



It may have been just a practice match, but the out-of-favour Soumya Sarkar's overjoyed reaction upon reaching a hundred for BCB XI against the touring Zimbabweans at BKSP yesterday said a lot about his desire to get back into the national fold. It was also a good day for seamer Ebadat Hossain (Inset) as he picked up a five-for.

PHOTO: STAR

U-19s win in tight finish

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Under-19 team clinched a dramatic 13-run win over Sri Lanka Under-19 in the first youth Test to take a 1-0 lead in the two-match series at the NCC ground in Colombo yesterday.

The youth bowlers led the way to the thrilling win in defence of a small target of 137 on the fourth and final day and eventually bundled out their opponents for just 123.

Chamindu Wijesinghe's 29 was the highest scorer for Sri Lanka while Sonal Dinusha added 24 as the home side kept losing wickets at regular intervals.

Sahin Alam and Rakibul Hasan bagged three wickets each while Shoriful Islam and Shamim Hossain took a wicket each for Bangladesh.

Resuming the fourth day on 18 for one in their second innings, Bangladesh fell to a horrible batting collapse and were eventually all out for just 115 runs.

Middle-order batsman Akbar Ali top-scored with 42 off 74 balls, which included five fours, but none of his other teammates were able to contribute with the bat as they kept losing wickets in clusters.

Off-spinner Ashian Daniel bagged four wickets while left-arm spinner Rohan Sanjaya took three wickets for Sri Lanka.

Earlier, Bangladesh were all out for 309 in their first innings with Amite Hasan top-scoring with 64 runs while skipper Towhid Hridoy added 54 runs for the visitors.

The visitors managed to get the first-innings lead after restricting Sri Lanka to 288 during which Sonal Dinusha struck a century for the home side.

Bangladesh will take on Sri Lanka in the second and final match of the youth Test series from October 23 at the Katunayake-MCG.

The youths will then lock horns in the five-match youth ODI series with the first starting from October 30.

Zimbabwe open with heavy loss

SPORTS REPORTER

The visiting Zimbabwe team started their tour of Bangladesh with a comprehensive eight-wicket defeat despite skipper Hamilton Masakadza's hundred, which was upstaged by BCB XI skipper Soumya Sarkar's ton and Ebadat Hossain's five-for in the one-day tour game at BKSP yesterday.

After Zimbabwe were bowled out for 178, Bangladesh lost the wickets of Mizanur Rahman (11) and Fazle Rabbi (13) early. But skipper Soumya Sarkar grabbed the opportunity and remained unbeaten on 102 off 119 balls with 13 fours and a six while Mosaddek Hossain added 33 runs to overhaul the target with 11 overs to spare.

Zimbabwe kept losing wickets after electing to bat and at one point they were struggling on 47 for five inside 16 overs. But Masakadza and Elton Chigumbura added 124 for the sixth wicket before the latter was dismissed for 47.

Masakadza was the ninth wicket to fall for the visitors after scoring 102 off 138 balls with 14 fours and a six.

Pacer Ebadat bagged five wickets for just 19 runs from his nine overs. At one stage the right-arm seamer picked up two wickets in consecutive deliveries and was eyeing a hat-trick. Another seamer and Banglades squad member, Mohammad Saifuddin, took three wickets.

Children get first run

SPORTS REPORTER

Approximately 150 school children enjoyed a sprint on the Bangabandhu National Stadium track as KPR [Khude Protivar Rajje] Games Bangladesh, in association with the Bangladesh Athletic Federation, held an athletic event, cultural show and prize distribution ceremony yesterday.

Students from 30 schools in Dhaka took part in the 100m sprint for the first time, courtesy of the programme launched by KPR Games Bangladesh to inspire kids to become more involved with sports.

BAF president Ali Kabir, National Sports Council secretary Masud Karim and KPR Bangladesh Games director Imran Khan were, among others, present on the occasion.

Soumya issues timely reminder

SPORTS REPORTER



Following a lean patch in both domestic and international cricket, Soumya Sarkar has at last found some consistent form at the right time. The stylish left-hander struck an unbeaten hundred to take Bangladesh Cricket Board XI (BCB XI) to a comfortable eight-wicket win over Zimbabwe in the tour match at BKSP yesterday.

Soumya has been in good touch as he scored two fifties and bagged a five-wicket haul in the third round of the four-day National Cricket League.

The 25-year-old has been in and out of the national team due to his inconsistent performances. His last recall was called midway through last month's Asia Cup alongside Imrul Kayes.

After being dismissed for a duck against Pakistan in the Asia Cup, Soumya scored a crucial 33 against India in the final but did not get a place in the squad for the three-match ODI series against Zimbabwe starting from tomorrow.

Chasing a small target of 179, BCB XI skipper Soumya utilised the opportunity after coming in to bat at number three and struck 13 fours and a six in his 114-ball 102. More



BCB XI skipper Soumya Sarkar got some words of support from Bangladesh national coach Steve Rhodes after scoring a timely century in the practice game against Zimbabwe yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

importantly, the intent he showed to stay at the crease until the end -- a tendency to throw away a good start is a common criticism of young Bangladesh players -- was an auspicious sign.

"I haven't thought that if I do well it will be a relief for me. As I was playing in the National

Cricket League, a different format, I tried to stay at the crease as I wanted to see how long I can stay there. It was also a great platform today [Friday] as the target was not big, so I tried to stay as long I could," Soumya told reporters after the match yesterday.

