



Upon Bangladesh's arrival for the third ODI against New Zealand in Dunedin, a city with Maori roots, the Tigers were welcomed by a (inset) Haka dance. They surely enjoyed the performance but it should be mentioned that the dance is considered a challenge.

PHOTO: STAR



## Tour moves to Dunedin

SPORTS REPORTER from Dunedin

Bangladesh's disappointing tour of New Zealand so far shifted cities as Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and his troops, having already lost the three-match ODI series in Christchurch on Saturday, reached Dunedin yesterday with the aim of avoiding the humiliation of being whitewashed when they take on the hosts in the third match on February 20.

The Bangladesh team flew to Christchurch without Mashrafe and Tamim Iqbal, who yet again avoided flying in a small aircraft and travelled by road. They missed the warm welcome at the Dunedin airport where the team were greeted by the traditional Haka dance and there were also a few Bangladeshi expatriates present to boost the morale of the visitors.

New Zealand has remained a cursed place for the Tigers, where they are yet to beat the hosts in any format and the tough seaming conditions have con-

tinued to test the visitors to the limit.

It's the Tigers' batting failure, especially the top order that has not shown any sort of resistance in the first two games, that has remained one of the biggest concerns for the team management.

Adding to that, there was more bad news for Bangladesh as the only in-form batsman -- Mohammad Mithun, who struck consecutive fifties in the first two ODIs -- has suffered a hamstring injury while taking a short single during the second ODI Christchurch.

The right-hander will undergo a scan today in Dunedin and it is still uncertain whether he will be able to take part in the third and final ODI on February 20.

The experienced Mushfiquir Rahim is also struggling with a pre-existing rib cage injury which he sustained during the Asia Cup last year. He is also experiencing pain in his wrist along with a side strain injury that he sustained during the practice match ahead of the ODI series on February 10.

He too is under observation and if

the two cricketers are not able to recover on time it will be even worse for the visitors who are eying their first ever win in New Zealand.

Talking about adjusting to the tough New Zealand conditions, Dunedin will also test the Tigers as the southern part of the island is one of the chilliest parts of the country.

Bangladesh have played just once at the University Oval in Dunedin back in 2010, which they lost by five wickets after posting a small total of 188 for five in fifty overs, during which Mushfiquir top-scored with 86.

None of the Bangladeshi players had spoken to the media yesterday since arriving in Dunedin and the cricketers, with their morale understandably low, will practise today at Logan Park.

It will be important for the senior members of the side like Tamim, Mushfiquir and Mahmudullah Riyad to step up as they were disappointing in the two ODIs and need to provide the much needed stability in the batting department, which at the moment is missing from the Tigers.

## Happily interviewing

MAZHAR UDDIN from Dunedin



How often would you see a wife taking an interview of her husband during a live telecast just after he scored a hundred in an international game? It is indeed a rare occurrence but Laura McGoldrick, the Sky Sports presenter, who is married to New Zealand opener Martin Gupthill after he scored not just once but twice -- after each of the right-hander's back-to-back hundreds against Bangladesh during the Kiwis' wins in the first two ODIs of the three-match series.

It was one of the most talked about incidents as McGoldrick interviewed her husband Gupthill after he scored an unbeaten 117 against Bangladesh in Napier, followed by an 88-ball 118 in the second ODI in Christchurch and was interviewed yet again during the presentation ceremony.

McGoldrick, who started her career as a stage performer with a degree in performing arts, entered broadcasting in 2009 where she hosted a children's TV show before joining Sky Sports and started hosting 'The Cricket Show'.

When asked how often she interviews her husband after he scores a hundred, McGoldrick said that it was a 'cool' thing to be able get the first reaction and congratulate him.

