

TIM SOUTHEE'S
career in numbers

Tests: 107	Strike-rate: 36.5
Wickets: 391	5w: 3
Average: 30.26	T20Is: 126
Strike-rate: 60	Wickets: 164
5w/10w: 15/1	Economy rate: 8:00
ODIs: 161	Average: 22.38
Wickets: 221	Strike-rate: 16.7
Economy rate: 5.53	5w: 2
Average: 33.70	

“It’s a nice way to fade out after what’s been an incredible journey. Every opportunity to play for New Zealand has been a special moment. It’s been a great ride and I’ve got 17 years of memories which I’ll take with me. “I’ll certainly enjoy a Christmas at home with the family. They’ve been few and far between over the last how many years.”

New Zealand’s retiring pacer
Tim Southee



New Zealand pacer Tim Southee waves to the fans after ending his international career with a victory as the hosts beat England by 423 runs in the third and final Test of a three-match series at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday. The 36-year-old took two wickets and scored 25 runs in his final Test for the Kiwis.

PHOTO: AFP

Rangpur, Metro
book qualifiers
spots in NCL T20

SPORTS REPORTER

Rangpur Division and Dhaka Metro became the first two teams to book a place in the qualifiers of the National Cricket League (NCL) T20 yesterday after both sides clinched their fifth straight wins in the competition.

Pacer Alauddin Babu was the wrecker-in-chief in Rangpur’s seven-wicket win over Barishal Division at the Sylhet Outer Stadium, claiming 4-9 to help bowl out Barishal for just 108 in 19.2 overs.

Rangpur opener Chowdhury Rizwan made 53 off 44 balls to take his side home with 13 balls to spare.

Metro, meanwhile, after bossing the majority of the match against Sylhet Division, nearly lost due to Mahfuzur Rahman Rabby’s unbeaten 82 off 39 balls. Rabby needed to hit a four in the last ball off Shohidul Islam but could only fetch two as Metro won the game by one run.

In the other matches, Towhid Hridoy (69 off 50 balls) and Mushfiqur Rahim (46 off 31) returned to action for the first time since getting injured in last month’s Afghanistan series, but could not inspire their side Rajshahi Division to victory as they lost to Chattogram Division by four runs.

Meanwhile, Anamul Haque Bijoy hit the second century of the tournament, an unbeaten 101 off 67 balls, to help Khulna Division clinch a 21-run win over Dhaka Division.

‘We don’t use first-class
cricket like other countries’

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh cricket needs to adopt a “ruthless” decentralised model in player selection, where decisions are spread across a broader structure rather than concentrated in one individual’s hands, opined David Moore, who is stepping down from his role as the Bangladesh Cricket Board’s (BCB) Head of Programs at the end of his contract this month due to family commitments.

Moore, who joined the BCB in January last year, has made significant strides, organising the Bangladesh A team’s tours to Pakistan this year – which played its part in Bangladesh’s epic Test series win in Rawalpindi – and the High Performance team’s tour of Australia, with the foresight of providing experience for those earmarked to play in the 2027 Test series in Australia.

“I thought the tour to Australia with the HP was really good... We’ve got to think strategically about how we plan our tours,” Moore told The Daily Star on Monday before his departure.

According to the Australian, however, the role of HP teams often diverges from their intended purpose, leading to players staying in the system for extended periods without being promoted to higher levels.

“Someone not being picked [in the national team after a certain age] doesn’t mean he should be in HP. That’s not what it’s for. That’s what first-class cricket’s for,” he asserted.

Drawing a comparison with his home country, Moore stressed that decentralisation was key to Bangladesh’s cricketing future, with regional



bodies taking responsibility for player development.

“I think the Bangladeshi people are too nice sometimes. Because the system I came through, they’re ruthless. I think that we don’t use first-class cricket like other countries use first-class cricket,” he said.

One of Bangladesh’s ongoing struggles has been the difficulty in building a robust player pool. Moore noted that identifying the right kind of players within Bangladesh’s vast population is no easy feat.

“Massive. The bigger the population, the harder, the more difficult talent

identification is. It is really scientific. So we make sure that they’re fit, they’re game smart. You’ve got to make some tough decisions on the way and there’s got to be open and transparent selections,” he added.

Having worked closely with former head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, Moore moved the vital cogs from the background for two years in developing a framework.

“You need the [national] head coach to identify what they’re looking for. You know, do they need leg spinners, do they need finger spinners, etc. You look at all the best nations, they have a fully integrated program from the bottom to the top. There is complete communication, and U-15 to U-19 levels all work very closely with HP or the academy programs that run the A tours.

“And national selectors in countries know what’s going on at the under-15 level and so on. So I think one of the things that I would have liked to have seen happen was a fully integrated system from fifteens up to the top,” Moore opined.

After the change in BCB’s hierarchy following the political changeover on August 5, the Australian informed that he had found it more challenging to communicate ideas. With no standing committees, BCB president Faruque Ahmed had too much on his plate, running several departments.

