

## Shakib not downbeat

SPORTS REPORTER

One might have thought that there would be little left to say for a captain after his side had suffered a massive nine-wicket defeat but Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan had no shortage of words in the press conference at the end of the game, except when it came to his bowlers.

The 22-year-old Tigers skipper found no reason to be disappointed after his team's humiliating defeat against Sri Lanka in their third match of the Idea Cup tri-nation tournament at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, rather he painted the bright signs of his team's performances.

"It is something rare in Bangladesh cricket that the national team has scored 250-plus runs in three consecutive matches and I think it shows that we have been playing good cricket," said Shakib reflecting on his team's 249-run score in the third game which Sri Lanka overtook with 7.1 overs to spare riding on twin tons from Mahela Jayawardene and Upul Tharanga.

"We were however 30 runs short as we didn't play smart cricket in the batting powerplay and lost too many wickets at a crucial time," he added.

The Bangladesh bowling was helpless against the master class batting of the two Sri Lankan openers and when asked about the matter, Shakib said: "I don't want to

say anything about our bowling."

He was however quick to explain the reason behind the poor bowling effort. "Actually our bowlers gave too much room to the two opening batsmen and you know you can't survive at this level if you give too many chances," he explained.

He also believed that even the presence of leading pacesman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza would not have made any difference in this surface.

"He (Mashrafe) is a very good leader but I don't think his presence would have made any difference in this kind of surface," Shakib observed.

The young Bangladesh skipper however was a little bit unhappy with the fact that none of his batsmen could make the three-digit figure although almost all got starts towards making a big one.

"It's little bit disappointing and we definitely need to work on this area," he promised.

Shakib got back amongst the runs after two abortive efforts in the competition as he made 47 although it came off 75 balls. The left-hander however said that he was never under pressure.

"I enjoyed the time in the dressing room with my colleagues and passed the times in gossiping (adda) and I went to bed at 1.30am and walked in the morning as usual. I never felt any pressure on me," he said.

Shakib also talked about the poor turn out in the competition and blamed the high rates of the tickets.

"If you consider our eco-

nomical condition than I think the ticket is expensive for the spectators," he opined.

Shakib was not ready to talk any more about the dew factor but former Sri Lanka skipper

Mahela Jayawardene confirmed that dew was definitely an issue.

"I think dew was a factor as it was not so easy to grip the

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### BANGLADESH-SRI LANKA SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH	R	B	4s	6s
Tamim lbw b Randiv	21	22	2	1
Imrul lbw b Perera	42	54	4	1
Ashraful run out (Thushara)	13	14	2	0
Raqibul c Randiv b Perera	43	71	2	0
Shakib c Tharanga b Thushara	47	75	1	0
Mushfiqur c Bandara b Randiv	32	22	2	2
Mahmudullah not out	24	24	2	0
Naeem b Kulasekara	5	3	1	0
Razzak run out (Kulasekara/Sangakkara)	1	1	0	0
Rubel c Sangakkara b Kulasekara	0	4	0	0
Rasel not out	7	10	1	0
Extras: (b-1, w-13)	14			
Total: (For 9 wickets in 50 overs)	249			
Fall of wickets: 1-44, 2-73, 3-88, 4-175, 5-199, 6-211, 7-223, 8-227, 9-231				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Kulasekara	10	1	48	2
Thushara	9	0	67	1
Randiv	10	1	40	2
Perera	10	0	32	2
Bandara	10	0	44	0
Samaraweera	1	0	17	0
SRI LANKA	R	B	4s	6s
Tharanga not out	118	126	18	0
Jayawardene c Mushfiqur b Naeem	108	117	13	0
Sangakkara not out	17	14	2	0
Extras: (lb-1, w-8)	9			
Total: (For 1 wicket in 42.5 overs)	252			
Did not bat: Thirimanne, Samaraweera, Kandamby, Perera, Thushara, Randiv, Bandara, Kulasekara				
Fall of wickets: 1-215				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Rasel	6	0	37	0
Rubel	8	0	59	0
Naeem	5	0	35	1
Shakib	8	2	27	0
Mahmudullah	2	0	16	0
Razzak	8	0	41	0
Ashraful	5	0	29	0
Tamim	0.5	0	7	0

Result: Sri Lanka won by 9 wickets  
Man-of-the-Match: Upul Tharanga  
Toss: Sri Lanka  
Umpires: Simon Taufel (AUS) and Shahid Saikat (BAN)



PHOTO: STAR  
Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan improvises on a sweep shot during his enterprising knock of 47 in their Idea Cup match against Sri Lanka at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR  
Sri Lankan opener Mahela Jayawardene (L) and Upul Tharanga celebrate a boundary during their Idea Cup match against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Both scored centuries as Sri Lanka recorded an emphatic 9-wicket victory over the hosts.