"I don't know how often I do it as he scored a couple of back-to-back hundreds in the past. That was pretty cool to be able to interview him on both occasions. I have

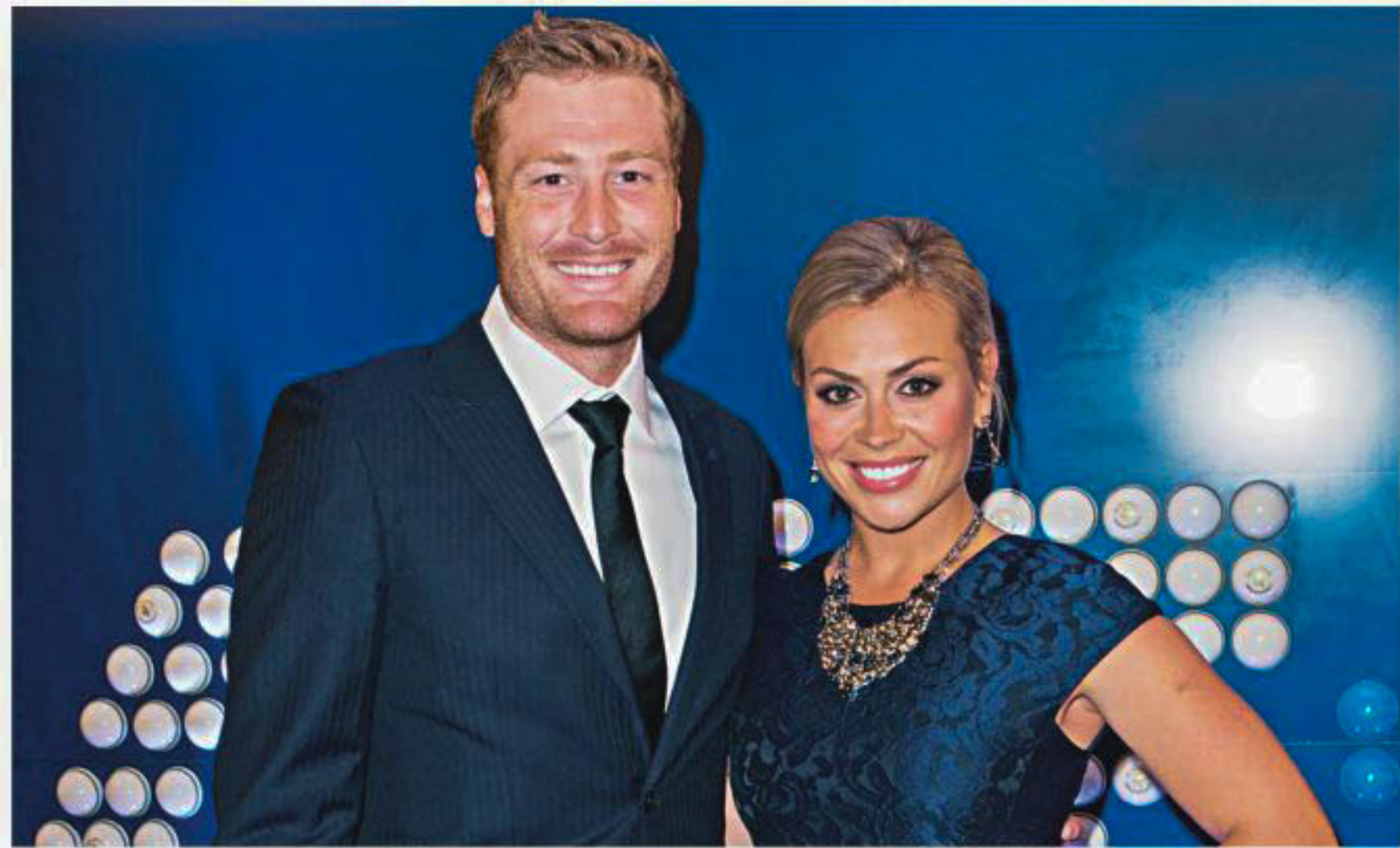
interviewed him quite a few times after he scored a hundred, so it actually makes me proud to be able to interview as not many wives get the opportunity to interview their husband. The coolest part is I am the one who gets his first reaction after scoring a hundred," McGoldrick told The Daily Star on Sunday after the second ODI in Christchurch.

When asked who was more nervous during the interview, McGoldrick smiled. "Well...maybe him. I don't know, I guess neither of us as it's our jobs and we are both professional and things get done. So I don't think we get nervous and it's more exciting."

McGoldrick and Gupthill met each other during a TV show and got married in 2014. It may be natural to assume that the couple talk about cricket even at home, but according to McGoldrick they hardly discuss cricket, adding that life changed since the birth of their daughter Harley Louise.

