



HAMZA CONTINUES TO CLICK

On Thursday, all lenses were fixed on Bangladesh star midfielder Hamza Choudhury, who produced the moments of a lifetime for any Bangladesh fan -- a stunning bicycle kick and a cool Panenka penalty -- in Bangladesh's 2-2 draw against Nepal in a friendly at the National Stadium. As the men in red and green prepare for their high-voltage Asian Cup qualifier against India on November 18 at the same venue, a buoyant Hamza was spotted behind a different lens, playfully turning into a shutterbug during training yesterday. With fans swept up in full-fledged Hamzamania, the ever-cheerful Leicester City midfielder greeted supporters, posed for selfies, and even signed a hand-drawn sketch from a young fan.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Shamit knows how to hurt India

SPORTS REPORTER

Shomit Shome is optimistic Bangladesh will end their winless streak in international football when they take on neighbours India in an AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers fixture in Dhaka on November 18.

The Cavalry FC midfielder, who made his Bangladesh debut against Singapore in Dhaka on June 10 this year, has already worn the red and green jersey four times but is yet to taste victory as Bangladesh drew two and lost two of those matches. The last victory for Bangladesh came in a friendly against Bhutan at home on June 4 this year.

Having started his Bangladesh journey with a 2-1 defeat against Singapore, the 28-year-old scored his first goal for the country at home against Hong Kong in October with a late equaliser, only to see his side lose through a last-ditch goal.



The men in red and green then conceded an injury-time equaliser against Nepal in Dhaka last Thursday. Shamit, though, believes the win could come against India at the National Stadium on Tuesday.

"We don't need to create motivation separately -- everyone knows what this match (against India) means. Even when I first started playing for Bangladesh, someone told me on my first day to be ready for the India match. At that time, Singapore were our opponents. So this game has been in our minds from long ago. We're motivated -- we want to win this match, and we will," Shamit told the media ahead of the team's training session on Saturday.

Shamit feels he knows how to hurt India to forge a victory against the neighbours, something that has eluded Bangladesh for the last 22 years.

"India are a good team, but they have gaps too," Shamit analysed. "There are spaces between their midfield line and their defensive line. Even the way Nepal defended -- I don't think India will be able to defend as well or maintain that structure. And we can take advantage

of that. With the way we're passing now, we're finding the half spaces. That's how we can create an impact against them."

Meanwhile, the India team reached Dhaka last night, bringing on board Australia-born Ryan Williams, who is yet to receive clearance to play for India from FIFA and Football Australia, after having represented the Socceroos at age-level as well at senior level.

Although the 23-member team does not feature regulars like Subhasish Bose, Lalengmawia Apuia, Brandon Fernandes, Liston Colaco and Udanta Singh, there is enough quality in the side, evident from their 6-1 win against Bhutan in a closed-door friendly on Thursday.

The last time these two sides met produced a goalless draw in Shillong in the first match of the qualifying campaign in March this year. Both teams are out of the qualification race with two points each.

Mushfiqur's 100th Test celebrations in motion

SPORTS REPORTER

All eyes will be on Mushfiqur Rahim as the veteran wicketkeeper-batter gears up to play his 100th Test, when Bangladesh face Ireland in the second and final Test of the ongoing two-match series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on Wednesday.

Bangladesh head into the Mirpur Test with momentum, having wrapped up the opening Test in Sylhet within four days, securing an innings and 47-runs victory on Friday.

The early finish allowed both teams an additional rest day before regrouping in Dhaka on Saturday morning. Several Bangladesh players even returned to the capital on Friday following the early conclusion of the match during the second session.

With Mushfiqur set to become the first Bangladeshi cricketer to reach the 100-Test milestone, discussions naturally turned to how the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) plans to commemorate the landmark occasion.

When contacted, BCB cricket operations in-charge Shahriar Nafees said preparations are still underway.

"We are still planning to mark the occasion. It will not be a big programme, but it will be a significant one," Nafees told The Daily Star.

Other board officials, however, hinted that the details of the programme will remain secret for now.



Bangladesh eye medal at home

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh are gearing up for hosting the 2nd Women's Kabaddi World Cup 2025, starting from November 17 at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur.

Originally supposed to feature 14 teams, the eight-day tournament has been reduced to an 11-team affair as Argentina, the Netherlands South Korea and Japan have pulled out while Poland have been added from reserves list. The participating teams are: Bangladesh, India, Chinese Taipei, Germany, Iran, Kenya, Nepal, Poland, Thailand, Uganda and Zanzibar.

India are the defending champions -- winners from the first edition which was held in Patna, India way back in 2012.

Bangladesh's women, who finished fifth in that event, will look to improve on that performance, having completed an extensive preparation phase despite the tournament being postponed twice.

Meanwhile, Arduzzaman Munshi, one of the all-time best players of the country, is guiding the team in this global event. Munshi is confident of a strong showing from the hosts.

"Playing at home gives us extra motivation. Apart from India, we have the strength to beat any team. We have trained consistently, and we are hopeful of winning a medal," he said recently.

Veteran Rupali Akter will wear the captain's armband for the first time in her career, and this will be the final tournament of her playing career.

BANGLADESH SQUAD:

Sraboni Mallik, Brishti Biswas, Rupali Akter Sr, Smriti Akter, Rekha Akhteri, Mebi Chakma, Rupali Akter, Anjuara Ratri, Sucharita Chakma, Khadija Khatun, Loba Akter, Yasmin Khanam, Israt Jahan Sadika and Tahirin.

Steyn-inspired Sakib 'trying to master off-the-pitch movement'

As Sylhet and Khulna Division prepared for their National Cricket League match at Sylhet Academy Ground while the national team faced Ireland at the main venue, the appeal of first-class cricket was unmistakable, especially for youngsters sharing the field with rising national fast bowler like 23-year-old **Tanzim Hasan Sakib**. Fresh from his Test debut earlier this year and carrying experience from a few ICC events, Sakib spoke to **The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdi** about his game and his affinity towards first-class and Test cricket.

