

SPORT



Nutrition on The Go



'My challenge is to score'

SPORTS REPORTER



Misfiring Bangladesh opener Soumya Sarkar yesterday said that he could only respond to the growing criticism by scoring heavily.

"I'm doing well in one game and then doing not so well in the next. I may have played badly in Champions Trophy, but I played well in the preceding series. A lot of people are saying a lot of things. But I'm not paying attention to everyone. I'm realizing that I will have to solve my own problem," Soumya told reporters during the Tigers' fitness training session in Mirpur.

The young left-hander came under scrutiny after his no show in the Champions Trophy, where his combined four innings score, including the semifinal against India, was 34. He got out against Australia and New Zealand for 3 and scored a duck against India, in these three innings his footwork, or lack of, was exposed. The young batsman, who relies on hand-eye coordination, however said that those dismissals were of different kinds.

"If it was the case that I was getting out in the same way, which was not, it would have been easier to solve. I will have to solve it and I know that I can only do it by scoring runs. And this is the biggest challenge for me," said Soumya.



Opener Soumya Sarkar (L) speaks with reporters at the BCB headquarters in Mirpur yesterday.

"In the Champions Trophy I stayed at the wicket for awhile against England. In the other games I got out quickly. When I score runs my batting looks good but when I can't score it looks ugly and unfortunately this is way I play," the left-hander continued.

He said that the on-going fitness camp could be the first step for a turnaround.

"Fitness camps are always important for a cricketer. It is also

very important if you are playing uninterrupted cricket for a long time. This is a place where you can make yourself fit and I'm trying to do that, working on my weaknesses," he continued, adding that he looks forward to the Australia challenge. "The Champions Trophy was a one-day tournament. Against Australia we will play Tests. These are two different formats and at the moment I'm solely focused on fitness. If I get an opportunity I will

try to do well against Australia."

Australia are scheduled to play two Tests in Bangladesh, starting next month.

"I'm playing lower down the order in Test and the team management thinks I can better serve in that position. I have no problem to play at any position," said Soumya when asked if he was comfortable batting lower down the order in Test.

Soumya also expressed his

belief the Tigers will do well against Australia this time.

"We normally play a few Test matches and against Australia we play fewer. We are playing well in Tests of late. We had an outstanding series against England at home. The Australia series is a big opportunity for us. We are really excited to play against them. I hope that we will play good cricket against them. If I get a chance it will be my first Test game against Australia and I want to make it a memorable one," said a confident Soumya.

He said that he was focused on his bowling.

"I always bowl in the nets. We had two seamers in a match before but now we play three pace bowlers. So there is very limited option for a fourth seamer to bowl in a match. Besides, we have always got a very strong spin attack. But I'm continuing to bowl in the nets and hope I can also add as a bowler in the future," he said, adding that it is very difficult to do both things together as it requires a different fitness level for an all-rounder.

Lastly, he spoke highly of his vastly experienced opening partner Tamim Iqbal.

There are a lot of things one can learn from Tamim Iqbal. When he is on strike I follow him, keenly. He is now playing differently. He is more matured. He can read the team situation very well and act accordingly," Soumya observed.

Shakib takes fast road to recovery

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is recovering fast from a twisted ankle he incurred on July 14.

The left-hander turned up at the home of cricket in Mirpur yesterday and had a morning gym session after missing the on-going fitness camp for the last two days.

Shakib reportedly twisted his left ankle at home. But at the moment the swelling has subsided which is very good news. It was learnt that he might be able to start running again within the next three or four days.

"The injury is an ankle sprain. It is a grade one injury. It is not a serious injury and we are using conservative treatment for the time being," said BCB physician Manirul Hasan.

"The swelling has reduced and the injury is healing quickly. We hope that he will be able to do upper and lower body exercises in a day or two."

"In 10 days time he will be able to exercise like before," Hasan added.



South Africa pacer Vernon Philander (C) celebrates after dismissing England's Ben Stokes on the fourth day of the second Test in Nottingham yesterday.

