

## Tamim expected to start net session from Aug 19

SPORTS REPORTER

Former ODI captain Tamim Iqbal went to the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday while national team players were undergoing the last day of their fitness drills, ahead of skill training camp which begins on August 8.

It was Tamim's first visit to the 'home of cricket' in Mirpur since having announced his decision to step down as ODI captain.

The 34-year-old spent time in the medical department and, according to sources, the southpaw discussed his rehabilitation process with doctors. He later visited the cricket operations department before leaving Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) premises.

Tamim's initial two-week rest is set to continue till August 11, following which he will go through rehabilitation.

According to the chairman of the cricket operations committee, Jalal Yunus, the left-handed opener is expected to start net sessions from August 19.

"We had a meeting today (yesterday) and Tamim is expected to undergo further rehabilitation with [fitness coach] Nick Lee for the first week from tomorrow (today). If things go well, Tamim may start working at the nets from August 19," Jalal told The Daily Star yesterday.

Tamim's current rehabilitation plan is to overcome injury issues and return for Bangladesh's home ODI series against New Zealand right before the World Cup in India.

## Pakistan to send team to India for World Cup

AGENCIES

Pakistan has decided to send its cricket team to India for the upcoming 2023 ODI World Cup.

This comes after Pakistan's foreign office cleared the decks for the team's participation in the World Cup that will be held in India during October-November.

A release from the foreign ministry said that Pakistan will be sending its national team and that sports should not be mixed with politics.

"Pakistan believes that the state of bilateral relations with India should not stand in the way of fulfilling its international sports-related obligations," the release said.

The ministry however maintained that the safety and security of the team will be of paramount importance.

"We expect that the full safety and security of the Pakistan cricket team will be ensured during its visit to India," the release said.

The neighbouring countries, who share fraught relations, have played each other only in multi-team events at neutral venues over the last decade.

Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had formed a committee to review and decide on Pakistan's participation in the World Cup.

The committee was scheduled to meet under the chairmanship of foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto and Zaka Ashraf, the chairman of the PCB Management Committee.

The 14-member committee includes various ministers and advisers, including the foreign minister, the interior minister, the law minister, the Inter-Provincial Coordination minister, the information and broadcasting minister, the adviser on Kashmir affairs, the adviser on establishment, the foreign secretary, PSPM, as well as representatives from secret agencies and other sensitive departments.

Sources added that there was no objection to Pakistan playing in India, but the committee wanted assurance that the players, officials, fans and media would not face any problems.

## Tearful end to Rapinoe's WC career

REUTERS

Megan Rapinoe did not get the Women's World Cup farewell she wanted on Sunday, a penalty that sailed over the crossbar the last international play by one of the United States' most decorated players.

American soccer's charismatic figurehead was sent on as a substitute in extra time but the last-16 game against old foes Sweden ended 0-0 before the Swedes won the penalty shootout 5-4.

Rapinoe was of three American players to miss her spot-kick.

"This is the balance to the beautiful side of the game. I think it can be cruel and (it was) just not our day," Rapinoe told Fox Sports.

"I still just feel really grateful and joyful."

Renowned for her reliability as a penalty taker, Rapinoe said missing one in the final moment of her career felt like "a sick joke".

She tearfully embraced her coach on the pitch before linking up with her team mates one last time while the Sweden players celebrated to Abba's "Dancing Queen".

"I've loved playing for this team and playing for this country. It's been an honour," she said.



Rapinoe won the Golden Boot, Golden Ball and Ballon d'Or for her role in the United States' victorious 2019 World Cup campaign and her personality and activism off the pitch took her star to new heights in a country where not many female soccer players have achieved household fame.

"I've always tried to play the game the right way and to go about things the right way," she told reporters in Auckland.

"I've always tried to use whatever platform we have - and this platform obviously was built long before I got here."

The 38-year-old Rapinoe played few minutes at her fourth World Cup, embracing a role



largely as a mentor to a young and inexperienced U.S. team after playing a key part in helping the team win the 2015 and 2019 world crowns.

Her most memorable moment, however, came in 2011 when she sent a laser-like cross to Abby Wambach in the quarter-final against Brazil to set up what was voted the greatest goal in the history of the tournament.

Rapinoe plans to finish her club season with National Women's Soccer League side OL Reign before retiring and shows no signs of retreating from public life after a career spent championing social causes.

She was a leading voice for the

U.S. players in their pay equity fight against their federation in 2019, the effects of which were still being felt at the 2023 tournament. Looking back at the 2019 tournament, Rapinoe saw her on-field achievements as being inextricably entwined with her advocacy.

"It was almost like a mandatory upping of our level to be able to match everything that we were saying off the field," said Rapinoe.

"Without the winning, you don't get all these microphones and without the winning, you don't get the platform. Without the winning, you don't get the media, you don't get the eyes, you don't get the fans."

