

## 'Good players on good wickets will lead to good cricket'

Harry Tector is amongst the few Irish cricketers who have been roped in by teams in the ongoing 10th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). The Sylhet Strikers' batter, who recently hit a match-winning half-century against Khulna Tigers, spoke to The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin about how he is enjoying his debut season at the BPL and what he hopes to achieve in his career. The excerpts of the interview are given below:

**The Daily Star (DS):** This is your first BPL. Tell us about your experience so far.

**Harry Tector (HT):** My experience so far has been great. From a cricketer's point of view, it's competitive and tough which is awesome for me. So yes, I am enjoying here so far.

**DS:** You have been to Bangladesh a few times before with the Ireland team. Any fond memories here from your previous visits?

**HT:** This is my fourth time here. The first time I came here in Bangladesh was with the Ireland Under-19 team for the World Cup in 2016 and also travelled here with the A team in 2022 and eventually toured with the senior team in 2023. All three visits were different experiences. I think when I first came here during the Under-19 World Cup I was about 15 or 16 years of age. The first game that I played was against India in Mirpur and actually it was the first time I played in a proper stadium which was televised on TV and I don't think I would ever forget that. It was an amazing memory.

**DS:** You have already made a mark playing franchise cricket in West Indies and now in Bangladesh. Where do you want to see yourself in the coming years?

**HT:** I definitely feel I have a long way to go in all formats really. It's great to play franchise cricket all across the world where you meet new players and learn things and that's the thing that motivates me. I just want to be the best cricketer that I can be. Coming here and playing in different sort of wickets and trying to adjust and take the challenge and hopefully play a lot of franchise cricket in future.

**DS:** Do you think the surfaces used in BPL are ideal for T20s?

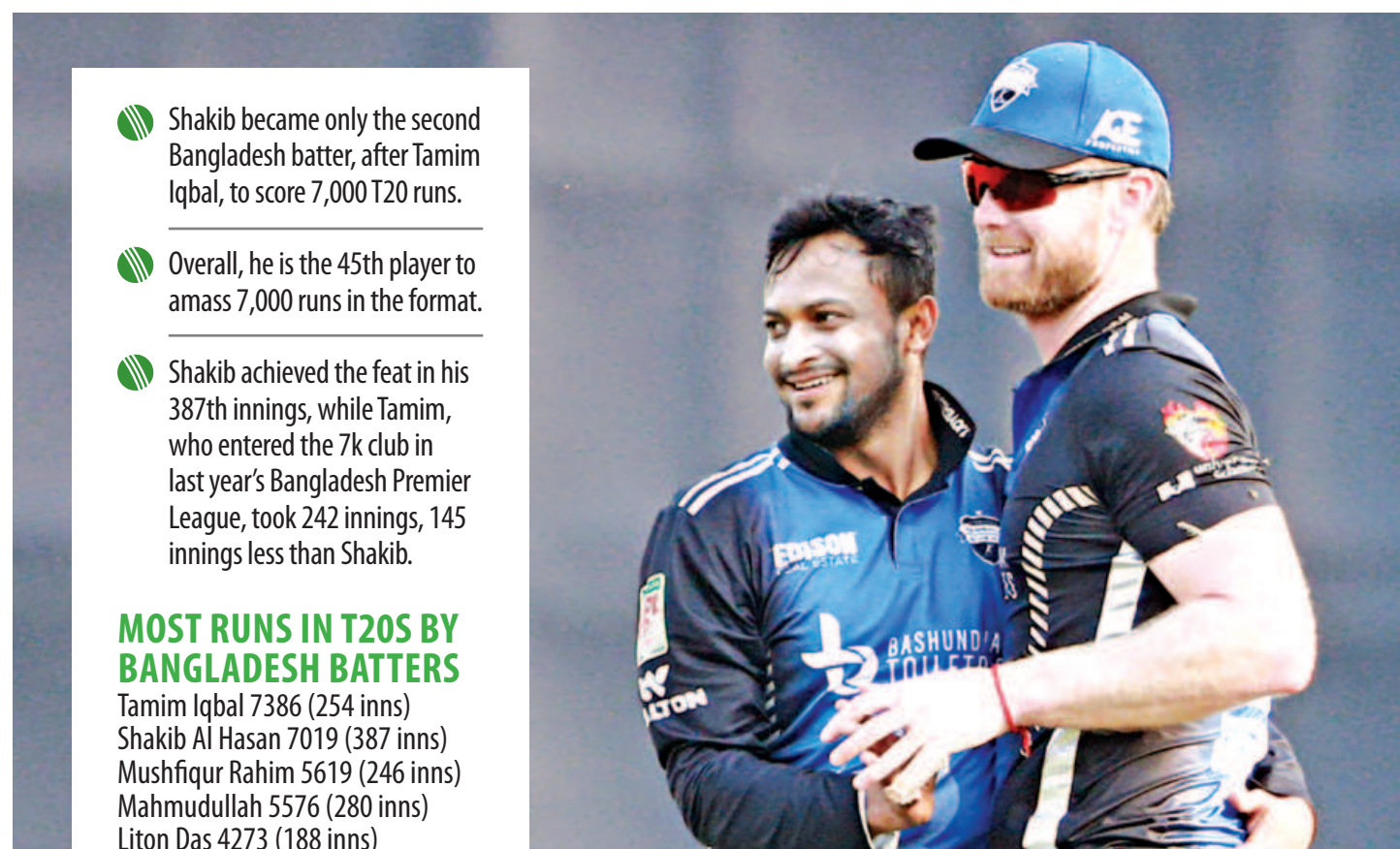
**HT:** It's different and there's definitely been some challenging wickets. I think the wicket that we played on yesterday (Friday) was the best so far and the scores reflects that. When you put good players on good wickets you will get to see some good T20 cricket.

