

Tamim's illustrious career in numbers

- 14: Number of ODI centuries – the highest by a Bangladesh player.
- 16: His international career's time-span in years. Tamim debuted as an 17-year-old in February, 2007, against Zimbabwe in Harare, and played an iconic 53-ball 51-run knock against India in the ODI World Cup the month after.
- 25: Number of international centuries across three formats – the most by a Bangladesh player.
- 37: Number of ODIs he captained Bangladesh. The Tigers won on 21 of those occasions.
- 56: Number of ODI half-centuries – the most by a Bangladesh player.
- 60: Win-rate for Tamim as the ODI skipper – most by any Bangladesh player who captained the nation at least five times.
- 103: Number of sixes in ODIs – most by a Bangladesh player.
- 292: Starred in Bangladesh's highest ODI partnership for any wicket with Liton Das against Zimbabwe in 2020.
- 312: Starred in Bangladesh's highest opening partnership in Tests with Imrul Kayes against Pakistan in 2015.
- 389: Number of international matches.
- 916: Number of boundaries in ODIs – the most by a Bangladesh player.
- 8313: Number of ODI runs – the highest by a Bangladesh player.
- 15205: Number of international runs across three formats – the highest by a Bangladesh player.



The defining image of Tamim Iqbal's desire to put the team and his nation first shone brightest in the 2018 Asia Cup, when the southpaw came back out to bat after retiring hurt so the team could have one final push. The left-hander had to fend off just one delivery, doing so with utmost bravery and the use of only one hand.

Purveyor of a new beginning held TRUE TO HIS MERITS

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

It was the 2007 World Cup and if one expected a 17-year Bangladesh batsman to be overcome with the nerves of playing against one of the best side in the world in India, they had another think coming. For Tamim Iqbal, just five games deep into his ODI career, showed the meaning of class and domination against a fine India attack.

Bangladesh is a cricket-crazy nation but the Tigers were just in their eighth year of top-class international cricket. With the nation looking for something special from the team, that day became a special occasion.

India's Zaheer Khan was a top-notch bowler, feared by both openers and tail-enders alike and had pace, bounce and ability to cover batters. Within Tamim's 53-ball 51 was a boundless courage to stand tall.

Till his shock retirement yesterday, he had held his own despite being overcome by the emotion that gripped him during his announcement at a city hotel in Chattogram, his hometown.

He copped blows from Zaheer too, but it only served to strengthen his resolve.

He charged Zaheer, dismissing the bowler from his presence straight down the ground – not something expected of a Bangladesh batter against a quick like Zaheer – and it signalled the rise of a new talent. A statement was made by a generational Bangladeshi talent. The shots square off the wicket were a joy to behold and the whole of Bangladesh rejoiced at his arrival.

"That an opening batter could go down the track and hit straight down the ground was not a concept that a Bangladesh



PHOTO: MAZHAR UDDIN

Excerpts from Tamim's presser

"Yesterday (Wednesday ODI) against Afghanistan was my last international game. I'm retiring from international cricket, effective right now.

"It is not that I took this decision abruptly. There are different reasons, which I think isn't necessary to reveal here. I've always said that I play the game to fulfil my father's dream. I don't know how much I've made him proud throughout these 16 years of international career.

"I thank everyone I've played with – whether it's the Under 13s, 15's, 17's, 19's, premier league, national league – and especially my colleagues in the national team. And cricket board (BCB), obviously, having given the opportunity to represent the country for so long and to captain Bangladesh. "Whoever has helped me to grow

as a cricketer or as a human being, I thank all from the bottom of my heart.

"Actually, I don't have much to say. One thing I'll definitely say is that I tried giving my hundred per cent whenever I was on the field.

"There are a lot of other things I want to really say. As you can see, I'm unable to speak. But I hope you all will be able to respect the circumstances. Quitting international cricket is not easy.

"However, I will only request [the media] one thing: about the ones who will play cricket in future, write good or bad or whatever about them but stick to cricket.

"I'll request that you end my topic right here. It's the end, at least as far as international cricket is concerned. Please don't poke around to find what could've happened.

opening batter could fathom before that," his captain in that World Cup Habibur Bashir recalls.

"Our concept was to save our wicket, play along the ground and not go for aerial shots. That was what the coaching concept was like. Tamim Iqbal changed all that and brought a new theory, a culture and the idea of being able to hit an opening bowler like that. That was Bangladesh cricket's new beginning. That was a statement," he reminisced.

"In a World Cup game, on that wicket, it wasn't a small target. His innings, even if small, made everyone's innings easier to accomplish. India did not think that Bangladesh could attack like that. That start from Tamim took the match out of their hands and they received a shock."

That was how Tamim went about his cricket for a majority of his career. Till today, he is the only Bangladesh batter to hit a ton at Lord's, the only one with tons in all three formats for Bangladesh and the only one from the country to cross 15,000 runs in all three formats combined.

The games won under him since he took on captaincy at a difficult time also assured Bangladesh of the current solidity heading to the ODI World Cup in India.

