

# SPORT



Opener Soumya Sarkar finally hit some sort of form in the first T20 against South Africa at Bloemfontein yesterday. His enterprising 47 gave Bangladesh hope of toppling the Proteas' massive 195.



PHOTO: AFP



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## Where's Chandika?

SAKIB SUBHAN from Bloemfontein

Shakib Al Hasan was the third captain to lead a Bangladesh side out onto the field on this ill-fated tour during the first T20i yesterday. Before that, it was Mashrafe Bin Mortaza in the ODI series and Mustafizur Rahim in the Test series. He had to bear the brunt of the backlash for the negative results. While captains have to deal with the format, head coach Chandika Hathusingha has been a constant but since the eve of the first Test against South Africa on October 27, the Sri Lankan's voice has been conspicuous by its absence.

Normally, it would not have been an eyebrow-raising issue but in times when the team has been losing, and losing badly, it has quickly become the elephant in the press conference room. His absence also raises questions about the differing measures of value the Bangladeshi Cricket Board places on the captains and the coach. Mashrafe faced the music six times in three matches, and all except the first time – which was before the start of the series – he had to field questions about the team's failing.

The same went for Mustafizur – in two Tests, he fronted up five times, with the first day of the second Test being an extra occasion when he came to the end-of-day presser and informed the world that he was instructed to field in the deep by the team management, turning the spotlight on Hathusingha, who has since just put on high-opacity shades.

Mustafizur had to bear all the negativity for the inexplicable decision to win the toss and field first twice, with disastrous results. But it is only natural that the decision was not his alone and one that

other seniors and the coaching staff weighed in on, but it was just Mustafizur who had to take the responsibility. No wonder then that he said after the second Test was lost that "when the team does really well, all the credit goes to the management and when we are not doing really well, all the blame comes to the captain."

This is not just about satisfying the press' hordes' thirst for quotes – failures of the proportion seen on this tour warrant a show of accountability from all the men in charge. And Hathusingha enjoys a lot of clout when it comes to running the show, usually part of the squad selected for a team in world cricket, and so it falls upon him to answer why the players chosen cannot deliver or why new faces have not been tried.

As has been mentioned on these pages before, he is also the only one who can satisfactorily answer the question of why, with an extensive coaching staff and a wealth of facilities back home, the batsmen were like deer caught in the headlights even on pitches that were docile by South African standards. He is the one in charge of the practice, and it is obvious that the practice has not produced the desired results even once on a tour that has now crossed a month in duration.

Last and least, it is hard to escape the feeling that Mashrafe and Mustafizur have been thrown under the bus after bad results. Both intelligent and thoughtful cricketers, by their third or fourth utterances, they had run out of things to say and were left exposed, sometimes to ridicule. Meanwhile, South Africa coach Ottis Gibson has taken questions twice so far, and if the answer to that is that the hosts have been on a winning trend, it also answers who among the captains and coaches the BCB place greater value on.

## BD-SA SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA		R/B 4/65	
De Kock	lbw & Rubel	59/44	1/0
Amila c Mehedi		3/4	0/0
De Villiers c Mahmudullah		49/27	8/0
De Villiers b Shafiq		50/19	1/0
Hiller not out		50/19	1/0
Boehmien not out		56/17	2/2
Extras: (0-b, 1-b, 1-t, 1-w, 4-e) 10			
Total: (For 4 wickets in 20 overs)		195	
Did not bat: Phehlukwayo, Fafnyck, De Villiers, Paterson, Hendricks			
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-97, 3-122, 4-133			
BOWLER O M R W			
Shahid 3.0 0 28 1			
Mehedi 4.0 0 31 2			
Rubel 4.0 0 34 1			
Taskin 2.0 0 21 2			
Sadman 1.0 0 33 0			
Shafiq 0.0 0 22 0			
Mahmudullah 3.0 0 22 0			
BANGLADESH		R/B 4/65	
Imrul & Hendricks	10/11	1/0	
Scoupe lbw b Phehlukwayo	4/7/1		
Shafiq b De Villiers & Fafnyck	3/8/0		
Phehlukwayo 13/8 1/1			
Habib b Phehlukwayo	19/16	0/2	
Mahmudullah & Amla			
Safuddin not out	3/9/2	3/1	
De Villiers b Paterson	14/6	0/0	
Shafiq & Imrul b Fafnyck	0/7 0/0		
Rubel not out	2/3 0/0		
Extras: (0-b, 1-w, 1-1) 14			
Total: (For 4 wickets in 20 overs)		175	
Fall of wickets: 1-43, 2-64, 3-92, 4-98, 5-101, 6-124, 7-147, 8-147, 9-150			
BOWLER O M R W			
De Villiers 4.0 0 42 2			
Hendricks 4.0 0 33 2			
Fafnyck 4.0 0 33 2			
Phehlukwayo 4.0 0 15 0			
Duminy 1.0 0 15 0			
Phangiso 3.0 0 20 1			
Result: South Africa won by 20 runs			
Player-of-the-match: Al De Villiers			

## Bangladesh A complete Ireland whitewash

SPORTS REPORTER

Yasir Ali hit a fine unbeaten hundred as Bangladesh A completed a whitewash of the visiting Ireland A team with a 76-run victory in the last one-day match at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The 21-year-old right-hander from Chittagong smote four fours and five sixes during his 101-ball 102 as the home side reached 286 for six in their share of 50 overs.

