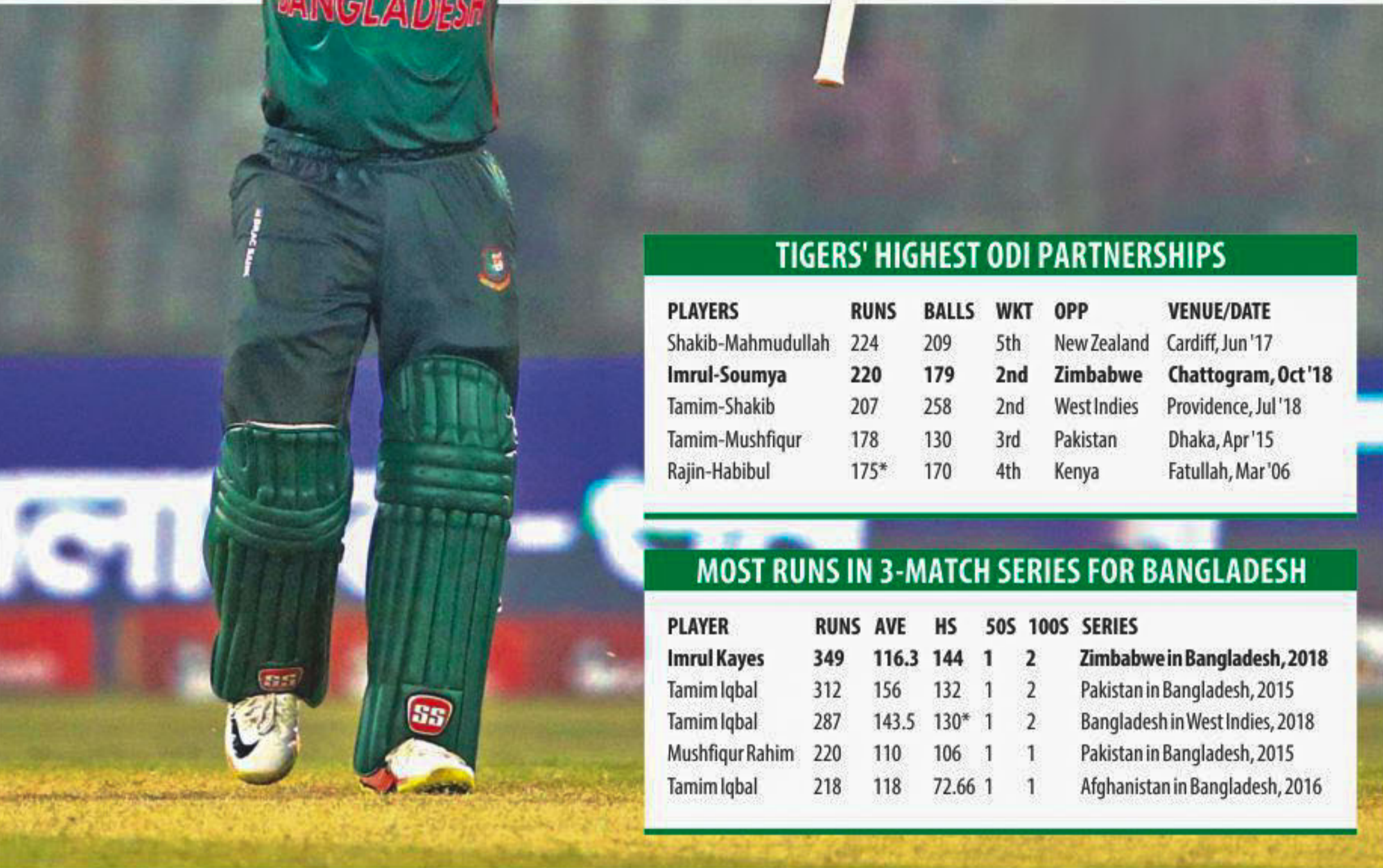


SPORTS



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Bangladesh opener Imrul Kayes celebrates after reaching his century, which along with Soumya Sarkar's ton overshadowed (Inset) Zimbabwe batsman Sean Williams's unbeaten 129 in the third and final ODI in Chattogram yesterday.

