

Headline	Kumar keeps his fingers crossed that he'll be fit for World Series		
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Kumar keeps his fingers crossed that he'll be fit for World Series

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: Goalkeeper S. Kumar (*pic*) will only know today whether he is fit to play in the World Series at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil from April 26-May 4.

The 39-year-old from Tampin went for an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) on Tuesday to see whether he has recovered from a thigh injury.

The Tenaga Nasional employee suffered a 7.5 cm tear in his right thigh during a match in the Malaysia Hockey League (MHL) last month.

He did not feature in the six-nation Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh last month and Malaysia finished third behind champions South Korea and runners-up India.

Kumar said he did not train for a month and only started his rehabilitation three weeks ago.

"I went for an MRI on Tuesday and the doctor will inform me tomorrow (today) if I have recovered to play in the World Series.

"I want to play in the World Series and I am keeping my fingers crossed that I will be cleared to play in the tournament, which is the qualifying tournament for next year's 2020 Tokyo Olympics," said Kumar.

"I have played in the World Cup twice but I have yet to play in the Olympics," said Kumar, who has represented Malaysia since 1999.

Meanwhile, Tenaga Nasional have come in to sponsor RM500,000 for the World Series next week.

Malaysian Hockey Confederation (MHC) president Datuk Seri Subahan Kamal said that they need RM1 million to stage the World Series next week.

"We managed to get RM600,000 and we still need RM400,000 to organise the tournament. We have written to a few sponsors and we also hope to get the financial support from National Sports Council (NSC) and the Youth and Sports Ministry.

"My concern is to make sure our national team perform in the tournament to reach the final and win the tournament. Our players are in high spirits and they want to prove that they are among the best," said Subahan.

Eight teams will feature in the tournament and Malaysia are drawn in Group B with Brazil, China and Italy while Group A comprises Canada, Belarus, Austria and Wales.

The World Series is the qualifying tournament for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.