"Life changed quite dramatically after we had a baby but all for the better. I am not sure what we used to do in our spare time before that. It is such a great joy and great perspective, and privileged to be her parents, that's for sure," she added.

Gupthill endured a lean patch during the previous five-match ODI series against India, when he scored just 37 runs in four games and missed the last match due to a lower back injury and McGoldrick said that she would take her husband out for dinner to celebrate the batsman's superb return to form.



After Martin Gupthill singlehandedly led New Zealand to victory in the second ODI against Bangladesh with a blistering 118-run knock, he had the pleasure of being interviewed by his wife and sports presenter Laura McGoldrick.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Eng U-19s on cusp of victory

SPORTS REPORTER

Jamie Smith hit a scintillating hundred as England Under-19s tightened their grip on the second and final four-day match against Bangladesh Under-19s by the end of the third day's play at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

Riding on right-hander Smith's 106-ball 104, featuring nine fours and four sixes, the visitors declared their second innings at 223 for eight to set a huge 333-run win target for the home team; which finished the day with 34 for one, requiring another 299 runs on the final day.

Left-arm spinner Minhazur Rahman picked up four wickets for 74 runs.

Earlier, Bangladesh added 34 more runs to their overnight score of 194 for six before being bundled out in the first innings to concede a 109-run lead. Resuming the day on 62, Mahmudul Hasan ended his five hour vigil at the middle on 74.

England pacer Kasey Aldridge, who claimed four wickets in the first innings, gave his side a perfect finish by trapping Amite Hasan in front for six runs.

If England do succeed today, they would at least have some good news to take home from the nearly month long tour after having lost the solitary T20 match, three-match ODI series and the first youth Test against the hosts.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND U-19s: First innings 337 and second innings 223 for 8 decl in 54 overs (Smith 104, Cox 30; Mujakkir 2-50, Galib 2-58, Minhazur 4-74)

BANGLADESH U-19s: First innings 228 and second innings 34 for one in 7.3 overs (Tanzid 28 not out; Aldridge 1-16)

## DPL players' draft takes place today

SPORTS REPORTER



Although it was once a prime cricket competition in the country, the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) has already lost the glamour it was known for and that is why it comes as no surprise that the players' draft for the upcoming season will be held today at a city hotel without any buzz.

The madness which surrounded the player's transfer window in the past has now become folklore to the cricket fraternity, especially after the introduction of the player's draft system which has all but put an end to the traditional and much-cherished event.

Also, gone are the days when the pressure of playing in the country's lone 50-over List A completion was described as so severe that it prepared the players for most situations in international cricket.

However, former national captain Khaled Mahmud, a cricketer during the league's heyday, said that the tournament is still relevant since it is the premier competition to showcase domestic talent and further many of the players' cases for entry to the national team.

"Definitely any tournament would lose its attraction without the presence of the country's leading players. If you wait for the availability of the national players, then it will not be possible to find a slot for the league and we should accept it," said Mahmud yesterday. "It would be impossible to hold the league if we want to start it after the national players return from New Zealand. It's a worldwide scenario as how many Indian team players get opportunities to play the Ranji Trophy."

"The absence of national stars, however, creates an opportunity for young players to step up and I still believe this league is a platform where a player can prove his worth," added Mahmud, who is also the coach of defending champions Abahani.

National team players Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiquir Rahim have already expressed their desire for a break from the league while the injured Shakib Al Hasan still has a slim chance of participating. Meanwhile, a fellow member of the Big Five, ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was retained by Abahani alongside Nazmul Hossain and Mosaddek Hossain.

Due to the unavailability of national cricketers ahead of the ICC World Cup to be held in England from May, the clubs were reluctant to retain many of the Tigers, including Mahmudullah Riyad, who will only be available after April 6.

Mahmud does however expect Mashrafe to be available after two or three matches.

## Test cricket is the best format in the world

*This article by Lungani Zama on Sri Lanka batsman Kusal Perera's miraculous innings in the first Test against South Africa was carried by iol.co.za. We have printed it in its entirety*

Ridiculous, riotous Test cricketing madness! Someone forgot to send Kusal Perera the last few pages of the script, and the defiant southpaw stood in the middle of the Kingsmead ring and simply improvised.

