

SPORT

What to
WATCH
Star Sports 3
 Lanka Premier League
 Kandy vs Dambulla
 Live from 3:00 pm
 Galle vs Jaffna
 Live from 7:30 pm

Sony Sports 2
 Durand Cup
 North East United vs
 Lajong
 Live from 6:30 pm
Star Sports 2

 GT20 Canada
 Surrey vs Vancouver
 Live from 9:00 pm
 Brampton vs Montreal
 Live from 1:30 am
 (Saturday)

Tamim's sole focus on World Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Tamim Iqbal stepped down from captaincy yesterday after the much-awaited meeting with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon and cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus, with injury at the heart of the decision.

Tamim conveyed the matter of captaincy himself before Jalal informed the media in the same press conference that Tamim will not be playing the Asia Cup in order to not force the issue and instead get ready for a return for the home series against New Zealand in September, just before the World Cup.

Defying the weather, media personnel flocked to Mirpur while national team players had the Yo-Yo test awaiting them. The focus of the media, however, was not on the activities related to fitness drills as their attention was fully trained on when and where the meeting between Tamim Iqbal and BCB will commence.

As their wait grew till the evening, the press event which was supposed to commence at 8:00 PM, began much later after 9 PM.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

"I am very angry about it. I feel that the matter needs to be investigated since there is a difference in the way the matter was presented to us and what happened in reality. If this was diagnosed in 2022 and treatment began back then, by now he would have recovered. This thing was neglected in some way which is why we had to hear all this right at the doorstep of the World Cup."

BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon said regarding Tamim's injury diagnosis.

"I had an important meeting with Jalal bhai and Papon bhai. We have discussed what will happen going forward. From today [Thursday] I will step down as Bangladesh cricket team ODI captain. I feel that injury is an issue and I have taken injections but those treatments are almost hit-and-miss at this point. I have spoken of my problems with them. Thinking of the team, stepping down would be the best possible thing," Tamim said at the press conference yesterday while also relaying that he talked to the Bangladesh Prime Minister about his decision ahead of the meeting.

"Whether somebody else is captain, the target is one which is to do well at the World Cup. Country is much bigger than the individual," Tamim added.

Jalal informed that Tamim's pain subsided "somewhat" after being administered injections multiple times in the UK. On 28th July, he was instructed to go for two weeks' rest. On August 11th, the two weeks' rest will end before Tamim can begin rehab in a "small way". Two more weeks would pass once he begins rehab. Then it would take two more weeks for him to return to nets and Tamim will not be able to do high-

intensity training before 21st August.

"Two more weeks will pass after that before he can return to nets. As you know, by that time our schedule for Asia Cup will resume and his intensity can't increase before the 21st. The team will leave for Asia Cup on [August] 26th so it will not be possible for Tamim to return before the Asia Cup," Jalal informed.

meant that the board would seek a candidate for the captaincy in the long run. According to BCB sources, they would prefer Shakib Al Hasan for the long-term role but they need to discuss it among themselves and also the player concerned.

Jalal further said that Tamim will likely not go for surgery as it would be difficult to make a return following a

***Tamim took charge of the Tigers in ODIs after Mashrafe Bin Mortaza stepped down in 2020 following the home series against Zimbabwe. He had to wait for his first assignment as captain and started his captaincy against the West Indies in 2021 at home.**

***Tamim led Bangladesh in 37 matches, where the Tigers won on 21 occasions and lost 14 times. Two other matches had no results.**

***During his tenure as captain, Tamim led Bangladesh to memorable series victories against India (home) and South Africa (away).**

The BCB president also said that they are confident that Tamim will be able to return before the New Zealand series as a player while also informing that they have not talked to any other player regarding captaincy.

BCB president said that had Tamim not been available for Asia Cup, then the vice-captain would lead the Tigers as per normal procedure. However, Tamim's decision to quit captaincy

surgery.

BCB are still going to investigate how the situation got so far regarding Tamim's injury diagnosis in the L4 and L5 discs.

Tamim relayed at the press conference that his problem was diagnosed first in November 2022. However, a recent MRI report in Dubai revealed a different injury diagnosis.

Abahani bank on new foreigners in AFC Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani were the first Bangladeshi club to progress into the inter-zonal semifinals of AFC Cup in 2019 but struggled in Asia's second-tier club competition ever since.

In last three editions, six-time Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) winners failed to get out of the preliminary round or play-off stage after falling prey to either Maldivian or Indian outfits.

Bashundhara Kings had booked a spot in the group stage of South Asian zone on virtue of being BPL champions. Abahani, meanwhile, as the Federation Cup champions or league runners-up, got a chance to compete in the group-stage qualifiers.

Maldivian outfit Club Eagles stand in the way of Abahani in the second preliminary round. If the Sky Blues cross that hurdle, they could face Mohun Bagan in the play-off match.

A new rule which allows six foreign players in an AFC Cup match is providing optimism for Abahani to fare better this time around. Coach Mario Lemos, however, sees the down side as well.

"New signing does help the club.

We are getting five new foreign players but not much time because all of them are from different clubs," Lemos

told The Daily Star yesterday.

"They now need to adapt to the way we want to play and build the connection with new players. It is about me getting to know the players and trying to use them in the best possible ways."