Had he waned so much to be unable to handle the pressure of the international circuit? Much will be speculated regarding the reasons. The grumblings underneath of division may have been pronounced in Tamim's exit. Above all however, whether his fans agree with his decision or not, there cannot be a doubt that Tamim stands by what was a very tough decision.

He took blows but taught how to hit back. In his exit, he will be remembered as having held his own. That is the Tamim everyone always wanted and why he is what he is.

WHAT THEY SAID

He passed the fitness test. Then why did he say in front of the media that he was not fully fit? If he was not fit then how did he get the green signal to play? If he had a problem regarding this, he should have gone to the physio or come to us. What was his intention behind saying this to the media? International cricket doesn't work like that. We never tolerated this and won't do it in the future.
– Nazmul Hassan Papon

Aged 34 years and 108 days, why did you retire so soon? Is it really that you are no longer able to continue? Or is there some sort of pressure that forced you to do so? Maybe many of your fans will look answers of these questions – they will search for answers today and maybe for a long time to come.
– Mashrafe Bin Mortaza

It's been a long journey with you [both] on and off the field with lots of moments & memories together. I'm grateful to you because of all the support you gave us as a brother and captain. We will miss you Tamim bhai
– Taskin Ahmed

Back when I was young and started understanding cricket, I used to watch and enjoy Tamim bhai playing. Didn't think that one day I will have the fortune of playing alongside him. My debut match too came under Tamim bhai's captaincy. I am proud to have played cricket alongside a legendary cricketer. You will be missed a lot in international cricket.
– Shoriful Islam

This picture is the last day of our practice. You are laughing with us Tamim Bhai. Today, you are retiring from international cricket. It's hard for me to accept. You are such a good person; may Allah always bless you brother. Thanks for your great contribution to Bangladesh. We will miss you
– Ebadot Hossain.



We batted together, shared a dressing room. Had a lot of memories together. Can't believe you will not play for Bangladesh anymore. Will miss you badly vai. All the best for your future life.
– Liton Das

Living legend of Bangladesh with more than 15 thousand international runs! I have learned invaluable lessons about the game and life from Tamim bhai. And I am eternally grateful for your unwavering support, belief, and encouragement. You are a great sportsman with godly virtues. The players, the fans and the game itself will miss you, Tamim bhai.
– Mehedi Hasan Miraz

Shocking to hear the news. I can't believe my ears! I will always miss your guidance and your supportive hand on my shoulder Tamim Iqbal bhai.
– Mustafizur Rahman

Receiving my debut cap from you and till now it has been a pleasure to play with such a legend of Bangladesh cricket team. Very shocking to hear [of] your retirement from international cricket. Never imagined that we're going to lose you so quickly, captain.
– Hasan Mahmud

Of friendship, bitterness and uneasy circumstances

SPORTS REPORTER

Both Tamim Iqbal and Shakib Al Hasan made their debuts in close proximity. Tamim was the first to enter the ODI format, Shakib coming in just a few months later. Shakib had debuted first in Tests, ahead of Tamim, who debuted in 2008. In friendship, the two of the big and young characters of Bangladesh cricket took the team to new heights. In their split, it is as if a broken mirror now shows the muddy atmosphere of the cricket fraternity.

Tamim and Shakib were the aggressors, the assets of our cricket that bled new life into the country's cricket. Two youngsters who knew how to stare down the opposition came together and combined to deliver and take Bangladesh to new heights.

They were known as best friends, and as individuals they publicly fawned over their bond as well. They even banked on each other's merits, with many a partnership where the duo showed how they thrived alongside each other.

All good things come to an end though. Even in the gentleman's game, things that happen inside the dressing room and in personal conversations can create a bitter rift. A broken relationship like theirs is

not the first in world cricket, nor will it be the last. It has reportedly been a few years since they talked as 'just friends.'

While their uneasy relationship may have been an open secret to many, the news had stayed out of the public's ears until this year, when BCB president Nazmul



Hassan, in an explosive interview, exposed the strained relationship, bringing the issue to the forefront of Bangladesh cricket.

"This is not a healthy dressing room, that I can guarantee you. This thing [rift between Shakib and Tamim], it's not that I have

not tried to sort it out. I spoke with both of them but I felt that it would not be easy to settle the issue at the moment," the BCB president had said.

Shakib, amongst other qualities, is recognised as someone who can compartmentalise his emotions and focus on bringing out the best of his game, no matter the mental strain he is facing off the field. For Tamim, the scenario became increasingly difficult as the ODI captain as talks of a divided dressing room continued.

The team was left to cater to both big-hearted characters, but it brought out a pressure Tamim may not have felt before. Amidst the lack of runs and recurring injury issues that Tamim faced recently, the very public knowledge of his strained relationship with his friend became an issue.

There were whispers of a change of ODI captaincy and zero transparency, brought along by the remarks from the board president. It in the end effected Tamim and as far as BCB's ways of dealing with senior stars go, it was another ugly mark on the country's cricket.

As administrators, they needed to solve their issues internally and gather both their forces for the upcoming World Cup in India. They failed significantly in that regard.



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