

## Tamim's WC fear over

*Batsman undergoes successful knee op*

SPORTS REPORTER

The national selectors received good news from Australia yesterday as opener Tamim Iqbal had a successful surgery on his injured left-knee.

Australian surgeon Dr David Young, who conducted the operation, confirmed that the player would be able to return to training in two to three weeks time following his rehab.

It means the dashing left-hander will be available for selection for the ICC World Cup to be held in Australia-New Zealand from February 14.

The national selection panel led by Faruque Ahmed is expected to submit the 15-member World Cup squad to the board within the next four days.

Tamim is expected to return to training before Bangladesh fly for Australia on January 24 next year.

"Tamim underwent an arthroscopic evaluation and surgery for a left meniscal pathology at the Avenue Hospital in Melbourne, Australia today. The procedure was performed by orthopaedic surgeon Dr David Young. We will decide on the management plan for the player in consultation with Dr Young after evaluating the complete report on the surgery," Chowdhury said.

Tamim left for Australia last Friday with a grade one meniscus tear on his left knee.



PHOTO: TAMIM IQBAL'S FAN PAGE  
Tamim Iqbal awaits instructions from the doctor after undergoing a surgery on his knee in Australia yesterday. He is expected return to the field in two week's time.



LIMBERING IN THE COLD FOR A SUMMER ADVENTURE: Bangladesh Test captain Mushfiqur Rahim (R) enjoys a game of soccer in biting cold at Mirpur ahead of an imminent Premier Cricket League game and more importantly for next February's World Cup Down Under.

PHOTO: STAR

## 'We're eager to perform in WC'

SPORTS REPORTER



When it comes to preparing for a series Bangladesh Test captain Mushfiqur Rahim always seems to be ahead of his teammates. From putting in those extra hours in the nets to crunching in some valuable time in the gym, Mushfiqur's strict regimentation has been lauded over the years.

It's an aspect that has reflected in his performance as well. He has been Bangladesh's highest run-getter this year and come next February, he will be the one batsman that the Tigers will depend upon the most in the World Cup.

The 26-year-old however

claimed to have no extra pressure on his shoulders. He is, instead, merely concentrating on the best possible way to prepare for the mega event.

"I am watching the international matches regularly on TV. I have an idea about how the wicket can play. I have not played there for a long time. The last time I played there was for the under 19 team back in 2006.

"Many say that the pacers will get plenty of help. But I personally feel that in such a big tournament there won't be a huge amount of swing or seam. If we can work on our side shots then I think we can do well," explained Mushfiqur.

"The batsmen will have to do majority of the work. We are work-

ing hard in the nets and with the machines. It may not help in adjusting with the wicket there, but we are trying to do the best with what we have," he added.

Mushfiqur had a disappointing World Cup in 2011. He had scored just 81 runs in six matches and had an average of 16.20, the lowest among the specialist batsmen in the side. Ever since then though, his batting has seen a dramatic change. In the 36 matches that Mushfiqur played from 2012 onwards, he has scored 1166 runs at an average of 37.61, the highest amongst his teammates.

The former ODI captain however, does not seem to be bothered by the statistics.

"The last three years are gone

now. The new year will begin with the World Cup and my focus is on that. We have to show the others that we can play in these [Australian] conditions. The entire team is very eager and waiting to perform," reckoned Mushfiqur.

He further believed that the two extra weeks that the Tigers would get in Brisbane prior to the World Cup would be extremely important for them.

"We may not have international matches but the Premier League is no less. Those who can do well here will get a boost ahead of the World Cup. We are also going to Brisbane early and have an opportunity to play two extra practice matches. We have to make the most of them," said Mushfiqur.

## NCL from Jan 25

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to kick off the National Cricket League (NCL) from January 25 next year at eight different venues across the country.

The decision was taken at a coordination meeting yesterday, chaired by BCB's vice-president AJM Nasir.

The eight-team first-class tourney will take place at Barisal, Rangpur, Khulna, Rajshahi, Bogra, Chittagong, Fatullah and Mirpur.

The local organisers along with team coach will first select a 30-member preliminary squad from where the national selectors will finalise a 14-member team and four stand-by players for each sides, while the rest will be available for other teams.

To make the league more competitive the board has decided to make it a two-tier competition from next season.

