

# SPORT

## 'Yet to perform collectively'

**AL-AMIN from Napier**

When you are losing, it is not pleasing and to some extent turns monotonous when you are confronting the press after every defeat. So, when a grim-faced Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza appeared in the post-match briefing after his side's six-wicket defeat against the Black Caps at McLean Park, he mostly replayed the rhetoric.

"We batted well in the last 10 overs and bowled well in the first 10. We got the

just over the ropes -- near the boundary. "The match could have been turned back our way had we taken those catches, especially the first one off Shakib. Because at that time they needed more than seven runs per over and they had their last recognised pair in the middle," he said.

Like his previous briefings he also said: "We have some individual performances that was also evident in the one-dayers. But we are yet to perform collectively."

The Bangladesh captain also refuted the notion that his batsmen are not good against pace and bounce. "(Mahmudullah) Riyad handled it beautifully. He adjusted with the wicket beautifully and played his shots against their top bowlers. I don't want to believe that our batsman can't handle pace like 147kmph. Besides, we did not get out to their bouncing deliveries. If you look at our innings a few of our batsman were out to full toss deliveries and in front of the wicket," defended Mashrafe.

He said that his team lost the plot when they were reduced to 30 for four. "The turning point in the game was when we lost four wickets. Mahmudullah batted unbelievably well and that's why we have scored 140. Otherwise it could have been a score between 115 to 120," he said.

His New Zealand counterpart however was happy after yet another professional performance with an experimental bowling side.

When his attention was drawn to that shot over mid-wicket, Williamson said that he had not noticed the fielder's unlikely position.

"I just chipped that over there. I just tried to whack it and get it over him," said Williamson. He also praised Bangladesh's bowling.

"Credit to Bangladesh, the way they bowled. They were able to take wickets at key times and kept it tight but it is fantastic to see Colin come out and play fantastically to take the game away from them."

"They have got some very good T20 bowlers, particularly Mustafizur. I have played him in the IPL. He is a world-class operator."



New Zealand batsmen Kane Williamson (2nd from L) and Colin de Grandhomme walk off the McLean Park in Napier after leading their side to victory in the first T20I, while the dejected Tigers trudge off behind them.

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## Mash rallies behind struggling Soumya

**AL-AMIN from Napier**

After being dropped in the last two ODIs, Soumya Sarkar returned to action in Bangladesh's first T20I against New Zealand at McLean Park yesterday. When he strode out to bat after the departure of Sabbir Rahman, the burning question was whether he would be able to put behind the batting blues.

He failed again. He scored a first-ball duck. It was a very good delivery for any batsman who has just come to the wicket. But this game in particular was a total disappointment for him. He misjudged a crucial catch offered by New Zealand captain Kane Williamson and then went for 17 runs in the one over he bowled.

Already under pressure to perform to keep his place in the team, Soumya is increasingly becoming a dilemma for the team management, which is keen to keep trying with him, considering him as an asset. But the left-hander, who came onto the scene with a golden bat, has already become public enemy number

one in social media. That overflowing hate campaign perhaps played a key role for his axing in the last two ODIs despite the fact that he could have been the automatic choice for those games, especially after the injury to Mushfiqur Rahim.

"We don't have that many players. Not only me but everyone believes that if you look at Soumya's history he is a match-winner of the Bangladesh team. I think nobody has won as many games like Soumya did for us. He is not in form but it's a matter of time for him to come back. He got a platform today but unfortunately he got out to the first ball. I believe at this moment we should keep a cool head and fight with what we have at the moment," said Mashrafe about the stroke-maker.

Mashrafe's desire to try with what they have understandably implies that he was against the popular sentiment of dropping Soumya. And if that is the case then the board should back the desire of the team management to release that tension prevailing in the team. After all this is the very group, including Soumya, that gave Bangladesh so many successes over the last two years.



