



Shamim gets going after Litton's show of 'trust'

SPORTS REPORTER

Shamim Hossain struck a career-best 81 off 43 balls not out while playing a lone hand for Dhaka Capitals against Sylhet Titans in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) in Sylhet yesterday, nearly pulling off a win. Dhaka eventually fell short by six runs, but Shamim's innings underlined his value in the lower middle order and explained why captain Litton Das had backed him and even confronted selectors over his exclusion from the Ireland series in November-December last year.

Bangladesh's middle-order batters such as Shamim, Tawhid Hridoy, Jaker Ali, and Nurul Hasan Sohan are capable of playing the finisher's role, but they have struggled for form of late.

Shamim did not get to bat in the final T20I against Ireland despite being included in the squad. His previous six T20I innings saw three ducks and two scores of one. With the T20 World Cup approaching, BPL performances could prove decisive in determining the final squad, and Shamim's career-best effort must give the team management something to ponder.

His last-over assault highlighted his T20 credentials, with bat speed and a flair for the unconventional proving decisive against Mohammad Amir, a renowned death-over bowler. Chasing 27 off the final over, Shamim flicked the first ball over middle and off to fine leg for four. After two wides, he reverse-scoped a delivery well outside off-stump over third man for six. Amir then missed his yorker by a small margin, and Shamim went down to smash it through mid-on. An edge off the penultimate ball flew away for another boundary before Amir finally nailed the yorker, leaving Shamim unable to add to his tally.

The acceleration in Shamim's innings was telling. With wickets falling around him, he was 37 off 27 balls at one stage. He then plundered 54 runs off his next 17 deliveries.

"Obviously, when you lose a game, there is always regret, but I had faith that as long as I stay there, I will keep believing in myself," Shamim said in the post-match presser.

On overcoming a difficult period, he credited T20I captain Litton for showing faith in him.

"Regarding the national team, I have to thank Litton for placing his trust in me because I have played match-winning knocks before. A player can have two or three bad games, but if someone backs you and supports you, you can make a comeback easily," he said, adding that his focus was on performing well in the BPL to prepare for next month's T20 World Cup.

While he admitted that Amir's final delivery was "extraordinary", Shamim will hope to build on yesterday's knock to strengthen his case as the kind of middle-order batter Bangladesh have been searching for.

Cummins returns as Australia name provisional T20 WC squad

ICC

Australia have announced a provisional 15-player squad for ICC T20 World Cup 2026 in Sri Lanka and India.

Mitchell Marsh was named captain while Pat Cummins, Cameron Green and Cooper Connolly, who all missed Australia's T20 series against India, returned to the squad.

Provisional Australia squad: Mitchell Marsh (c), Xavier Bartlett, Cooper Connolly, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Cameron Green, Nathan Ellis, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Matthew Kuhnemann, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Short, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa

When passion outshone the numbers

ANISUR RAHMAN

The scoreline of the BRAC Bank Oporaje Alo Women's Hockey Tournament final suggested a one-sided affair, but the competition itself revealed a much richer story about the state and spirit of women's hockey in Bangladesh.

FAvourites BKSP thrashed Zone-2 -- a team formed by girls from Dhaka and Mymensingh -- 8-0 at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium on Thursday. Yet the tournament was less about the margin of victory and more about the perseverance of girls from across the country who displayed their love for the sport despite limited opportunities.

Much like the men's game, women's hockey in Bangladesh largely depends on BKSP players. However, the participation of more than 350 players from 18 districts was widely viewed as a possible foundation for the future of the women's game, with teams such as Sylhet showing notable enthusiasm.

The story of the Sylhet girls captured the essence of the tournament. They were first introduced to hockey using the curved handles of umbrellas, holding the shafts to learn how to control the ball. Only later did the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) provide them with 18 proper hockey sticks.