## BCB all set to hold captaincy discussion

SPORTS REPORTER

The biggest question in Bangladesh cricket fraternity at present is who will succeed Tamim Iqbal as ODI captain after he stepped down due to injury problems.

By the looks of it, Shakib Al Hasan is in pole position to take up the reins of the side for the ODI World Cup in India, with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan on Saturday saying that appointing Shakib is the "easiest choice".

ODI captaincy record comparison				
	Matches	Won	Lost	No Result
Shakib Al Hasan	50	23	26	1
Mushfiquir Rahim	37	11	24	2
Liton Das	5	3	2	0

Coach Chandika Hathurusingha is slated to return to the country on August 8th but, according to a BCB official, the team for the Asia Cup may very well be sorted and announced before the Sri Lankan arrives. But first, the team management would name the captain of the side before the squad is given by the selectors.

Shakib held the ODI captaincy previously from 2009 till 2011, winning 22 matches out of 47. He would also captain the side in specific games in 2015 and 2017. The overall record of 23 wins under Shakib sees him right behind Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (50) and Habibul Bashar (29) in the standings for most games won as Bangladesh captain.

Already the Test and T20I captain, it would not be surprising to see the all-rounder also made captain for the 50-over format. Meanwhile, Liton Das, who also

captained Bangladesh in five ODI matches, winning three which includes the 2-1 series triumph over India at home last year, is also in the running.

From the current crop of players, veteran Mushfiquir Rahim is another who has captained the side in 37 games to win 11. With vast experience on his side, he may be unwilling to take on the role. Naturally, Liton was set to step in as skipper but the cricket board wants a long-term solution.

"We have not discussed captaincy yet. We have to take a break and think about it after taking some time. As I have said before, if it was one series, we could have gone with the vice-captain but now we have to think about the long term," Nazmul told reporters on Saturday while attending a programme to commemorate Sheikh Kamal's 74th birth anniversary.

The BCB president, however, was wary of suggesting Liton's name for such a big event as the World Cup.

"Shakib is the obvious choice [as captain] but can you say he will play for two years? We don't know that and so we need to know his plan and talk with the board.

"I think the easiest choice is Shakib and there is no problem with it," Nazmul had said regarding Shakib.

According to a BCB source close to the development, the BCB president is set to discuss captaincy with the candidates on Tuesday. Shakib would be the chief choice for the board and the BCB president would query Shakib regarding his interest in taking over.

Shakib has also captained the side in seven ODI World Cup matches, winning three and losing four. Given the Tigers' aspirations for a big performance in the upcoming event, BCB would want a performing captain leading from the front but keeping in mind Shakib's contribution in the 2019 World Cup, only his availability remains the question going forward.



Mushfiquir Rahim, Ebadot Hossain and Mehedi Hasan Miraz, three of the players whose place in the upcoming Asia Cup squad look certain, enjoy a light moment following a fitness session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. (Inset) Meanwhile, Tamim Iqbal, who stepped down from ODI captaincy recently and will miss the tournament due to injury, spent time with the medical department at the BCB.

PHOTO: AFP



## Bangladesh Army hold East Bengal to 2-2 draw

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army Football Team registered their first point in the Durand Cup with a 2-2 draw against East Bengal at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata yesterday.

The Bangladeshi outfit, who suffered a 5-0 thrashing against Super Giants Mohun Bagan in their opening fixture on August 3, came back from two goals down against East Bengal in yesterday's match.

Spanish forward Saul Crespo gave the Kolkata giants a 34th minute lead from the penalty spot before Javier Siverio, another Spaniard of the ISL outfit, doubled their advantage four minutes into the first-half stoppage time.

The Bangladeshi team, who took a number of players from top-tier outfit Mohammedan SC on loan for this assignment, scored two late goals to stun the local side.

Shahriar Emon pulled one back in the 88th minute with a left-footed placing shot before Meraj Proddhan scored the equaliser in the sixth minute of added time.

Bangladesh Army will play their last group-stage match against Punjab on August 10.

A total of 24 teams including two invited foreign teams are taking part in the 132nd edition of the Durand Cup, considered to be one of the oldest football tournaments in the world.



Thailand's Nitithorn Thippong prevailed in the Mandiri Indonesia Open yesterday after a gripping finish at Pondok Indah Golf Course. Having started the day with a comfortable five-shot margin, he was pushed all the way to the finish line, closing with an even-par 72, for an 18-under-par total, and a two-stroke triumph over Australian Scott Hend, Steve Lewton from England and Chinese-Taipei's Lee Chieh-po, who all carded 68s. Bangladesh's Siddiqui Rahman, meanwhile, finished the 500,000-dollar event at 51st position, earning 2150 dollars in the process. This was the first event of the Asian Tour season following a three-month midseason break.

PHOTO: AFP