

Soumya out for ‘3 to 4 weeks’

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh batsman Soumya Sarkar has suffered a finger injury during the second T20 International against the West Indies in St. Vincent yesterday, which may keep him out of action for around three weeks, according to a press release from Bangladesh Cricket Board. Soumya injured his right index finger while attempting a catch in the seventh over of the West Indies innings and did not take further part in the match.

The press release quoted national team physio Bayjedul Islam Khan as saying, “Soumya sustained a cut injury on his right index finger while fielding, which required five stitches. An X-ray was conducted after the match, revealing a subluxation in the affected area. His recovery may take about three to four weeks.”

Soumya was in good form with the bat of late, having scored 43 in the first match following a good show in the ODI series. He was run out for 11 in the second T20I.

Soumya’s injury will be a blow to Rangpur Riders’ campaign in the Bangladesh Premier League, which starts on Dec 30.

Shamim shows his niche as finisher

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh batter Shamim Hossain marked his return to the T20I fold with consecutive cameo knocks, paving the way for his team’s maiden bilateral T20I series win in the West Indies.

A T20 specialist of sorts, Shamim’s blistering 35 off just 17 deliveries gave Bangladesh crucial momentum in the second T20I in St Kitts yesterday, earning him the Player of the Match award.

The left-hander said he always had the confidence to play his game, and his stroke-play came to the ‘Tigers’ aid again, following a 13-ball 27 in a seven-run win in the series opener. However, a poor run of scores in the 2023 Asia Cup, played in the ODI format, had sealed Shamim’s fate as he was dropped from the ODI World Cup squad.

Although he had played crucial knocks against Afghanistan in July last year, by the T20 World Cup, Shamim’s fitness scores were in the red zone, leading to his exclusion from the event the following year.

However, during his absence from the national team, his strike rate became his standout feature. He found his niche as a lower-middle-order enforcer – a role he relishes and one that is increasingly important in Bangladesh’s T20I context.

“I’m so very happy. After a long time, I



PHOTO: CWT

am back in the national team, and I’m happy. My role is a finisher in the team, and my role is to hit the ball. In the last few months, I have worked hard,” Shamim said during the post-match ceremony yesterday.

“I didn’t think a lot about being dropped. I go about my life with a positive mindset,

and I like being happy. I knew that at any time I would make a comeback, and that was the confidence I had,” he added.

His relaxed demeanour complements the risks he takes late in the innings. He demonstrated his ability to handle pressure during the final of this year’s Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), where

his unbeaten 59 off just 24 deliveries gave Rangpur Riders a fighting chance.

Shamim scored at a strike rate of 140 during the BPL. In this year’s Dhaka Premier League, he smashed a whirlwind 86 off 43 for Legends of Rupganj against Partex Sporting Club, finishing the tournament with a strike rate above 113.

Shamim also impressed at the Emerging Asia Cup, where he struck 61 runs at an average of 61 and a strike rate above 138. When David Moore organised Bangladesh HP’s tour of Australia for the Top End T20 tournament, Shamim, already armed with national team experience, delivered steady 40-plus scores, maintaining his rhythm and confidence.

When he moved across his stumps yesterday to Obed McCoy and found the ropes at the Arnos Vale Stadium, Shamim displayed his inventiveness. His fast hands allow him to clear the ropes with both finesse and power when needed.

“I always think that, whatever situation the team is in, if I play well, we’ll reach a decent total. I played well in HP, the emerging team, and wherever I have played recently, I gained the confidence that, given an opportunity, I would do well,” he said.

“This is just the beginning. I have a long way to go; there is a long way left in my career,” Shamim added, as the Tigers will be hoping for more daring finishes from their enforcer at the death.

India’s ‘carrom ball’ champion Ashwin bows out

REUTERS

Batters around the world heaved a sigh of relief on Wednesday as Ravichandran Ashwin brought down the curtain on an international career that saw the India spinner take more than 500 Test wickets with an arsenal that included the dreaded ‘carrom ball’.