**DS:** What adjustments did you have to make while playing in the BPL?

**HT:** You are always going to get troubled by the spinners when you are playing on spinning wickets. I had the experience of playing here in the past where I sort of faced quite a few of the local bowlers. I think this is the biggest adjustments when you play here compared to Ireland where it has more pace than spin.

**DS:** Is there any Bangladeshi player you look up to?

**HT:** Growing up I used to look up to Tamim Iqbal and I just loved the way he took the game on. I remember his hundred at Lords against England and when Ireland played against Bangladesh back in the 2011 World Cup where he scored a boundary off the first ball and I loved the way he played. Had the opportunity to play against him when he was the captain. Looking up to him growing up and being able to play against him is amazing.



Shakib became only the second Bangladesh batter, after Tamim Iqbal, to score 7,000 T20 runs.

Overall, he is the 45th player to amass 7,000 runs in the format.

Shakib achieved the feat in his 387th innings, while Tamim, who entered the 7k club in last year's Bangladesh Premier League, took 242 innings, 145 innings less than Shakib.

### MOST RUNS IN T20S BY BANGLADESH BATTERS

- Tamim Iqbal 7386 (254 inns)
- Shakib Al Hasan 7019 (387 inns)
- Mushfiqur Rahim 5619 (246 inns)
- Mahmudullah 5576 (280 inns)
- Liton Das 4273 (188 inns)

Rangpur Riders all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan celebrates with teammate Jimmy Neesham after taking a wicket in a Bangladesh Premier League fixture against Chattogram Challengers in Mirpur yesterday. Shakib completed 7,000 T20 runs during a 16-ball 27-run knock in the match and struck twice with the ball to help his side to a thumping 53-run win. Neesham also stamped his authority on his BPL debut on the day with an unbeaten 26-ball 51 and two wickets.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Secret to Neesham's instant success

While both local and foreign batters have struggled to adapt to the conditions, especially in the first half of the tournament, New Zealand's James Neesham feels it's his preparation and professionalism that helped him get into the groove right away. "Obviously watching the videos of the opposition (helped), but to be honest its more personal responsibility to be professional and doing your preparation on what's coming. It's not up to the coach or the captain to tell me how to prepare for the game as it's about personal responsibility. We have got all the technology these days to look through teams, and some guys are familiar with them. So, it's playing your own game and trusting and obviously it worked," Neesham told the media after his man-of-the-match effort.

\*\* Read the full story on The Daily Star website

## Ex-commando's shot into athletics record

ANISUR RAHMAN

Golam Sarwar, a former SWAT commando from Bangladesh Navy, yesterday wrote his name in Bangladesh's athletics history with a new national record in shot put event of the 47th National Athletics Championships at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

A former member of the force

3rd Division Cricket League for East End Club as a pacer. But financial constraints in his family prompted him to join the defence force as a soldier. Despite leaving cricket, the man from Jashore kept himself engaged with sports by taking part in inter-base sports competition in 2014 from where he got selected in shot put event for the central sports team.

on a UN mission. Three years later, Sarwar returned to the field and grabbed his first gold medal in the national championships by clearing 14.23 metres.

Sarwar informed that he had cleared 15.10 metres in training but yesterday he could not repeat his practice performance due to pain on his wrist. However, he believes he can clear 16 metres if he gets better

47th National Athletics Championships

Best male athlete: Golam Sarwar

Best female athlete: Shirin Akter

Best coach: Abdullah Hel Kafi

In 38 events, five national records were set

Results of men's 800m withheld over Army complaint

Marathon will take place on Feb 14

Fastest woman Shirin Akter



Golam Sarwar

grabbed maximum four golds

Fastest man Imranur Rahman won two gold

All gold medals were shared by Army and Navy

Bangladesh Navy won 19 gold, 18 silver, 12 bronze.

