

# SPORT



**FOCUS ON THE FUTURE:** Bangladesh batsman Soumya Sarkar is determined to leave his chequered record in the past and focus on firing in all three formats by utilising the current practice sessions in Mirpur to the fullest.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Surgery looms for Mustafizur

SPORTS REPORTER



Celebrated Bangladesh pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman's injuries finally seem to have caught up with him as a specialised MRI examination in England yesterday has revealed that he will most likely have to undergo surgery to correct his shoulder injury.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) revealed the possible need for surgery after an orthopaedic surgeon in England saw the MRI arthrogram, a special examination to determine the severity of the pacer's SLAP (Superior Labrum Anterior to Posterior) tear in his left shoulder, and diagnosed it as a Grade 2 injury that usually requires surgical intervention. If the talented left-arter does undergo surgery -- the BCB are yet to determine if that will be the case -- he will be out of cricket for a minimum of five to six months and will miss the England series in October and Bangladesh's visit to New Zealand at the end of the year.

The 20-year-old Mustafizur, who went to Sussex on July 20 to participate in the Natwest T20 Blast and Royal London One-Day Cup, suffered a recurrence of the shoulder injury he first sustained during the National Cricket League in October 2015.

Orthopaedic surgeon Professor Tony Kochhar, head of the Sports Science department at the University of Greenwich, recommended the need for the MRI arthrogram, which he saw yesterday and suggested the surgical route. He is yet to see the report of the test and it has been learned that Mustafizur will sit with Kochhar once he is furnished with the report today.

"I have not yet seen the details of the report, but as far as I know a grade 2 injury requires a surgical solution," said BCB physician Debashish Chowdhury yesterday.

BCB media committee chairman Jalal Yunus said that a final decision on the course of action is yet to be taken. "The physio [Bayzedul Islam], team doctor [Chowdhury] and others concerned will sit down and discuss the plan of action once we get the full report," Jalal informed. "They might want a second opinion. But as far as the BCB is concerned, we are looking for a permanent, long-term solution and we want to eliminate any delays in the process."

The unwillingness to delay the process may point to the surgery -- if that is the path pursued -- being done in England. Sources close to Mustafizur intimated that he would prefer that the procedure be done in England. Additionally, Bangladesh team manager and BCB director Khaled Mahmud also said that sports medicine in England is highly developed and that the BCB was averse to any delays.



## 'Want to be good in all 3 formats'

SPORTS REPORTER



Soumya Sarkar did not take much time to show his true colours as a top-order batsman upon his arrival in international cricket against Zimbabwe in December 2014. The left-hander's fearless batting, especially in the 50-over format, enthralled fans last year, but he suddenly lost his rhythm when it was time to show his character in T20Is

this year.

The southpaw's drawn-out lean patch even put the national team's think-tank in a spot of bother, but the 23-year-old batsman from Satkhira said yesterday that he had found the solution to his recent batting failures, which is to focus on his own strengths.

"I have been playing T20 cricket for quite some time but I still could not make my mark on this format as I made lot of mistakes in the past. Now I am trying to get accustomed to this

format. ODI cricket is my favourite format. I lost my rhythm due to T20 cricket and to get it back I slowed down my pace in the Dhaka Premier League initially. Later I thought that it would be best for me to play according to my style and I got runs later," said Soumya while talking to reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

He also believes that his batting will improve in the coming practice sessions. "You cannot improve much

when you are in a match, so I will try my best to correct the mistakes during practice sessions."

Soumya said that his ultimate goal was to prove himself a good batsman in all three formats.

"We have been out of ODI cricket for quite some time. On the other hand I could not do well in T20 cricket. So I plan to prove myself in the upcoming matches and I will definitely try my best to establish myself in all three formats."

## Fahad sets his sights on IM norms

ANISUR RAHMAN



Mohammad Fahad Rahman, the youngest FIDE Master of

Bangladesh, has set an ambitious target to achieve the International Master (IM) title by this year after the young chess prodigy won the 14th Dubai Juniors Chess Tournament on Tuesday.

"Now my target is to achieve the IM title by this year and I will now concentrate on preparation for upcoming tournaments so that I can earn the norms for International Master," said Fahad after returning home from Dubai yesterday afternoon.

