

## Tamim's T20I retirement imminent?

SPORTS REPORTER

Will Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal make his comeback to the shortest format of the game to be available for the T20 World Cup in Australia?

"We will know it very soon," said Jalal Yunus, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB)'s cricket operations committee chairman, after meeting with the national players, who went to the board yesterday to sign their new central contracts.

A source close to the BCB informed that he may make the announcement within the next two days.

On January 27 this year, Tamim had declared his intention of staying out of the national T20 squad for the next six months but said that he might return to the side if he is needed ahead of the T20 World Cup in Australia in October. That six-month period will end in July ahead of the Asia Cup T20 and the T20 World Cup.

During a recent interview with The



Shakib Al Hasan went to the Bangladesh Cricket Board headquarters in Mirpur yesterday, following his arrival from the USA earlier in the morning, to sign contract with Legends of Rugganj for the remaining four matches of the Dhaka Premier League. Shakib and other national team players, meanwhile, also signed central contracts with the BCB.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'Availability' the crux of next central contracts

SPORTS REPORTER

The Boishakh weather dampened proceedings in the outer grounds of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, but there was no shortage of activity in the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) offices as the board decided to sit down with national cricketers on the rest day of the Dhaka Premier League following a long tour of South Africa.

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who returned to the country yesterday, was at the meeting alongside seniors like Mahmudullah Riyad, Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim. Following the meeting, Shakib joined Legends of Rugganj for a discussion. The southpaw looked in sprightly mood after the discussions and his smile came out like the sun blinking momentarily through the cloud covers.

Later, Rugganj officials confirmed to The Daily Star that Shakib had been signed to play for the Mashrafe-led side for the four remaining Super League games and that all relevant procedures had been completed. Shakib departed the BCB premises, saying that his availability for the upcoming Sri Lanka had not been in doubt.

The discussions with the cricket board had been mostly informal but its purpose was the signing of this year's central contracts.

"We called everyone together to sign contracts. Almost everyone came. A few were unable to make it due to personal reasons. There were almost 17-18 players and we sat down. Most were busy with the Premier League so we were unable to sit down before. We discussed cricketing things amongst ourselves," cricket



operations chairman Jalal Yunus told the media yesterday.

However, there was a more serious undertone to the discussions, ranging from cricketers' workload to their availability for different series, which had been a prickly topic ahead of almost every key series.

The BCB's intention was to shake up the process for the next central contract so that the vagueness of availability does not occur. There had been drama over Shakib's availability for the South Africa series while Mustafizur Rahman has remained unavailable for the red-ball format. ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal too had gone into a self-imposed T20I hiatus.

"We cannot tell now whether he [Tamim] is available in the next World Cup or not. We will let you know as soon as he informs us of his decision," Jalal told reporters yesterday.

The meeting had been called to sort out not only who will be available but also with an urgency to manage workload. BCB understood that they would be the ones dictating to the players what assignments

they need to get ready for.

"Everything has been done in a disorderly manner in the past. As we have a chance to meet together, we shared many things informally, especially how we can manage everything considering the workload in the coming days," Yunus told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

"In the future, we will decide everything regarding players' participation. For example, we will decide whether Mustafizur will play red-ball cricket or not. We can make some adjustments but the decision must come from the board. Things will be clearer in the next contract but we take care of everything regarding players' wellbeing," he added.

The focus on the mental health of players, especially having undergone quarantine processes both at home and abroad, is under the microscope.

"As there has been a lot of talk regarding the mental aspects behind our failures, we are considering arranging sessions with every individual and as a team ahead of the home series against Sri Lanka," Jalal informed.

## Medvedev barred from Wimbledon

REUTERS

Tennis players from Russia and Belarus will not be allowed to compete at this year's Wimbledon due to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, the Grand Slam's organisers All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) said in a statement on Wednesday.

Earlier this month, the AELTC said it was in talks with the British government on the participation of players from Russia and Belarus in the grasscourt Grand Slam.

"We recognise that this is hard on the individuals affected, and it is with sadness that they will suffer for the actions of the leaders of the Russian regime," Ian Hewitt, chairman of the AELTC said in a statement.

Hewitt said the AELTC had "carefully considered" alternative measures that might be taken within the UK Government guidance.

"But given the high profile environment of The Championships the importance of not allowing sport to be used to promote the Russian regime and our broader concerns for public and player (including family) safety, we do not believe it is viable to proceed on any other basis," he said.

The organisers had earlier planned to announce a decision in mid-May before the entry deadline for the June 27-July 10 event.

A ban on Russian players prevents world number two Daniil Medvedev and Andrey Rublev, ranked eighth, from competing in the men's draw. Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova is 15th in the women's rankings.

## 'Man Utd six years behind Liverpool'

AFP, LIVERPOOL

Manchester United interim manager Ralf Rangnick said the Red Devils are "six years" behind Liverpool after being blown away in a 4-0 defeat at Anfield on Tuesday.

Jürgen Klopp's men won 5-0 at Old Trafford in October and expectations of a similar rout were well-founded as Liverpool exposed the massive gulf between the sides with Mohamed Salah scoring twice and Luis Díaz and Sadio Mané also on target.

Liverpool move two points ahead of Manchester City at the top of the table, but still need the English champions to slip up in their remaining seven league games to win the title.

Rangnick will step aside at the end of the season, with Ajax manager Erik ten Hag reportedly set to take over.

And the German said the impact Klopp has made on transforming Liverpool's fortunes is the example for United to follow.

"It is embarrassing, it is disappointing, maybe even humiliating," said Rangnick.

"We have to accept they are six years ahead of us now. When Jürgen Klopp came they changed at the club and lifted not just the team but the club and city to a new level.

"That is what needs to happen with us in the next transfer windows."



Daily Star, Tamim said: "Everyone, more or less, knows about my stand regarding T20 cricket. I've always been transparent about all my decisions and the board is very clear about my stand as well since I always inform them [BCB] in advance and not at the last moment."

Yunus, however, said that next time the board will decide who will play which format or series and it will also be clear in the next contract.

"You know everything has been done disorderly in the past. We invited players today to sign the contract and most of the players turned out and only a few missed due to their individual commitments. As we have got a chance to meet together, we have shared many things informally, especially how can we manage everything considering the workload in the coming days," said Yunus.

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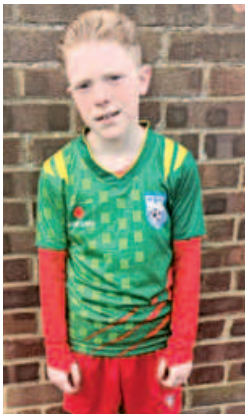
## Day flaunts fondness for Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh head coach Jamie Day recollected some of his fond memories in Bangladesh while talking about his son Tiller Day, who decided to wear the Bangladesh football team's jersey during a school function of late.

The British coach, on Twitter on Tuesday, posted a picture of his son wearing a Bangladesh jersey with complementing red shorts and green socks. Day had also inserted two emojis – a red heart and a Bangladesh flag – in the photo caption to display his family's love for Bangladesh. "Bangladesh has been a big part of our lives. So we all still have good memories and like to show that," Jamie told The Daily Star yesterday. Tiller's outfit had his teachers and schoolmates curious and Jamie's son was delighted to reply to all their queries regarding Bangladesh and its football scenario.

"They all asked a lot of questions about the country and football kit so he was happy to give them all the information," Jamie informed.



**চাঁদপুরস্থ নদী কেন্দ্রে ইলিশ গবেষণা জোরদারকরণ প্রকল্প**

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Project Director

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