## Shakib 5th best Test all-rounder

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh interim captain Shakib Al Hasan has made progress in the ICC Test all-rounders ranking by stepping into the fifth position, said an ICC press release yesterday.

Shakib, who is number one in the ODI all-rounders ranking, has now 282 points to topple England's all-rounder Stuart Broad and grab the fifth position following his brilliant performance in the West Indies last year.

South African all-rounder Jacques Kallis and New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori, both lost points in the new publication though both are still maintaining the top two positions respectively. Australian Mitchell Johnson (339) and England's Graeme Swann (304) followed Kallis and Vettori in the rankings.

Meanwhile, Graeme Smith, Jacques Kallis and Mike Hussey are the main movers in the rankings for Test batsmen while bowlers Mohammad Asif, Morne Morkel and James Anderson also made progress.

Indian opener Gautam Gambhir, Sri Lankan Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara are in top three positions respectively in the Test batsmen ranking while South African Dale Steyn and Australian Mitchell Johnson are in the top two places in the Test bowlers ranking followed by Pakistan seamer Mohammad Asif and Sri Lanka spinner Muttiah Muralidaran.

## Abahani in President's Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani, the champions of the second B. League, have been nominated to represent Bangladesh for the third consecutive time in the AFC President's Cup in 2010.

Nine clubs out of 11 have already confirmed their participation with only the clubs from Sri Lanka and Pakistan yet to be confirmed, according to a report carried by the-AFC.com. Eleven teams, split into three groups, will play the group-phase matches and the top six teams will be advanced to the finals.

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## Trophy unveiling today

SPORTS REPORTER



The trophy for the ICC World Cup 2011 will be unveiled today at the Bangabandhu International Convention Center following the meeting of the Central Organising Committee of the ICC World Cup.

State-run Bangladesh Television will telecast the unveiling programme live from the venue at 6:45 pm.

Besides, fans across the country will have a chance to glimpse the ceremony on big screens in Dhaka, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. In Dhaka, Uttara Friends Club, Banani Society Field, Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Kalabagan Club field, East End Club field, Shaheed Hazi Abdul Alim Eidgah field, Shiraz Mia Memorial Model School field, Dholaipur High School field, Dhaka University, and Shaheed Alauddin Park field will beam the action live. Fans in Chittagong will be able to catch the action live at the MA Aziz Stadium, while Laboni Point in Cox's Bazar will serve as another location for viewers.

## Smith rues missed chance

Cricket

AFP, Cape Town

Number 11 batsman Graham Onions batted out the last over for the second time in the series as England escaped with a draw on the fifth day of the third Test against South Africa at Newlands on Thursday.

South African captain Graeme Smith bemoaned his side's inability to finish off the opposition, which means England go into the fourth and final Test in Johannesburg next Thursday with an unbeatable 1-0 lead despite South Africa twice getting within one wicket of victory.

"It's hugely frustrating not being able to land the knockout blow," said Smith.

"We arrived in this Test match under a lot of pressure with a lot of questions being asked. We were put in to bat on a wicket that was doing a bit and the guys showed a lot of character. We played a lot of positive cricket."

England finished on 296 for nine after four wickets fell in the last hour.

"Everyone gave 100 percent in that last 15 overs," said Smith.

England captain Andrew Strauss hailed Onions as 'a legend' but said the finish should not have been so close after an 'unbelievable partnership' between Paul Collingwood and Ian Bell, who batted together for almost four hours.

Strauss said England would not be satisfied with a share of the series.

"It's nice to know they can't win it but we came here to win the series," said the South African-born Strauss.

"We'll be pretty unhappy when we step on that plane if we let them back in. But we've got to be better than we were in this game."

Dignitaries across the world are in Dhaka to make the official launch of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011 in Bangladesh. In attendance will be, ICC vice president and chairman of the central organising committee Sharad Pawar, ICC chief executive officer Haroon Lorgat and tournament director Prof. Ratnakar Shetty. This is the first COC meeting that will be held in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Mustafa Kamal and convenor of the COC Mahbub Anam will also be present on the occasion.