He slung Dale Steyn towards the Indian Ocean, so violently that they might have heard it land in Colombo.

He smeared Kagiso Rabada over fine-leg, paying no mind if the direction was 'jammy', because sincerity lived from whence the shot came.

He dared Vishwa Fernando to go with him, to dream with him - and live out that dream simultaneously.

He ravaged the Proteas attack with a knock so unexpected that the applause was still polite when he reached three figures.

No one had reckoned with the Lankan sting in the tail.

And then, and then, and then...

South Africa, in control for so long, will rise today hurt and, perhaps, embarrassed by their efforts when they suddenly realised the noose was around their necks - and no longer on their visitors.

The prey became the predator, and the Sri Lankan Lions pulled off a miracle that makes their 2011 victory on this very ground look like child's play.

This was Roy of the Rovers, Kusal of Kingsmead stuff.

This was ridiculous - an enthralling slugfest of wickets and defiant runs, until the runs that were made outlasted the wickets that were lost.

Who knew that Sri Lanka had that in them? Perhaps they did, which is why they chose to stay away from training, the day before the match started.

Whatever their logic, it worked. And how!

Perera may never play a better knock if he sleeps and dreams a million knocks, but he will always have the glistening memory of Durban.

South Africa lost, sure, and they will ask themselves some hard questions about all their disciplines in this match.

But, they will rise and fight again

and six and niks, so truly special.

It surprises us, even as we think we might have the foggiest what happens next. Constantly, it ad-libs and delights the sporting soul with a result that corrupts the senses and captures the imagination.

Dare to dream.

There is a show in America that plays along those themes of improvisation and entertainment.



Sri Lanka wicketkeeper-batsman Kusal Perera lifted his side to victory in the first Test against South Africa with an awe-inspiring 153 not out despite getting little to no support from the rest of the batting order.

PHOTO: AFP

in Port Elizabeth. They have to.

So, no one died. But, Sri Lanka lived again, in the most sensational way possible.

They tore up the script, and wrote their own ending.

And, with it, Test cricket won, too. This is the format. This is the unpredictability and sheer magic that makes this game of bat, and ball,

As Perera rises to a thousand messages from around the world this morning, he might ponder upon a phrase that is the title of said Yank show.

It's a phrase the Aussies of last summer churned out, during the last Test match at Kingsmead. That time, though, it was for completely different reasons.

Whose Line Is It Anyway?

## Cummins first since McGrath

AGENCIES



Australia fast bowler Pat Cummins is the new number 1 Test bowler after the stupendous summer. He overtook South African Kagiso Rabada to take the top spot among bowlers. With this feat, he became the first from his country since Glenn McGrath in February 2006 to top the Test bowlers' list.

Rabada slipped down to No.3 after managing just three wickets in two innings in Durban. Cummins is now No.1 with 878 points, and is followed by England's Jimmy Anderson, who has 862 points.

After his heroics with the bat in the first Test match at Durban, Sri Lankan batsman Kusal Perera jumped 58 places to a career-best 40th position after 15 Tests.

Indian captain Virat Kohli remains the number 1 Test batsman in the world with 922 points. The other Indian on the list of top 10 Test batsman in Cheteshwar Pujara, who occupies the 3rd spot with 881 rating points.

## 'Ready and raring to go'

ICC



Wicket-keeper batsman Shai Hope has labelled the Windies "ready and raring to go" for their five-match ODI series against England, which will form a key part of both sides ICC Men's Cricket World Cup preparations. The series is set to start from February 20 at Bridgetown.

England are the No.1 MRF Tyres ranked side in ODI cricket, while the West Indies sit in ninth, but buoyed by momentum picked up in their recent 2-1 victory in the Test series, there is a real air of enthusiasm in the Windies camp.

"It's a lot to look forward to," said Hope. "It's a very exciting time, especially leading up to the World Cup so I'm sure the guys are ready and raring to go. We are just coming off a Test series win and that was fantastic for everyone involved and the fans, so it is important for us to continue in that vein and try to get the series win as well."

"We can use this as a good gauge for us going into the World Cup. We are still looking at some plans, in terms of what is the best fit and combination but it's a good challenge for us and we've got some work to do."