"This season's competition is important for the teams as the top four will play the first-tier league from the next season and the bottom four will play second tier league. The match fee and prize money will be significantly increased for the first tier teams. The bottom finishers of the top tier will be demoted to second tier and the top finisher of the second tier competition will be promoted," Nasir said after the meeting.

## BCB names provisional U-19 squad

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 21-member Bangladesh Under-19 provisional squad for the tour of Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh U19 are scheduled to fly to Sri Lanka on January 14 to play five one dayers and two three-day matches against their Sri Lankan counterparts.

The training camp of the provisional squad will start at the National Cricket Academy from January 3.

**PROVISIONAL SQUAD**  
Joyraj Sheik, Munim Shahriar, Pinak Ghosh, Mohammed Saif Hassan, Zakir Hasan, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Mehidy Hassan Miraz, Shaif Uddin, Mossabbek Hossain, Shahanur Rahman, Abu Saeed Sharkar, Rifat Pradhan, Mehede Hasan, Nahid Hasan, Shahibul Motin, Abdul Halim, Sanjit Saha, Saleh Ahmed Shawon Gazi, Sifat Islam, Prosenjit Das and Jaker Ali.

## A crucial round

SPORTS REPORTER



With five out of the six teams still in the race for the Championship, the third round of the Dhaka Premier League's Super Sixes, which will take place today, promises an exciting finish.

At Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur league leaders Abahani will take on third-placed Prime Doleshwar led by Mushfiqur Rahim. Abahani, who lost their last game to Shakib Al Hasan's Legends, currently have 20 points while Doleshwar are a win behind.

Opener Rony Talukdar, who scored two centuries and a half-century in the last three matches has been Doleshwar's star in the Super Sixes. With the ball, pacer Delwar Hossain shined with a five-wicket haul at Mirpur in the last game. If the conditions remain the same, he can prove to be a threat again.

Abahani, on the other hand, will hope that the likes of Nasir Hossain and Liton Das can hit form again.

At Fatullah, Prime Bank Cricket Club will hope to score an important win over Anamul Haque's Kalabagan Cricket Academy (KCA). Mahmudullah Riyad-led

| Team               | M  | P  | RR     |
|--------------------|----|----|--------|
| Abahani Ltd        | 13 | 20 | 0.728  |
| Prime Bank CC      | 13 | 20 | 0.753  |
| Prime Doleshwar SC | 13 | 18 | 0.708  |
| Kalabagan CA       | 13 | 16 | 0.469  |
| Legends of Rupganj | 13 | 16 | 0.415  |
| Mohammedan SC      | 13 | 14 | -0.078 |

Prime Bank are currently second with 20 points while KCA have 16. A win for the latter will bring Anamul's side into contention for the championship. Riyad will want more from his batsmen, who struggled in the last game.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's Mohammedan may not have a chance of winning the championship but they sure can end Legends' hopes if they beat them at the BKSP today.

Shakib and Rubel Hossain scalped three wickets in the last game for Legends and paved the way for their win against Abahani. They will hope to repeat that performance. Mohammedan on the other hand will want their other batsmen to support Naem Islam, who has been the only consistent batter in the side so far.

AFP, Melbourne



An unbeaten half-century by Shaun Marsh put Australia in a strong position on Monday, setting India a near-record task if they are to win the third Test in Melbourne.

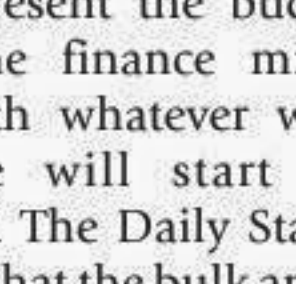
Marsh produced one of his finest knocks for his country with 62 to steer Australia to 261 for seven, giving the hosts an overall lead of 326 runs heading into Tuesday's final day.

The Indians will have to defy history at the famous Melbourne Cricket Ground where they have not won for 33 years to keep the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series alive to next week's fourth and final Test in Sydney.

The highest successful run chase in the fourth innings at the MCG remains 332 for seven by England against Australia in 1928.

Teams have struggled to score more than 250 in the fourth innings on the drop-in pitch in recent years, with India all out for 169 (2011) and 161 (2007) in their last two Tests at the ground, both defeats.

AFP, Christchurch



New Zealand wrapped up a win against Sri Lanka by eight wickets on Monday to cap their most successful year in Test cricket.

