





THE LAST THING I WANT IS YOU TO GET INJURED: Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusingha (L) and opener Soumya Sarkar share a light moment as they leave the Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong Monday afternoon. The Tigers are now in the port city to play the Chittagong leg of the South Africa series.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

### 'Let the critics say whatever they like'

SPORTS REPORTER



The Tigers have 160 million or more followodi CRICKET SERIES
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same number of critics

and as many advisors. This is something the Tigers' inspirational captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is well aware of. But if he or his team were to take notice of all those critics and advisors, it would have been a recipe for disaster.

After the magnificent turnaround in the second one-day international against South Africa in Mirpur on Sunday, when they beat the visitors by seven wickets, the Bangladesh team is now confronted with huge outcry in the social media -- where everybody is calling for the head of opener Tamim Iqbal.

The crime the dashing left-hander committed in an otherwise perfect performance was that he threw away his wicket by attempting a down-the-track shot early in the chase of 163.

But when Mashrafe's attention was drawn on Tamim's expensive shot and the subsequent outcry, the Bangladesh captain appeared very annoyed and primarily refused to make any comment. But then what he said can be best described as an outburst.

"I don't feel like talking about such trivial subject. One or two bad performances doesn't make a batsman bad overnight. I think this kind of talk will not help our cricket, let alone a cricketer. It must be stopped," said the Bangladesh one-day captain acidly yesterday.

"We are not going to produce a cricketer like Tamim every now and then. I agree that he played a bad shot [on Sunday] and you can criticise him for that. But that should be a cricketing criticism instead of a personal one. It was a good opportunity for him to play a good knock [on Sunday] but he could not avail that. But it's totally rubbish to dismiss any player after he played one or two bad knocks," Mashrafe observed.

Mashrafe has been a success story for the Tigers in the shorter version ever since took over from Mushfigur Rahim before the Zimbabwe series in November last year. Under his stewardship, Bangladesh have played 19 matches so far and won 14 out of them, a statistics that any captain in the world will envy.

But going into the third and deciding one-dayer in Chittagong on Wednesday, Mashrafe, who is better known for a straight-forward approach and honesty, said that he was not too excited like the others about winning the series against the Proteas.

"We had a near perfect game against them [South Africa] in the second match. But that doesn't mean we have become a big team and just go out there and blow your opponents away. They are one of the best in the world.

"Our focus should be to play our best cricket. We have bowled and fielded well and we should continue doing so. We may not be that clinical in bowling in our next game and this is something our batsmen should take note of and live up to that challenge," said the Tigers skipper, whose bowlers bowled South

# in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong



The Bangladesh and South Africa cricket teams arrived in Chittagong yesterday afternoon to play the third and final oneday international on Wednesday and the

first match of the two-Test series which will begin on July 21. Both the teams arrived on the same flight of US Bangla Airlines, which landed at the Shah Amanat International

Airport at 3:50pm. The Tigers, who beat the Proteas by seven wickets in the second one-day international on Sunday in Mirpur to level the series at 1-1, were given a reception by their adoring fans who thronged the sides of the roads from the airport right up to the Hotel Radisson Blu Chittagong Bay View where the teams are staying.

Both the teams are scheduled to hold practice sessions at the match venue, the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium (ZACS), today.

With a chance to confirm a fourth consecutive series victory, the Tigers will be hoping that their 'lucky venue' yields them another win against one of the world's best teams. The Tigers have won nine out of the 15 matches they have played here since the venue was introduced to international cricket in 2006. The latest of those wins, and also the latest match to be held here, was a 68-run win for the hosts against visiting Zimbabwe in November last year. The Tigers won the series 5-0 before going on to reach the quarterfinals of the World Cup for the first time in Australia and New Zealand earlier this year. The Tigers returned home to whitewash Pakistan 3-0 in April before beating India 2-1, also at home. None of those matches, though, were played in Chittagong.

This venue has seen Bangladesh beat the West Indies, England, Netherlands and Scotland apart from Zimbabwe. However, the only time the Tigers faced South Africa here, back in March of 2008, they lost by nine wickets. The current team, though, has only three members from that squad in skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and opening batsman Tamim Iqbal.

## Tigers, Proteas | Take care of him, he'll take care of you'

BISHWAJIT ROY



The question whether he WALTON

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considered for

Tests was never there, rather it was when?

Before the start of the South Africa series, an influential member of the Tigers think-tank jokingly said: "Let him take some more beef." That official was encountering questions whether the team management had any immediate plan for new bowling sensation Mustafizur Rahman in Test cricket.

The stunning limited-overs success and promise in his bowling made many believe that it was just a matter of time to see him in the longest version of cricket, but the only concern that was there was physically how fit the 19-yearold pacer was to take the workload of Test cricket.

