



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal is felled by a bouncer during the Tigers' tour of Sri Lanka and such an uncharacteristic miscalculation perhaps told of his lack of self-confidence in recent times.

PHOTO: AFP FILE

Tamim asks BCB for a break

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal has asked for a leave that will see him miss the lone Test against Afghanistan and a tri-series at home involving Afghanistan and Zimbabwe in September this year, informed Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Cricket Operations chairman Akram Khan yesterday.

"We have received a letter from Tamim on the subject. However, we [the BCB] are yet to make a decision. We will take a decision following the Eid vacation," Akram told reporters yesterday.

Tamim has been enduring a lean patch since the World Cup, during which he scored 235 runs across eight games with only one half-century.

Things quickly went from bad to worse for the 30-year-old during the tour of Sri Lanka last month, for which he was named interim ODI captain in the absence of Mashrafe Bin

Mortaza.

Bangladesh were whitewashed in the three-match ODI series and Tamim's poor form continued as he managed just 21 runs in the series as the pressure continued to mount. There was also discussion about whether the dashing left-hander should take a break from cricket for some time.

If granted, this will be the first time Tamim will miss a series for Bangladesh for a reason other than injury. Tamim is expected to make a return for Bangladesh's tour of India in November, when the Tigers are scheduled to play two Tests and a three-match T20I series.

Recently, Shakib Al Hasan had been granted a break for the series against Sri Lanka. Shakib had also taken a break during a Test series against hosts South Africa in 2017.

The Bangladesh Test and T20I skipper also took to media to advise Tamim to take a break. The ace all-rounder emphasised the importance of a proper break and the need for

stress management.

"Look, a player can go through such a patch. I think it is most important for him [Tamim] to have a good rest, recover and become fresh and come back strongly. I am sure he will do that," Shakib had said at an event in Dhaka earlier this month.

Meanwhile, the training camp for the upcoming home series against Afghanistan is set to begin from August 18 and the selectors have already provided the board with a 35-member squad.

"The training camp for the upcoming Test against Afghanistan and the following tri-nation T20I series is expected to begin from August 18 or the two days after. We have already submitted the 35-member preliminary squad for the series. We have heard Tamim asked for a leave for the series and if it is granted we will chalk out our team without him," chief selector Minhajul Abedin told The Daily Star yesterday.

Windies call up mountain-man

AGENCIES, St John's



West Indies have called up uncapped spin-bowling all-rounder Rahkeem Cornwall for the two Tests against India later this month but paceman Alzarri Joseph will miss the series with injury.

Cornwall is an all-rounder from the islands of Antigua and is perhaps the heaviest cricketer ever. He stands at a towering height of 6'6" and weighs around 140 kg.

The selectors resisted the temptation to grant Chris Gayle a sentimental final Test appearance on home ground when the opener was omitted from the squad.

The 39-year-old played the last of his 103 Tests in September 2014, but had hinted during the World Cup that he was open to playing one more before bringing down the curtain on his international career.

Despite the second of the two-Test series against India being played at his home ground of Sabina Park in Jamaica from August 30, it looks like Gayle's final international appearance in the Caribbean will instead be next Wednesday in the third ODI in Port of Spain.

Cornwall's impressive record for Leeward Islands Hurricanes and the West Indies 'A'

team earned him his maiden call-up with Robert Haynes, head of interim selection panel, saying they had high hopes from the 26-year-old.

"Rahkeem has been performing consistently over a long period of time and has proven to be a match-winner, so we believe his elevation to the Test squad is merited at this time," Haynes said in a statement.

Joseph was allowed to recover from an arm injury sustained during the Indian Premier League earlier this year.

"Alzarri is undergoing remedial work and we are monitoring his recovery, but we do not think he is ready yet to last five days of a gruelling test match," Haynes said.

Along with Cornwall, regular West Indies 'A' captain Shamarh Brooks is the only other uncapped player in the 13-member squad. The Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Ground in Cornwall's native Antigua hosts the first Test from August 22 while the second Test is at Jamaica's Sabina Park from August 30.

WEST INDIES SQUAD: Jason Holder (captain), Kraigg Brathwaite, Darren Bravo, Shamarh Brooks, John Campbell, Roston Chase, Rahkeem Cornwall, Shane Dowrich, Shannon Gabriel, Shimron Hetmyer, Shai Hope, Keemo Paul, Kemar Roach.



RAHKEEM CORNWALL

'No one likes to face tall 90mph bowlers'

AFP, London



Australia great Shane Warne believes Jofra Archer could be the man to stop Steve Smith's Ashes run-spree as "no one likes to face tall 90 mph (145 kph) bowlers".

World Cup-winner Archer is set to make his Test debut at Lord's next week after being included in England's squad for the second match of the Ashes series.

Australia star Smith made 144 and 142 in a 251-run win for the



Obviously I would love to see Steve [Smith] go on and score a hundred in every single innings for the rest of the Ashes but with Jofra [Archer] coming in I think he'll be set to face his biggest challenge yet and this could make the difference in the upcoming Tests. No one likes to face tall 90 mph bowlers.

SHANE WARNE
AUSTRALIA LEGEND

visitors in the opener at Edgbaston during a superb return to Test cricket following a 12-month ban for his role in a ball-tampering scandal in South Africa -- an incident that also cost him the captaincy.

Archer missed the first game with a side injury but the 24-year-old quick is in line to replace the injured

James Anderson, England's all-time leading wicket-taker, at Lord's after proving his fitness in a 2nd XI match for county side Sussex.