“It was tough because of change. Like the new president’s been trying to put in place a program for the whole BCB to regenerate. It’s tough to be thinking about HP when you’ve got really big things you’ve got to deal with as well,” Moore said.

Kyrgios to team
up with Djokovic

REUTERS

Record 24-times Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic will team up with former Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios to play doubles at the Brisbane International, the Australian said.

The pair, who have developed a friendship after once being at loggerheads when Kyrgios labelled Djokovic “bonheaded” and a “tool”, will use the Dec. 29-Jan. 5 ATP 250 event as a warm-up for next month’s Australian Open.

Djokovic and Kyrgios have faced each other three times on the ATP Tour, with the Australian winning the first two encounters in 2017 before losing in four sets in the 2022 Wimbledon final.

In a post on Instagram on Monday, Kyrgios shared a picture of their meeting at Wimbledon, writing: “Doubles at Brisbane. See y’all there”.

Organisers of the Brisbane International did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment.

Kyrgios, who is also scheduled to play in the Dec. 19-22 World Tennis League exhibition event in Abu Dhabi, has played just one singles tour match in the last two years due to knee, foot and wrist injuries.

He is set to make his competitive singles return in Brisbane and will play at the Australian Open, where he will also be reunited with Thanasi Kokkinakis in the men’s doubles.

The 2025 Australian Open will run from Jan. 12-26.

SAFF U-20
Women’s C’ship
moved to July

SPORTS REPORTER

SAFF Under-20 Women’s Championship, which was initially scheduled to be held in Bangladesh from February 20, has now been pushed back to July 1-11, as part of rescheduling of SAFF age-level events.

A meeting of the SAFF Competition Committee yesterday also revised the schedule for the SAFF U-19 Men’s Championship in India, which will now take place from May 8-18. Similarly, SAFF U-17 Women’s Championship and SAFF U-17 Men’s Championship have been fixed for September 14-24 and October 17-27 respectively.

Bangladesh are the defending champions in SAFF U-20 Women’s Championship, having won the previous edition held in Dhaka in 2023.



India pacers Akash Deep Singh (L) and Jasprit Bumrah wear broad smiles after helping the visitors avoid follow-on with an unbroken 39-run stand for the 10th wicket at the end of the fourth day’s play in the third Test against Australia at The Gabba in Brisbane yesterday. The visitors were 252-9 in reply to Australia’s first-innings total of 445.

PHOTO: AFP

Sazzad dazzles as Brothers
crush Wanderers

SPORTS REPORTER

Forward Sazzad Hossain made a compelling case for his return to the national team with a hatrick that powered Brothers Union to an emphatic 8-0 victory over promoted Dhaka Wanderers Club in a Federation Cup fixture in Mymensingh yesterday.

Sazzad, who had been an unused substitute in the 1-0 loss to Bashundhara Kings in the opening match, was brought into the starting eleven for this game at Rofique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium. The 29-year-old repaid the coach’s trust with a brilliant performance, netting the season’s second hatrick after Gambian teammate Mustapha Drammeh claimed the first in the same match.

The result kept Brothers’ hopes alive for progressing to the second round, especially as defending champions Kings suffered a shocking 2-0 defeat to Fortis FC in Dhaka. Fortis currently top Group A with four points; one ahead of Brothers and Kings.

Sazzad, who previously featured for Sheikh Jamal DC, Mohammedan SC, and Saif SC, opened his scoring account



for the season in the 29th minute. His effort followed goals from Kawsar Ali Rabbi and Mustapha. The Gambian forward completed his hatrick with strikes in the 65th and 70th minutes, while Sazzad added two more goals in the 45th and 82nd minutes to secure his own. Eleta Kingsley rounded off the scoring in stoppage time to complete the rout.

“It has always been a happy moment to get a goal and a hatrick is something more than that. However, it was not possible without the assistance from the teammates. Both the local

and foreign players combined well to deliver this big win,” Sazzad told The Daily Star while returning to Dhaka.

The experienced forward also expressed his ambition to make a return to the national team by maintaining his form throughout the season and scoring consistently.

“This hatrick has boosted my confidence, and I will try to score in every match if I get the chance. Scoring goals not only helps the team but also strengthens my case for a recall to the national team,” he concluded.

Meanwhile, at the Kings Arena, Fortis resisted early spell of pressure from the three-time Federation Cup champions before Uzbek defender Jasur Jumaev broke the deadlock in the 71st minute, powering in a drop header. Seven minutes later, Mohammad Abdullah latched onto a clever pass from Piash Ahmed Nova and outsmarted the onrushing goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico to double the lead.

The outcome marks Fortis’ maiden win over Kings since their introduction in the top-tier football.



Bangladesh players celebrate a Malaysia wicket during their crushing 120-run victory in the U-19 Women’s T20 Asia Cup at the Bayuemas Oval in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Defending 150, Bangladesh bowlers made quick work of the Malaysian batters, bowling them out for a mere 29 in 14.5 overs. The win helped the women in red and green to qualify for the Super 4 stage as group winners.

PHOTO: ACC