



An on-song Bangladesh batter Liton Das is poetry in motion and once again the stylish right-hander made his presence felt with a 44-ball 60 during his side's 61-run victory in the first T20I of the two-match series against Afghanistan in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

# NASUM SHOWS calm in heat of Powerplay

- 155 for eight is Bangladesh's highest total against Afghanistan in T20Is. Bangladesh's previous highest score against Afghanistan was 144 for six in Dehradun back in 2018.
- Nasum Ahmed's four for 10 is the best bowling figure by anyone in Bangladesh-Afghanistan T20Is, surpassing Rashid Khan's figures of four for 12 in Dehradun in 2018.
- This was also Nasum's joint-best bowling figures in T20Is after he recorded a similar figure against New Zealand last year.
- Nasum became the first Bangladesh bowler to take four wickets inside the Powerplay in T20Is.
- Shakib Al Hasan became the first left-arm spinner in history to pick 400 international wickets in white-ball cricket (ODIs and T20Is). He is the ninth bowler in history to pick 400 wickets in limited-overs formats.

## SPORTS REPORTER

There are few spinners in T20 cricket that prefer to bowl in Powerplays, when the batters tend to go hard and put runs up in a hurry at the start, but Nasum Ahmed is among that select few that can pull it off regularly.

The left-arm spinner registered joint-T20-best figures of four wickets for 10 runs as Afghanistan were bundled out for just 94 in chase of a 155-run target to seal a comprehensive 61-run win for the Tigers in the first T20I yesterday.

The mantra to keep things tight up front paid dividends for 27-year-old Nasum, who broke the back of the Afghan batting line-up right. At one point, the visitors were reeling on 20 for four inside five overs and all four wickets had been supplied by Nasum, who became the first Bangladeshi to take four wickets in the Powerplay of a T20 innings.

"I was challenged to limit it to twelve runs in two overs before the start of the innings and I am happy that I picked four wickets and conceded ten runs," the man of the match said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

Nasum's first victim was the in-form Rahmanullah Gurbaz. As Gurbaz attempted to make some room, Nasum dragged the length back and away from the batter and he could only top-edge it.

Nasum's variations in terms of pace also kept the Afghan batters on their toes.



Hazratullah Zazai was lucky to be dropped by debutant Munim Shahriar, but Nasum got his man soon enough.

Just an over later, Nasum bowled a much slower, looping delivery to Zazai, who totally mistimed the shot and top-edged to mid-off for a simple catch.

"He [Nasum] is not a typical left-arm spinner. From my experience of playing him in the nets, he always tries something

different and mixes his pace really well. It's easy for the batters to pick things up when someone bowls at the same rhythm. But he is different from that point," Liton Das, who top-scored with sixty off 44 balls for the Tigers yesterday, said.

Nasum's strategy of keeping things simple and tight also earned him the wicket of Darwish Rasool, who tried to play across the line and was bowled. Nasum then forced Karim Janat into a shot with a turning delivery going away from the batsman and Janat handed a simple catch as he tried to get something on the ball.

"We had a chat in the team meeting that the target was something we could bank on and defend if we could get early wickets. I think Nasum's bowling was game-changing for us. If they were 40 for 1 after the Powerplay, it would have been a different ball game. I think the wicket was better to bat on and the way Nasum bowled was extraordinary," said Liton.

However, it was not the first time that Nasum provided early breakthroughs. Last year, Nasum registered his previous best bowling figures of four for ten against New Zealand and even then the left-arm picked up two wickets inside the Powerplay. The Sylhet native provide instrumental in bundling the Kiwis out for just 93 and the eventual win.

Undoubtedly, Nasum is proving to be the go-to man for the skipper in Powerplays.

## WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

# Fight for 50-over glory begins

## AGENCIES

It has been a five-year wait since England won the 2017 title on home soil, but after a 12-month postponement due to Covid-19, the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup get underway when hosts New Zealand play West Indies in Tauranga today.

The tournament is an eight-team round-robin involving Australia, England, New Zealand, Pakistan, West Indies, South Africa, India and Bangladesh.

Australia will go in as favourites to win their seventh title. However, they will face stiff competition from defending champions England, hosts New Zealand, 2017 runners-up India and the world's second-ranked ODI side, South Africa.

BANGLADESH'S TOURNAMENT FIXTURES	March 5: Vs South Africa, 4:00am.
	March 7: Vs New Zealand, 4:00am.
	March 14: Vs Pakistan, 4:00am.
	March 18: Vs West Indies, 4:00am.
	March 22: Vs India, 7:00am.
	March 25: Vs Australia, 4:00am.
	March 27: Vs England, 4:00am.
	<b>**All are Bangladesh Standard Time</b>

# Tamim, Shakib return to Tigers' Test squad

## SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced Bangladesh's Test and ODI squad for the upcoming tour of South Africa, scheduled for March-April this year, in which the two stalwarts of Bangladesh cricket – Tamim Iqbal and Shakib Al Hasan – made their way back into the Test squad.

