



## 'Last chance for Sabbir Rahman'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan has issued a warning to batsman Sabbir Rahman, promising dire consequences if there is even one more

disciplinary issue concerning the batsman.

The BCB boss made the statement while speaking to reporters at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday after Sabbir's inclusion in

controversy. The right-hander was included in the side a month before completing his six month ban from international

the Bangladesh squad for the

upcoming three-match ODI

series in New Zealand caused

cricket. "After Sabbir was banned, I received a lot of requests to include him in the team but normally we don't allow such things. But at times when the player realises his mistakes and shows some changes in his behaviour, then on that basis requests continue to come. Obviously this is his last

chance. It's not important that he was recalled 15-20 days before his ban finished and if he does something again he will be banned for life.

"I think it would have been good for Sabbir if he had taken some more time and thought deeply before making a comeback as it is very risky for him now. Even a small mistake now can finish his career," Nazmul said.

Asked how they could include a cricketer who is yet to finish a ban, Nazmul informed that he

thought Sabbir's ban would be finished before he approved the final squad. "I am not interfering at all as

they [the selectors] are doing everything and regarding Sabbir's inclusion, I feel that it was because of the demand from the coach and captain to include him," he said. "Mainly, they wanted him for the World

Cup and said that if he is able to perform, then he has a chance. Other than that I don't see any reason to include him 15-20 days before his suspension ends. Definitely performance is also a big reason as he scored 85 runs in a BPL game which may have encouraged them."

# Lewis ton provides template

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Chattogram



two-week layoff is a long time in a T20 tournament like the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), where matches are played almost every day.

tion from the Comilla Victorians management might have been that the West Indies cricketer would get back the feel of the game with some runs under his belt. After missing four matches since his injury on January 13, Lewis did a lot more than that as the left-hander returned in style to strike a magnificent ton -- the fourth of this season's BPL.

kept Khulna's batters at bay with figures of three for 14.

His innings continued the streak of foreign players being the only ones to score tons this season. Laurie Evans, Alex Hales and Rilee Rossouw were the three others who attained this feat. Lewis's domination resulted in Comilla posting the second-highest total in BPL history and portrayed the steely determination needed to perform when the going gets tough. It was not rosy for Lewis at the beginning and he limped off at the end but remained unbeaten on a magnificent 49-ball 109 -- his second BPL ton at the

#### **SCORES IN BRIEF**

**COMILLA VICTORIANS V KHULNA TITANS** 

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

COMILLA: 237 for 5 in 20 overs (Lewis 109 not out, Imrul 39, Shamsur 28 not out; Mahmudullah 2-32, Brathwaite 2-42, Shoriful 1-53) KHULNA: 157 all out in 18.5 overs (Taylor 50, Junaid 27; Wahab 3-14, Afridi 3-27, Perera 1-28) Result: Comilla won by 80 runs. Player-of-the-match: Evin Lewis.

Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

It also raised questions why local batsmen, with more experience in these conditions, did not reach the magical mark of a T20 ton. Some have gotten close -- Tamim Iqbal, Lewis's opening partner, hit a vital 73 in this edition while Mushfigur Rahim's 41-ball 75 took Chittagong Vikings to an impressive win in Dhaka. Yasir Ali too scored 78 against Rangpur Riders, who were also at the receiving end of the highest score by a local batsman -- Sabbir Rahman's 85.

T20 tons are complex because not all batters get to face the first and the last over during a match the way Lewis did yesterday. However, match situation aside, particular strategies has merits in this format. Having suffered an injury scare after he jarred

his knee while taking a quick single, he planned his innings well, keeping the scenario in mind. Although not batting comfortably, he picked his bowlers well, taking young pacer Saddam Hossain -- playing his first BPL game this season -- to the cleaners. He plundered 28 runs in the 15th over, hitting four sixes that took him from 50 to 75 in the over. In fact, nine of his 10 sixes yesterday came against Saddam and another youngster in left-arm pacer Shoriful Islam.

That kind of T20 instinct is yet to be shown by some of the local batsmen as quick runs are needed but so is awareness. Having gotten starts, they did not capitalise even though the talent is there. Of the 15 tons scored in six editions, only three were by Bangladeshis -- Shahriar Nafees, Mohammad Ashraful and Sabbir Rahman.

Tamim recently said: "If one wants to get to the next level, they will have to make these innings longer. For a Bangladesh player to attain the feat would be a big achievement."

Lewis demonstrated what the next level is by drowning Khulna in sorrow in a 80-run win after a hattrick from Pakistan paceman Wahab Riaz -- the second of this season and only the third in BPL-saw the Titans bundled out for 157 in 18.5 overs.



**NAZMUL HASSAN** 

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AB de Villiers, dubbed as Mr. 360, authored an unbeaten 50-ball 100 and established a record third-wicket 184-run partnership with Alex Hales (85) in Rangpur Riders' BPL match against Dhaka

AB MASTERCLASS PUTS RANGPUR ON TOP

Dynamites in Chattogram yesterday. The Riders won the encounter by eight wickets.

PHOTO: STAR

## The promise of Afif and Yasir

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram



While established stars like Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza are never away from the

headlines, it is the performance of two young talents in this year's Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) that can give Bangladesh some new faces to look to.

22-year-olds Afif Hossain for Sylhet Sixers and Yasir Ali in Chittagong Vikings have made steady progress during this year's Bangladesh Premier League and have authored classy knocks of their own. Both have played in local cricket and are not unknown entities in international cricket. Afif and Yasir were both part of the Bangladesh Under-19 World Cup squad and the former was the vice-captain in the 2016 U-19 Asia Cup.

