



YOUTHFUL ENERGY GLOWING IN THE SUN: With the Swadinata Stambha in the background some youths are playing a game of cricket at the Suhrawardi Udyan yesterday.

PHOTO:
FIROZ AHMED

BCB seeking long-term fix

Fizz's Sussex stint almost over

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh pace prodigy Mustafizur Rahman is likely to know today whether or not he needs to go under the knife. The pacer is scheduled to undergo an MRI arthrogram, a special examination which will determine the exact severity of the pacers' SLAP tear in his left shoulder, and then consult with orthopaedics surgeon Professor Tony Kochhar, who chairs the Sports Science department at the University of Greenwich, today. If it is not possible today, then he will have to wait till Saturday.

However at least for the time being, Mustafizur's stint with Sussex is over and they confirmed that on their website, saying that the left-armed would play no further part in the Sharks' upcoming NatWest T20 Blast and Royal London One-Day Cup group matches.

"The 20-year-old is suffering from a shoulder injury and, under directions from the Bangladesh Cricket Board, is due to have a scan this week to ascertain whether or not he will be fit enough to play in any knockout matches should Sussex qualify for the latter stages of either competition," the statement added.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) also made clear yesterday that they would not take the slightest risk regarding the treatment of Mustafizur's injury and that their focus would be on the long-term rather than taking any quick-fix measures.

"Mustafizur has an appointment for tomorrow [Thursday]. The special MRI will determine the exact nature of his injury and after that he will consult with doctors. We will hear the advice of the specialist in the UK in conjunction with our doctors, physio and head coach and discuss everything before taking a final decision," said BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus.

"We will not take the slightest risk. He is our prized bowler so we will not go for any short-term solution. We will prefer a permanent solution for his injured shoulder. You know that Sussex were talking about making him play with injections but we advised them not to do that," he added.

"If UK is a better place to undergo the surgery then the board would definitely prefer it to be done there. The BCB will bear the expenses but if his contract with Sussex covers it, then they will bear it."



'We don't need to be pushed anymore'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal has said that the national team's thought process with regards to fitness issues has made immense progress over the years.

Speaking to reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday Tamim said that the national players 'don't need to be pushed anymore' when it comes to matters related to fitness.

"We have definitely progressed a lot. There was a time for instance when we had to be pushed to remain fit. But I think a lot has changed now. Today no one needs to say anything to us. We know

that if we want to remain fit for long periods of time we need to work hard.

"All the senior and junior players are working hard to become better. I think this is a great change. We follow a different culture in the dressing room when compared to the outside world. Outside the dressing room we may have certain bad habits, but if you want to be in the national team you have to sacrifice a lot and be disciplined," said Tamim.

"We have managed to grow a disciplined culture here and that has helped bring a big change in Bangladesh's cricket. The cricketers from the past showed us the way and we have managed to grasp on to that opportunity and take it further," he added.



TAMIM IQBAL

The left-hander had a brilliant run in 2015. He scored 1201 runs across all the formats and was the highest run-getter for Bangladesh. While there was nothing much that the left-hander had to be

disappointed about last year, he did however lament not being able to play more games when in rhythm.

"When a player is in good rhythm, it's best for him to play as many matches as possible. Last year I was in good touch and it would have been better for me had I managed to play a few more games. But then again that's not in my hands. That depends upon the FTP. But I will try to create a similar mindset this year and try to use a similar approach," explained the opener.

In February next year Tamim will complete ten years in international cricket. It's a feat that he will achieve after his colleagues Mushfiqur Rahim and Shakib Al Hasan. While there's no doubt that he has

provided commendable service to the national team at the top, he regrets not being able to play as many Tests as he wanted to.

"A cricketer dreams of playing 100 Tests for his country. The players who started playing with me have already played 80 to 90 Tests. I have just played 40. It does feel a little bad. If I had played more Tests I would have had more runs under my belt.

"But then again, as I always say, this is not in our hands. However, we can change the current scenario through our performance. The better we play, the more teams will want to come and play against us," said Tamim, while adding that the upcoming series against England would be an extremely important one for the Tigers.

KING'S CUP Siddikur's ideal prep before Rio

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman is keen to wrap up his final warm-up for the Olympic Games with a good showing at the King's Cup, which gets underway in Thailand today.

The 31-year-old Bangladeshi golfer will be flying off to Rio de Janeiro on August 2 after arriving in Bangladesh on the previous day following his participation in the 750,000-dollar event in Pataya.

But before departing for Brazil, Siddikur, who will carry the Bangladesh flag at the Games' opening ceremony, is hoping for a good outing at the King's Cup.

"I want to do well at the King's Cup so that I'll head into the Olympics with a lot of confidence. That's why this is also a very important week for me," Siddikur told Asiantour.com on Tuesday.

However the two-time Asian Tour winner is cautious of aggravating his back which has been his Achilles heel for a long time.

"My back is good and I'm really managing myself well. I struggled a bit a few years back but now, it's good. So far, there has been no problem, I'm enjoying my golf and I really want to thank god for that," said Siddikur.

Siddikur will be competing against the likes of fellow Asian Olympians Miguel Tabuena of Philippines and Thaworn Wiratchant of Thailand among others.

The field for the King's Cup will comprise 90 players from the Asian Tour, 25 from The European Tour, 25 from Thailand PGA and 16 invite spots.