From training with umbrella handles to seeing two of their players -- Prima Begum and Nuri Akter -- reach the final phase was a testament to their adaptability and eagerness to learn. The tournament began with zonal rounds, where 18 districts were divided into four zones. Each zone sent one team, formed by the best players, to the final phase in Dhaka. BKSP, who train year-round on artificial turf under FIH-certified coaches, entered the final phase directly as the fifth team.

Although the final scoreline was unflattering,

the runners-up were not completely outmatched. Despite the absence of proper facilities and regular competition, they showed encouraging signs by moving the ball well, producing a few neat passes, carrying the ball at pace and even penetrating BKSP's attacking third. Ultimately, the lack of skill, fitness and experience proved decisive.

Their effort was reflected in the individual awards. Best player of the final Fardiya Akter Ratri, best goalkeeper Mohua and rising star Apurbo Akter all came from outside BKSP. Meanwhile, BKSP's Arpita Pal and Airin Akter Riya emerged as the tournament's top scorer and best player, respectively.

"It is really challenging for girls from outside BKSP because we play on grass and it is tough to adjust to artificial turf," said Ratri, younger sister of national forward Rakibul Hasan Rocky, adding that the final phase would have been more competitive had BKSP players been distributed among the teams.

"I sat idle most of the year and only came into action during the tournament," said Apurbo. "If we are given training throughout the year, we can improve more. I want to represent the national team."

Airin also acknowledged that non-BKSP players lag behind in experience as BKSP players regularly play international tournaments.

So far, 25 players have been selected from the event for advanced training starting in mid-January, while the federation is considering launching a national camp in March ahead of the Asian Games qualifiers. With BRAC Bank CEO and MD Tareq Refat Ullah Khan promising continued support for women's hockey and BHF eager to take initiatives, the tournament that began with umbrella handles may yet prove to be the first step toward a stronger future.



BKSP players celebrate after winning the BRAC Bank Oporaje Alo Women's Hockey Tournament final, beating Zone-2 -- comprising girls from Dhaka and Mymensingh -- 8-0 at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium on Thursday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

An 'unexplainable' emotional return for Sabina

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh captain Sabina Khatoon feels it is like breathing fresh air to be wearing the red and green jersey again following a long silence.

After more than a year away from the national spotlight, the familiar jersey will return to her shoulders, bringing with it emotion, pride, and renewed purpose.

For Sabina, this moment is not just a comeback -- it is a reminder of what it truly means to represent Bangladesh.

She is set to lead the Bangladesh women's team in the upcoming SAFF Women's Futsal Championship, to be held in Thailand from January 13-25.

After being overlooked for the women's football team for nearly a year following her disagreement with head coach Peter Butler in January last year, Sabina was named as captain for the preliminary futsal squad announced in December last year.

"The feeling of representing the nation is really unexplainable," Sabina said when



she faced the media in a press conference yesterday for the first time after the fallout with Butler.

For her, the red and green symbolise honour, sacrifice, and responsibility, and returning to them after such a long gap has made the moment even more special.

Iranian head coach Saeid Khodarahmi announced the men's and women's squads after a month-long training camp, and the

teams are leaving for Thailand well ahead of the tournament to adapt to the conditions and futsal facilities.

Sabina welcomes the preparation, knowing the team is still growing into the game.

Transitioning from regular football to futsal has been an exciting challenge for her. Sabina carries valuable experience, having been the first Bangladeshi female footballer to play international futsal tournament abroad.

She feels that experience has given her confidence and a natural comfort on the futsal court. More importantly, she sees this as an opportunity to contribute to the country in a new way.

"Now the girls know about futsal -- how to play it and understand the laws," she said, expressing optimism. Though the surface and style are different, the team has adapted well and shown promise.

As captain, Sabina is focused not only on results but also on inspiring the next generation.