One of only 14 FIDE Masters in Bangladesh, Fahad is aiming to achieve two norms of IM in the next five months. In order to do so, Fahad will need to take part in two to three IM or GM tournaments involving at least 27 matches and earn the requisite points from upcoming tournaments.

13-year-old Fahad was awarded the FIDE Master title by the world's game governing body following his triumph in the ASEAN Age Group Chess Championship in

2013, but since then he failed to earn any norms for the IM title despite taking part in some tournaments.

"There are two things needed to get my norms: training and participation in tournaments abroad. I

have been training regularly, but I don't have the opportunities to play many tournaments form where I can get the norms. But over the next five months, I will try to participate in as many tournaments as possible," said Fahad,

who has recently taken part in two standard tournaments of IIFL -- the Mumbai Junior Chess Champions and sixth Asian Children Games in Russia -- where he failed to earn the required points for the IM norm.

"Playing against senior players is always tough because they are much better and more mature than me, but truthfully, I have been mostly taking part in the rating tournaments which can only increase or decrease my rating, nothing else. In Bangladesh, IM or GM tournaments are not being held, so I don't have the chance to get the norm. For getting the norm I need to play IM or GM tournaments abroad," continued the youth from Faridpur.

The Dubai Junior Chess tournament was the third standard international tournament triumph for Fahad. His first title came in 2012 from the Asian School Chess Championship in Delhi before he clinched the Open Under-10 group of the 14th ASEAN Age Group Chess Championship in Chiang Mai, Thailand a year later.

However, Fahad was ecstatic after the Dubai triumph and termed the tournament as one the toughest tournaments he has

participated in at the international level so far.

"It was a tough tournament because there were two players who were ranked higher than me. Both of them were also my seniors. Other players have also been ahead of me in rankings and everyone was trying their utmost on the boards," explained Fahad. "I also tried my best. I thought deeply before making any moves and winning the title was the result of my consistent performances throughout the championship."

Fahad also kept the victory at the Dubai Junior Chess Championship ahead of his other triumphs.

"I will keep the Dubai championship ahead of my other triumphs, although victory in the Thailand tournament [ASEAN Age-Group Chess] granted me the title of FIDE master," concluded Fahad.

Nazrul Islam, Fahad's father, urged corporate houses to come forward and sponsor Fahad as his current sponsorship deal with Mahindra Comviva is coming to an end in September.



**Upon his triumphant return from Dubai yesterday, Mohammad Fahad Rahman was received at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport by his mother Hamida Khan (R) and Bangladesh Chess Federation general secretary Syed Shahabuddin Shamim (L).**

PHOTO: BCF

KING'S CUP

## Siddikur off to slow start

SPORTS REPORTER



It was not the kind of flamboyant start that Siddikur Rahman had wished for in the King's Cup yesterday before embarking on a dream Olympic journey in Rio next month.

The ace Bangladesh golfer stroked a two-under-par 68 on the opening day in the 750,000-dollar event in Pataya, five shots behind hosts Thailand's Sattaya Suppramai, who overcame a stiff neck in the morning before going to post a seven-under-par 63.

31-year-old Siddikur, who will carry Bangladesh's flag in the Rio Olympics' opening ceremony on August 5, hit three birdies against a bogey to share the 19th position. The two-time Asian Tour winner, like many, is taking the King's Cup as a final preparation for Rio Olympics, in which golf returned after 116 years.

The first Bangladeshi to make a direct entry in any Olympic Games as one of the top 60 qualifiers, Siddikur needs to up his game in the next three rounds of the King's Cup if he is to carry the momentum to Rio.

He will be flying off to Rio de Janeiro on August 2 after arriving in Bangladesh on the previous day following his participation in the King's Cup.



## WI seek U-19 inspiration from Joseph

AFP, Kingston

West Indies on Wednesday called-up uncapped teenage fast bowler Alzarri Joseph to their squad for the second Test against India which gets underway at Sabina Park on Saturday.

Joseph, 19, was one of his team's stars at the Under-19 World Cup this year, helping the West Indies to the title with 13 wickets to his name.

