DHAKA SATURDAY NOVEMBER 7, 2026, KARTIK 22, 1433 BS

SPORT



"It's not a retirement, his career hasn't ended. Anyone who knows him knows he still has goals for his career. The only thing I would hope for is that when the day finally comes for him to retire as a footballer, it happens differently than it did yesterday.

JOSE MOURINHO on Cristiano Ronaldo's international retirement

Shadman 'not in a condition to bat'

STAR SPORTS DESK

Bangladesh will start the third day of the Sylhet Test effectively four wickets down after national team physio Bayjedul Islam Khan confirmed that opener Shadman Islam is "not in a condition to bat in the first innings" following an ankle injury.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board medical department confirmed the batter had sprained his left ankle on Friday morning, leaving the hosts a batter short.

"Shadman Islam hurt his ankle while fielding today and couldn't take any further part in the field afterwards," Bayjedul said in a video release. "We have kept him under observation and he has also undergone a scan. It looks like he has sustained an injury. We will get the scan report tomorrow [Saturday].... At this moment, he is not in a condition to bat in the first innings."

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS
Bangladesh vs West Indies
2nd Test, Day 3
Live from 9:30 am

LaLiga
Malaga VS Racing
Live from 7:00 pm
Espanyol vs Deportivo
Live from 9:15 pm
Osasuna VS Athletic
11:30 pm
Valencia vs Real Madrid
Live from 2:00 am (Sunday)

SONY SPORTS 1, 2, 5
U-19 Asia Cup
Afghanistan vs Malaysia
Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka
Live from 11:00 pm

RAJDHANI TV, STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
English Premier League
Leeds vs Tottenham
Live from 6:30 pm
Arsenal vs Hull
Live from 9:00 pm
Nott'm vs Man City
Live from 11:30 pm

PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

Cerebral lock-picker Hasan keeps it simple

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI *from Sylhet*

Five five-fors, five countries, one nuanced reader of minds.

Hasan Mahmud's knack for setting up batters has gained new dimensions in recent times, and in the ongoing Sylhet Test, on a surface that was being prepared for a spin trio, the right-arm fast bowler of Bangladesh seized a world record. The length, the movement in the air or off the seam, all came together once more for him against the West Indies, as has been the case in the last six months.

Yesterday, the 27-year-old became the first-ever pacer in the Tests to bag five five-wicket hauls in five different conditions.

It was a rare feat which transcends conditions. Rawalpindi, Chennai, Darwin, Abu Dhabi and now Sylhet all carry their own challenges, and Hasan has thrived. Australia spinner Nathan Lyon was the first to achieve the feat, but in terms of pace, Hasan is the first.

At Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, where pacers were expected to play the supporting role, Hasan and Taskin Ahmed found water in the desert, with the former leading the charge and ending the second day with six scalps.

There is more to his skill than meets the eye. Beneath his shy exterior, Hasan has the knack for picking the lock. Far from just seam position or movement, part of his skill armoury, Hasan predicts batters' tendencies and how they are thinking.

"We try to bowl two-three balls in a way that the batsman might think how the ball will come [next]," he explained his tactical thinking at the press conference.

"We bowl like that, and the wicket-taking ball is bowled with a slightly different plan," he stated, suggesting that a ruse or deception is evidently at play. It was often clear. Kavem Hodge was castled shouldering arms on day one. The batter had left a delivery of similar length just two deliveries ago, but from that same length, Hasan hit the top of the stumps. Even set batter Amir Jangoo, batting on a ton, perished shouldering arms as Hasan made inroads on day two.

"Maybe the batsman thinks this [certain] ball won't come or a slightly fuller length ball will come, and he'll go to play it. Sometimes, the batsman might not think outside the box," Hasan said.

Jangoo was done in by the movement through the air, the ball tailing in and taking the off-stump. It was not the ball Jangoo expected, but Hasan predicted it. The results show.

Since June, Hasan has been among the top five pace wicket-takers in Tests, with 23 wickets. The top four in the list are all from outside the subcontinent. Hasan, meanwhile, bowled in Abu Dhabi, Mirpur and Sylhet during this period.

"I keep things very simple. But I will definitely try to get more in the future. As long as I am in Test cricket, playing, [picking up] five wickets will always be special. I will keep trying," Hasan said on his record.

Hasan almost got another hattrick yesterday after achieving the feat in the Abu Dhabi heat. With bounce on offer, his plans changed. Joshua Bishop was stumped, which saw Hasan become the first Bangladesh fast bowler to claim a stumping dismissal.

This was his first five-for at home, and as Hasan continues to make the complicated look simple, he seems to have found a formula that travels.

BCB moves to introduce paid maternity leave

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to introduce paid maternity leave for women cricketers, with the proposal expected to receive formal approval soon, a board official said yesterday.

"We had an online board meeting yesterday [Thursday]. Many of the directors were present. We have decided to introduce paid maternity leave, and it will also be approved by the board," BCB women's wing chairman Rafiqul Islam Babu told The Daily Star.