Tamim wants honours board at Mirpur

SPORTS REPORTER

Six years ago, Tamim Iqbal had his name etched on the Lord's honours board after a breathtaking century against the hosts. It was a dream come true for the left-hander and that little episode provided him all the encouragement he needed to remain competitive in international cricket.

Today the left-hander feels that the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium (SBNCS) in Mirpur, considered to be the home of Bangladesh cricket, needs to have its own board in order to inspire younger cricketers.

"Cricketers want to perform everywhere around the world, but it's always special when you do well at home. Children in Bangladesh dream of playing at the SBNCS and the honours should be recorded," said Tamim.

"It will also be great for me. I probably may not feel it now, but once I retire, I will want to show my son my achievements here and the best way to do that is through an honour board. England have boards not only at Lord's but also at other venues," he added.

The left-hander also said that the BCB needed a museum at its headquarters as well.

"I am sure all these coveted structures will come up in good time," he said.

Twist in Saintfiet tale

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh national football team's head coach-hopeful Tom Saintfiet has kept the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) waiting for a proposed three-month agreement after the Belgian coach skipped the official signing ceremony citing sickness yesterday.

"Today [Wednesday] we were supposed to strike a deal with Tom Saintfiet, but he requested us to postpone the signing as he fell ill last night," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.

The twist in this tale apparently emerged after Frenchman Paul Le Guen turned down an offer to take charge of the Nigeria national team on July 20. Le Guen's refusal to take the Nigeria job, where Saintfiet was one of three shortlisted candidates, has seemingly reignited Saintfiet's hope of landing the Super Eagle's job.

The Belgian recently gave an interview with supersports.com, posted on July 24, where he expressed his desire to take charge of the Nigeria team. "Nigeria is my

priority and that is why I have not taken up the Bangladesh job. I have postponed the signing and I want to go to the World Cup with Nigeria and not just that but to reach the semis of the World Cup because they have the quality to do so. I am ready to live in Nigeria," said the Saintfiet in that interview.

Explaining his interview yesterday, Saintfiet said: "I did give an interview a



few weeks ago. I think we discussed the Nigeria topic one or two weeks ago. We spoke to media about Nigeria, who can go to the World Cup again."

The 43-year-old coach added: "I watched six matches of the Bangladesh Premier League in the last three days and will watch another six matches in coming three days which shows my

commitment to prepare a strong team for the Bhutan matches because my goal is to see Bangladesh qualify for the Asian Cup Qualifiers."

He made this statement after holding a discussion with BFF president Kazi Salahuddin in the afternoon.

When asked about when he wants to sign the agreement with BFF, Saintfiet said: "I don't know exactly when I will sign the agreement and that is not important because I am doing the job. You could have signed a coach who doesn't have a job, but I am in a job which proves I am here to work with Bangladesh."

"I have a verbal agreement with the president which is the most important thing. I think signing papers is not important," Saintfiet explained. "If Real Madrid or Argentina call me up, I will consider, but at the moment I don't have any offer from any federation or club except for Bangladesh. I am happy to be here."

Having informed that there is no chance of an agreement before Saintfiet's return in August, the BFF general secretary informed that the Belgian will fly home on July 31 and

Murali to be inducted into Hall of Fame

PTI, Dubai

Sri Lankan spin legend Muttiah Muralidaran, along with three others, will be inducted into the International Cricket Council's Hall of Fame later this year.

"The International Cricket Council on Wednesday announced that Muttiah Muralidaran, Karen Rolton, Arthur Morris and George Lohmann will be inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame later this year," the ICC said in a statement.

Record-breaking off-spinner Muralidaran becomes the first Sri Lankan player to be inducted along with twice ICC Women's World Cup winner and former Australia captain Karen Rolton, her compatriot Arthur Morris, a member of Don Bradman's 'invincibles' and England's George Lohmann, the 19th century fast bowler who took 100 wickets in just 16 Tests.

Rabada grabs them all

AFP, Johannesburg

Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada was named South African Cricketer of the Year Tuesday in Johannesburg and received five other awards after an outstanding first international season.

His other awards included Players' Player of the Year, Test Cricketer of the Year and One-day international Cricketer of the Year.

The 21-year-old also received the Delivery of the Year and Fans' Cricketer of the Year prizes during a banquet.

Australia in command

AFP, Pallekele



Australia removed Sri Lankan opener Kusal Perera cheaply after building up an 86-run first innings lead over their hosts as they took firm command Wednesday of a low-scoring Test in Pallekele.

Perera fell to the last ball of the day, with the umpires once again forced to call a premature halt to proceedings following a downpour at the picturesque ground on the outskirts of Kandy.

Australia were all out for 203 in reply to Sri Lanka's first innings total of 117, with spinner Lakshan Sandakan taking four wickets on his debut.

The early loss of Perera on the second day of the first Test was another bitter blow for the struggling hosts. Perera fell for just four when he was lbw to paceman Mitchell Starc, leaving Sri Lanka wobbling on six for one at close of play.

The downpour initially prompted the umpires to call an early tea break, but they were later forced to abandon

play early for the second day running.

Veteran Sri Lankan left-arm spinner Ranga Herath and the 25-year-old rookie Sandakan had earlier taken four wickets apiece.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: First innings 117 (De Silva 24, K Perera 20; Hazlewood 3-21, Lyon 3-12)

AUSTRALIA: First innings 203 all out (Khawaja 26, Smith 30, Voges 47, Marsh 31, O'Keefe 23; Herath 4-49, Sandakan 4-58)

SRI LANKA: Second innings 6 for 1.