Tamim last played in the longest format for the Tigers in their Sri Lanka tour last year and went on to miss the away series against Zimbabwe, Pakistan at home and the away series against New Zealand. Shakib, on the other hand, only missed the historic New Zealand series this year. However, batters Naim Sheikh and Fazle Mahmud exit from the Test squad that travelled to New Zealand.

Shakib had previously asked the BCB about his intention to skip the South Africa series before the Indian Premier League auction. However, as the all-rounder remained unsold in the auction, Shakib's involvement in the Test team was confirmed. The ODI squad is pretty much unchanged, from the one that featured against Afghanistan at home recently, with Khaled Ahmed being the only inclusion.

Test squad: Mominul Haque (Captain), Tamim Iqbal, Shadman Islam, Najmul Hossain, Mushfiqur Rahim, Liton Das, Shakib Al Hasan, Nurul Hasan Yasir Ali, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Abu Jayed, Ebadot Hossain, Shoriful Islam, Khaled Ahmed, Shohidul Islam, Mahmudul Hasan Joy.



# Mud-slinging in DPL still in vogue

## SPORTS REPORTER

Former Prime Doleshwar head coach Mizanur Rahman alleged on Thursday that the club did not pay his salary for the last season. Mizanur, who joined Gazi Group Cricketers this time around, added that he had complained to the BCB about unpaid salaries.

News surfaced on Wednesday that Prime Doleshwar would not participate in the upcoming Dhaka Premier League, which was supposed to be a 12-team league. It was learned that Doleshwar blamed coach Mizanur and captain Forhad Reza for bad performances last season in a letter to CDDM and cited their misconduct as the reason for pulling out.

CDDM chairman Salahuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star that no such complaints were made in the letter. "We can't give a decision yet, since they can register at any time before the tournament begins. They didn't cite any reasons," Salahuddin said on the last day of the DPL players' transfers yesterday.

"They (Doleshwar) did not pay us and are now questioning our motives," Mizanur told The Daily Star yesterday. "The timing of their allegations is curious. I am not in Dhaka so I don't know why they are spreading these rumours and allegations now. We have already complained to the board."

"When I am in Dhaka, I will be able to talk to them and the board," he concluded.

The Daily Star could not contact any club official for comment.

# Rohit wants to give Kohli a 'special' victory

## AFF, MOHALI

Test cricket is the "real cricket," Virat Kohli said yesterday ahead of his 100th game for India in the five-day format, his first since stepping down as captain in January.

"I personally never grew up thinking I have to score small runs, the idea was to score huge runs," Kohli said ahead of the match in Mohali against Sri Lanka – also the visitors' 300th Test.

"My idea was to bat long. I used to enjoy batting for long periods of time, try to win games for my team, or try to get a first-innings lead, which is the format we used to follow," he said.

"These are the things which reveal your true character. I just felt that Test cricket needed to stay alive, because this for me is real cricket," Kohli said in the interview with the Indian cricket board.

Kohli, 33, threw in the towel as India's most successful Test leader with 40 wins and 17 losses in 68 Tests as captain. Under his leadership, India rose to top the Test rankings and stayed there for over three years, beating all comers at home and away including winning a series in Australia for the first time.

But India failed to win any international tournaments, including last year's inaugural World Test Championship, when they lost to New Zealand in the final. A few months later, Kohli quit as T20



captain after a disastrous World Cup that included a heavy defeat to arch-rivals Pakistan and failing to make it to the knock-out stage. He was then sacked as one-day captain and after publicly falling out with the head of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, Saurav Ganguly resigned the Test captaincy

in January following a series loss in South Africa.

Rohit Sharma, who last month replaced Kohli as captain across all formats, was one of a string of players past and present to pay tribute to his predecessor on Thursday ahead of the landmark match.

"As a Test team, we stand in very good position. If you look at the last five years of our Test cricket... the whole credit goes to Virat for getting us going in this particular format," Rohit told reporters.

"What he has done with the Test team was brilliant to see," Rohit told reporters, saying he wanted to give Kohli a "special" victory over the visitors – who have never won a Test in India.

Sachin Tendulkar said in a video message to Kohli that it had been "fantastic" to watch him over the years. "Numbers will have their roles, but your real strength is being able to motivate the whole generation," he said.

"That's been your real strength and your immense contribution to Indian cricket. That is something which I would say is your real success."

India's coach Rahul Dravid said: "To be able to play one (Test) is great. To play 100 is a fantastic achievement. "It's an achievement Virat Kohli can be very proud of. It's a great achievement for one of India's greatest players. Just looking at his fitness and looking at where he is, I think he has a lot more to go."