Set a meagre 105-run target on the fourth day of the first Test in Christchurch, they took 30.4 overs to complete the victory with Ross Taylor not out 39 and Kane Williamson on 31.

It means New Zealand have won five Tests in a calendar year for the first time after enjoying 2014 series wins at home against India (1-0) and away in the West Indies (2-1). They also drew a series with Pakistan (1-1) in the UAE earlier this month.

Although Williamson and Taylor steered New Zealand home, the victory was built on Brendon McCullum's swashbuckling 195 first innings knock and the lethal swing and seam bowling of Trent Boult and Tim Southee.

After Sri Lanka were forced to follow on 303 runs in arrears of New Zealand's 441, they ground out a gritty 407 but the size of the first

Australia has to decide whether to declare overnight or bat on with a total of 96 overs to be bowled on the fifth day.

It was Marsh's fighting innings which tilted the Test Australia's way after India reduced the home side to 176 for five, claiming the key wickets of Steve Smith and Chris Rogers in the process.

The tourists kept the clamps on the Australian batting in a tense final session, before Marsh clawed back the advantage.

The tourists removed Smith for just 14 after the Aussie skipper scored 192 in the first innings in his third century of the series.

Veteran opener Rogers reached his fourth consecutive half-century of the series but again failed to go on with it and was bowled by Ravi Ashwin for 69 nearing tea.

Rogers was dropped on 33 in the slips by Shikhar Dhawan on the second ball after a lengthy rain delay and had another big moment on 56 before his dismissal.

Umpire Richard Kettleborough called for the video umpire to check if the ball had carried in a claimed catch by MS Dhoni off Mohammed Shami.

But replays showed the ball hitting the ground in Dhoni's glove and Rogers was

given a reprieve. He added another 13 runs before he edged on to his stumps.

India celebrated the important psychological wicket of Smith in one of their rare successes against the prolific Aussie skipper in the series.

Smith was caught at leg-slip by Ajinkya Rahane off Umesh Yadav after playing a similar shot for a boundary a few overs before.

Shane Watson again failed to nail a big score when he was caught behind off Ishant Sharma for 17.

Debutant Joe Burns was out to a poor shot and was caught behind off Sharma for nine, while Brad Haddin (13) and Mitchell Johnson (15) were also caught behind.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**

**AUSTRALIA:** First innings 530 (Smith 192, Harris 74; Shami 4-138)

**INDIA:** First innings 465 (Vijay 68, Dhawan 28, Pujara 25, Kohli 169, Rahane 147; Johnson 3-135, Harris 4-70, Lyon 2-108)

**AUSTRALIA:** Second innings 261 for 7 (Warner 40, Rogers 69, Watson 17, Marsh 62 not out, Johnson 15; Yadav 2-73, Sharma 2-49, Ashwin 2-56)

## NSC sitting on proposal

*Venue renovation for Bangabandhu Gold Cup*

SPORTS REPORTER



With only 16 days remaining to the scheduled start of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup, the two venues in Dhaka and Sylhet

are in dire need of renovation as National Sports Council sweats over how to get fund for the job.

The Bangladesh Football Federation, after successfully hosting a FIFA friendly between Bangladesh U-23s and Nepal U-23s at the Sylhet District Stadium in August 29, with upwards of 40,000 people in attendance, wanted it as the second international football venue of the country. But the appar-

ent dillydallying of the NSC over its much-needed renovation has put it in danger of even losing the opportunity to host the Bangabandhu Gold Cup.

The BFF started communicating with the sports regulatory body as early as November 5, 2014 for the renovation work – the floodlights, the VIP stands, four security gates and press facilities at the Sylhet District Stadium -- and have already sat for two meetings in the last week. But the NSC, having had an inspection of the Sylhet venue by its engineers last week, is still looking to start the work, as the available fund is much less than the estimated expenditure, which is Tk 1.78 lakh, according to NSC secretary

Shibnath Roy.

"We will present the budgeted amount to the finance ministry today and with whatever we are provided, we will start work soon," Roy told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that the bulk amount would be required for upgrading the floodlights at the Sylhet venue.

"Out of the 400 floodlights, there are only 46 workable ones while the remaining ones need to be bought. Each floodlight costs Tk 45,000 and that is our biggest concern as the matches are to be played under lights.

"We will try to renovate the dressing rooms and four security gates at the venue. We will try to do as much as we can with the fund made available to us," added Roy.