TIGERS' HIGHEST ODI PARTNERSHIPS					
PLAYERS	RUNS	BALLS	WKT	OPP	VENUE/DATE
Shakib-Mahmudullah	224	209	5th	New Zealand	Cardiff, Jun '17
Imrul-Soumya	220	179	2nd	Zimbabwe	Chattogram, Oct '18
Tamim-Shakib	207	258	2nd	West Indies	Providence, Jul '18
Tamim-Mushfiqur	178	130	3rd	Pakistan	Dhaka, Apr '15
Rajin-Habibul	175*	170	4th	Kenya	Fatullah, Mar '06

MOST RUNS IN 3-MATCH SERIES FOR BANGLADESH						
PLAYER	RUNS	AVE	HS	50S	100S	SERIES
Imrul Kayes	349	116.3	144	1	2	Zimbabwe in Bangladesh, 2018
Tamim Iqbal	312	156	132	1	2	Pakistan in Bangladesh, 2015
Tamim Iqbal	287	143.5	130*	1	2	Bangladesh in West Indies, 2018
Mushfiqur Rahim	220	110	106	1	1	Pakistan in Bangladesh, 2015
Tamim Iqbal	218	118	72.66	1	1	Afghanistan in Bangladesh, 2016

'My bags are always packed'

MAZHAR UDDIN from Chattogram

Neither Imrul Kayes nor Soumya Sarkar are strangers to last-minute plans -- both were flown to the UAE midway through last month's Asia Cup, with the former hitting a fifty less than 20 hours after landing. Soumya was called away from the National Cricket League to play yesterday's third ODI against Zimbabwe, and responded with his second international ton while Imrul scored his second of the series. It was therefore no surprise that the left-handed duo -- who combined for Bangladesh's highest second-wicket partnership of 220 -- were all smiles when they showed up for the post-match press conference. The following are excerpts from the good-humoured press meet:

IMRUL KAYES

Regrets on missing out on a hundred in the second game
I could have been dismissed for a duck but I scored in all three games. But yes, I was disappointed as it could have been three hundreds on the trot, which has never been done by a Bangladeshi. I was frustrated after I went to my room and decided that I won't make the same mistake again in the nineties.

Batting with Soumya

I feel good when I bat with Soumya -- I am more pressure-free because he plays strokes. Even if I am not able to score freely, he covers for me -- which is the same with Tamim [Iqbal]. The potential he [Soumya] has, on his day he can be a one-man-show.

Process of scoring consistently

Please let me play (laughs). I don't know that much as I am not a big player yet. I have played well in three games and will try to do so in the coming days.

SOUMYA SARKER

Batting looking effortless after a long time
When you play well you will hear such things -- others can say how fluent I was. I try to play my game whenever I get the opportunity. It's because of my bad patch that I was unable to sit in front of you and you did not get the opportunity to question me. It's because of playing well that I am here. Ups and downs will be there, but I will try to continue playing well.

Regret over not playing all the matches
I felt that after scoring the hundred in the warm-up game [against Zimbabwe]. After landing at the airport in Khulna I thought that it would have been good if I had gotten the chance. But when I was called for the last game I wanted to utilise the opportunity.

Mistakes during the bad patch
I think I used to listen to a lot said from the outside. When I used Facebook I saw a lot of negative things and when you see anything negative, it feels bad. As people didn't write positive things and when I saw the headlines, it felt that everything I did was bad. We Bangladeshis mostly read headlines, so I decided not to use Facebook, speak less to people and think only about the positives. I actually practised less then as things do not go well in bad times. I spent more time with my friends.

Keeping bags packed all the time
Nowadays my bags are always packed and even now I have to travel to Barishal, where I have a [NCL] match day after tomorrow (smiles). It's good that I am playing matches. I don't get nervous but initially there is a feeling that the journey is long, but after resting for a day everything goes fine.

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Tigers unearth pace options

MAZHAR UDDIN from Chattogram

The Bangladesh team management opted for five seamers in the eleven for the third and final ODI against Zimbabwe yesterday. Ariful Haque and Soumya Sarkar were the batting all-rounders coming in to supplement the usual group of three pacers -- a move to gauge the bench strength in pace bowling.

