



If Shorna Akter's stunning 3 for 5 against Pakistan set the tone in the ICC Women's World Cup, her power-hitting masterclass against South Africa announced her arrival in style. The 18-year-old all-rounder then underlined her growing stature with another dazzling display in Navi Mumbai on Monday, taking 3-27 to spark Sri Lanka's collapse from 174-4 to 202 all out. With every outing, Shorna is proving to be Bangladesh's game-changer thriving on the world stage.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

SPIN DUEL awaits in Mirpur

SPORTS REPORTER

Spin it to win it -- that seems to be the mantra of Bangladesh and the West Indies heading into today's second ODI of the three-match series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

After the first ODI, a spin-dominated affair which the hosts won by 74 runs, the Tigers added left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed into the

In the first match, Rishad Hossain's six-wicket haul rescued the hosts after the batting department disappointed once again, getting rolled over for just 207.

Head coach Phil Simmons and senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin worked extensively with the batters on Monday on how they could score runs in the Mirpur turner, and came up with some out-of-the-box methods.

Former skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto, who



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bangladesh players and head coach Phil Simmons observe intently as senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin demonstrates a low-centre-of-gravity batting stance during a training session yesterday, ahead of their second ODI and penultimate against the West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur. While the spinners are primed to have a field day, all eyes will be on the batters as they face the notorious Mirpur pitch which would be devoid of grass and bounce, with the Tigers aiming for a series win after four straight losses.

squad on Sunday.

The visitors responded by flying in left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein, who was expected to land in Dhaka on Monday night, as the fourth spinner in their squad.

A win today would seal an ODI series triumph for the Tigers after four successive defeats. Given the prodigious turn and the occasional bounce that was on offer in the wicket for the series opener, the temptation is there for the hosts to go with four frontline spinners -- one more than the last match.

The hosts' spin bowling coach Mushtaq Ahmed, however, remained tightlipped about team formation, instead, spoke about the dangers of spinners getting carried away by the extra turn.

"As a spinner, when you see that kind of wicket, you get excited. And when you get excited, you don't remember your process. Process is everything. You [have to] bowl good overs to get wickets, not just good balls," Mushtaq said in the pre-match press conference on Monday.

made a dogged 32 in the last match, batted at the centre nets with two stumps right behind his legs -- on the left of where a left-hander's leg stump would be -- to work on his backfoot movement, which was causing him to fall over while playing through the leg-side.

The players also batted with smaller bats, a ploy to help them keep their head position and balance right while making late adjustments to deal with the turn.

"We wanted to bring the net practice very close to the match environment... Simmons and Salauddin were trying to tell them how to take singles in the middle overs. The spinners also set field positions, making it very close to an actual match situation," Mushtaq said.

"With a small bat, whether you are on the front foot or back foot, your gravity level has to be low. So, your head has to be very close to the ball. So, you start playing the ball very late."

It remains to be seen whether the special training pays dividends for the hosts in sealing the series, or, if the visitors can outspin the hosts to keep the series alive.

Butler wants stronger tests before Asian Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh head coach Peter Butler has stressed the need to face stronger opposition as part of their build-up to next year's AFC Women's Asian Cup in Australia.

The women in red and green are set to leave for Bangkok this morning to play two international matches against Thailand -- ranked 51 places above them but had failed to make it to the Asian Cup. The fixtures are scheduled for October 24 and 27.

"You can't go there with a mentality, you know what I mean, a win-at-all-cost mentality," Butler emphasised that the matches were more about performance than results, in a press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

"You have to sometimes be realistic and put things in context of actually what you want from that game."

Bangladesh began their preparations about three weeks ago at KEPZ in Chittagong before returning to Dhaka on Friday. Nine players, who had been playing in Bhutan's domestic league, joined the squad upon their return.

"We covered a lot of ground and built strong team spirit," Butler said, noting he had to ensure the players weren't "overcooked" during the intense camp.

The Englishman reiterated his desire for Bangladesh to face stronger opponents in the lead-up to the Asian Cup, facing "state teams in Australia" if the opportunity arises.

"We've had this conversation, myself and Miss [Mahfuza Akter] Kiran. Club sides in Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong are not strong enough. So that would be a complete waste of time. All we want is that the international fixtures, it may be against Azerbaijan, it could not be Iran."

SHORT CORNER

Volleyballers eye CAVA Cup

Bangladesh volleyball team are aiming for the title at the six-nation CAVA Cup, starting Wednesday at Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Dhaka. The seven-day tournament features Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. Captain Horosit Biswas said beating Afghanistan in recent matches boosted the team's confidence.



Five national records tumble on opening day

Experienced swimmer Kajal Mia and rising star Samiul Islam Rafi stole the spotlight on the opening day of the 34th National Swimming, Diving and Water Polo Championships at the National Swimming Complex yesterday.

***Read The Daily Star website for full stories.*

KINGS END FORTIS RUN



Bashundhara Kings players celebrate snapping Fortis FC's four-match unbeaten streak against them with a 2-1 win in a Bangladesh Football League fixture at Dhaka's Kings Arena yesterday. Dorielton Gomes scored within 40 seconds, and Faisal Ahmed Fahim added a second, before Onyekachi Okafor pulled one back for Fortis in stoppage time. Elsewhere, newly promoted PWD Sports Club shocked Arambagh KS 1-0 in Manikganj.

PHOTO: BFF

PSG get Dembele boost, ARSENAL HOST ATLETICO

STAR SPORTS DESK

Defending champions PSG headline Wednesday's Champions League action as Luis Enrique's side travel to Germany to face Bayer Leverkusen. The Parisians are among six teams still boasting a perfect record after two matches. Elsewhere, Barcelona, sixth in the standings after a win over Newcastle United and a loss to PSG, host Olympiacos in the early kick-off. Manchester City journey to Villarreal, while last season's finalists Inter Milan make the trip to Belgium to take on Union Saint-Gilloise. In one of the night's most tantalising clashes, Arsenal welcome Atletico Madrid to the Emirates, while Newcastle United play host to Benfica.

*Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele is set to return for PSG for the first time since claiming the award. The 28-year-old winger has been sidelined for six weeks with a hamstring injury. PSG have also been boosted by the return of Desire Doue and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia.

*Atletico Madrid have never won away to an English side in the group or



league phase of the Champions League.

*Arsenal remain one of only two teams, alongside Inter, yet to concede a goal in this season's competition.

*Barca continue to battle an injury crisis, with Joan Garcia, Marc-Andre ter Stegen, Gavi, and Dani Olmo all unavailable. Robert Lewandowski will be sidelined for around a month after sustaining a hamstring injury on international duty, while Raphinha

remains doubtful after missing the last four matches.

*Erling Haaland is in blistering form for Manchester City, scoring 14 goals in just 10 appearances across all competitions this season.

*Inter, winners of both their opening fixtures, have now kept 10 clean sheets in their last 11 group or league-phase matches, winning 11 and losing only once in their last 16.



Morocco players celebrate winning the FIFA U-20 World Cup after Yassir Zabiri's brace fired them past six-time champions Argentina 2-0 in the final at the Estadio Nacional Julio Martinez Pradanos in Santiago, Chile, yesterday. The victory delivered Morocco their maiden title, making them only the second African nation after Ghana (2009) to win the tournament which has long been a hotbed for future superstars.

PHOTO: REUTERS

