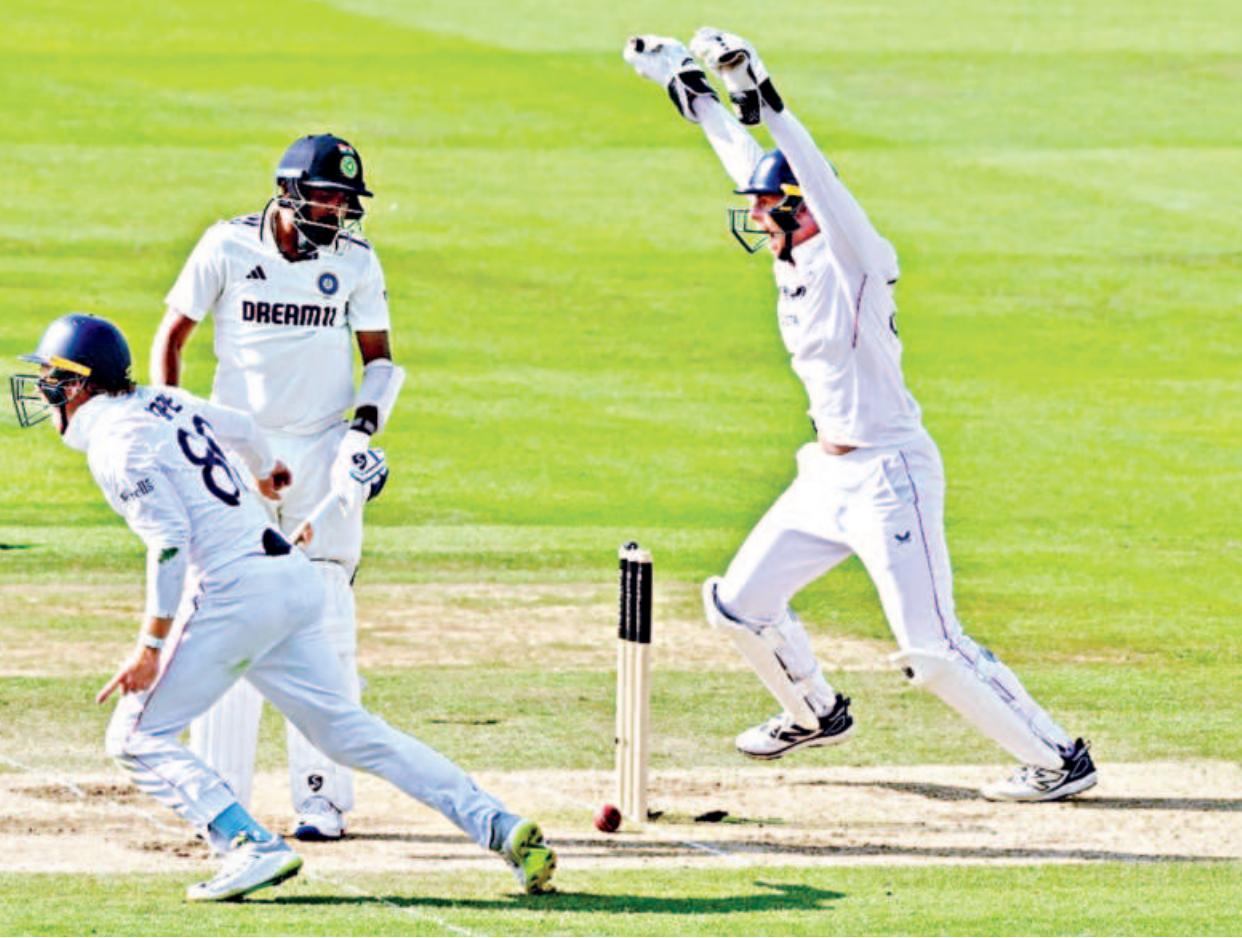


England win nail-biter at Lord's

Mohammad Siraj looks on in disbelief as the delivery from off-spinner Shoab Bashir overspins from the pitch after he defended it and nudges the leg stump just enough to dislodge the ball, ending India's chase on 170 and handing hosts England a 22-run win in the third Test at Lord's. In an enthralling final day, England, defending 193, had reduced India to 112-8 before Ravindra Jadeja's valiant 61 got the tourists close to pulling off a famous victory. But in the end, Jadeja remained unbeaten as England won the match and took a 2-1 lead in the five-match series. PHOTO: AFP



Aminul hopeful of timely BCB elections

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Aminul Islam Bulbul insisted that they have no plans of changing the schedule of the upcoming board election which is supposed to be held before the end of October this year.

