DHAKA FRIDAY JUN 15. e-mail: sports@thedailystar.net

He was one of the three local half-centurions of the match yesterday.

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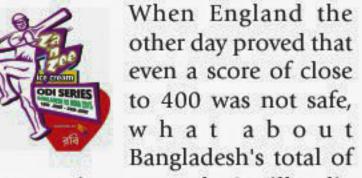


Bangladesh posted their highest ever total against India, 307, yesterday

The 102-run stand between Soumya Sarkar and Tamim Igbal was Bangladesh's highest opening partnership against India Bangladesh reached 100 runs in 79 balls yesterday; their fastest against any top-eight ranked side Both Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Igbal scored their 19th halfcenturies in Bangladesh yesterday

# Batting delights

AL-AMIN



307 at Mirpur yesterday? Will India romp past that mark? This was a puzzle that was to be answered later Thursday night, provided that rain stayed away during the Indian innings under lights.

But if you are a Tigers fan and want not to be bothered about what to follow then the home side's first innings total beyond 300, a first for them against the mighty Indians in the shorter version, was something to behold.

One may say that Bangladesh

might have scored 50 odd runs dominated even an on-song Tamim short on a brilliant batting wicket. The argument could be that the Tigers should have carefully avoided India's best bowler on the field Ravichandran Ashwin after that rain break. But despite that, a collapse after an hour of rain interruptions, it was one of those rare days the Tigers dominated a better

Seventy-nine runs in 10 overs and 100 on the board in the 13th were how openers Tamim Iqbal and Soumya Sarkar went about a serious business against a vaunted Indian attack. It was however not the runs but the manner in which those were scored. Everybody is aware of what Tamim is capable of with his brute power. But it was the other left-hander, who for a change

with his elegance and pristine touch.

Soumya made a good impression in the World Cup and against Pakistan last month. But his 38-ball half-century yesterday was a class apart. His effortless pull on the back foot and exquisite square drives were a treat to watch. It took India a certain degree of

luck to break the menacing pair with Soumya being run out after failing to back up while chasing a non-existent single. Rain poured soon after and a witty journo quipped that it brought more relief to the Indians than the hosts.

Tamim struck a fluent run-a-ball 50 before holing out in the deep while trying to force Ashwin.

Mushfigur Rahim and debutant

Litton Das also fell to Ashwin with the former unnecessarily trying the aerial route.

With four wickets down at 146 Bangladesh suddenly looked out of sorts. But a new-look Tigers, who have now made it a habit of turning things around, found a wily Shakib Al Hasan and along with him another young prospect Sabbir Rahman. The pair added 83 runs for the fifth wicket before Sabbir departed for a fine 41. Shakib struck his fifty but suffered a soft dismissal when he was about to cut loose.

The Indian pace bowlers might have bowled with their tails up against the opposition tail, but India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni must have tried his best to hide them somewhere when the true Tigers were in full cry.

## 'I always keep my cool'

NAIMUL KARIM



At no point of the match yesterday did Mustafizur Rahman let the batsmen dominate him. When Rohit Sharma pulled him for a six in the early stages of the match, he came back with his off-cutter to produce

an edge in the very next ball.

A collision with Mahendra Singh Dhoni could have knocked anyone unconscious, · Mustafizur, though had different plans. While he did leave the field temporarily, he came back to complete a superb five-wicket haul.

When he was brought on in the Powerplay overs as a replacement for Rubel · Hossain, Suresh Raina greeted him with an astounding six over covers. Any other debu-: tant would have probably found it difficult · to even stick to a right line after that hit. But Mustafizur came back with yet another offcutter to uproot Raina's stumps. He fol-· lowed that with Ravi Ashwin's wicket with : the next ball.

There were few players on the field that

had to deal with the amount of brunt that

· Mustafizur went through yesterday and yet, at

· no point of the match did he seem uncom-

fortable. He was as calm as ever; almost as

However, the moment Mustafizur stepped

Some of the questions were answered in

one line, whereas the others were met with an

innocent face. By the end of the press confer-

· Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and BCB media man-

· Those may have been one-line answers, but

: they were gold, considering the fact that this

· young man had almost single-handedly

ence, he was helplessly looking at his captain

The journalists though didn't mind.

outside the field, a different shade took over

him. He was shy and barely looked in control

during the press conference.

ager Rabeed Imam for some help.

though he had found a new home to live in.



The Export Leader

CROWN TO CEMENT

**MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN** 

outfoxed one of the best batting line-ups of the world on a batting-friendly pitch.

"The fact that I was playing with India in itself was very exciting. The five-wicket haul felt good," said Mustafizur.

Despite a relatively quiet press conference, Mustafizur did manage to reveal the secret behind his off-cutters.

"When I bowled in the under-19 level I

could swing the ball. Then one day [Anamul Haque] Bijoy bhai asked me if I could cut the ball. I tried doing that and surprisingly, got him out with that delivery," laughed Mustafizur. A rare left-arm pacer in

Bangladesh's cricket, the 19-

year-old only began playing

first-class cricket a year back. In www.premiercement.com fact, only four years ago, he used to travel 40 kms every day from his village in Tetulia to Satkhira on a

scooter with his brother, in order to play for a club there. It was his brother Mogleshur Rahman,

who first asked him to take part in an interdistrict pacer hunt in Satkhira, which initiated his career. "I want to thank my brother for all that he

has done. I want to thank my entire family actually," Mustafizur quietly muttered.

A fan of Pakistan's Mohammad Aamer, when Mustafizur was asked if he used any special tactic to stay calm on the field, he merely answered the question in one line: 'I always keep my cool.'