But the Faruque Ahmed-led selection panel thought time has come to include the astute leftarmer in the Test side for the twomatch series against South Africa, when the pace department is the most vulnerable area for the Tigers in the five-day game which is a stark contrast to the ODI team.

The most loveable scene for the Tigers fans is Mustafizur clapping until hurting his hands after every dismissal; full of emotion. But when it comes to saying something about his Test call-up, the baby-faced cricketer could only say, "Hope it wouldn't be a problem to play Test cricket. My pace has increased a little bit and I am trying hard to do better."

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza however must be the perfect man to comment on whether it's a wise decision to give Mustafizur the break in Test cricket after his astounding limited-overs success.

"True, he is young but still I think it's a right decision to pick him for the Test side. He has got the potential, so let him encounter with the real cricket. He is young, so it's the perfect time to face the challenge in real cricket which is Test cricket," said the Bangladesh ODI skipper.

Mustafizur is now 19 while Mashrafe made his Test debut at 18, so he knows better than anybody else that age is not the factor if someone has got the ability and talent. But when it comes to Mashrafe, one is also bound to feel the pain after the way one injury after another simply limited his Test career and there is a notion that things might have been different had the Narail Express been properly handled during the early stages of his career.

"Yes, it's a big issue as you need to use this young bowler very carefully so that he can give his services to the team for long. You know in the early days of my career there was only John Gloster [the



Is this the new mobile phone that Mustafizur Rahman's uncle had promised him

to give as a gift following his outstanding debut against India? then physiotherapist of the Bangladesh national team] and he too was young in his career. But the scenario is totally different now as

to handle a player," said Mashrafe. "Just look at Taskin [Ahmed],

there are a lot of technical people

around the team who know how

he is an exciting bowler and nobody would love to miss him for any format but still he is yet to be considered for Test cricket due to fitness issues. So, I am sure that there will be no difference for

Mustafizur," he continued. It was hard for the brave-heart

cricketer to hold back his emotion when asked whether he had missed the proper guidance in the

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"You know the beauty of this current team is that nobody is selfish, so I have no doubt about proper care of Mustafizur," ended

early stage of his career.



A stone-faced South Africa opener Quinton de Kock (R) walks out of the Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittogong yesterday.

#### Rossouw fined India eye whitewash

AFP, Dhaka

South Africa batsman Rilee Rossouw has been fined 50 percent of his match fee for a code of conduct breach during a one-day international against Bangladesh, the International Cricket Council said on Monday.

Rossouw, 25, was found to have been involved in a shoulder barge with Bangladesh's opening batsman Tamim Iqbal, who was walking back after being dismissed during Sunday's second international in Dhaka.

Rossouw pleaded guilty over charges of "inappropriate and deliberate physical contact" laid by match referee David Boon and he accepted the penalty, the ICC said in a statement.

"Rilee was very mature in discussions relating to the charge," Boon was quoted as saying in the statement. "He felt it was inappropriate, but not deliberate, an explanation to which I agree.

"However, there is no place for any form of physical contact in our game and such actions should be punished," he said.

The amount that Rossouw has to pay was not made known.

#### PTI, Harare



An unassailable lead taken, India will look to complete the formalities and assert their supremacy by completing a white-

wash when they take on Zimbabwe in the third and final ODI on Tuesday.

After a scratchy four-run victory in the opening game, India got their act together to thrash the hosts by 62 runs in the second game, riding on a solid all-round performance.

The areas which seemed like cause of concern after the opening game were addressed quite well by the Indians in the second match.

The entire top-order came good after a disappointing show in the first match. Skipper Ajinkya Rahane (63), opener Murali Vijay (72) and Ambati Rayudu (41) laid the foundation for a good score. For Vijay, rated more of a Test batsman, it

was his maiden fifty in his 16th ODI. But in a setback for India, the inform Rayudu has been ruled out of the tour after picking quadricep injury which would require 2-3 weeks of rehabilitation and Sanju Samson has been named as his replacement.

But Manish Pandey could be the one making his ODI debut on Tuesday as Samson is unlikely to reach here in time for the match.

bowlers performed well too to outwit the sprightly Zimbabweans. In fact, after a rather pedestrian effort in the first game, the bowlers came back strongly to exploit the conditions well. Pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar was the

After the batsmen came good, the

pick of the lot as he snared four scalps and senior off-spinner Harbhajan Singh also bowled with discipline to return fine figures of 1/29 in his 10 overs.

And India would be looking for a similarly clinical performance to wrap up the short series before the couple of Twenty20 International scheduled immediately after.

For Zimbabwe, the side would look to rediscover the spark it showed in the first game. On the up side, the home bowlers have not allowed Indian batsmen to score all that freely but have failed to maintain the pressure consistently.