Things got worse for Soumya Sarkar on his return to the national side as he was dismissed for a golden duck. PHOTO: AFP

BD-NZ SCOREBOARD				
BANGLADESH	R/B	4s/6s		
Tamim c Bruce b Wheeler	11/13	1/0		
Imrul c Ronchi b Henry	0/2	0/0		
Sabbir c Henry b Ferguson	16/15	1/1		
Shakib c Santner				
b de Grandhomme	14/14	0/0		
Soumya c Anderson b Ferguson	0/1	0/0		
Mahmudullah b Ferguson	52/47	3/3		
Mosaddek c Anderson				
b Santner	20/17	0/2		
Mashrafe c de Grandhomme				
b Wheeler	1/3	0/0		
Nurul not out	7/6	1/0		
Rubel not out	2/2	0/0		
Extras: (w-18)	18			
Total: (For 8 wks in 20 overs)	141			
Did not bat: Mustafizur.				
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-28, 3-30, 4-30, 5-67, 6-99, 7-114, 8-138.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Wheeler	4	0	22	1
Henry	4	0	44	2
Ferguson	4	0	32	3
de Grandhomme	4	0	23	1
Santner	4	0	20	1
NEW ZEALAND	R/B	4s/6s		
Broom c Shakib b Rubel	6/7	1/0		
Williamson not out	73/55	5/2		
Munro c Nurul b Mustafizur	0/2	0/0		
Anderson c Tamim b Shakib	13/14	1/0		
Bruce run out	7/9	0/0		
de Grandhomme not out	41/22	3/3		
Extras: (lb-1, w-1, nb-1)	3			
Total: (For 4 wks in 18 overs)	143			
Did not bat: Ronchi, Santner, Wheeler, Henry, Ferguson.				
Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-28, 3-46, 4-62.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shakib	4	0	30	1
Mashrafe	3	0	22	0
Rubel	4	0	43	1
Mustafizur	4	0	21	1
Mosaddek	2	0	9	0

## Shafiul back on track

### Saif scores second consecutive 100

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Shafiul Islam, who had suffered a hamstring injury during the Bangladesh Premier League, took two wickets on his return to professional cricket yesterday in the National Cricket League (NCL).

The pacer bowled eight overs for Rajshahi, seven of which were bowled on the trot, and finished with figures of 2 for 34 on the first day of the game against Rangpur at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

Shafiul was supposed to travel to New Zealand along with the rest of his national colleagues, but his injury compelled selectors to replace him. If Shafiul does well in the NCL, he might be selected for the Test series.

According to selectors, there is a good chance for Shafiul to play the second Test which is set to begin on January 20 in Christchurch.

However, Shafiul did not want to bother himself with the expectations of going to New Zealand.

"I played my first game today and by the grace of God everything went well. As of now, my body



SHAFIUL ... 2 for 34 SAIF ... 131 not out

is working fine and I am feeling no pain anywhere, so that's a good sign.

"However, that is all I am thinking about. I don't know if I will play in the Tests or if will go to New Zealand. As of now I am completely focused on the NCL," Shafiul told The Daily Star yesterday.

Rajshahi were bundled out for 191 in 54.2 overs as Rangpur pacer Mohammad Saddam scalped a five-wicket haul. However, Rangpur crumbled after the exchange, finishing the day on 89 for 4.

Meanwhile, Dhaka made a fantastic start against Barisal at the Sylhet International Cricket

Stadium yesterday. Bangladesh U-19 skipper Saif Hassan scored his second-first class century -- his second consecutive 100 -- to lead Dhaka to 300 for 3 at stumps.

Saif remained unbeaten on 131 after an extremely cautious knock, while Taibur Rahman was not out on 70. Opener Rony Talukdar was dismissed off the first ball of the day and therefore Saif had to bat out the entire day and he did so with plenty of patience, getting his runs off 265 balls.

Sylhet's Imtiaz Hossain also scored a century yesterday and helped his side coast to 309 for 4 at stumps against hosts Chittagong at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

While Imtiaz scored 134, Sylhet veterans Rajin Saleh and Alok Kapali scored half-centuries and supported the opener.

The game between Khulna and Dhaka Metro at Fatullah witnessed the fall of 13 wickets on the first day. Batting first, Khulna were bundled out for 207 in 61.4 overs, courtesy of Dollar Mahmood's five-wicket haul. With eleven overs to go, Metro lost three wickets and were left stranded at 37 for 3 at stumps.

## Sunil backs Sourav to take BCCI reins

**PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi**

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar has thrown his weight behind another former skipper, Sourav Ganguly, to take over the Board of Control for Cricket in India after the Indian Supreme Court forced Anurag Thakur to stand down as president on Monday.

When asked to name a person whom he felt was capable of taking over the role of president and bearing the brunt of the calamitous situation, Gavaskar responded: "BCCI has got a very good bench strength to take up the bigger roles and one name that comes to my mind is Sourav Ganguly."