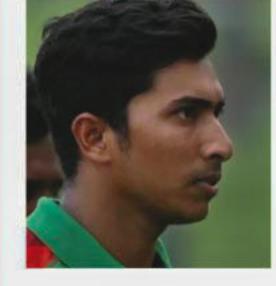
He also played down the collision that he had on the field with India captain Dhoni. "I was standing in the line when that happened. We talked later and sorted it out," he said.

#### SUPERCRETE CEMENT

#### SUPER PERFORMER OF THE DAY

Lafarge Surma Cement Ltd.

#### **SOUMYA SARKAR**



There might have been a number of batsmen who got set for Bangladesh yesterday, but Soumya Sarkar's innings was easily the most dominant of them all. The manner in which the left-hander swayed his bat so delicately and found the gaps in the field almost at will,

left Mahendra Singh Dhoni and company in tatters in the first 10 overs. Yes, Tamim Iqbal too was getting runs at the other end, but it was the apparent ease with which Soumya played his innings that further pressurised the opposition. He reached his half-century in the classiest of fashions; calmly upper-cutting a Mohit Sharma bouncer over the wicketkeeper for a four. That shot showed that Soumya was in it for a big knock; that yesterday could have been his day. However, the enthusiasm got the better of him as he got run out just before the rain arrived. He hit eight fours and one six in his 40ball 54.

## A dose of pace

NAIMUL KARIM



Eyes were blinked, heads were scratched and a sense of confusion seemed to spread across the Mirpur press box as soon as Bangladesh's

team for the first ODI against India was announced yesterday. Out of the blue, the Tigers had

decided to field four specialist pacers, a decision which came as a surprise due to a number of reasons. For one, the bowler who was replaced -- Arafat Sunny -- did little wrong in the last few matches. He was, in fact, the highest wicket-taker in the Pakistan series.

Secondly, the pacer who came in place of him, Mustafizur Rahman, had played just one T20I prior to the match yesterday. Now this wasn't the first time that

Bangladesh had employed four specialist pacers in their side, but it has been a while since the home crowd got to witness such a combination.

The last time Bangladesh's pacers bowled more than 35 overs in an ODI at home was back on December 26, 2004 with Khaled Mahmud, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tapash Baisya and Nazmul Hossain forming Bangladesh's attack against India.

National Stadium.

There was always a chance to use the left-handed Mustafizur as a surprise element in this series, however to go with him in the very first match -- instead of a more sedate and safe segment of the competition -- was a move that not many had expected.

But then again, expecting the unexpected has seemed to be the motto of the Chandika Hathurusingha-led team management, ever since the Sri Lankan took over in June last year.

The last year has witnessed the team management employ a number of moves that one can't generally associate with the men in green. They have been more aggressive, and the urge to win seems to have doubled.

Right from smothering the Indians with pace and bounce in June last year -- in an attempt to play to their weakness -- to stepping out of the mentality of filling the eleven with slow left-armers, there's been this conscious effort to change the look of the team.

In fact, the changed mindset was witnessed in the lone Test against India as well. Bangladesh's team management decided to field just

However, from the way Ravi Ashwin and Harbhajan Singh turned the ball in the latter days of that Test in Fatullah, one could say that the objective there too was to go on an all-out attack against the visitors; to go with the only tactic that could give them a possible win.

Yesterday was no different. The only reason why Mustafizur was brought in was because the managemost vulnerable point of the series -right at the beginning.

They decided to bring in a bowler they wanted to make the visiting : they put in against slow left-armers in the nets.

message.

There's no doubt that a certain: it's not the result that matters, but the : back to complete his five-wicket haul. needed fresh air in the last one year. : clash. Thankfully neither of us got injured."

### Dhoni blames Incidentally, Bangladesh went on to win that game at the Bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and four spinners -- a move that came under heavy scrubing the bangabandhu one pacer and bangabandhu one pacer and bangabandhu one pacer and bangabandhu one pacer and bangabandhu one

cement

SPORTS REPORTER



India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni credited Bangladesh's bowlers and also blamed his batsmen for the defeat at Mirpur yesterday.

Speaking to reporters at the stadium, Dhoni praised the way Mustafizur Rahman used his variations to outfox the visitors. "Today he bowled really well. Being a left-armer is certainly an

advantage. He mixed his variations well. That was the main reason why he was so successful," said Dhoni. "I think the key to chasing down big totals is partnerships. The

ment wanted to hurt India at their : bigger the partnership, the easier it becomes. We kept losing wickets in the middle, which I feel was crucial, especially on wickets that turn out to be on the slower side. The batting was really not up to it," he added.

Furthermore he praised the way Bangladesh's batsmen took on that India had never seen before; the bowlers right from the word go. "They were successful. It's not as though we bowled bad deliver-

batsmen pay for all those extra hours ; ies. They went after the bowlers even when they bowled good deliveries. 308 was an achievable target but the batting was not up to it," said Dhoni. 'Guess what? We just have one : When asked about the key aspects of Bangladesh's match that

slow left-armer in the side. Now : changed the game, the skipper said, "I think, their bowling and our here's a dose of our pacers' was the : batting. Though they bowled well, they knew the home conditions well and they knew the kind of variations that would be helpful."

Dhoni's collision with the young Mustafizur garnered plenty of amount of risk remains in these tac- : attention on social media by the time the match was over last tics. But in circumstances like these, i night. Mustafizur had to leave the field temporarily, before coming

thinking; the ideas behind the moves; Speaking about the collision he said, "Well I thought he would an aspect that has provided: move, he thought I would move and at the end both of us collided. Bangladesh's fans with some much- I have to take the closest path to the crease. It was a typical street