Soumya's over-the-moon celebration of

his century in a tour match showed how much it meant, but he tried to downplay his emotions when asked whether he tried to prove his worth to return to the national side.

"There was a time when I thought that I have to return to the team by playing well. But now I don't think like that and look to play my normal game," he said.

Considering Soumya's current form, chief selector Minhajul Abedin did not rule out the left-hander's return to the national team soon.

"Soumya is not out of our consideration as he is still in the 30-man pool and he is under a process. We wanted to see quite a few players in the Zimbabwe series and if we need Soumya we can bring him anytime the team requires. It's not that we dropped a player and he will never be recalled," Minhajul said yesterday.

Bangladesh head coach Steve Rhodes also witnessed the game yesterday, a day after saying that he believed that Soumya had enough time for a comeback.

"I was delighted that Soumya has got two 70s and a five-wicket haul in the NCL. The timing of him doing well is terrific. I was in contact with him about it as well. He's the type of player that may well push out some of our other players. It's all about performance. They've got to keep performing in the hope that guys don't perform in the main side and they can get a go," Rhodes said on Thursday.

TALK ON ZIM SERIES



I think he [Soumya Sarkar] has started to come out of his bad patch. He also performed in the NCL. I believe he will return to the national team in no time if he regains his form.

BCB chief selector Minhajul Abedin

Hockey team to tour Pak if govt allows

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) has recently agreed to send a team to the proposed Hockey Series Open in Pakistan on condition of Bangladesh government's approval of the tour.

Bangladesh had earlier withdrawn from the series citing busy schedule of the national team as well as financial constraints and security in Pakistan. Other participating countries except for Afghanistan also pulled out of the series, which was originally scheduled to take place in Lahore from September 26-30.

Following a shortage of participants, the proposed series was suspended and has been rescheduled for December 17-21. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka, Oman and Qatar were re-invited last month, with the FIH pursuing these teams to take part in the series, which will also serve as a qualifying platform for the Olympic Games.

"One FIH official phoned me last month to request us to participate in the Hockey Series," BHF general secretary Abdus Sadeque informed yesterday.

"I told him that we can play if the government gives us permission. We have, however, sent entry to the Pakistan Hockey Federation within the deadline," Sadeque added.

The hockey official is, however, doubtful whether the series will take place on time as only three teams -- Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Bangladesh -- have sent entries within the deadline while Sri Lanka, Oman and Qatar are yet to confirm their participation.

"We will be confirmed about the fate of the Hockey Series in Pakistan next week and then we will seek permission of the government," said the former hockey player.

International Hockey Federation (FIH), hockey's world governing body, introduced the Hockey Series across the world for the developing hockey nations to give an opportunity to test themselves against some of the world's best teams.

The first round of Hockey Series has already been completed in seven zones with the fixtures of Pakistan yet to be completed.

UCB to sponsor BD-Zim series

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) named United Commercial Bank Ltd (UCB) as the title sponsors for the Bangladesh - Zimbabwe series yesterday. Walton was named as the cosponsor and the series will be known as the 'UCB Bangladesh - Zimbabwe series 2018 powered by Walton'.

Zimbabwe will take on Bangladesh in a three-match ODI series which will be followed by a two-match Test series.

The BCB previously declared the ticket prices for the series. The tickets are available for purchase through UCASH and designated booths near the match venues.

Qadir's son to play for Aus PM's XI

AGENCIES, Melbourne

The son of legendary leg-spinner Abdul Qadir has been included in an Australia Prime Minister's XI to play a tour match against South Africa in Canberra.

The 25-year-old Usman Qadir's father took 236 wickets in 67 Tests from 1977 to 1990 and is generally regarded as Pakistan's best-ever leg-spinner.

The Lahore-born Usman, who moved to Australia in 2016 saying he was disenchanted with the politics surrounding the sport in his homeland, played grade cricket in Sydney last season and also had an earlier stint in the Adelaide club competition.

Usman Qadir, who also played first-class cricket in Pakistan, took 36 wickets with his leg-spin in just six games in Sydney, figures that brought him to the attention of current Australia coach Justin Langer and former Test bowler Geoff Lawson.

Final set tie-breaks from next year

AFP, London



FILE PHOTO: COLLECTED

Wimbledon will introduce tie-breaks in the final set of all events for the first time next year, but only once the score in the deciding set reaches 12-12, the All England Lawn Tennis Club announced on Friday.

"Our view was that the time had come to introduce a tie-break method for matches that had not reached their natural conclusion at a reasonable point during the deciding set," said the club's chairman Philip Brook.

A tie-break is normally played to decide the set when the score reaches 6-6. However, until now the US Open has been the only Grand Slam that uses a tie-

break in the fifth set.

In this year's Wimbledon men's final, South African Kevin Anderson lost to Novak Djokovic in straight sets less than two days after beating John Isner 26-24 in the fifth set after more than six-and-a-half hours on court.

Djokovic's own five-set semi-final victory over Rafael Nadal also had to be played over two days due to the delay in a conclusion to the Anderson-Isner match.

"While we know the instances of matches extending deep into the final set are rare, we feel that a tie-break at 12-12 strikes an equitable balance between allowing players ample opportunity to complete the match to advantage, while also providing certainty that the match will reach a conclusion in an acceptable timeframe," added Brook.



Kevin Anderson (R) and John Isner embrace after playing the longest semifinal in Wimbledon history this year. Anderson won the match that dragged on for a total of six hours and 36 minutes, with the final set alone taking two hours and 54 minutes.