

# SPORT

## Tamim causes WC concern

SPORTS REPORTER



Opening batsman Tamim Iqbal has been diagnosed with a meniscus tear in his left knee and the left-hander may go to Australia for surgery to fix it.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) physician Debashish Chowdhury informed yesterday that the MRI report revealed a meniscus tear in his left knee what someone generally needs about one and a half month's time to recover from. But he said that it was too early to say the batsman would be ruled out of the ICC World Cup to be held in Australia-New Zealand in February and March.

The board already emailed all the reports to Australia and was also taking all necessary preparations so that they could send Tamim down under if experts opined for operation.

Tamim felt pain in his left knee during the recently-concluded home series against Zimbabwe and he was diagnosed with hamstring injury for what he had taken ten days rest before featuring in the Dhaka Premier League. But as the pain remained the opener went for the MRI only to get the bad news ahead of the World Cup.

"This is a Grade I injury. We sent the reports to Australia where Dr. David Young along with his colleagues will review the reports and after getting their feedback we

will take the final decision about his treatment," informed Debashish.

"It's all but confirmed that they would like to see him physically and that's why we took all kinds of preparations for sending him to Australia. There are two options of treatment; one is conservative and other is operative. There are also different types of operations, so it's not possible right at this moment to say how much time he would need," he added.

Debashish also said it's become a delicate issue as the World Cup is drawing nearer.

"We cannot say anything about his World Cup chances," said Debashish.

The injury to a vital player like Tamim came as a shock to the team think-tank, but chief selector Faruque Ahmed said that it was not the time to come to any conclusion.

"Yes it's a bad news but still we cannot say it's a setback because he [Tamim] is going to Australia and after that we will get the clear picture. We still have time in our hand," said Faruque. The three-member selection panel must announce the final 15-member World Cup team by January 7.

According to sources, it would however fully depend on Tamim whether he would go for long-term safety in his career or prefer the World Cup most.

Bangladesh also has very important home assignments right after the World Cup.



A test report yesterday has revealed a meniscus tear in Tamim Iqbal's left knee. The injury may require a surgery which can keep the opener out of the game for around one and half month.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

## Partex relegated after refusing to play on

SPORTS REPORTER



Partex Sporting Club have been relegated from the Dhaka Premier League after the team decided to walk out of their crucial Relegation League match against Kalabagan Cricket Academy yesterday.

With the teams tied at six points each, it was a must-win game for both sides. The match was in progress at BKSP until 21.4 overs when Partex refused to play on and as a result Kalabagan CA were handed a walkover.

Partex team management was unhappy with the lbw decisions given against Rajin Saleh and Daniel Housego. They eventually decided to call their players off the field.

A discussion between the management and the match referee ensued and the latter reportedly tried to convince the team to get back to the game. Partex however stuck to their decision.

Rajin criticised the umpire's decision and claimed that 'certain officials' in the league were not able to take the right decisions due to 'lack of freedom'.

"I got an inside edge to the delivery and after that the keeper failed to grasp on to it. I was given out lbw. That was a shocker! I don't think I have ever seen such low quality umpiring in the competition.

"It's not as though our league does not have good umpires. But it's just because of a few umpires that the competition's reputation is falling. I think they are just not able to take decisions freely for some reasons," reckoned Rajin.

Umpiring decisions have come under criticism a number of times this season. Legends of Rupganj chairman Lutfur Rahman Badal had made a similar claim recently.

## Malinga's knee recovering well

REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka pace spearhead Lasith Malinga is recovering well from his ankle surgery and should be back in action during the later stages of the one-day international series in New Zealand next month, according to coach Marvan Atapattu.

The mercurial Malinga underwent surgery on his left ankle in September and missed the team's one-day series against India and England.

The 31-year-old, whose yorkers delivered with a sling-shot action at times makes him almost unplayable, will be crucial for Sri Lanka's chances in the 50-over World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

"Malinga is still recovering from surgery and everything is going well according to plan," former Sri Lanka batsman Atapattu said. "He will return for the last two ODI games in New Zealand."