The 38-year-old was not selected for the opening Test against Australia in Perth but returned to the side for the day-night second match in Adelaide, where he took one wicket.

That would prove to be his final Test after Ashwin was again left out in Brisbane where India snatched a draw in a rain-blighted contest.

Ashwin’s 537 wickets from 106 Tests is the second highest by an Indian bowler behind Anil Kumble’s 619. He also played 116 one-dayers and 65 Twenty20 Internationals, finishing with 765 wickets across formats.

“This will be my last day as an Indian cricketer in all formats at the international level,” a composed Ashwin told reporters with captain Rohit Sharma by his side.

“I do feel there’s a bit of punch left in me as a cricketer, but I would like to express that and probably showcase that in club-level cricket.”

Since making his India debut in an ODI against Sri Lanka in 2010, Ashwin went on to fill the void created by the retirement of

Kumble.

A cerebral spinner with a fast bowler’s aggression, Ashwin grew to become a match-winner on India’s turning tracks, where his impeccable control and ability to bowl long spells made him a huge asset.

Obsessed with the small details of his craft, the off-spinner constantly tinkered with his technique in his relentless quest for perfection.

Ashwin bowled leg spin in domestic cricket to expand his repertoire and mastered the ‘carrom ball’, in which he flicked the ball with knuckle.

The Indian was a big influence on his peers, with Australian spinner Nathan Lyon calling him one of his “biggest coaches” in the run-up to the ongoing series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Ashwin, who will return home on Thursday, also evolved into a decent Test all-rounder, hitting six hundreds in the format.

India captain Rohit said he convinced Ashwin to stay on for the pink ball Test in Adelaide after learning of the spinner’s retirement plans.

“I have created a lot of memories alongside Rohit and several of my other teammates, even though I have lost some of them (from the India side) over the last few years,” Ashwin said of his contemporaries.

“We’re the last bunch of OGs, if we can say that, left out in the dressing room, and I will be marking this as my date of having played at this level.”



ASHWIN’S CAREER IN NUMBERS

Tests: 106	Average: 33.20
Wickets: 537	Strike-rate: 40.4
Average: 24	T20Is: 65
Strike-rate: 50.7	Wickets: 72
5w/10w: 37/8	Economy rate: 6.90
ODIs: 116	Average: 23.22
Wickets: 156	Strike-rate: 20.1
Economy rate: 4.93	

Ashwin holds the record for most Player of the Series awards in Tests with 11 under his belt. It is the same as the number of times Sri Lanka’s Muttiah Muralitharan won the series best award but Ashwin took 27 matches and 16 series less than Murali.

The 38-year-old also sits second on the list of most five-wicket hauls in the format after Murali (67). His 37 fifters are equal with Shane Warne and he has a better strike-rate and average than the Australia great.

Dhaka, Sylhet stay alive

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Division and Sylhet Division kept their hopes of qualifying for the ongoing National Cricket League T20’s playoffs mathematically alive after wins against Rajshahi Division and Barishal Division respectively in the penultimate round matches in Sylhet yesterday.

Riding on a brilliant 62 off 39 balls by opener Zawad Abrar, Dhaka chased down a target of 141 with 29 balls to spare to beat Rajshahi by seven wickets at the Sylhet Outer Stadium, knocking out their opponents. Rajshahi could only earn two points from their six games.

Meanwhile, in a low-scoring encounter, Mahfuzur Rahman Rabby’s unbeaten 30-ball 18 propelled Sylhet to a two-wicket win over Barishal after they were set a target of 109 runs in the other match at the same venue.

Both Dhaka and Sylhet, having four points to their tally, now not only need big wins over their today’s last round opponents Barishal and Rajshahi respectively but also have to hope that Chattogram Division and Khulna Division, who have six points from six games, lose to Dhaka Metro and Rangpur Division in their respective last matches.

Dhaka Metro and Rangpur have already qualified for the playoffs.

In yesterday’s other matches, Dhaka Metro beat Rangpur by seven wickets to remain the only undefeated side in the tournament while Khulna beat Chattogram by five wickets.