During the reign of the previous BCB president Faruque Ahmed, there were few developments regarding the polls but since Aminul replaced him on May 30, the election has seemingly taken a backseat with no visible progress.

"We will not shift the scheduled date of the BCB election. We will hold it on time," Aminul told reporters in Paltan after the opening ceremony of the 39th National Badminton Championship on Monday.

The BCB boss was also asked if all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan could be brought back into the Bangladesh side. He left that decision up to the national selectors and also clarified that he is yet to speak with Shakib in this regard.

"Shakib is an available player. He is yet to retire from all formats. I will speak to him and after that, we can take a decision about him... His selection depends completely on the Bangladesh team selectors."

Aminul also announced several initiatives for local coaches starting next month and confirmed that Dhaka will host the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) on July 24.

"We will hold a level 3 coaching course at the end of August from where we can identify coaches who can work with different teams in Bangladesh. We will organise a coaching summit in September so that we can get specialised coaches for batting, fast bowling, spin bowling, wicketkeeping and fielding," he said.

"On July 23rd, we will host an official dinner and on the 24th, we will host ACC's AGM in Dhaka. Almost all the member nations will participate in the programme," he added.



Bangladesh forward Mst Sagorika and midfielder Munki Akhter share a light-hearted moment during a swimming and light gym session yesterday. Fresh from a 3-2 win over Nepal in their second match, the Bangladesh women's team take on Bhutan today at 3pm at the Bashundhara Kings Arena in their third SAFF U-20 Championship clash. The hosts had earlier launched their campaign in style with a 9-0 win against Sri Lanka. PHOTO: BFF

Blues blueprint silences the noise

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

People riding the Paris Saint Germain wave were far from prepared for what transpired on Sunday night.

It was uncomfortable, and even perhaps upsetting, for all who have been entranced by Luis Enrique's revived PSG project centred around youth, as Chelsea rocked the world and put an end to the Parisians' incredible run this season – a marauding campaign that saw them win every competition they have been in up until the just concluded inaugural FIFA Club World Cup.

English starboy Cole Palmer came in like an industrial air conditioner, too cold for comfort for his opponents in the sweltering New Jersey heat at the MetLife Stadium, arresting all PSG's hopes with two similarly identical left-footed goals before setting one up for Joao Pedro in the first half to essentially put the game to bed.

European champions PSG came into the contest as the best team in the world; as the poster boys of a new era built around a fearless, youthful core that has swept aside all challengers. So what this emphatic victory has provided is not only validation that Chelsea's very own youth-driven project under American ownership Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital is gathering steam, but also a statement that they are heading in the right direction, following a Conference League triumph.

And what better team to gauge this notion than against PSG. And as for the owners, it could not have come on a better occasion.

Very few, except for Chelsea loyalists



Chelsea finished as top scorers in the tournament with 17 goals; one more than PSG, Man City and Bayern who were all on 16.

PSG conceded their first goals since Igor Jesus scored for Botafogo in a 1-0 win.

Chelsea are the fifth team, and first from England, to win multiple FIFA Club World Cup titles (including previous formats).

and the players themselves, could see past the jamboree surrounding PSG and their football and comprehend that the rationale behind plotting to disarm the most explosive attack in the global event was not an unreasonable one.

Eventually, Chelsea not only defused the opposition's attack but also initiated a kill-switch to shut down the PSG system.

Head coach Enzo Maresca did a number on Enrique by going long to beat the daunting press, which had bamboozled Real Madrid in the semi-finals. He got rid

of his insistence to play out from the back and had goalkeeper Robert Sanchez ping long balls to players wide and higher up on the field. This worked to great advantage, as the Blues could bypass the press as well as the congested midfield compressed by high lines from both sides.

They scored in the 22nd minute after Sanchez floated a ball down the right wing to Malo Gusto, who capitalised on a stumble by left-back Nuno Mendes to run free in behind and set up Palmer. For the second, Levi Colwill looped one

behind after a turnover for a sprinting Palmer, who continued his run into the box and froze Vitinha and centre-back Lucas Beraldo with a series of quick fake shots before beating goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma again for a 2-0 advantage in the 30th minute.