Malinga, who has taken 271 wickets in 177 ODIs, has been named in Sri Lanka's provisional 30-man squad for the World Cup.

Sri Lanka, who finished runner-up to India at the 2011 World Cup, will play seven one-dayers in New Zealand to warm up for the Feb. 14-March 29 tournament.

## 'Here to help football'

SPORTS REPORTER

George Kottan, former coach of Bangladesh national team, said he is interested to help Bangladesh football, in whatever capacity possible, after taking charge of four-time professional league champions Abahani for the upcoming season.

The 68-year-old Austrian, who arrived here along with his wife yesterday morning, said he has come back to his 'second home', because his 'friends' wanted him here.

"I came back to my second home because my friends of Abahani called me. But if needed, I can help the national team along with Abahani, even though no one from the Bangladesh Football Federation called me," said Kottan, who had led Bangladesh to a SAFF Championship title in 2003, during his three-year tenure with the national team.

"Whatever I know of today's Bangladesh football is through some sporadic news and results at the FIFA and AFC websites. But when Rupu (Abahani manager Satyajit Das) called me, I said I can come after November 29th," said the Austrian, who was looking after a German third-tier club called Kuten Grun for the last five months, after serving as an AFC Instructor for three years.

The former Bangladesh coach, who was also in charge of Muktiyoddha Sangsad KC during a barren season in 2005, believed that coaching Abahani would be a big difference compared to his previous stint.

"Muktiyoddha is not a big name, but Abahani is. I know the standard of Abahani and I think everyone in South Asia knows about them. So when I am taking charge of Abahani, my target is to make them become champions again," said Kottan during the press-briefing, before Abahani's practice session yesterday afternoon.

However, the Austrian coach is aware of the fact that Abahani are no longer the giants that they once were and that new powers like Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel have emerged. The Dhanmondi giants have failed to land any silverware in the last two seasons and started the preseason on the wrong foot after being eliminated from the group stages of the King's Cup in Bhutan last month. Kottan believes that a few good foreign recruitments and changes in tactics—he hopes to focus on the importance of passing football coupled with a direct approach—can make Abahani a team to be reckoned with.

## Patel to replace Jadeja

INTERNET, New Delhi

Axar Patel will join the Indian team in Australia for the remainder of the Test series as a replacement for Ravindra Jadeja, who has a shoulder injury and will be returning to India to undergo a rehabilitation programme.

Having made his ODI debut early this year, Patel has been in contention for a place during the current Ranji season. He is currently playing in Ranji Trophy round three match where he picked up four wickets on Sunday for Gujarat against Saurashtra.

The opportunity couldn't have come at a better time for the 20-year-old Axar, who has already played 9 ODIs for India taking 14 wickets with best figures of 3 for 40 against Sri Lanka. He was in contention for a place in the ODI squad for the tri-series after the Gujarat boy impressed one and all by taking 11 wickets from the five ODIs against Sri Lanka in the last series.

Jadeja, who picked up the injury while training wasn't part of either the Adelaide or the Brisbane Tests. He will now return to India to undergo treatment. The injury will also raise question marks over whether Jadeja will recover in time for the ODI tri-series in January, which will be India's preparatory ground for the World Cup.

## Maldives ruled out too

### BFF keeps everyone guessing

SPORTS REPORTER



Maldives are the latest team, after Laos and Pakistan, to be ruled out of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup, which is set to take place from January 16 to 27. The decision has now left the BFF in an odd circumstance as they now have to sweat over finding a sixth participant for the competition real soon.

The Football Association of Maldives (FAM) yesterday informed the BFF that they would not be able to participate in the tournament due to internal issues of their association, confirmed a BFF official. The BFF invited Maldives as Pakistan's replacement a few days ago.

Initially proposed as an eight-

nation tournament, the competition had to be trimmed down to a six-team affair, due to budget constraints. While Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Bahrain U-23 have 'verbally' confirmed their participation, BFF is yet to confirm their sixth participant. Names such as Qatar and Laos had propped up at the BFF House before being set aside as the football's governing body is reportedly concentrating on 'lesser opponents'. Nepal and Myanmar are the latest names to have surfaced, although an official confirmation is yet to be made.