Ukrainian shuttlers seek ‘peace’, a path home

Displaced by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, women’s shuttlers Polina Buhrova and Yevheniia Kantemyr have fought to keep their badminton dreams alive. Once based in Kharkiv, near the Russia-Ukraine border, the duo fled shortly after the war began three years ago, leaving behind families still grappling with uncertainties.

Federer pays tribute to Fraser

Australian tennis great Neale Fraser was honoured with a state funeral on Wednesday with Roger Federer among those paying tribute to “a true legend”. Fraser, a former world number one and winner of 19 Grand Slam titles during the amateur era, died aged 91 earlier this month.

Shaheen to play for Barishal in BPL 11

Pakistan’s ace pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi will play for reigning champions Fortune Barishal in the upcoming 11th edition of Bangladesh Premier League T20, scheduled to start on December 30.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website*

Vinícius aims dig at critics after FIFA The Best award win

AGENCIES

Vinicius Junior hit back at his critics after winning FIFA’s The Best men’s player of the year award on Tuesday, accusing his detractors of trying to “invalidate” and “diminish” him.

Real Madrid and Brazil forward Vinicius, 24, took the 2024 prize – which is voted on by a combination of national team coaches and captains, journalists, and fans – with 48 points, ahead of Manchester City midfielder Rodri who earned 43 points and Madrid teammate Jude Bellingham with 37 points.

It comes after Rodri beat Vinicius to the Ballon d’Or, which is organised by France Football and UEFA, leading Real Madrid to boycott the ceremony in protest.

“Today I write to the child who has seen so many idols lift that trophy,” Vinicius posted on Instagram. “His time has come. Or rather, my time has come. The time to say ... yes, I am the best player in the world and I have fought hard for it.

“They have tried and tried to invalidate me, to diminish me. But they are not ready. No one is going to tell me who I should fight for, how I should behave. When I was at Sao Goncalo, the system didn’t care about me. It almost swallowed me up.

“I won for myself, for my family. With a lot of support along the way: Flamengo, Real



WHO WON WHAT

Best Men’s Player – Vinicius Junior
Best Women’s Player – Aitana Bonmati
Best Men’s Goalkeeper – Emiliano Martínez
Best Women’s Goalkeeper – Alyssa Naehner
Best Men’s Coach – Carlo Ancelotti
Best Women’s Coach – Emma Hayes
Marta Award – Marta
Puskas Award – Alejandro Garnacho

Madrid, the Brazilian national team, my hundreds of teammates over the years ... the people who accompany me every day in my routine, those who admire me ... The best player in the world.”

Vinicius won The Best – for the first time – after a 2023-24 season which saw him help Madrid win a LaLiga and Champions League double.

Barcelona’s Aitana Bonmati won the women’s award, with Carlo Ancelotti being named men’s coach of the year.

In October, Vinicius reacted to missing out on the Ballon d’Or: “I’ll do it 10x if I have to. They’re not ready,” he wrote.

Madrid’s delegation had opted not to travel to the Ballon d’Or ceremony in Paris when it emerged that Rodri was likely to win, with none of the club’s multiple nominees or officials attending.

President Florentino Perez criticized the Ballon d’Or voting system – which involves 100 journalists from different countries – in a speech at Madrid’s AGM last month, saying “nobody knows who they are” and arguing the award should be “independently organised” and voted on by “people who are well-known.”

Neymar was among the stars to praise Vinicius after his triumph on Tuesday, encouraging his compatriot to “keep flying” in an Instagram story.



Players of defending champions Juventus celebrate after reaching the quarterfinals of the Coppa Italia with a comfortable 4-0 home win over Cagliari on Tuesday, thanks to goals from Dusan Vlahovic, Teun Koopmeiners, Francisco Conceicao and Nicolas Gonzalez.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

CORPORATE BOOKING

Fantasy Kingdom and Water Kingdom will be reserved on 19th December (Thursday), 2024 for Corporate Booking.

From 20th December (Friday), 2024 Fantasy Kingdom and Water Kingdom will remain open for all.

Contact: 01969-910100