"Remember, in 1999-2000 when Indian cricket was gripped by the match-fixing saga, Ganguly was given the captaincy and he turned it around," he told NDTV.

"The BCCI has lost face internationally after this entire saga," Gavaskar said. "We are in for a completely new era of Indian cricket."

The verdict to sack Thakur and secretary Ajay Shirke in the BCCI versus Justice RM Lodha Committee came after months of a bitter court battle. The Lodha Committee, appointed by the Supreme Court after a betting scandal in the Indian Premier League, recommended sweeping changes, but the board's refusal to implement those led to the fallout.

"Once the Supreme Court gives order, that has to be accepted," Gavaskar said.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

<b>DHAKA VS BARISAL</b>	for 53, Hider 2-44, Arafat 2-61	Saddam 5-57, Ariful 2-37, Sajedul 2-46
<b>DHAKA:</b> 300 for 3 (Saif 131 not out, Taibur 70 not out, Zahiduzzaman 57; Towhidul 2-45, Monir 1-77)	<b>DHAKA METRO:</b> 37 for 3 (Shamsur 14 not out; Al-Amin 1-15, Ashiquazzaman 1-12, Ziaur 1-3)	<b>RANGPUR:</b> 89 for 4 (Liton 41 not out; Shafiq 2-34, Forhad 2-32)
<b>KHULNA VS DHAKA METRO</b>	<b>RAJSHAH VS RANGPUR</b>	<b>SYLHET VS CHITTAGONG</b>
<b>KHULNA:</b> 207 all out in 61.4 overs (Anamul 62, Mithun 36; Dollar 5	<b>RAJSHAH:</b> 191 all out in 54.2 overs (Farhad 59, Myshukur 32;	<b>SYLHET:</b> 309 for 4 (Imtiaz 134, Rajin 58, Kapali 56 not out; Nayeem 2-108, Tasamul 1-4).



Australia opener David Warner became the fifth batsman to score a ton before lunch on the first day of a Test, completing his ton in 118 minutes against Pakistan yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

## Warner, Renshaw rule the day

**AFP, Sydney**

David Warner joined the illustrious company of Don Bradman and Victor Trumper with a Test century before lunch as rookie partner Matthew Renshaw hit his maiden hundred against Pakistan on Tuesday.

Warner smashed a whirlwind 18th Test hundred off 78 balls in just 117 minutes, while 20-year-old Renshaw blossomed after claiming his century in 282 minutes in the third Test in Sydney.

At the close, after winning the toss, Australia were 365 for three with Renshaw taking his score to 167 and Peter Handscomb on 40 in an unbro-

ken fourth-wicket stand of 121. Warner became the first Australian since Bradman 87 years ago to make a century in the opening session of a Test, and the only batsman to achieve the feat in Australia.

Bradman made 105 in Leeds in 1930 on his way to 334, with fellow Australians Trumper hitting 103 in Manchester in 1902 and Charlie Macartney scoring 112 at Leeds in 1926.

Warner was finally out 20 minutes after lunch, caught behind by Sarfraz Ahmed off Wahab Riaz for 113 off 95 balls with 17 fouers.

"That's obviously an honour and privilege to be amongst the greats of the game," Warner said.

guys. Hopefully I can continue with that great start and positive approach.

"I started last year with a hundred here [against the West Indies] and I started here with another hundred here and I've got to capitalise on that."

The only other player to post a century before lunch on the first day of a Test was Pakistan's Majid Khan against New Zealand at Karachi in 1976.

In contrast to Warner's dazzling century, rookie Renshaw provided the steady foil, painstakingly taking almost five hours to bring up his maiden Test century.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**AUSTRALIA:** First innings 365 for 3 (Renshaw 167 not out, Warner 113, Handscomb 40 not out; Riaz 2-63)

### PERFORMER OF THE DAY

**LOCKIE FERGUSON**



On a pitch that had plenty of bounce, fast bowler Lockie Ferguson turned out to be a nightmare for Bangladesh. He finished with figures of 3 for 32 but in reality, he was a lot more dangerous than what the scorecard suggested. In his first over, he dismissed Sabbir Rahman and Soumya Sarkar off consecutive deliveries. He then welcomed Mahmudullah Riyad with a toe-crunching yorker and followed that with a brutal bouncer. However, Mahmudullah negotiated him well and even hit him for a four but Ferguson got his revenge in the last over with a beautifully disguised slow yorker that flummoxed Mahmudullah and hit timber.