

MOST 6s : HIT BY A PLAYER 🔾 **MORGAN ENGLAND** 022 MOST 4s : HIT BY A PLAYER 🔾 WARNER

AUSTRALIA

049



# Have to play better than we have so far'

SAKEB SUBHAN from Birmingham

At the business end of a tournament, skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was once more faced with an all-too-familiar hurdle. In the last two ICC 50-over tournaments, it was India that stopped Bangladesh's march -- in the 2015 World Cup quarterfinal and the 2017 Champions Trophy semifinal. After an impressive run in the ongoing World Cup, Mashrafe and Co are left having to win against India today to stay alive in the race to the semifinals.

Mashrafe was under no illusions about the size of the task at hand when speaking at the pre-

match press conference in Birmingham yesterday. "Look, every time we play, we want to win, but India were the better side in the last few World Cups," Mashrafe said when asked about his team's chances. "We go out onto the field to play at our best, and let's see. You never know. If you

The Export Leader

CROWN IIII CEMENT

have a very good day, play every area, and if we are 100 percent correct, then you never know. It's a sport that on your day you can beat anybody."

All sportsmen present a veneer of confidence ahead of a contest, but Mashrafe seemed to struggle to maintain his.

"I'm not surprised," Mashrafe answered when asked whether he expected the team to last this long in the World Cup. "I think there's not too much left. We have to play at our best. If we can manage to win, that will be great, but to be honest, both sides [India and Pakistan, their next opponents] are very strong. It's not going to be easy, but we have to play hard and have to be 100 percent in every area. Good thing that we're still in the tournament, maybe, maybe not [after tomorrow], but let's see. We have to play a lot better than what we have played."

And that is the nature of the challenge facing

Bangladesh. Most observers have been impressed by Bangladesh's progress through the tournament -- beating West Indies, South Africa and Afghanistan and almost beating New Zealand. But with how the teams stack up -- India have the most varied bowling attack and the best players of spin bowling, Bangladesh's strength -- Mashrafe knew that his team would have to play even better to stand a chance against the 2011 and 1983 champions.

"Whenever we have beaten big teams, I don't think we have ever won by playing well in one department," Mashrafe said when asked if there was one area in which he would put Bangladesh ahead of India. "It has always been batting, bowling and fielding. If we can do well in all sectors, then of course we can win."

City

There may be one chink in India's armour and that is their top-heavy batting department. Opener Rohit Sharma and skipper Virat Kohli, at number three, have scored a lion's share of their runs and getting them early could expose a softer middle order. But Bangladesh seem ill-prepared to exploit that as well, as they have managed to take a wicket in the first 10 overs just twice in six matches. Pacers Mustafizur Rahman and Mohammad Saifuddin have taken 10 wickets each, but only one of those wickets, that of Chris Gayle's wicket by Saifuddin, was taken by a pacer. Mashrafe meanwhile has just one wicket from six matches.

"It has not been ideal, for sure," Mashrafe said. "You need early wickets against India, otherwise they can get a very big score. But just because it has not happened before does not mean it won't happen tomorrow [Tuesday]."

That seems to be Bangladesh's way forward -- they have to find something that they have not yet found in the tournament.



Among players between the two teams today, Mushfigur Rahim is the secondhighest run-getter, only behind Virat Kohli. A proven performer against India, the onus will be on Mushfigur to deliver today. PHOTO: AFP

India captain Virat Kohli was critical of the dimensions of the Edgbaston ground after England targeted the short boundary. The square boundary is 59 metres on one side while 80 metres on the other side and will be a challenge for the Tigers when they face India today. PHOTO: SAKEB SUBHAN

## Lop-sided challenge for Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER from Birmingham

Part of the challenge for Bangladesh in the ongoing World Cup has been to adjust not just to the different pitches across the United Kingdom, but also to the ground dimensions. Having played their last match on a rare, circular-shaped ground in Southampton, Bangladesh will have to make another adjustment to contrasting boundary sizes when they face off against India in a must-win encounter at Edgbaston today.

The square boundary on one side of the ground is 59 metres, while it is around 80 metres at the opposite end of the ground. There is double trouble for Bangladesh as far as the dimensions are concerned. While the Tigers will try to adjust to the boundary sizes, India have already played a match on the same wicket just two days ago during a 31run loss against England. India skipper Virat Kohli was not too happy with the 59-metre boundary on one side, presumably because it negated his spinners. After the match, he took a tongue-in-cheek dig at the boundary size. Happy or not with the dimensions, India will have had experience of what to do in such conditions today.

Bangladesh, meanwhile, had been on a five-day break since the match against Afghanistan and, unlike previous venues, could not practise at the centre wickets yesterday, which denied them a feel for the

ground conditions. They also did not have the option of coming to practise on their five-day break because two matches -- New Zealand-Pakistan on June 26 and India-England on June 30 -- had been played during that period. "We knew about the system before playing

the tournament -- that we would have an eight-day break," skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza replied when asked during the prematch press conference yesterday whether the break helped. "The ground was busy because two matches took place [in that period]. It is difficult because the teams [playing the matches] were practising here too.

England utilised the shorter boundary to good effect against India, hitting their spinners for sixes to the shorter side of the ground.

"We will have to look at whether it will be possible to bowl spinners from both ends," Mashrafe said.

With India being such good players of spin, that may open the door for pacer Rubel Hossain. Rubel had a good outing in the teams' last match in the Asia Cup final in September 2018, almost bowling Bangladesh to a win with figures of two for 26 in 10 overs. The option may be to rest off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz and opt for Rubel, and counting on Mosaddek Hossain to bowl some overs of spin and Soumya Sarkar to chip in with some medium pace.

