super League at Providence Stadium in Guyana yesterday. The Riders secured a hefty cash prize of around Tk six crore (USD 0.5 million) in the tournament, organised by Cricket West Indies, featuring teams from West Indies, England, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Australia.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK