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I think it's going to be an exciting game. We are very much motivated. The team has been training and working hard for 24 days already. We have prepared well, we are confident and we expect a very tight game and hopefully we will make things very difficult for India.

Bangladesh coach
JAVIER CABRERA

When you play against big brother, you always want to win. So, we want to win against India. There is pressure but we are focused on the match because you all know what happened over the last one year. We feel pressure but we are cool.

Bangladesh captain
JAMAL BHUIYAN

Hamza's inclusion in the Bangladesh national team is a positive step, not just for Bangladesh but for Asian football as a whole....His impact on the pitch remains to be seen, but overall, this is a great addition for Bangladesh.

India coach
MANOLO MARQUEZ

One thing we know is that whenever India play Bangladesh, we expect a match full of high intensity, passion and adrenaline, be it in football or any sport. We are focused on getting a result.

India defender
SANDESH JHINGAN

Hamza-spurred Bangladesh vie to conquer India

SPORTS REPORTER

Even though there is a big gulf in ranking as well as performances between Bangladesh and India, the matches involving the two neighbours have over the years produced some thrilling contests. Viewed only statistically, India are clear favourites going into today's AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers fixture against Bangladesh in Shillong, with a 59-position gap in FIFA rankings and having enjoyed a 13-2 win record out of 31 contests between the two nations. However, the recent results have been quite close, with four of the last five contests producing draws, with India winning the other one 2-0. The inclusion of Hamza Choudhury will



definitely bolster Bangladesh's confidence as well as their performance on the pitch, but India, too, have their own talisman in the form of Sunil Chhetri. The 40-year-old Bengaluru FC forward, who returned from retirement earlier this month, has been a thorn in Bangladesh's side, scoring five out

of India's six most recent goals against the men in red and green. Preparation-wise, the two teams are at the opposite extremes. While Chhetri's return helped India end a long winless run in international football in a 3-0 win against Maldives last week, Bangladesh did not play any practice match, except for one against an academy side, during their 12-day preparation camp in Saudi Arabia. The results from 2024 are not too positive either following an uptick in results in the previous year. But the Bangladesh team and their fans are hoping Hamza's inclusion will start a new resurgence in football, starting with a positive result in Shillong.



BANGLADESH VS INDIA

Fixture: 2027 Asian Cup Qualifiers Third round, Group C
Venue: Shillong
Kick-off: 7:30 pm
Telecast: T Sports, Star Sports 3
Matchday: 1
Other teams in group: Hong Kong, Singapore
Bangladesh Ranking: 185
Coach: Javier Cabrera
Captain: Jamal Bhuiyan

Asian Cup appearance: 1 (1980)
India Ranking: 126
Coach: Manolo Marquez
Captain: Sunil Chhetri
Asian Cup appearance: 5 (1964, 1984, 2011, 2019, 2023)
Head-to-head Record: Matches: 31
Bangladesh won: 2
India won: 13

Drawn: 16
Results of last five matches:
2021 SAFF Championship: India 1 – 1 Bangladesh
2021 Asian Cup Qualifiers: India 2 – 0 Bangladesh
2019 World Cup Qualifier: India 1 – 1 Bangladesh
2014 FIFA friendly: India 2 – 2 Bangladesh
2013 SAFF Championship: India 1 – 1 Bangladesh



TAMIM'S HEART ATTACK and a decision that saved his life

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Yesterday was supposed to be just another day at the office for Tamim Iqbal, who was at the BKSP, captaining the star-studded Mohammedan Sporting Club against bottom-placed Shinepukur Cricket Club in an eighth round fixture of the Dhaka Premier League (DPL).

While Tamim went out for the toss, back at the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) headquarters in Mirpur, the officials were preparing for a board of directors meeting set to begin at 12:00 pm.

But in a matter of hours, Tamim was not in the field vying for victory but lying in a hospital bed in Savar fighting for his life after suffering a major heart attack during the match, board officials had cancelled the meeting and were rushing to Savar while millions around the world were refreshing their Facebook feed, trying to find the latest update of their beloved Tamim.

The news of Tamim's heart



attack spread like wildfire, people were in disbelief and fearing the worst and only could breathe easy a few hours into the incident when doctors at the KPJ Specialised Hospital in Savar, where Tamim is being treated, officially announced that the 36-year-old has regained consciousness.