Proteas hammer England

AFP, Nottingham



Vernon Philander led a fine all-round bowling effort as South Africa thrashed England by 340 runs in the second Test at Trent Bridge on Monday.

Victory saw the Proteas lead the four-match series at 1-1 after they themselves had been beaten by 211 runs in the first Test at Lord's.

England, set a mammoth 474 runs for victory, collapsed to 133 all out 40 minutes before tea on the fourth day.

Player-of-the-match Philander took three wickets for 24 runs in 10 overs, including an early double strike.

That gave him five wickets in total in a match where he also made scores of 54 and 42 with the bat.

No England batsman made a fifty in the second innings where former captain Alastair Cook's 42 was the top score.

The most made by anyone to win in the fourth innings of a Test is the West

Indies' 48 for seven against Australia at St John's in 2003.

But the more immediate task for England on Monday was to see if they could at least keep South Africa in the field.

They failed miserably, the hosts bowled out in 44.2 overs despite South Africa being without Kagiso Rabada after the fast bowler was suspended for swearing at England's Ben Stokes at Lord's.

Philander removed left-handers Keaton Jennings (three) and Gary Ballance (four) during a burst of two for eight in 19 balls.

Recalled all-rounder Chris Morris followed up with two for two in 20 balls to dismiss England captain Joe Root (eight) and Cook.

At lunch, England had slumped to 79 for four, with Jonny Bairstow 12 not out and Ben Stokes five not out.

But their stand on Monday was worth just 12 when Bairstow (16) advanced down the pitch to left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj only to drag

an intended drive straight to Morris at mid-on.

"It was an extraordinary shot given England's dire position."

"I can't believe I have seen that," said angry former England captain Michael Vaughan, commenting on BBC Radio's Test Match Special.

"All you need to do is dangle the carrot and they'll go for it. Dumb batting! What is the thinking?"

"Even if it goes for four or six... that's not the point now. It's about batting time."

SCORES IN BRIEF
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 335
ENGLAND: First innings 205
SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings 343-9 decd
ENGLAND: Second innings 133 (Cook 42, Bairstow 16, Stokes 18, Moeen 27, Philander 3-24, Olivier 2-25, Morris 2-7, Maharaj 3-42)
Result: South Africa won by 340 runs and levelled four-match series 1-1.
Player-of-the-match: Vernon Philander.

Dhawan in for Vijay for SL Tests

AFP, New Delhi

Injured opener Murali Vijay was Monday ruled out from India's upcoming Test series against Sri Lanka, the cricket board said Monday, with Shikhar Dhawan named as his replacement.

Vijay, who underwent surgery on his wrist in England after the four-Test series against Australia, has already missed the 10th edition of the Indian Premier League Twenty20 tournament.

The 33-year-old batsman is set to undergo rehabilitation after pain reappeared in his wrist while playing a warm-up match, the Board of Control for Cricket in India said in a statement.

Dhawan, who has played 23 Tests at an average of 38.52 since making his debut in 2013, is now part of the 16-man squad for the three Tests starting in Galle on July 26.

The left-handed batsman, who last played a Test in October against New Zealand, was the highest run-scorer in the 50-over Champions Trophy in England and Wales in June.

India, led by skipper Virat Kohli, are also slated to play five one-day internationals and a single Twenty20 after the Test series wraps up.

Gayle stands by Smith & Co

AGENCIES, New Delhi



The bitter pay dispute between Cricket Australia and the players continues and while it looked like a dead end till last week, things have slightly moved forward with Cricket Australia and the Australian Cricketers Association engaging in marathon meetings.

But the signing of a new MoU is still a distant dream.

With more than 230 professional cricketers in Australia rendered jobless, West Indies batsman Chris Gayle has come out in support of Steve Smith and boys and feels that the players deserve what they demand. Cricket Australia wants to break up the fixed revenue percentage model, but the players' body aren't sure of the idea and want the old model to continue, something which has been in place since 1998.

Gayle, who has played his trade for Melbourne Renegades and Sydney Thunder in the Big Bash League, said that he has himself been a part of pay disputes between the West Indies players and the West Indies Cricket Board and wants the likes of Smith, David Warner and others to stand ground and not crack under pressure from Cricket Australia.

