

Headline	Can't stick to any keeper		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	24 Jun 2019	Language	English
Circulation	175,986	Readership	527,958
Section	Sports	Page No	35,36
ArticleSize	850 cm ²	Journalist	N/A
PR Value	RM 128,331		



Custodian crisis



They keep us alarmed: (from left) Muhd Hairi Abdul Rahman, Muhd Hafizuddin Othman and S. Kumar.

Malaysian hockey is facing a custodian crisis at the worst possible time – ahead of the 2020 Olympics qualifier in October. Muhd Hairi Abdul Rahman is the latest goalkeeper to be sidelined due to a knee surgery two weeks ago. The 29-year-old stepped up as the No. 1 keeper in the absence of two others – Muhd Hafizuddin Othman and S. Kumar. Hairi admitted the goalkeepers' injury woes may spell disaster for the team's Olympic dream. >Story by AFTAR SINGH on Page 35

Headline	Can't stick to any keeper		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	24 Jun 2019	Language	English
Circulation	175,986	Readership	527,958
Section	Sports	Page No	35,36
ArticleSize	850 cm ²	Journalist	N/A
PR Value	RM 128,331		

Can't stick to any keeper

Crisis at the back – Hairi the latest custodian to join the crocked list

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's goalkeeping department has been plagued by injury woes again. This time, Muhd Hairi Abdul Rahman, is the latest to join the crocked list.

The 29-year-old Hairi, who featured in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh in March and the FIH Series Finals in Bukit Jalil in April, has been sidelined due to a knee surgery two weeks ago.

Hairi stepped up as the No. 1 goalkeeper following the absence of two others – Muhd Hafizuddin Othman and S. Kumar.

Hafizuddin suffered a hamstring injury that ruled him out for five months last year while top goalkeeper S. Kumar picked up a 7.5cm muscle tear in his right thigh during a match in the Malaysia Hockey League (MHL) in February.

Kumar has recovered from the injury and is expected to play in a Tour in Europe but his form is questionable.

Hairi admits the goalkeepers' injury woes are major headaches for the country ahead of the Olympic Games qualifier.

"Injury is unavoidable in sports but to have most of the goalkeepers injured is not good for the national team," said Hairi, who played in the World Cup in Bhubaneswar, India, last December.

He will skip next month's playing Tour in Europe and has withdrawn from the invitational Olympic tournament in Japan in August.

Hairi is also unsure whether he will recover in time for the playoff matches in October to qualify for the Tokyo Olympic Games.

"This is the worst injury I've suffered in my playing career. I've been undergoing rehabilitation for the last two weeks and it will take two to three months for me to recover," he said.

"I don't want to take the risk of aggravating my injury by making a quick comeback. I will



Latest casualty: Goalkeeper Muhd Hairi Abdul Rahman went under the knife two weeks' ago and is not sure whether he can recover in time for the Tokyo Olympic qualifier in October.

take my time to recover and I'm not sure whether I can make it for the Olympics qualifier," said Hairi, who made his national debut at the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh in 2016.

Malaysia have a fourth goalkeeper in Muhd Zaimi Mat Deras, who played in the Sultan Azlan Cup in March.



Down and out: Goalkeeper S. Kumar has been out of action after sustaining a muscle tear while playing in the Malaysia Hockey League in February.