On October 26, The Daily Star published a report in its print edition titled 'Here motherhood costs cricket career', highlighting how the absence of a maternity policy in Bangladesh cricket had left several women cricketers considering quitting the game.

Current and former women cricketers, umpires and coaches shared their experiences and expressed concern that, without such a policy, many players would continue to face uncertainty over whether motherhood and a sustained career could coexist.

"We discussed how many months of maternity leave could be granted and the payment details for those on the payroll," Rafiqul said.

"Some recommended four months, while we suggested six months Four months has been proposed for now, but it could be extended to six months," added the women's wing chairman.

Rafiqul further informed the board had already taken steps to pay former national pacer Suraiya Azmin four months' salary after she sought paid maternity leave earlier this year.

"I have already signed on it, and the payment should be credited to her account within a day or two for the four-month period," he added.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Suraiya said she had been informed of the development by Bulbul Bashar, who is in charge of the BCB women's wing.

Suraiya welcomed the move, saying: "I feel happier knowing that they are finally taking steps towards introducing paid maternity leave."

Cricket Australia and New Zealand Cricket provide paid maternity leave to their contracted players, while Pakistan introduced a Parental Support Policy in 2021.

On June 22 this year, International Cricket Council (ICC) introduced its Return to Play Post-Pregnancy Guidelines for women cricketers. Its six-stage framework -- Ready, Review, Restore, Recondition, Return and Refine -- covers recovery, medical assessments, gradual training and monitoring. While the guidelines help member boards develop their own policies, they do not guarantee paid maternity leave.

'Everything changed after the Bhutan win'

Mohammad Ibrahim returned to the national team and made instant impact as a super-sub, scoring the decisive goal against Bhutan in the opening match of the SAFF Championship on Thursday. The 29-year-old forward, enjoying a rich vein of form with Fortis FC, spoke to The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman about his goal, time on the bench and away from the team, the improvements he has made to earn a recall, and the team environment. Following are the excerpts:



The Daily Star (DS): When you came on after 65 minutes with the match still goalless, what was going through your mind?

Mohammad Ibrahim (MI): The coach told me to stay around the box and make third-man runs because we were struggling to score. Balls were coming into the box frequently from the right. By the grace of Allah, I scored, and it feels very good.

DS: Describe the goal and the aftermath.

MI: I was waiting for the second ball, anticipating where it might drop. When I saw the ball in the air after the header from Shamit [Shome], I was ready. Then I checked the goalkeeper's position before finishing. That moment cannot be expressed in words. Scoring in front of so many spectators on home soil is unbelievable. So many things go through your mind that you cannot remember everything.

DS: What kind of hard work did you put in to return to the team after being dropped from the final squad for the ASEAN Cup?

MI: Previously, we used to whip balls in from the flanks and then drop back to help the defenders. But recently, forwards have been scoring from inside the box as inverted wingers, something that was previously absent. After analysing this, I have been trying to score as an inverted winger and stay around the box. As a forward, I should be close to goal, either to score or assist. Physical fitness is also important for this.

DS: What is your shortcoming? Why aren't you a regular in the team?

MI: I scored my last goal in Malaysia during the Asian Cup Qualifiers four or five years ago. I don't know why I was dropped despite scoring two goals. I was performing regularly at club level but was still left out of the national team. When I was selected again, I had to spend time on the bench. But I always tried my best to return. Recently, the focus on overseas players has made the path tougher for those of us in the wing positions. However, I will not blame them [diaspora players], because we also needed to improve but failed to do so. Now all local players are working extra hard to address their shortcomings.

DS: How do you assess Bangladesh's performance against Bhutan?

MI: Our target was to score without conceding. Bhutan could not create chances, while we created many and were ahead in every aspect. It would have felt better if we had scored earlier.

DS: Is it possible to become champions playing like this?

MI: We will definitely have to raise our level. When our main player Hamza [Choudhury] bhai joins the team, the scenario will be completely different. His presence gives everyone extra confidence. He also guides us on the pitch, and his impact drives everyone to give their best. We are not thinking about the title yet; we want to progress match by match.

DS: Were you surprised to see Bishwanath Ghosh playing as a № 9, and how do you evaluate his performance?

MI: It is the coach's decision, but I think Bishwanath did his job. He had to tire out the Bhutanese players, and he did that perfectly. He is hardworking and good in duels. The coach wanted him to wear down the opposition to make room for the substitutes to make an impact later, and that happened. If Bishwanath had scored, there would have been no discussion about his position.

DS: How is the environment in the team after winning the opening match of the championship?

MI: The atmosphere in the camp was gloomy and tense, especially after the 9-2 defeat to Indonesia in the ASEAN Cup. But everything changed after Thursday's win, and a positive vibe has returned. There is also the motivation of Hamza bhai and Farhaan Ali Waheed joining the camp before our second match against Sri Lanka. I think the atmosphere will improve further once Hamza bhai arrives.