"We feel that Alzarri, who led the attack so expertly in the Youth World Cup earlier this year in Bangladesh, will now benefit from the professional guidance of our coaching staff and the presence of fast bowling legend Joel Garner as manager," said West Indies chairman of selectors Courtney Browne.

## Wagner rocks Zimbabwe

AFP, Bulawayo



Left-arm seamer Neil Wagner's raw pace and aggression proved too much for an out-of-touch Zimbabwean batting lineup as New Zealand stamped their authority on the first Test on the opening day at Queens Sports Club on Thursday.

On a surface offering little to the bowlers, Wagner bent his back and used the short ball to good effect to take career-best figures of 6 for 41, bowling Zimbabwe out for just 164 after they had won the toss and elected to bat first.

In a 13-over spell either side of the lunch break, the 30-year-old removed Chibhabha and Sean Williams before the interval and then struck three times in one over to reduce the hosts to 72 for eight.

Zimbabwe had not played a Test since November 2014, and the hiatus showed in their inability to occupy the crease on a pitch that held no demons.

New Zealand closed the day on 32 without loss, with Tom Latham on 16 and Martin Guptill on 14.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**

**ZIMBABWE:** First innings 164 (Raza 22, Masvaure 42, Tiripano 49 not out; Southee 2-28, Santner 2-16, Wagner 6-41)

**NEW ZEALAND:** First innings 32 for no loss (Guptill 14 not out, Latham 16 not out)

## SL strike back with Mendis ton

REUTERS, Pallekele



Sri Lankan Kusal Mendis struck a majestic maiden Test century on day three of the first Test against Australia to leave the bowler-dominated contest evenly poised at Pallekele on Thursday.

The 21-year-old was unbeaten on 169 -- 52 runs more than his team managed in the first innings -- when rain forced the players off the ground 10 overs after tea with Sri Lanka on 282 for 6.

Dilruwan Perera was on five with Sri Lanka leading by 196 runs with four wickets in hand as rain continued to plague the Test which has already seen the final sessions of the first two days washed out.

Resuming on six for one, Sri Lanka lost Dimuth Karunaratne to Mitchell Starc in the third delivery of the day.

Steve O'Keefe dismissed Kaushal Silva and his spin partner Nathan Lyon sent back home captain Angelo Mathews (nine) to reduce Sri Lanka to 86-4.

Mendis then forged two important partnerships to rebuild the Sri Lankan innings, raising 117 runs -- comfortably the highest of the match so far -- with Dinesh Chandimal (42) and 71 with Dhananjaya de Silva (36) to haul his team back into the contest.

In a match where no other batsman

has managed a fifty, Mendis brought up his maiden hundred in style, slog-sweeping O'Keefe over midwicket for six.

Lyon dismissed de Silva for his 200th Test wicket but Mendis was unfazed at the other end, sweeping the spinners and cutting the pacemen with equal ease.



**Sri Lankan batsman Kusal Mendis refused to go down without a fight, ending the third day of the first Test against Australia on an unbeaten 169 as the hosts amassed a 196-run lead at the Pallekele Stadium in Kandy yesterday.**

PHOTO: AP

## SCOREBOARD

**SRI LANKA:** First innings 117

**AUSTRALIA:** First innings 203

**SRI LANKA:** Second innings

(overnight 6 for 1)

K Perera lbw b Starc 4

K Silva lbw b O'Keefe 7

Karunaratne lbw b Starc 0

Mendis not out 169

Mathews c Burns b Lyon 9

Chandimal lbw b Marsh 42

De Silva c Khawaja b Lyon 36

D Perera not out 5

Extras: (lb-10) 10

Total: (For 6 wks in 80 overs) 282

Fall of wicket: 1-6, 2-6, 3-45, 4-86,

5-203, 6-274.

To bat: Herath, Sandakan, Pradeep

**Bowler** O M R W

Starc 12 4 44 2

Hazlewood 13 3 41 0

O'Keefe 16.2 3 42 1

Lyon 26 2 98 2

Warner 1 0 10 0

Voges 1.4 0 3 0

Marsh 9 1 33 1

Smith 1 0 1 0