Bangladesh Army won 19 gold, 17 silver, 12 bronze.

which provides security for the Prime Minister and the President, Sarwar had a couple of pauses in his athletic pursuits. But he keeps coming back to track and field, which helped him clear 14.89 metres in the shot put event and eclipse the previous record set by Mohammad Ibrahim in 2019 by 0.36 metres.

Sarwar had a decent sporting career before he joined Navy in 2012, having played in the Dhaka

"I probably cleared more than nine metres in shot put event in inter-base sports before getting selected by Bangladesh Navy Sports Control Board," said Sarwar, who started participating in national athletics championships in 2015 but returned empty-handed before becoming runner-up in the 2019 Summer Athletics Championships.

But his sporting pursuits were brought to a halt in 2019 when Sarwar was posted in South Sudan

training facilities.

"If we are given chance at international meet, we will be more inspired and will do more hard work in training. We also need to increase training facilities. If we are given ground, coach and training facilities by the federation, we can do better at international level," said Sarwar, also stressing on the need for arranging better diet with high protein, especially for athletes in throwing events like himself.

## SHORT CORNER



### India and Australia set to renew rivalry in U19 WC final

India and Australia both head into the final today undefeated, having topped their respective groups in both the initial stage and the Super Six stage.

### BPL Chattogram phase ticket prices revealed

The Bangladesh Cricket Board revealed the ticket prices for the forthcoming Chattogram phase of the Bangladesh Premier League yesterday, with the prices ranging from Tk 200 to Tk 2500.

### Hangzhou, Beijing cancel Argentina friendlies after Messi no-show

Sports bosses in China cancelled two friendly matches featuring world champions Argentina, after their star man Lionel Messi failed to turn out for his club in a Hong Kong exhibition match.

### Kohli to miss remaining three England Tests

India batter Virat Kohli's absence from the India squad for undisclosed "personal reasons" will extend to the remaining three Tests against England. The series is level at 1-1 after two matches that Kohli also missed.

\*\* READ FULL STORIES ON THE DAILY STAR WEBSITE

## Kings go three clear

SPORTS REPORTER

Bashundhara Kings opened up a three-point gap at the top of the Bangladesh Premier League following a 3-0 victory over Bangladesh Police at the Rafiq Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium in Mymensingh yesterday.

Miguel Figueira, Rakib Hossain and Asrar Gafurov scored the three goals – all within the first half-hour of play – as the defending champions moved to 18 points from seven matches, three more than Mohammedan Sporting Club.

Meanwhile, Sazzad Hossain's second-half goal helped Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club to a 1-0 win over Fortis FC at the Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni Stadium in Gopalganj. The win helped Jamal to fifth position with seven points while Fortis remained in eighth position with six points.

Elsewhere at the Birshreshtho Ft Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj, Chittagong Abahani registered their second victory of the campaign with a 2-1 win over Sheikh Russel KC.

Sohel Rana and Riaz Uddin Sagor gave the port city side a 2-0 lead early in the second half before Selemani Ndikumana reduced the margin for Sheikh Russel in the 90th minute.

Chittagong Abahani, who were close to the bottom of the table after five rounds of matches, now sit fourth with nine points.



Two clinical strikes from striker Erling Haaland saw Manchester City beat Everton 2-0 at home in the Premier League yesterday. The brace took the Norwegian's tally to 16, the highest in the league after Matchweek 24, and propelled City to the top of the Premier League with 52 points ahead of Liverpool's clash against Burnley. City were two points adrift of The Reds before the contest but made up ground as things got tight at the top.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Resilient Ivory Coast ready for AFCON final challenge

REUTERS, ABIDJAN

Ivory Coast can complete a remarkable recovery and put a successful seal on an absorbing Africa Cup of Nations tournament if they can beat Nigeria on Sunday and claim the title on home soil.

They scraped through the group phase, staged thrilling come-from-behind wins in the last-16 and quarter-final and are now looking to complete one of the great comebacks in the tournament's storied history.

"I don't have the words, I still have trouble taking it all in," admitted Ivory Coast's coach Emere Fae. Fae was catapulted into the job after 70-year-old Frenchman Jean-Louis Gasset was sacked as the Ivorians waited for three days to find out whether they would qualify from the group phase as one of the best third-placed sides.

When they did, they went on to beat holders Senegal on penalties and then snatch a quarter-final win over neighbours Mali, where they were down to 10 men for most of the match, equalised in the 90th minute and then netted the winner at the end of extra time.

The Ivorians lost to Nigeria in their second group game when a cagey contest was decided by a penalty, only awarded after a lengthy VAR review.

Nigeria employed a clever tactical plan, which included an uncharacteristic five-man defence and extensive use of the flanks to attack. Their X-factor, however, remains striker Victor Osimhen, who has had an outstanding tournament despite scoring only once.