The excerpts of the conversation are as follows:

The Daily Star [DS]: When you become a regular national team player and return to first-class cricket, it creates a different vibe within youngsters in the dressing room. Do you feel it too?

Tanzim Hasan Sakib [THS]: We also felt it when we were new in first-class cricket and saw senior players... I grew up this way, and I think they feel inspired too.

DS: There was a time when national team players didn't play first-class much, but now most of them try to take part. Does this signify the improvement of our first-class cricket standard?

THS: Definitely, it creates a competitive spirit. If I don't look above me, I won't improve. If you look below, you won't ever improve. When I see Taskin [Ahmed] bhai in good shape, I feel motivated to bowl better. I really enjoy playing first-class cricket.

DS: How is the competitive spirit?

THS: It's very competitive in Sylhet

(smiles because of the number of pacers coming through from Sylhet).

DS: What other things do you personally feel should be introduced into our first-class structure?

THS: I would say the wicket. If the wickets are good, our whole country's cricket will improve, just like India's has. When we play against them in age-level events, we are on par. But they score 200-250-run innings in first-class, and our batsmen don't have that experience.

DS: Who inspired your Test dreams?

THS: I grew up watching Dale Steyn... Sitting at home, I spent all day watching Test cricket. Didn't miss many South Africa matches in life, especially when Steyn was bowling. So, watching Steyn is where my desire to play Test cricket

came from. In Tests, you can bowl for a long time, show aggression, and enjoy the battle with the batsmen, which is difficult in shorter formats.

DS: Alongside Steyn, you mentioned your admiration for Jasprit Bumrah and Kagiso Rabada. What specific things do you try to take from them?

THS: Their skill, actually. The off-the-pitch movement and pace they generate... I bowl around 135 to 140 kilometres per hour, and they bowl around that speed too. But their off-the-pitch movement makes the ball nip around a lot, which is very difficult for the batsman. So, I'm trying to see how I can master that skill.

DS: Do you feel hitting the pitch harder is what makes you tick?

THS: I am a hit-the-wicket bowler and

have no other option. I'm not a swing bowler like Hasan Mahmud. I'm more similar to Taskin Ahmed.

DS: What is the biggest factor in achieving the off-the-pitch movement?

THS: I think that motion of brushing the surface and the seam position. Sometimes when the delivery falls on the seam, it doesn't happen. It's seen that the scrambled seam makes it happen. I'm trying to work on that. Scrambled seam gets more off the pitch, and [Mustafizur Rahman] Fizz bhai is best at it, and I'm trying to learn from him.

DS: You enjoy that direct eye contact with the batter?

THS: Yes, which you can do in Test cricket. So, Test cricket is very enjoyable, and definitely every cricketer's dream. It's also tough, but it's the ultimate format, in my opinion.

***Read full interview at The Daily Star website.*

T SPORTS

New Zealand vs West Indies
1st ODI
Live from 7:00 am
Asia Cup Rising Stars
India A vs Pakistan
Shaheens

Live from 5:30 pm
STAR SPORTS 2
India vs South Africa
1st Test, Day 3
Live from 10:00 am
SONY SPORTS 1, 2, 5
World Cup Qualifiers

Portugal vs Armenia
Live from 8:00 pm
Azerbaijan vs France
Live from 11:00 pm
Italy vs Norway
Live from 1:45 am (Monday)

SHORT CORNER

Double delight for SOBD

Special Olympics Bangladesh (SOBD) achieved a remarkable double triumph at the Special Olympics Southeast Asia Football Competition 2025, winning both the male and female Division 1 Championships in Indonesia from November 10-14. The regional event featured teams from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, said a press release from SOBD.

Fahad beats Vietnamese GM

Bangladeshi International Master Fahad Rahman defeated Vietnamese Grand Master Nguyen Duc Hua as the Leonine 3rd Grandmasters Chess Tournament got underway in Dhanmondi on Saturday. Playing with the white pieces, Fahad won in 51 moves against Duc Hua's Petrovs Defence.

Sunzamul's rare ton lifts Rajshahi

Rajshahi Division's left-arm spinner Sunzamul Islam produced a rare batting display, scoring only the second hundred of his first-class career to guide his side to 275 for nine against Dhaka Division on the opening day of the fourth round of the National Cricket League 2025-26 in Rajshahi on Saturday.

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



Habibur Rahman Sohan smashed an unbeaten 100 off 35 balls to record the fastest T20 century by a Bangladeshi, steering Bangladesh 'A' to an eight-wicket win over Hong Kong in their Asia Cup Rising Stars 2025 opener in Doha yesterday. The 25-year-old right-hander, who also broke the fastest-fifty mark, reaching 50 off 14 balls, surpassed Parvez Hossain Emon's 42-ball ton from 2020. Bangladesh will face Afghanistan 'A' next on November 17.

PHOTO: BCB



PHOTO: STAR

In the wake of recent sexual harassment allegations that have rocked the nation, veteran sports organisers and former athletes gathered yesterday afternoon at Gate No. 1 of Dhaka's National Stadium under the banner Shommito Krirangan (United Sports Arena), calling for action and accountability and speaking out against misconduct in local women's sports.



PHOTO: AFP

Veteran spinner Ravindra Jadeja's four-wicket haul kept India in sight of victory as South Africa slumped to 93-7 on a tricky Eden Gardens pitch yesterday. Fifteen wickets fell on a manic day two, leaving South Africa with a 63-run lead and three wickets in hand after Simon Harmer's 4-30 bowled India out for 189.