Warne believes Archer's extra pace, as well as the knowledge gained from playing alongside Smith for the Rajasthan Royals in the IPL, will stand him in good stead if he is selected.

"Steve (Smith) has been the star of the show so far but now we have Jofra joining his Royals (and England) teammates Ben Stokes and Jos Buttler," Warne, a former Rajasthan player turned brand ambassador, said Friday after Archer was named in England's 12-man squad for Lord's.

Former leg-spinner Warne added: "Obviously I would love to see Steve go on and score a hundred in every single innings for the rest of the Ashes but with Jofra coming in I think he'll be set to face his biggest challenge yet and this could make the difference in the upcoming Tests."

"No one likes to face tall 90 mph bowlers."

Anderson only managed four overs before breaking down at

Edgbaston and Warne, 49, said: "The loss of Anderson was such a blow and they will really need Jofra to step up but I think he has all the attributes to do just that."

"They (Archer and Smith) will have faced each other a lot in the nets so if anyone will have a plan, it will be Jofra."

But Archer, speaking before England's group-stage match against Australia at Lord's during the World Cup, said of his time with Smith at Rajasthan: "To be honest, I didn't bowl at him much."

"A lot of the guys probably don't want to face me or (West Indies quick) Oshane Thomas in the nets. But when you play with them you pick up on things you won't normally notice when you're just playing against them."

Archer made his international debut in May but he was still England's leading bowler during the World Cup with 20 wickets at 23.05. But his haul didn't include the wicket of Smith even though England played Australia twice, with their pool loss to the then reigning champions followed by a semifinal win over their arch-rivals.

Match, camp both in Tajikistan?

SPORTS REPORTER



Although still unofficial, the Bangladesh national football team look very likely to play their first match of the Joint Qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup against Afghanistan in Tajikistan on September 10, according to a high-placed official of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF).

"We have spoken with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), which has told us to wait for a couple of days for official confirmation. However, the AFC also told us to start our preparations with Tajikistan as the venue in mind as it is all but likely to be the venue. There needs to just be the final confirmation," Abu Nayeem Shohag, general secretary of the BFF, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The match was initially expected to be held in Doha as Afghanistan is not eligible to host matches in the war-torn

country. However, since Qatar are in the same qualifying group as Bangladesh and Afghanistan, the Qatar as a venue was ruled out as the home venue for Afghanistan.

The BFF spokesman said that the shift in venue would likely alter their plans regarding the team's training camp.

"If the match was held in Qatar, we would have had our camp there. But if the match is held in Tajikistan, it will be a long journey from Qatar to Tajikistan. There is also the issue of getting used to local conditions. Considering these things, the team might go to Tajikistan a week or so before the game and have its camp there and play a practice match with a local club side as part of their preparation," Shohag said.

National team head coach Jamie Day, who will arrive here from England on August 19, has already made a 38-member preliminary squad for the first match and will likely trim the squad to 23 players-plus a few reserves some time during the camp in Dhaka, which is likely to begin in the fourth week of August.

Rumana ruled out

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's team suffered a blow ahead of the Women's T20 World Cup Qualifiers with all-rounder Rumana Ahmed ruled out of the tournament with injury.

"We cannot consider her for the World T20 qualifiers as she is going through a recovery program and it will take some time for her to recover fully," Nazmul Abedin Fahim, BCB's women's wing development manager, said on Friday.

"It is certainly a big loss considering she is an experienced cricketer."

Eight teams will fight it out for two qualifying spots in Australia early next year. Bangladesh begin their campaign against Papua New Guinea on the opening day. The team are in a camp and will fly to Netherlands for another 10-day camp.

SHEIKH KAMAL INTERNATIONAL CLUB CUP

All three Kolkata giants to play?

SPORTS REPORTER



East Bengal, Mohun Bagan and Mohammedan -- all the three giants of the Kolkata football scene -- are expected to feature in the third edition of the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup, which is scheduled to be held from October 19 in Chittagong, claimed the tournament's chief coordinator and host club Chittagong Abahani's director, Tarafder Ruhul Amin.

The football organiser, who was in Kolkata for the past two days, has received confirmation from the three teams in a bid to make the tournament a grand success.

"We got written confirmation from Mohun Bagan on Friday and today we got written confirmation from

Mohammedan. We also got verbal assurances from East Bengal today [Saturday]," Ruhul Amin told The Daily Star over phone from Kolkata last night.

"We are trying to make a big splash with this tournament. If all the three traditional powerhouses from Kolkata participate in this tournament, it will be a big football event in all of the subcontinent," he added.

Although Ruhul Amin said that East Bengal had not given a written commitment yet due to its obligation to have the issue approved by the club's sponsors, he expects all three clubs to send their first teams.

"They are willing to send their first teams as they are taking this tournament as preparation for the I-league, which will start in the first

week of November," Ruhul Amin said.

The three Indian giants will be joined by defending Bangladesh Premier League champions Bashundhara Kings, Federation Cup winners Abahani and host club Chittagong Abahani in the eight-team tournament, with the other two teams yet to be confirmed.

The organisers have already sent letters through the Bangladesh Football Federation to the football federations of Thailand, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives for the remaining slots.

The host club had won the inaugural edition of the tournament in 2015, beating East Bengal in the final. The second edition was held in 2017 where TC Sports Club of Maldives emerged champions, beating FC Pocheon of South Korea on penalties in the final.