"To be very honest I have not been following or have not spoken to anyone about it. But yes, I am aware of their situation. It is something that I have been involved with myself before (West Indies even cut short a tour of India in October 2014). I am standing with the players and hope they stand firm and get what they deserve," he said.

Gayle goes to join hands with his teammates and help West Indies lift the 2019 World Cup.

"It is obviously great to be back in national colours. Obviously, I hope to get back into the squad. Our main aim will be to put up a great show and collectively win the 2019 World Cup."



Mendis solid in record chase

AFP, Colombo



Kusal Mendis scored a fluent half-century to keep Sri Lanka's hopes of chasing a record 388 alive on day four of the one-off Test against Zimbabwe on Monday.

The hosts were 170 for three at stumps, with Mendis (60) batting alongside Angelo Mathews (17) at Colombo's R. Premadasa Stadium.

Sri Lanka's highest-ever successful run chase was against South Africa in 2006, when they achieved their 352-run target in Colombo.

Zimbabwe skipper Graeme Cremer denied the hosts with his leg-spin, claiming the important wickets of Upul Tharanga (27) and his opposite number Dinesh Chandimal (15).

Opener Dimuth Karunaratne was bowled by left-arm spinner Sen Williams for 49 as the visitors persisted with an all-spin attack in the 48 overs bowled in the innings so far.

Karunaratne said Cremer - who bagged his maiden five-wicket Test haul in Sri Lanka's first innings - would pose the biggest threat on a fifth-day track.

"We have got to watch out for Cremer. He is creating the most trouble. There is lot of assistance for the wrist spinner," Karunaratne told reporters.

"We have already got 170 runs on the board... once the ball gets softer, it gets easier. If these two guys are able to hang in there for one and a half hours we will get into an interesting position."

Mendis, who fought off hamstring trouble in the final session of play, put



Kusal Mendis's (L) unbeaten 60 kept Sri Lanka's hopes of chasing a record 388 alive on the fourth day of a one-off Test against Zimbabwe in Colombo yesterday.

together an unbeaten 37-run stand with Mathews to take the delicately poised Test into its final day.

Zimbabwe were earlier bowled out for 377 in the second session, with Sikandar Raza (127) top-scoring for the visitors with his maiden Test century.

Cremer was the last man out for 48 off left-arm spinner Rangana Herath, who returned figures of 6-133 to take his match tally to 11 wickets.

The Pakistan-born Raza steered the team's middle and lower order to help his side accumulate another 318 runs after being reduced to 59.5 on day three.

Raza's 144-run partnership with Malcolm Waller (68) was the highlight of the Zimbabwe innings after the pair resumed on the overnight score of 252-6.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SRI LANKA: First innings 356
SRI LANKA: First innings 346
ZIMBABWE: Second innings 377 (Williams 22, Raza 127, Moor 40, Waller 68, Cremer 48, Tiripano 19; Herath 6-133)
SRI LANKA: Second innings 170 for 3 (Karunaratne 49, Tharanga 27, Mendis 60 not out, Mathews 17 not out; Cremer 2-67)

Afghanistan replace Aus for SA 'A' tour

REUTERS, Johannesburg

Afghanistan have replaced Australia in a development tour of South Africa after the latter pulled out due to a pay dispute between its players and board.

With talks between the union and governing body Cricket Australia deadlocked, the players decided they would boycott the triangular series between the 'A' sides.

Australia's 'A' team, captained by Test batsman Usman Khawaja, were scheduled to play two four-day matches and a 50-over tri-series against India and South Africa on the tour.

"We are delighted that Afghanistan have accepted our invitation and look forward to welcoming them to our country for the very first time," Cricket South Africa chief executive Haroon Longat said.

"We are very pleased to accept Cricket South Africa's invitation to participate in the upcoming triangular series," Afghanistan Cricket Board chief executive Shafiqullah Stanikzai said.

"This will be our first-ever visit to South Africa and I am certain that this will give Afghanistan 'A' team very good exposure to competitive cricket."