Although neither Ariful and Soumya displayed any bite and bowled just three and two overs respectively, left-arm seamer Abu Hider and Mohammad Saifuddin's bowling will surely impress the team management despite Zimbabwe posting a challenging total of 286 for five after being asked to bat.

The Bangladesh think tank is looking for a set of fast bowlers, much like they had discovered during 2014 and 2015 when pacers like Taskin Ahmed and Al-Amin Hossain emerged before Mustafizur Rahman took the world by storm. Only Mustafizur has survived from that group.

As things stand, the team have three pacers to count on -- skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Rubel Hossain and Mustafizur -- and the team management have their eyes on Hider and Saifuddin as Bangladesh whittle down their options for next summer's World Cup in pace-friendly England.

Hider, playing his second ODI after Mustafizur Rahman was rested for the yesterday's game, proved his ability and took the wicket of Zimbabwe skipper

Hamilton Masakadza, who chopped onto the stumps while going for a drive on the up.

Hider conceded just 39 runs from nine overs -- one of which was a maiden -- and also managed to bowl 32 dot balls, the most by a Bangladesh bowler yesterday. He bent his back and managed to shape the ball into the right-hander with the new ball and with the old ball he bowled slower deliveries to good effect.

The 22-year-old also has good knowledge about bowling in the death overs. Hider kept the length fuller without providing much room to the batsmen, giving away just three runs in the 49th over of the innings with centurion Sean Williams at the crease.

Saifuddin, despite being a bit expensive as he conceded 51 from his 10 overs, has started to gain more confidence.

The youngster showed his ability with the new ball in the first spell, during which he gave away just 14 runs and picked up the first wicket of opener Cephas Zhuwao with his third ball of the match.

The 22-year-old, who took three wickets for 45 runs from nine overs in the second ODI, then showed how far he has come as a bowler with a mixture of slower balls and full-pitched deliveries culminating in a superb last over during which he conceded just four runs, even though he bowled four balls to the centurion.

With the World Cup in England next summer, the Tigers' think tank would love to provide these two seamers more confidence and create more variations in the pace bowling department.



Young pacers Abu Hider (R) and Mohammad Saifuddin impressed with their bowling, giving Bangladesh early breakthroughs against Zimbabwe yesterday.

BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD			
ZIMBABWE	R/B	4s/6s	
H Masakadza b Hider	2/10	0/0	
Zhuwao b Saifuddin	0/3	0/0	
Taylor c Mushfiqur b Nazmul	75/72	8/3	
Williams not out	129/143	10/1	
Raza c Soumya b Nazmul	40/51	2/1	
Moor run out	28/21	0/2	
Chigumbura not out	1/1	0/0	
Extras: (b-4, lb-5, nb-1, w-1)	11		
Total: (For 5 wickets in 50 overs)	286		
Did not bat: Jarvis, Tiripano, Ngarava, W Masakadza.			
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-220, 3-274.			
Bowler			
O	M	R	W
Hider	9	1	39
Saifuddin	10	2	51
Ariful	3	0	17
Mashrafe	8	0	56
Soumya	2	0	16
Nazmul	8	0	58
Mahmudullah	10	0	40
BANGLADESH:			
R/B	4s/6s		
Liton lbw b Jarvis	0/1	0/0	
Imrul c Chigumbura b Masakadza	115/112/10/2		
Soumya c Tiripano b Masakadza	117/92	9/6	
Mushfiqur not out	28/39	1/1	
Mithun not out	7/11	1/0	
Extras: (nb-2, w-19)	21		
Total: (For 3 wickets in 42.1 overs)	288		
Did not bat: Mahmudullah, Ariful, Nazmul, Mashrafe, Saifuddin, Hider.			
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-220, 3-274.			
Bowler			
O	M	R	W
Jarvis	6	0	47
Ngarava	5	0	44
Tiripano	4	0	33
Sikandar	10	0	47
W Masakadza	10	0	71
Williams	6.1	0	43
H Masakadza	1	0	3
Result: Bangladesh won by seven wickets			
Player-of-the-match: Soumya Sarkar			
Player-of-the-series: Imrul Kayes			