Opener Anamul Haque once again failed to make any impact as the right-hander was dismissed for just 13 runs while captain Nazmul Hossain walked to the pavilion for 26, reducing Bangladesh A to 57 for 2.

Yasir then joined opener Sadman Iklam and the duo repaid the initiative from the visitors with a 132-run stand. Shadman scored 68 off 103 balls, smashing four boundaries and a six. After his departure, Al Amin (20) and Tanbir Haider (26) ably supported Yasir as the hosts put up a challenging total.

In reply, Ireland A made a poor start as Ali Enam dismissed Sean Terry for 3 and Sunzamul removed Andrew Balbirnie for 4. Jack Tector and John Anderson steadied the ship with an 83-run third-wicket partnership before Enam dismissed Tector for 66. Abu Hider then picked up three wickets in quick succession to confirm an easy win.

Sunzamul, Tanbir and Mehedi Hasan contributed to

## SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH A: 286 for 6 (Yasir 102 not out, Sadman 68; McCarthy 2-45, Gekle 2-63)			
IRELAND A: 210 all out in 43.4 overs (Tector 66, Anderson 45; Haider 3-38, Sunzamul 2-28, Enam 2-46)			
Result: Bangladesh A won by 76 runs and clinched the series 3-0			
Player-of-the-match: Yasir Ali.			
Player-of-the-series: Tanbir Haider.			

cutting the Ireland tail as the visitors were bundled out for 210 in 43.4 overs.

The first one-dayer was abandoned due to rain but Bangladesh A won the other three comfortably and also clinched the only T20 match.



Yasir Ali's unbeaten century powered Bangladesh A to a 76-run victory in the last one-dayer against Ireland A at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

## PERFORMER OF THE DAY



## Soumya Sarkar

Soumya Sarkar has not been in any sort of form for quite some time. He had a forgettable Test series in South Africa. His one-day form has also dipped. But Soumya's right-hand side even looked like a fish out of water while fielding in the deep during the first T20I at Bloemfontein yesterday. But Soumya finally got some sort of his rhythm

back with the bat. Opening the innings, he scored a fine 47 off 31 balls. His knock that contained five sweetly-timed fours and two sixes gave Bangladesh hope of toppling the home side's huge 195. But Bangladesh fell apart after his departure and eventually finished on 175-9. It is always refreshing to see him batting.

## MOMENTS

SAKIB SUBHAN from Bloemfontein

Those did not get much better for the duo as Shafiq conceded 33 off his two overs and Taskin 21 off two.

### IMRUL'S BLINDER

There has not been much to celebrate for Bangladesh on this tour so when they got De Villiers out with the second wicket, it was a remarkable demolition. It was important that they held on to that momentum. Imrul Kayes did just what South Africa skipper stepped out to his opposite number Shabik Al Hasan out of the ground in the 13th over. The ball went like Rayash's famous "tracer bullet" high and to the left of Imrul at long off, and he ran full tilt at the speed ball and leapt to get a hand to it. He got enough of a hand to it

for the ball to lob up and away from him, but he kept on running and put in a dive at full stretch to turn what would have been a good catch into a brilliant one.

### SOUMYA'S REMINDER

Soumya Sarkar has been the object of much derision during this tour, much of which has been spout of the Ashes media and when he plays he got out edging early. But yesterday, as early as the second over of the chase, he showed just why he is rated highly by the team. With the most nonchalant of flicks, he deposited Andrew Hendricks over wide long on and into the crowd. Five fours and a further six followed, and although Bangladesh lost, Soumya can rest assured that for once, he has got enough of a hand to it

## Playing int'l cricket is a dream: Ball

AGENCIES, London

England seamer Jack Ball believes that playing international cricket is a dream come true for him despite enduring a rollercoaster start to his time at the highest level.

Ball is part of the England Ashes squad and feels that his team have every chance of retaining the urn down under.

Ball told the "It's starting to feel a bit more normal that I'll be going to the Ashes. I had a bit of a break at the end of the season and got away from cricket a bit."

"Getting all my kit and packing it all makes it takes more real."