The format has also been subject to changes. Originally proposed to be held in two groups simultaneously in Dhaka and Sylhet, the latest move makes it a complicated one where matches of both groups

will be played in both venues chronologically, purportedly to meet the demand of the broadcasters, even at the cost of increased expenditure and hectic travelling schedules for the teams.

With only 24 days remaining for the showpiece event to start, the two venues – the Bangabandhu National Stadium and the Sylhet District Stadium, are in dire need of renovation work. The National Sports Council yesterday started its groundwork for the renovations, about a month after being urged by the BFF.

Whether there will be any more changes with regards to the format and the participants and whether the venues will be up to the mark in time for the grand event is a question making rounds in the football quarters.

## Sachin again the WC ambassador

INTERNET, Dubai



The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday announced Sachin Tendulkar as the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 ambassador. It will be the second successive time that

the Indian maestro will be the ambassador of the ICC's pinnacle tournament, after he fulfilled the role in the previous event, which was co-hosted by Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka in 2011.

In his role as the ambassador, Tendulkar will promote and support a variety of ICC initiatives to enhance the profile of the tournament, which is the third biggest sporting event in the world and will take place in Australia and New Zealand from 14 February to 29 March.

Tendulkar retired from international cricket last year after representing India in 200 Tests, 463 One-Day Internationals and one Twenty20 International. In a career spanning 24 years, the 41-year-old scored a total of 34,357 international runs and 100 centuries.

Tendulkar added the missing World Cup title to his long list of achievements in his sixth attempt in 2011. He is the all-time leading run-getter in World Cup history with 2,278 runs in 45 matches at an average of 56.95. For his 673 runs in the 2003 World Cup, he was awarded player of the tournament as India finished runners-up to Australia.

Commenting on his appointment, Tendulkar said: "I am delighted and honoured to be appointed ICC Cricket World Cup ambassador for the second successive time."

"After playing in the last six editions, the upcoming World Cup will be a different experience as I will follow it from the side-



lines. It could probably be comparable to the ICC Cricket World Cup 1987 where I was a ball boy, enthusiastically cheering every ball.

"The excitement of the World Cup grows with every new edition and this year's host nations, Australia and New Zealand, are known for their sporting culture, great cricket facilities and knowledgeable crowds. Lifting the World Cup is every international cricketer's quest and the tournament brings out the best of individuals and competing teams," he added.

"The image of the champion team lifting the World Cup inspires many youngsters around the world and gives them a dream to chase -- a dream which I fulfilled after 22 years of relentless pursuit by being part of the victorious Indian team in 2011," Tendulkar said.

ICC Chief Executive David Richardson said: "The ICC is delighted to once again have Sachin as an Ambassador for its biggest and most prestigious tournament. Sachin is not only an inspiration to cricketers but to all sportspeople for his endurance, perseverance, talent, personality and commitment to the game."

## Rossouw in for de Kock

AFP, Johannesburg

Left-handed batsman Rilee Rossouw was named on Sunday to replace injured wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock in South Africa's squad for the remaining two Test matches against the West Indies.

De Kock was ruled out of the Tests and limited overs matches of the West Indian tour after tearing ankle ligaments during the first Test at Centurion, which South Africa won by an innings and 220 runs on Saturday.

Rossouw, 25, made his one-day international debut earlier this year and has been a prolific scorer for the Knights franchise and South Africa A.

He hit 231 for South Africa A against Australia A in Townsville in August, sharing a partnership of 343 with Temba Bavuma (162), who is also in the Test squad.

Bavuma was on the field throughout both West Indian innings in Centurion following de Kock's injury.

The selection of Rossouw means that AB de Villiers, who took over as wicketkeeper in Centurion, will keep the gloves for the remaining Tests, starting in Port Elizabeth on December 26 and Cape Town on January 2.

Meanwhile, Windward Islands left-arm seamer Kenroy Peters will replace fast bowler Kemar Roach in the West Indies squad.