However, the match in Mohammedan did not stop as Tamim's Mohammedan teammates

which included Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah and Mehedi Hasan Miraz, played the match with a heavy heart, won the contest by seven wickets and then took no time to visit their captain at the hospital.

Meanwhile, Tamim's treatment procedure was followed by a series of wise decisions taken by a group of individuals which potentially saved his life.

The entire ordeal began

innocently enough, with Tamim initially complaining of gastro liver problems, was taken to KPJ Specialised Hospital – three kilometres away from BKSP – and underwent some initial treatment before returning to the venue once again.

Soon, a helicopter was flown into BKSP to take Tamim to Dhaka for treatment at a hospital in the capital but by the time he was near the helicopter, his medical condition had deteriorated drastically.

"Tamim was not even conscious. Dalim [team trainer] was pressing on his chest, foam was coming out of his mouth, there was no pulse," match referee Debabrata Paul, who witnessed the entire episode, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"I think our quick decision [to take Tamim to KPJ Hospital instead of boarding the helicopter] was very important. Later the doctors also acknowledged it and appreciated the decision as it played a key role in Tamim's wellbeing," said Debabrata, who also expressed his satisfaction with the treatment received at the

hospital.

"As I was the match referee, I talked to the CEO [Nizamuddin Chowdhury] and told him to contact to the hospital so that we can get treatment as soon as we arrive there.

"By the grace of the Almighty, everything was coordinated very well. We came here and found a team of the doctors ready. Tamim was taken to the emergency room and his treatment got underway... The doctors did everything in the shortest possible time and also in a proper way," he added.

Tamim is currently under observation for 48 hours at the hospital's Coronary Care Unit (CCU) after a successful stenting surgery. An Angiogram had shown major artery blockage with one of his arteries blocked a 100 percent and another partially.

Tamim's next course of treatment will be known soon enough but yesterday's quick decision making and swift actions at the hospital played the most significant part in potentially saving the cricketer's life.

Argentina on the brink, Brazil stand in their way

AGENCIES

Argentina will aim to secure their official spot at the 2026 FIFA World Cup in a highly anticipated clash against Brazil on Wednesday (6am, Bangladesh time) at the Buenos Aires' Estadio Mas Monumental.

Lionel Scaloni's side top the South American qualifiers with 28 points, while Brazil trail in third place with 21 points. Despite Lionel Messi's absence due to injury, La Albiceleste delivered a gritty 1-0 victory over Uruguay, courtesy of Thiago Almada's second-half wonder strike.

With this, Argentina ended their three-game winless away run and extended their dominance atop the table.

Argentina's remarkable home form bolsters their confidence: seven wins in their last eight home

qualifiers, including 11 clean sheets in 12. They also hold a four-match unbeaten streak against Brazil, highlighted by a 1-0 win in Rio de Janeiro last year, thanks to Nicolas Otamendi.

Brazil, on the other hand, have shown resurgence after a slow start to the campaign. The Selecao are on a five-game unbeaten run, capped by Vinicius Junior's thrilling 99th-minute winner against Colombia last week. However, Brazil's recent away struggles, with just one win in their last five qualifiers, add to their challenge.

This iconic rivalry promises high stakes and drama as Brazil seek their first win over Argentina since 2019, while the reigning world champions looks to cement their path to the World Cup in front of a roaring home crowd.



Epic comebacks set stage for Nations League semifinals

Epic comebacks set the stage for the UEFA Nations League semifinals, with Portugal, Germany, Spain, and France advancing. In Lisbon, Cristiano Ronaldo scored once and missed a penalty before Francisco Trincao's extra-time brace led Portugal past Denmark 5-3 on aggregate. Ronaldo, subbed off, passionately supported from the sidelines. Germany survived Italy's late surge to win 5-4 on aggregate after a dominant first half in Munich. Spain edged the Netherlands on penalties, while France overcame Croatia thanks to Mike Maignan's heroics—his two penalty saves proved decisive. With Ronaldo's leadership and Maignan's brilliance, the semifinals promise high drama on June 5.

PHOTO: REUTERS/FACEBOOK