With last season's Daniel Colindres, Peter Norah, and Raphael Augusto unavailable, the Abahani retained the services of

(Chittagong Abahani) and Brazilian defender Danilo Augusto (Fortis FC) for the preliminary round.

Abahani started their preparation for the AFC Cup on July 29 in Dhaka as the match was billed for August 16 in Sylhet.

Forward Nabib Newaj Jibon believes they "have an advantage of playing on home ground amid familiar conditions".



two foreigners: Syrian defender Yousef Mohammad and Nigerian Emeka Ogbogh.

The Sky Blues have five new signings in Caribbean forward Stuart Cornelius from Sheikh Jamal DC, Uzbek midfielder Muzaffar Muzaffarov (Mohammedan SC), Nigerian forward Ifeagwu Ojukwu David (Chittagong Abahani),

Egyptian midfielder Mostafa Mahmoud Kahraba

Asked whether they would struggle to adjust with new foreign players, Jibon reckons they would gel easily because of the familiarity of having played against each other in the league.

Lemos, who guided Abahani in 2019, said: "I think this time we have an advantage of playing six foreigners since Maldivian players are slightly better than Bangladeshi players, technique-wise."



Lionel Messi scored two more goals on Wednesday, giving him five in three matches for Inter Miami, as he led the Herons to a 3-1 win over Orlando City in a Leagues Cup round-of-32 match at Fort Lauderdale. Messi scored twice from close range -- a left-footed volley followed up by a right-footed volley -- to maintain his 100 percent winning record with Miami, who were winless in 11 league games before his arrival but have now set up last 16 Leagues Cup clash against FC Dallas.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'Born to be referee'

REUTERS, El Alto

Erick Callejas may be just 10 years old -- and a lot shorter than the other participants on the football pitch -- but he has no qualms enforcing the rules as one of the few referees his age.

In high altitude El Alto, Bolivia's second-largest city and neighbor to capital La Paz, Callejas can be found on weekends blowing his whistle and calling the shots at local games, inspired by his referee father Ramiro.

"On Saturdays and Sundays, I go out to referee with my little colleague, my son, Erick," Ramiro said. "I am very proud, I'm filled with emotion because refereeing runs in his blood."

Callejas refereed his first match in a women's league after his dad signed him up for the job.

"He runs. He moves. He is not intimidated by people, even if the public shouts," player Beimar Tancara said. "I think he was born to be a referee."

Callejas also dreams big. "My dream is to referee the Bolivian Derby, to be a FIFA referee so I can go to World Cup, America Cup, Liberators Cup and Champions League," he said.



Morocco's goalkeeper Khadija Er-Rmichi revels in joy as they stunned Colombia 1-0 in their final group match in Perth on Thursday to reach the last 16 of the Women's World Cup at the first attempt. Morocco's historic run to the semifinal in the 2022 FIFA Men's World Cup, as they became the first African nation to do so, was one to savour for football fanatics around the world and their female compatriots could now add more to the country's football folklore. [Inset] Meanwhile, In a tournament full of shocks, two-time world champions Germany suffered their earliest exit in Women's World Cup history after being held to a shock 1-1 draw by South Korea in their final Group H match.

PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS



PHOTO: BCB

Bangladesh batter Najmul Hossain Shanto recorded the highest score as the national team players underwent the Yo-Yo fitness at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium on Thursday ahead of the camp for the upcoming Asia Cup. With 18.6 determined as the standard passing score, Shanto registered a score of 19.5.

Taskin, Sabina, Ziarul among NSC awardees

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team captain Sabina Khatun, cricketer Taskin Ahmed and SA Games gold medalist weightlifter Ziarul Islam were named among winners of the Sheikh Kamal National Sports Council (NSC) Awards 2023 in sportsperson category.

State Minister for Youth and Sports, Zahid Ahsan Russel, on Thursday revealed the names of 12 awardees from eight categories.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to hand over the awards on August 5, on the occasion of the 74th birth anniversary of Shaheed Captain Sheikh Kamal who is eldest son of Bangababdh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and founder of Abahani Limited.

"In a quest to inspire budding and upcoming players, we have emphasised on the current players. The committee also emphasised on other disciplines beyond football and cricket," sports minister Russel told reporters at the NSC conference room.

Table tennis player Muhtasin Ahmed Ridoy and hockey player Amirul Islam were named in the emerging athlete category.

"In 2022, we gave away nine awards under seven categories but this time we have inserted one more category, of sports commentators, because they have also been contributing to sports like you sports journalists," added Russel.

Abdus Sadek, legendary hockey player and former general secretary of Bangladesh Hockey Federation, will receive the prestigious "lifetime achievement" award -- won by Kazi Salahuddin and Harun Ur Rashid in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

Mala Rani Sarker, headmistress of Kalsindur Primary School, who enormously contributed to the rise of a group of footballers in the national women's team from the remote village under Dhobaura upazilla, and Fazlul Islam, a hockey coach from Old Dhaka who had groomed a lot of national players, were the two nominated organisers from grassroots.

Bangladesh Archery Federation got recognition as the best sports federation while Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB) bagged the sports sponsor award.

Photojournalist and freedom fighter Khandoker Tareq Mohammad Nurullah and Athar Ali Khan have been nominated under sports journalists and sports commentator categories, respectively.