

# Tamim wants to leave it behind

 Cricket  
SPORTS REPORTER

Asked what the highlight of his nine-month term as vice-captain was, Tamim Iqbal gave almost the perfect answer.

"I thought the title was very nice," he said with a big smile.

After the board's decision on Monday and the subsequent reactions of the erstwhile skipper Shakib Al Hasan and new coach Stuart Law, yesterday was Tamim's turn. He could have voiced his opinion, vented his frustration or perhaps protest at the Bangladesh Cricket Board's decision to sack him and Shakib Al Hasan of their job as vice-captain and captain.

Instead, Tamim was pragmatic with a hint of lament at the handling of the matter.

"I feel normal, to be very honest. I didn't ask for the vice-captaincy and neither did I hand it back. It was totally the board's decision. I am not worried and bothered about the reason [behind the board's decision]," he said after training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Aware that voicing opinion, venting

frustration and protesting a hastily taken decision would amount to nothing in Bangladesh cricket, the left-handed opener was keen to move on.

"I am the happiest man in the world as long as I'm performing and playing for Bangladesh. If I play well and the board thinks I'm the right man, it will



come back again. At this moment, maybe I'm not the right man so I'm fine with it.

"If they discussed it with me at least once, it would've been better. Even then, I have no complaints," said Tamim, who could earn the praise for being an active deputy since he was

handed the job.

"There isn't much work for a vice-captain on the field but off it, I have done my duty and done well," he said, clearly of his ability to gee up the team when things weren't quite rosy for the Tigers, especially after the West Indies game in the World Cup. In his only tour as a vice-captain, Tamim gathered his team for most dinners in Harare and Bulawayo and is the most social member of the team.

Despite all the bonhomie, the sacking would put a tag on Tamim that could be hard to take off. He has offered full support to whoever the new man at the helm is but the truth remains that the board's impetuous judgment has ostensibly left him in limbo as he wasn't asked to give his version of events.

The opinion among many is that the board has only completed one part of the job and would use the sacking as a cover-up for their own mistakes. But Tamim didn't want to be drawn to any further controversies. "There are lots of other issues but at this moment, we should leave all these. We better start thinking of the upcoming series and we are all concerned about Bangladesh winning games and playing well," he said.

# A Roman Revival

JULIAN DI MARTINIS  
 Calcio

2011-2012 is shaping up to be a stellar season on the Italian peninsula after several years of placidity in the wake of Calciopoli. Milan finally broke the Inter-dominance of recent times by winning the Scudetto last year, and interesting mercato strategies should allow Milan to compete for trophies once again. In fact, nearly every club is pursuing a unique strategy in this offseason, perhaps most evidently demonstrated in the opposite approaches taken by the two capital sides.

Lazio, after narrowly missing out on a Champions' League spot last season, have decided to reinforce with experience and age. Goalkeeper Fernando Muslera has been shipped off to an emerging Galatasaray as Edy Reja's side look to Italy's number one for much of World Cup 2010, Federico Marchetti, to lead the defense. New attacking duo Miroslav Klose and Djibril Cisse have been in stellar form in preseason friendlies and will look to add goals up front for the side whose top goalscorer last season was attacking midfielder Hernanes. All three signings will be given the responsibility to add maturity

to the side- especially the strikers, who could form a deadly attacking quartet along with the aforementioned Brazilian and Mauro Zarate.

Crosstown rivals AS Roma have instead pursued the opposite gamble- a strict investment in youth. Gone are Alexander Doni, John Arne Riise, and Philippe Mexes; in their places have arrived Jose Angel, Loic Nego, and Gabriele Heinze to reinforce a leaky backline. Erik Lamela and Bojan Kirkic have been drafted in to lower the average age of the Roman attack, which may well have lost influential striker Mirko Vucinic by the publication date of this article. Marco Borriello's permanent signing as well as Heinze's one year deal stand out as exceptions to the youth rule. Luis Enrique's side will look to emulate a Barcelona-esque model in Serie A in order to reach success, and will thus need the new young signings to learn well from trophied stalwarts such as Francesco Totti and Simone Perrotta to fulfill the Spaniard's vision.

Outside of the capital, two other top sides look to have made great strides forward during the offseason. League winners Milan have added smartly to their side, drafting in defenders Philippe Mexes and Taye Taiwo as well as youngster Stephan El Shaarawy in order to march towards European

success as well as ensuring that a domestic repeat will be possible. They have also bought in the mercurial talents of Alberto Aquilani, who will be looking to impress after a few disappointing seasons in the wilderness.

It may be Juventus, however, who have impressed the most this summer. A creaky backline should well have been remedied with the addition of two of Serie A's finest fullbacks in the past few seasons, Reto Ziegler and Stephan Lichtsteiner. Antonio Conte's side has also taken in Andrea Pirlo on a free transfer as well as making the lethal attacking duo of Fabio Quagliarella and Alessandro Matri permanent fixtures. Finally, Arturo Vidal's signing from Bayer Leverkusen could be the best of the summer should the versatile midfielder acclimate quickly to the tactical side.

The rest of the Champions' League sides have made notable progress, as well. Gian Piero Gasperini's Inter have shored up incrementally, signing impressive Japanese fullback Yuto Nagamoto on a permanent basis and snatching up the promising Argentine Ricky Alvarez. The former has impressed in preseason friendlies and could be key to the unorthodox formation that Gasperini is widely expected to

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PHOTO: INTERNET


Gokhan Inler (R) signed for Napoli.



PHOTO: AFP

Australia's debutant Shaun Marsh leaves the ground as bad light stopped play during the second day of their second Test against Sri Lanka at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

## Marsh shines on debut

 Cricket  
AFP, Pallekele

Shaun Marsh was 13 runs away from a century on his debut and Mike Hussey hit an unbeaten 76 as Australia piled on Sri Lanka's misery in the second Test in Pallekele on Friday.

The West Australian pair put on 148 for the unbroken fourth wicket as the tourists moved to a commanding 264-3 in their first innings when bad light halted play soon after tea.

Marsh was on 87 and Hussey followed his match-winning 95 in the first Test in Galle with another half-century as Australia built a 90-run lead with seven wickets still in hand.

The pair joined forces after Sri Lanka had

grabbed three quick wickets in the morning session to restrict Australia to 116-3 in reply to their own 174.

Former Australian opener Geoff Marsh looked on from the stands as his 28-year-old son mastered the Sri Lankan attack with 11 boundaries after a dour start.

Marsh had come into the Test side in place of former captain Ricky Ponting, who had to return home after Galle for the birth of his second child.

The knock will help the left-hander cement his place in the team even when Ponting returns for the third and final Test in Colombo from September 16.

Marsh drove Suranga Lakmal through the covers and then chipped debutant leg-spinner

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