PERFORMER OF THE DAY

SIZZLING SOUMYA

The best news for Bangladesh from the three ODIs against Zimbabwe came in the last match yesterday in the form of an explosive return to the side and to form for Soumya Sarkar. Coming to the crease after Liton Das got out in the first ball of the innings, Soumya made like it was 2015. Soumya hit a 92-ball 117 against a shell-shocked Zimbabwe. During a Bangladesh-record 220-run first-wicket partnership with Imrul Kayes, Soumya brought up his second ODI ton off just 81 deliveries and hit nine boundaries and six sixes in the process. The sixes especially were worth watching, with the elegant left-hander almost hitting them at will.

Pakistan seal T20I series

STAR SPORT DESK

Pakistan clinched the three-match T20I series against Australia with an 11-run win in the second game in Dubai last night.

Set 148 to win, Australia were cut down to 73 for six before Glenn Maxwell revived hopes with a 59-run sixth-wicket partnership with pacer Nathan Coulter-Nile. Needing 23 off the last over, Coulter-Nile started with a six, but Maxwell holed out to Shaheen Shah Afridi for a 37-ball 52 and Coulter-Nile followed suit off the penultimate ball.

SCORES IN BRIEF
PAKISTAN: 147 for 6 (Babar 45, Hafeez 40; Coulter-Nile 3-18, Stanlake 2-36)
AUSTRALIA: 136 for 8 (Maxwell 52, Coulter-Nile 27; Shadab 2-30, Shaheen 2-35)
Result: Pakistan won by 11 runs

India look to plug the leaks

Third ODI against West Indies today

PTI, Pune

India will be hoping to put up an improved bowling show with their frontline pacers Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Jasprit Bumrah back in action for the third ODI here on Saturday.

A well-oiled India hammered the Windies in the opener in Guwahati by eight wickets, but the gritty visitors made a statement in Visakhapatnam, denying the hosts a victory and a chance to go 2-0 ahead in the five-match rubber.

However, the absences of Bhuvneshwar and Bumrah saw the Indian bowling unit being clobbered for 320-plus runs in both games.

With more variations in their repertoire in white ball cricket compared to the profligate Umesh Yadav and an inconsis-

SL U-19s level series with 74-run win

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 succumbed to a 74-run loss in the second and final four-day match against their Sri Lankan counterparts on the fourth day in Katunayake yesterday. The home side's win levels the two-match series at 1-1 after the young Tigers won the first game.

A first-innings debacle on Wednesday, when Bangladesh were all out for 109, handed Sri Lanka a 116-run lead. Sri Lanka then declared on 233 on a rain-marred third day on Thursday, setting the visitors a 350-run target. Resuming the last day on 75 for one, Bangladesh fought well but were eventually bundled out for 276. Sri Lanka left-arm spinner Rohan Sanjaya Silva took his second five-for of the match.

The young Tigers were cut down to 144 for six at one stage, but Akbar Ali hit 90 and strung together a few partnerships with the lower order. A 30-run seventh-wicket stand with Mritunjay Chowdhury and a 66-run eighth-wicket stand with Mahmudul Hasan briefly raised hopes, but it ultimately just reduced the margin of defeat.

The teams will next square off in the first of five ODIs on October 30.

Warner to turn out for Sylhet

STAR SPORT DESK

Australia's David Warner, who got embroiled in a ball-tampering row and is currently serving a one-year ban from international cricket, has signed for Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) outfit Sylhet Sixers.

The sixth edition of the BPL, originally scheduled to be held on October-November this year, is likely to be held in January next year. Warner, who has never



played for St. Lucia Stars in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) in August-September this year.

Warner had a horrid time with the bat playing for Winnipeg Hawks in Canada. He was better in the CPL, hitting one half-century in his nine innings, during which he scored 220 runs at an average of just over 31 with a strike-rate of 111.67.

Warner captained Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League in 2016 and 2017, before having to step down in the wake of the ball-tampering scandal in March this year.

West Indies' Shimron Hetmyer (L) and Devendra Bishoo warm up during a training session in Pune ahead of today's third ODI against India.



PHOTO: AFP