



## Soumya, Fizz recognised

SPORTS REPORTER



Indian newspaper The Times of India has honoured Soumya Sarkar not once, but twice in their list of the five best catches in the ongoing World Twenty20.

Soumya occupied the top two spots for his acrobatic efforts, the first-placed catch was the one against Pakistan in the Super 10 stage. On that occasion, Soumya ran about 15 metres and took a catch off a hit from Mohammed Hafeez, only to find himself flying over the boundary rope. However, showing great presence of mind, he flung the ball back, returned, and completed the catch.

The second-placed effort came in the Super 10 match against India. Soumya leapt high and held a catch off a bullet-like stroke by Hardik Pandya with the ball sticking to Sarkar's hand like a creeper to the ground.

The other players in the list of best catches were Ravindra Jadeja and Pandya of India, Najibullah Zadran of Afghanistan and Zeeshan Maqsood of Oman.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman was picked in Cricket Australia Digital Media's website in their team of the tournament. The only Bangladesh to feature in the side, the site wrote: "The left-arter has bowled with good pace and clever variation, and has left more than one batsman looking foolish... At only 20, Rahman has a bright future at the highest level."



England opener Jason Roy paved the way for his side's victory against New Zealand in the World Twenty20 semifinal in New Delhi yesterday. The 25-year-old led the charge with a 44-ball 78, smashing 11 fours and a six.

PHOTO: AFP

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## Lanning leads Oz into final

AFP, New Delhi



Captain Meg Lanning's aggressive half century helped holders Australia reach their fourth consecutive women's World Twenty20 final Wednesday after beating rivals England by five runs in the first semi-final.

Put in to bat in New Delhi, Australia posted a competitive 132 for six after Lanning's 50-ball 55 before their bowlers then restricted England to 127 for seven.

Lanning took control, starting off cautiously and then changing gear to give the England bowlers a hard time, registering her eighth T20 fifty as she hit six boundaries.

Australia will meet the winner of the second semifinal between West Indies and New Zealand in the title showdown in Kolkata on Sunday.



Australia captain Meg Lanning (L) and teammate Megan Schutt celebrate their victory against England in their Women's World T20 semifinal in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Kohli, Gayle take centre stage

### India face Windies in second semifinal today

AFP, Mumbai



Chris Gayle is determined to grab the World Twenty20 limelight back from in-form Virat Kohli when the West Indies and India clash in a mouthwatering semifinal in Mumbai on Thursday.

The destructive opener smashed an unbeaten century, which included 11 sixes, in the West Indies' opening win against England but has only batted once since, making just four.

Kohli has been the star of the tournament so far, expertly guiding India through the group stages with a half-century against Pakistan and 82 not out in a crunch win over Australia.

With the flat wicket at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium a dream for batsmen, the last-four showdown between the hosts and 2012 champions is set to be a battle of the big-hitters.

"I am looking to show what Chris Gayle is," Gayle warned ominously on Tuesday.

"I have only batted twice but this [semi-final] is a perfect opportunity to actually start the tournament and try and pick up where I left off, get a big one for the team and put them in a winning position," he added.

The 36-year-old described Kohli, who is the top run-scorer left in the tournament with 184, as a "world beater" but insisted neither he nor the West Indies were concerned about individual players.

"Chris Gayle will always be positive. It does not who is bowling against Chris Gayle," he said.

"Chris Gayle will attack. That's the

nature of T20 cricket. And that's the nature of Chris Gayle. No names, just cricket ball, beat it as hard as possible," Gayle added.

India's coach Ravi Shastri said his bowlers were aware of the danger posed by Gayle but were determined to tame him.

"Bring it on. All our bowlers will target him," said Shastri in his eve-of-match press conference.

The former Indian all-rounder meanwhile said that Kohli was on his way to proving himself as one of the greats of the game after a lull in form.

"You have to give him the credit for really believing that he can be



and believing in his own ability."

India are looking to take another step on their quest to become the first team to win the World T20 twice, after their triumph in the inaugural 2007 edition, and the first on home soil.

They are also bidding to give inspirational 34-year-old captain

Group Two.

By contrast, the Windies won their opening three games to top Group One before being shocked by Afghanistan.

Gayle believes India have the momentum but warned that "anything was possible".

"India are the favourites. It is always going to be difficult to beat them here. But the West Indies are ready for an upset," he said.

The Windies preparations were dealt a blow with the announcement that Andre Fletcher had been ruled out the rest of the tournament with a hamstring injury. Lendl Simmons



**HEAD-TO-HEAD IN WT20**

West Indies	Played	India
2	3	1
<b>IN ALL T20s</b>		
2	4	2

**LAST MEETING:** March 23, 2014 in Dhaka; India won by 7 wickets.

Indian batsman Virat Kohli (L) has shown that he can chase down almost any target, but if West Indian dynamo Chris Gayle is on song, then he may set the bar beyond even Kohli's reach.

PHOTOS: AFP

right up there with the best and for putting in the hard yards because let me tell you know one trains harder than Virat," said Shastri.

"Credit must be given to him for putting in that much of hard work

Mahendra Singh Dhoni -- who is thought to be close to announcing retirement -- a chance to go out on top.

India were stunned by New Zealand in their first match but picked up three straight wins to qualify second from

will replace him.

India meanwhile have drafted in batsman Manish Pandey in place of all-rounder Yuvraj Singh who has been ruled out of the tournament with an ankle injury.

## Waqar blasts Afridi in leaked report

AGENCIES, Karachi



In the wake of Pakistan's dismal performance in the World Twenty20 and consequent elimination from the tournament, head coach Waqar Younis wrote a report as the head of a fact-finding committee to the Pakistan Cricket Board. However, the report was leaked to the media, much to the chagrin of the bowling legend. Here are some excerpts from the report:

**ON SHAHID AFRIDI:**

We lost to New Zealand, Asia Cup and the World T20 due to poor captaincy. Over several occasions, I had made it clear that Shahid Afridi was not performing with the bat, ball or as a

captain but I was not listened to. Poor tactics really cost us matches. A meeting was held after the New Zealand T20 series, where the boys emphasised that they felt confused with what the captain was telling them to do.

Shahid Afridi didn't attend a few meetings and practice and this is not how a captain leads from the front. He was so fixated on his own performance that he did not execute any game plan or use the right player at the right time.

His sudden decision on changing the batting order or field placement did not help the team. He appeared to be under so much pressure and playing poorly, it really reflected poorly on the team.

**ON UMAR AKMAL:**

All the time he [Akmal] managed to retain

his place in the team. Andrew Symonds was a very talented player for Australia or Kevin Pietersen for England but due to their behavior they were dropped and never picked again irrespective of their talent. Are we bold enough to take this step or do we fear the media or pressure from different people to play certain players? Sacrificing one Umar Akmal will allow us to develop other players who can truly and proudly wear the star on their chest and represent Pakistan.

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**PERFORMER OF THE DAY**

### RAMPANT ROY

England opener Jason Roy was in devastating form in the World Twenty20 semifinal against New Zealand yesterday. The 25-year-old almost single-handedly led his team to the target, scoring over 50 per cent of England's runs with his 44-ball 78. The flamboyant right-hander smashed 11 fours and a solitary six, as he led from the front. He began the onslaught early, plundering 16 runs off the first over, and never took his foot off the pedal, as England reached home comfortably on the back of his heroics.



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