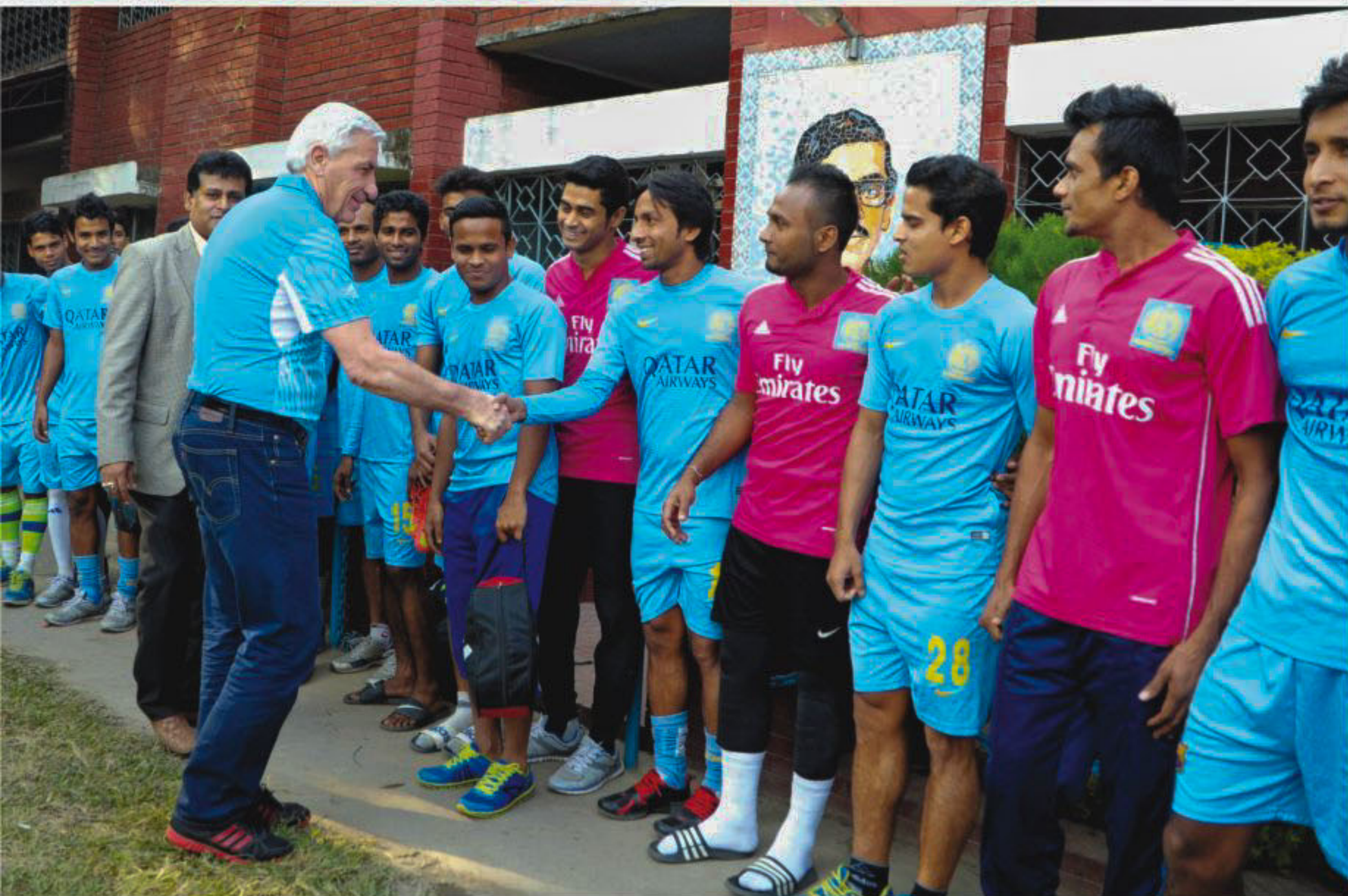


PHOTO: STAR

George Kottan, Abahani's newly-appointed coach, shakes hands with the players at the club premises yesterday.