It was learnt that the meeting would focus on discussion about the all the venues to be used during the World Cup. They will also finalise a date for the next COC meeting in Sri Lanka and take a decision on when to hold the official launch of the tournament in Sri Lanka. The meeting will also review the decision of the previous meeting held in India.

Bangladesh will host the inaugural ceremony of the World Cup on February 17, 2011 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. They will also host eight matches including two quarterfinals in both Dhaka and Chittagong.

But Collingwood was caught at slip off the part-time off-spinner JP Duminy with 13.3 overs remaining and as happened in the first Test at Centurion England found themselves in desperate trouble.

In Duminy's next over Matt Prior prodded a catch to AB de Villiers at short leg.

With up to seven fielders clustered around the bat, Stuart Broad survived without scoring a run for 22 balls before a ball from left-arm spinner Paul Harris bounced and popped off his glove for De Villiers to make another catch at short leg.

Fast bowler Morne Morkel was brought back into the South African attack and with his first ball had Bell caught at first slip by Graeme Smith after a 286-minute vigil in which he scored 78. There were 17 balls left but Onions and Graeme Swann survived against Dale Steyn and Morkel, with Onions playing out a challenging last over with Morkel with impressive calm.

South African hopes were high when they took the second new ball one over after lunch, needing five wickets to square the series.

But Collingwood survived a blistering spell of fast bowling from Dale Steyn, while the rest of the South African bowling attack made a minimal impression on a pitch which played easily under a warm sun.

"We had it well set up with five down and that new ball coming," said Smith.

"We bowled well with it. The first ten overs with that new ball was key. Collingwood and Bell stuck to their game plans and really showed a lot of strength of character."

"I really can't complain about the performance of our bowlers with the second new ball. We asked a lot of questions. I think Paul played 10 out of 18 balls at one stage."

Strauss praised the two batsmen.

"Colly used his experience again and Ian Bell has wanted to play an innings like that for a

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## What to WATCH

ESPN

English Premier League  
Hull City v Chelsea  
Live from 6:40 pm

English Premier League  
Arsenal v Everton  
Live from 8:55 pm

English Premier League  
Birmingham City v Manchester United  
Live from 11:25 pm

Star Sports

English Premier League  
Wigan Athletic v Aston Villa  
Live from 8:55 pm

Super Sport

Primera Liga  
Sevilla v Racing  
Live from 1:30 am (Sunday)

## DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh League  
Ctg Mohammedan v Abahani  
Venue: MA Aziz Stadium  
Time: 2:30 pm  
Brothers Union v Dhaka Mohammedan  
Venue: Kamalapur Stadium  
Time: 2:45 pm  
Beanbazar SC v Sheikh Russel KC  
Venue: Sylhet Stadium  
Time: 2:30 pm

## Nadal's lost confidence

Tennis

AFP, Doha

Rafael Nadal, seeking his first ATP World Tour title in eight months, admitted after reaching the semifinals of the Qatar Open that he has been suffering from a crisis of confidence.

"I have had a lot of problems in the head," the former world number one said after winning 6-1, 2-0 when his opponent, the Belgian qualifier Steve Darcis, retired after only 35 minutes of very one-sided action.

"I have had under-confidence and things in the head -- but that's life. You have to accept problems and you have to come back. I am trying. We will see what happens in the next six months."

For someone who has been conspicuously stable while closing out matches, rarely letting slip opportunities to win when they present themselves, Nadal's words superficially contained an element of surprise.

However, he has had increasing problems with arthritic knees, suffered from a stomach ailment, and reportedly been affected by the recent break-up of his parents' marriage.

The 24-year-old Majorcan took only two days' break over Christmas before returning to training and is here in Doha with his mother, though not his uncle-coach Toni. Apparently he will link up in Melbourne for Nadal's defence of the Australian Open title the week after next.

Nadal was asked whether the media has been too impatient with him -- suggesting that he is not the player he was, for having reached just one final since returning from a three-month absence in August.

"We will see in a few months," Nadal replied amicably. "Everyone is free to talk. I can say nothing against them. I didn't win against the best players."

"But that's tennis -- you can't be all the time one hundred percent. I am ready to try and win

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