What to WATCH

TSPORTS

BPL

Dhaka vs

Chattogram

Live from 2:00 pm

Sylhet vs Rangpur

Live from 7:00 pm

Qualifier 2

STAR SPORTS 2

Big Bash League

Brisbane Heat vs

Melbourne Stars

Live from 2:15 pm

ILT20

Live from

9:30 pm

Live from 8:30 pm

STAR SPORTS 1

SAT20

Paarl Royals vs

MI Cape Town

Live from

9:30 pm

'International cricket demands a different temperament'

Middle-order batter **Sobhana Mostary** finally proved her worth at the international level in last year's ICC Women's World Cup. The 23-year-old recently finished the Women's Bangladesh Cricket League (WBCL) T20 as the highest run-getter, scoring 259 runs in five innings at a strike rate of 126.34, and led North Zone to the title. As the women's team begin their final phase of preparation, starting Saturday in Mirpur, for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifiers in Nepal from January 18, Mostary spoke to **The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan** about her recent evolution and plans for the qualifiers. Excerpts follow:

The Daily Star (DS): You had a remarkable BCL as a batter and a captain. How would you describe it?

Sobhana Mostary (SM): I have captained in domestic competitions like the Premier League, NCL and BCL for the last four years, but winning a title always remained a dream. Even after losing our first match this season, I didn't lose belief. Everyone gave their best, and the support from senior players like Supta [Sharmi Akter] Apu and Samimu [Shamima Sultana] Apu helped me a lot as a captain.

DS: You are heading into another ICC event after playing only domestic cricket, no international matches, in the buildup. What sort of a difference does it make?

SM: The difference is significant. In domestic cricket, we play against the same opponents regularly, so there is less pressure. Experience matters the most at the international level. If we could have played against India as preparation for the qualifiers, it would have provided a lot of room for improvement because international cricket demands a different temperament; it can never be compared to domestic cricket.

DS: How do you reflect on your transformation as a player since the last World Cup?

SM: I struggled for three or four years and couldn't perform the way people expected, which led to a lot of criticism. The 2024 T20 World Cup was a turning point for me. Finishing among the top 10 batters gave me belief. My preparation was different -- I trained harder, stayed mentally focused and tried to understand the game's momentum, which helped me perform better.

DS: With four teams qualifying, will the upcoming qualifier be less challenging?

SM: I wouldn't say it would be easy, but we are confident. We have played against most of these teams and done well. Since the top four will qualify, I believe Bangladesh are in a good position. But we still need to perform.

DS: Should the BCB prioritise arranging international matches beyond the FTP?

SM: The board is trying to arrange more international matches before the T20 World Cup. Discussions about the Women's BPL are also ongoing. Senior players and the captain regularly convey the need for more matches, and the board generally responds positively.

DS: Despite salary and allowance increases, domestic earnings remain an issue in women's cricket. What's your take?

SM: The salary increase is a positive step, but domestic match fees are still low, especially for players outside the national pool. Many train all year for only one or two tournaments. Increasing domestic fees would sustain their careers.

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গাইত্তি সেবা সমূহ

NVD-Normal Vaginal Delivery
সিজার (প্রথম ও দ্বিতীয়)
LUCS (1st & 2nd)
সিজার (দ্বিতীয় ও তৃতীয়)
LUCS (3rd / Complex)
জরায় অপসারণ
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Laparoscopic Hysterectomy
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Laparoscopic Ovarian Cystectomy
ল্যাপারোক্ষেপিক মিডিল সাথে
Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy / Appendectomy
ক্রিমাই সুরক্ষিত থেকে
Circumcision
ল্যাপারোক্ষেপিক জাতীয় ও পেটের হার্নিয়া
Laparoscopic IPOM-(Intrapelvic Onlay Mesh)
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Piles / Fissure / Fistula
কুচকি হার্নিয়া
Inguinal Hernia
পেটের চরি অপসারণ
Abdominoplasty

জরায়ি সেবা সমূহ

ল্যাপারোক্ষেপিক মিডিল সাথে / অ্যাপেন্ডেক্টোমি
Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy / Appendectomy
ক্রিমাই সুরক্ষিত থেকে
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