# ७४१, ठेठ०

## WI-SL SCOREBOARD

RI LANKA			R/B	4
arunaratne c Hope b Holder			32/48	
erera run out	8 N			
Cottrell/Brathwaite)			64/51	
ernando c Allen b Cottrell			104/103	
lendis c & b Allen			39/41	
lathews b Holder			26/20	
hirimanne not out			45/33	
dana c Holder b Thomas			3/6	
e Silva not out			6/3	
xtras: (b-4, lb-5, nb-5, w-5)			19	
otal: (For 6 wkts in 50 overs)			338	
all of wickets	: 1-93, 2-	104, 3	-189, 4-24	7,
-314, 6-327.				
owler	0	M	R	
ottrell	10	0	69	
homas	10	1	58	
abriel	5	0	46	
older	10	0	59	
rathwaite	7	0	53	
llen	8	0	44	
VEST INDIES			R/B	4
ayle c Vandersay b Rajitha			35/48	
mbris c Perera b Malinga			5/6	
ope b Malinga			5/11	
etmyer run out (de Silva)			29/38	
			4407400	

Holder c sub (Mendis) b Vandersay 8/15 1/0 Brathwaite run out (Udana) Allen run out (Rajitha/Udana) 51/32 7/1 7/10 0/0 Cottrell not out Thomas Ibw b Malinga Gabriel not out 3/7 0/0 Extras: (b-3, lb-2, nb-2, w-20) Total: (For 9 wkts in 50 overs) 315 Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-22, 3-71, 4-84, 5-145,

Vandersay

Karunaratno Mathews Result: Sri Lanka won by 23 runs Player-of-the-match: Avishka Fernando.

6-199, 7-282, 8-308, 9-311.

Bowler

match, during which both Bangladesh and Pakistan

supporters were supporting India for selfish reasons.

As someone who believes wholeheartedly in the

shortcomings. He has been embracing uncertainty all

his career, and perhaps that will be the way forward for

Bangladesh when odds are stacked against them today.

resignation to a jocular acceptance of his team's

role luck plays in cricket, Mashrafe went from apparent

Asia were united," Mashrafe said.

"It was the first time I saw in cricket that the whole of

## Mashrafe sees the funny side

SPORTS REPORTER from Birmingham

Shankar out

of World Cup

India all-rounder Vijay

Shankar has been ruled

Cup with a toe fracture,

a minimum of three weeks to

heal. The injury rules him out

of the ongoing World Cup,"

management has requested

consider Mayank Agarwal

Shankar was hit on

the foot by a yorker from

paceman Jasprit Bumrah

during a training session

Edgbaston on Sunday.

Shankar played three

Pakistan, Afghanistan and

Injuries have troubled

India throughout their World

Cup campaign, with opener

forced out of the tournament

Shikhar Dhawan earlier

with a broken thumb.

the West Indies.

said a BCCI statement.

"The Indian team

the ICC (International

Cricket Council) to

as his replacement.

AFP, Birmingham

on Monday.

England's win over India made matters harder for out of the rest of the World Bangladesh to qualify for the 2019 World Cup semifinals. Bangladesh will now have to beat India today in the Board of Control for Edgbaston and Pakistan at Lord's on June 5 while also Cricket in India announced hoping that England lose to New Zealand on June 3. Perhaps that is why Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin "Vijay Shankar sustained a Mortaza appeared a little downcast at the beginning of his non-displaced fracture of the pre-match press conference. left big toe, which will require

When speaking about the prospect of beating India today, 'it will be difficult but we have to do our best' seemed to be a constant refrain initially. It was understandable of course -- Bangladesh have a 5-29 win/ loss ratio against India, have lost their last four matches as well as their last two World Cup games in 2015 and 2011. Also, in crunch matches -- the 2018 Asia Cup final, the Nidahas Trophy final in 2018, the 2017 Champions Trophy semifinal, the 2016 Asia Cup T20 final and the 2015 World Cup quarterfinal -- they have always come out



After picking up two crucial wickets, West Indies captain Jason Holder also got a start with the bat after coming in to chase the huge 339-run target set by Sri Lanka in a World Cup encounter yesterday. However, the tall right-hander was eventually dismissed on 26 with the Caribbean side struggling to notch a consolation win.



second-best against India.

The first half of the press conference could be characterised as that of a captain who did not see much hope in the offing. He was even unsure about what to do at the toss.

"Usually, when it is a used wicket, teams bat first," Mashrafe had said. "But with India, it is difficult, they are very good at chasing, so I don't know."

As the press conference wore on, however, Mashrafe lightened up -- perhaps embracing the uncertainty of his team's position. It all seemed to start with a question in jest about whether the current member of parliament would become a prime minister in 10-15 years. There was general laughter when Mashrafe replied with 'surely not'.

When asked whether the slow nature of the wicket would help the likes of cutter-specialist Mustafizur Rahman bowl his slowers, Mashrafe -- whose drop in pace in the last decade has become a topic of discussion -- had this gem: "Our balls are slow anyway."

His chuckle as he said that drew raucous laughter from Bangladeshi journalists. The lack of pace not just in Mashrafe's bowling but on the general pace-bowling scene in the country is well known and documented, and it seemed like a breaking down of pretence from the Bangladesh captain ahead of what may be the 35-yearold's last World Cup match.

He also had a funny comment on the England-India

Bangladesh skipper's attitude throughout his coveted career has been one of embracing uncertainty. With Bangladesh facing India today at Edgbaston, the skipper will have to face tough tasks and Bangladesh will be banking on his decision-making prowess under

pressure.

TODAY'S MATCH BTV, GTV & MAASRANGA ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP BANGLADESH V INDIA LIVE FROM 3:30PM (BANGLADESH STANDARD TIME)

PHOTO: AFP

sh@hoz

Ride. Food. Ticket

Download Shohoz App