To neutralise arguably the best attack in the world at this moment – comprising Desire Doue and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, and likely Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele – Maresca employed an aggressive counter-press when they lost possession high up the field and dropped into a back five and defended in number when PSG tried to typically cut loose through the dangerous trio.

"The idea was to go man-to-man because if you leave spaces to PSG, they will kill you," Maresca said. "So we tried to be very aggressive and suffocate them early on."

Maresca said Chelsea won the match in the first 10 minutes with their intense tempo. The midfield duo of Moises Caicedo and Reece James stood firm behind the first line of press and mopped up anything that squeezed past it. This forced PSG's midfield to often look sideways. Pass master Vitinha had a hard time initiating attacks from the base of midfield, which in turn flustered the likes of Fabian Ruiz and Joao Neves playing higher up.

"The message before the game was to make them understand that we are here to win the game," Maresca said.

And win they did. It was clinical and had Chelsea's characteristic imprint written all over it.

Backing Shamim's 'rare' flair begins to pay off

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Not many lower-middle-order batters in Bangladesh have a penchant for playing the more forbidden strokes quite like Shamim Hossain Patwary, the batter who was the catalyst for Bangladesh's acceleration in the middle overs on Sunday in the second T20I against Sri Lanka in Dambulla, paving the way for an 83-run victory – a national record in the format.

For all the flair on offer, consistency has remained not only an issue for Shamim but for most Bangladesh batters over the years. However, rather than clip his wings, coaches have instead tried to harness his natural instincts.

Shamim appears to be a one-off in Bangladesh's T20I circuit: a batter who keeps playing those shots as long as he stays in the crease.

Yet, when it comes to consistency, despite an impactful series in the West Indies last year, he also had a run of six games where he only managed single-digit scores.

Coaches – Mizanur Rahman Babul and Sohel Islam, for instance, who work with him in the Bangladesh Tigers programme – understood the challenge was not to limit his game but to shape it.

"He usually bats for five-six overs, so actually his playing style is to bat at a high strike rate, which also is demanded in those situations where he bats," Mizanur told The Daily Star.

"We need to give him more assurances, since these kinds of batters are rare here. If we restrict him or try to tell him to stop playing shots, his skill will be ruined. Then he would be playing selfish cricket and fall into a block. We must equip him so he can be more comfortable," he added.



"Equipping" Shamim was about more than just working on his mentality.

"He is very good at playing those scoops or those shots over fine leg, but he wasn't playing through mid-off, for instance," coach Babul observed.

"If he always plays those scoops, fielders are in place for that. If he plays straight at times, it would see the field change, and you can see now that he uses those unconventional shots much less.

"The Tigers programme works on honing players' shots they already know and also works on adding some shots. If he starts using an array of shots, the opposition keep guessing, and it allows him to find more gaps."

The array of shots was seen on Sunday. Shamim exhibited a six over mid-off with a straight face that emphasises Babul's words. Shamim averaged over 56 in the last Dhaka Premier League. Talha Jubair, his coach at Prime Bank last year, feels the batter now understands the value of his wicket better.

"You see that in international cricket, he is playing in the same pattern that he wants to, focusing on his strengths. There is a maturity that was previously not seen,"

Talha opined.

"The game is still 20 percent skill and 80 percent mentality. I only talked about the value of his wicket. T20 is about risks, but while taking that risk, if you throw away your wicket, then it's not useful. His ball selection is what I saw improve."

What Shamim is trying to master – calculated aggression – can only come with discipline. And if Bangladesh can continue to nurture that balance in him, they may yet unlock a timely talent for their T20 ambitions.

FROM RALLIES TO RHYTHM:

Jannik Sinner and Iga Swiatek, the newly crowned singles winners of Wimbledon 2025, share a joyful moment on the dance floor at the traditional Champions' Dinner in London on Sunday (Monday, Bangladesh time). After dazzling in their tennis whites, they got glammed up for a night of celebration, capping off a landmark weekend. The pair engaged in a 20-second dance, albeit at a slow pace and with one twirl, to the tune of Portugal. The Man's 2017 hit "Feel It Still". Sinner, uncharacteristically animated off court, had earlier outclassed Carlos Alcaraz for his first Wimbledon title, and the Italian now owns three of the four Slams, missing only the French Open. Swiatek, too, claimed her maiden Wimbledon crown, crushing Amanda Anisimova with a rare double bagel; and the Polish has only the Australian Open yet to conquer.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK VIA WIMBLEDON

