

I understand what is required of me, I've played for a long time now: Rohit

AGENCIES, NEW DELHI: India captain Rohit Sharma backed his strong mindset after gaining his form back with a century in the second ODI against England at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack on Sunday.

The opener was under immense criticism for his underwhelming form in the last two Test series against New Zealand and Australia, respectively. The 37-year-old also failed to get going in the first ODI of the series in Nagpur and departed for just two runs.

However, the Indian captain returned to form with a stylish knock of 119 off 90 balls decorated with 12 fours and seven sixes to guide India to a second

“I've played this game for a long time now, and I understand what is required of me. So it's just about going out there and doing your things, and what I did on Sunday was one of my things. In my mind, it was just about doing the things that I do. Try and bat the way I do. I've been here long enough to know one or two knocks are not going to change my mind. Our job is to just go out there and play the game. Every time I walk out to the pitch, I want to try and do well

— Rohit Sharma, India captain



consecutive win in the series to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

"When people have played for number of years and scored so many runs over the years. That means something," Rohit said in a BCCI video.

The right-handed batter reminded his critics that outside noise don't affect him, adding that one or two low scores will not change his mind.

"I've played this game for a long time now, and I understand what is required of me. So it's just about going out there and doing your things, and what I did on Sunday was one of my things. In my mind, it was just about doing the things that I do. Try and bat the way I do. I've been here long enough to know one or two knocks are not going to change my mind. But, just another day in the office," said Rohit.

"Our job is to just go out there and play the game. As long as you know that, when you go to bed, you know that you've given your best that is what matters. Every time I walk out to the pitch, I want to try and do well," he added.

The Indian captain also talked about clarity of thought when going through a lean patch. He said focusing on achievements really helps to score runs but admitted that it's not that simple to replicate.

"Sometimes it happens; sometimes it may not happen. As long as I am clear what I want to do, that's all that matters. Nothing else," Rohit said.

"When you have scored so many runs, you've done something. You just need to get back to that mindset of how to get runs. Sounds really simple, but it is quite difficult. But in my mind, it was just about enjoying. That is what we play the sport for. To enjoy the game more than anything else," he added.

Bethell ruled out of CT

PTI, CUTTACK: England suffered a major setback ahead of the Champions Trophy as promising all-rounder Jacob Bethell has been ruled out of the tournament due to a hamstring injury, skipper Jos Buttler has confirmed.

"I'm pretty sure he's been ruled out of the Champions Trophy, to be honest," Buttler said after their four-wicket defeat to India in the second ODI here on Sunday.

"So, that's really disappointing for him. Obviously, he played nicely the other day and has been one of the really exciting players. So, it's a shame that the injury is going to rule him out."

The 21-year-old left-hand-



er, who scored a half-century and took a wicket in the first ODI at Nagpur, missed the match here as the visitors called up batter Tom Banton as a cover.

The deadline to submit the final squads for the Champions Trophy is Wednesday. England begin their Champions Trophy campaign against Australia on February 22.

Without PV Sindhu, India face uphill task

PTI, QINGDAO (China): Without the services of an injured PV Sindhu, India will face an uphill task in pursuit of an elusive gold medal at the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships which gets underway, here, on Tuesday.

India hope to improve on their bronze medal finish from the previous edition where Sindhu played a key role in Dubai two years ago. Her absence this year due to an injury will be a significant setback as

the team embarks on its campaign in the prestigious biennial event.

Placed in Group D, India will open their campaign against Macau on Wednesday, followed by a clash with a strong Korean outfit on Thursday.

A top-two finish in the group will secure a spot in the quarterfinals, and while India is likely to progress to the last eight, advancing further will require exceptional performances from the squad.

Rahul coming below Axar raises eyebrows, where does it leave Pant?

PTI, NEW DELHI: Towards the end of the second ODI between India and England in Cuttack, the broadcaster's camera briefly panned to Rishabh Pant sitting in the dug-out, wearing the sleeveless green fluorescent bib which is mandatory for the reserves.

On the field, it was KL Rahul batting at No.6, an unusually low position for the man who has been preferred over

Pant. Ravi Shastri, who was on air, didn't hold back while talking about what he felt about a specialist top-order batter like Rahul coming in at No.6 instead of bowling all-rounder Axar Patel, who was promoted to No.5 during the first two games.

Many in Indian cricket shared Shastri's sentiments and are also wondering where does it leave an explosive

game-changer like Pant if the management remains firm on the left-right combination formula to promote Axar above Rahul. If ends justify the means, then head coach Gautam Gambhir stood vindicated after Axar scored 52 and 41 not out in the first two games even though he came in at a time when India were well on course for victory.

"India would be thinking about the

composition in the next game and Champions Trophy. There is Rishabh Pant sitting on the bench. There are certain questions to answer," Shastri said on air for host broadcasters Star Sports.

Pant's 871 runs at an average of just over 33 in 31 ODIs aren't exactly great numbers but cricket metrics over the years have changed. One also has to look at the kind of impact a player can

make during certain passages of play.

If Rahul is being seen as someone, who will come to bat after 30th or the 35th over in ODIs, there is every chance that Pant might make more impact than him. Rahul has had four knocks at No. 6 in which his tally is 42 runs off 46 balls. His highest score is 31. Pant has tallied 45 runs in two games. He also faced 46 balls in these

two games with 28 being his highest score. Also, one has to wonder whether Rahul's batting capabilities are being fully utilised at No.6. While Indian bowlers haven't let England off the hook in both ODIs, Rahul the batter, who scored more than 450 runs (452) in the 2023 ODI World Cup at No. 5, is coming at a position which is perhaps not suited to his style of play.



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