Afif, a left-handed batsman who bowls right-arm off-spin, was named the rising star of the Bangladesh squad for his exploits in the 2018 Under-19 World Cup, where he became the young Tigers' highest run-scorer with 276 runs. Not short on BPL experience, he had first featured in the BPL in 2016 for Rajshahi Kings and bagged a fifer on debut.

This season, he has shown his ability with the bat, playing freely and giving his side momentum. Although yet to strike a perform who are going to play for their fifty, Afif's 28-ball 45 -- one where he took country. We must not take our eyes off that. pressure off a star like David Warner -against Chittagong Vikings and his 49 against Khulna Titans both contributed to Helmot added.

his side's cause. Yasir started off as a burly young man, which made it difficult. He always had power-hitting ability but lacked the fitness to play long innings. Coming off the back of two BPL seasons where he warmed the bench, this time around he has grabbed his chance in place of the out-of-form Mohammad Ashraful in the Chittagong Vikings lineup. He created the impact needed in T20s with a 34-ball 41 against their former teammates' heights.

the Titans before striking an impressive 48ball 78 against Rangpur Riders, which was followed by a 38-ball 58 against Rajshahi Kings, to pick up his third fifty of the tournament so far. The change in fitness worked.

"When I first met him [Yasir] in the academy he was just a young player in the Academy squad who probably needed to do some work in conditioning. He has some skills, he had to improve on his fielding and fitness and he has done that. Now see what happened -- his batting has now gone to another level," said Chittagong coach and head coach of BCB's performance unit Simon Helmot, who worked with both Afif and Yasir in age-group teams.

"He can work the ball, hit with power, hit over midwicket, straight and extra cover. We





YASIR ALI

**AFIF HOSSAIN** 

are excited about his prospect in Bangladesh Cricket," he remarked. "This is the exciting part of BPL. We are seeing guys who can We have seen growth of players. Afif from Sylhet, he has started to grow and develop,"

"We have a T20 world cup in Australia, October 2020. So this competition is very important for us because it gives us a look at the talent that is going to represent our

country in a year's time." The duo were a part of the same U-19 squad in the 2014 World Cup that featured the likes of Mustafizur Rahman, Liton Das and Mehedi Hasan Miraz. It would be hard to bet against these young Tigers reaching

### Intense India in 'auto mode'

#### Kohli bids farewell to New Zealand

AGENCIES, Wellington



Satisfied with a run of rich form from his team that

continued yesterday with them sealing the ODI series against New Zealand with a seven-wicket win in the third ODI in Wellington, India skipper Virat Kohli said that they were in 'auto mode' going into the 2019 World Cup. India, who clinically chased down

a 247-run target in 43 overs, are runaway favourites for the 50-over global tournament after dominating series wins in Australia and New Zealand.

Kohli, who will head back to India and miss the remaining two ODIs and the ensuing T20I series, said that there aren't too many areas of concern for him at the moment.

It put India 3-0 up and world player of the year Kohli said with the series wrapped up early it was time for him to step aside for the remaining two matches and the following Twenty20 series.

"I couldn't have asked for a better performance after the first two clinical performances and just the relentI haven't had a break for a long time. It's been a very hectic Australian tour and now I go on a break very happy, 3-0 up, sealing the series and I can relax and enjoy my break.

> **VIRAT KOHLI** INDIA CAPTAIN

lessness of the side is something that really pleases me," he said at the post-match press conference.

Kohli's 60 off 74 deliveries and a 113-run partnership with Rohit Sharma formed the backbone of India's run chase. Sharma top-scored with 62 while Ambati Rayudu was unbeaten on 40

Dinesh Karthik on 38. "If you look at the last five

games Itwo in Australia and three here], I have said that number four is a position that we are looking to solidify but when Rayudu starts playing like that, you start feeling more confident about the batting

first three games, we have a lot to worry about," the skipper exuded confidence.

Asked if the intensity will drop in his absence, the skipper replied: "Not at all. Now things are more or less

"I don't need to throw myself around and ask others to do the same. When these two guys [Karthik and Rayudu] were finishing the game for us, we were all sitting together and clapping for every run."

SCORES IN BRIEF

Latham 51; Kumar 2-46, Shami 3-41, Chahal 2-51, Pandya 2-45) INDIA: 245 for 3 in 43 overs (Sharma 62, Dhawan 28, Kohli 60, Rayudu 40

Shami.



think for the sake of

team combination it

was thought that I

would not be needed

for the same position

[of another batsman].

Probably that is the

reason why I am not in

their head.

**IMRUL KAYES** ON HIS EXCLUSION

FROM THE NATIONAL TEAM FOR

THE NEW ZEALAND TOUR

after being reported for a suspect action, the International Cricket Council said Monday.

The part-time spinner's action was flagged by match officials, citing concerns over its legality, a day after the first one-day international against Australia in Sydney on January 12.



India captain Virat Kohli added 60 runs, laced with six boundaries and a six, as the side chased down New Zealand's 243-run total with seven wickets to spare in the third ODI at Mount

Maunganui yesterday.

If they [the selectors] clear it up [places for lineup," Kohli said. improvement] then I "I don't think after looking at the can work on that. I can work better. I think it is better for me to know the reasons why I am not included in the running in auto mode for us. team. I don't know, I

NEW ZEALAND: 243 all out in 49 overs (Williamson 28, Taylor 93,

not out, Karthik 38 not out; Boult 2-40) Results: India won by 7 wickets and lead the five-match series 3-0.

Player-of-the-match: Mohammed