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## ‘A big achievement’

Bangladesh and Litton Das turned things around in an incredible fashion, ending their full tour of Sri Lanka with a piece of history yesterday when they beat the hosts by eight wickets in the third and final T20I at Colombo's R Premadasa Stadium. Having lost the preceding ODI and Test series, Bangladesh were under pressure in the final phase of the tour, while a misfiring Litton was searching his mojo. "I have no words to express at the moment how our team played, the boys showed character. It's a big achievement for Bangladesh," Litton, who was adjudged Player of the Series, rightly summed up what it meant for him and Bangladesh at the post-match presentation.

- This was Bangladesh's maiden T20I series victory over Sri Lanka. This was also the first time that the Tigers beat the Lankans in a series in Sri Lanka in any format.
- Bangladesh won by eight wickets with 21 balls to spare -- the biggest win for the Tigers against the Lankans in terms of balls remaining in the format. The previous best was a win with 11 balls remaining in Sylhet last year.
- By winning the T20I series 2-1 against Sri Lanka, Litton Das became the first Bangladeshi skipper to win two T20I series abroad. He also led Bangladesh to a 3-0 series victory against the West Indies in the Caribbean last year.
- Since Litton got full-time T20I captaincy, he has lost all nine tosses.
- Off-spinner Mahedi Hasan became only the fifth Bangladeshi bowler to take 50 wickets in T20Is after Shakib Al Hasan, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, and Shoriful Islam. His career-best bowling figure of 4-11 yesterday is the best-ever by a Bangladeshi bowler against Sri Lanka in this format.
- Tanzid Tamim's career-best score of unbeaten 73 off 47 balls is the highest score by a Bangladeshi opener against Sri Lanka in this format. The previous highest score was Mohammad Naim's 52-ball 62, which he made in Sharjah during the 2021 ICC T20 World Cup.



PHOTO: AFP

## ‘Unprecedented decision’ alters CWAB’s playing field

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Focusing on constitutional amendments and preparations for an election likely in September, the Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday.

Since the previous committee's dissolution in March, the CWAB has been run by an ad-hoc committee led by Salim Shahed.

A key decision that raised eyebrows was the removal of voting rights for former first-class players. While the earlier constitution allowed all current and ex-national, first-class, and List A cricketers to vote, the new amendment limits this to only current first-class and all national players.

However, former first-class cricketers can still become life members for Tk one lakh but cannot vote or contest elections.

Former CWAB general secretary Debabrata Paul alleged that the "unprecedented decision" was made due to the "influence" of ex-national captain Tamim Iqbal, despite Salim's reported preference to include all former players as permanent members.

"He [Tamim] said in the meeting that he represents many cricketers and so everyone should take his decision into



account," Debabrata told The Daily Star on Tuesday, also questioning the legitimacy of the AGM held at the BCB premises.

"We have like 1,000 members or so. For an AGM, at least 300 members needed to be present, but it took place with only 30-35 members... Because of that [the decision to take away the voting rights of the former first-class players], the membership number will be reduced quite drastically," he added.

When contacted, Tamim declined to comment on the matter and insisted that this reporter talk to convenor Salim instead.

"I'm not the right person to ask this. You should talk to the ad-hoc committee's [Salim] Shahed bhai and he will give you a

better answer," said Tamim.

Salim later confirmed he "wanted to have all as permanent members" but said the decision followed the AGM majority view. He also abstained from voting on the issue.

"Our cricket started in 1972-73, and since then, those who represented first-class, premier league or the highest level, I feel they should be entitled to be permanent members," Salim told The Daily Star.

"They [former first-class cricketers] can come with the life member criteria... They can be members but won't have the voting rights. But the majority wants to have this," Salim added.

He also mentioned that CWAB has "no

audit record in the last 15 years," having remained inactive in the period, and efforts are now being made to hand over leadership to an elected body.

"The most unfortunate thing is we don't have any list of members. Those who will pay for membership will stay, and the rest will join later as per the current situation. We have to start from zero after reforming all the things," Salim informed further.

Ad-hoc committee member Neeyamur Rashid Rahul said they plan to finalise membership subscriptions by August 15 to enable a September election, introducing a tiered fee structure for different cricketer categories.

"In the last 15 years, nothing has been done in this organisation. It was like garbage. We made the decision after taking consent from all... We have been given responsibility to select a representative body," said Neeyamul.

Among unanimously approved resolutions was a rule barring BCB directors or contracted employees from serving on CWAB's executive committee -- though they will retain voting rights.

Meanwhile, CWAB received official recognition from the National Sports Council (NSC), which has allotted it an office at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur -- its first official address.



Pakistan T20I squad arrived in Dhaka on Wednesday ahead of their upcoming three-match T20I series against Bangladesh, set to begin on July 20 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

PHOTO: BCB

## FIFA WC 26 ticket sales to begin Sept 10

AGENCIES

FIFA announced that the first ticket draw for the FIFA World Cup 26 will open on September 10, 2025. Fans must register at FIFA.com/tickets and create a FIFA ID to apply.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino said excitement is soaring ahead the success of the FIFA Club World Cup in the USA, with the 2026 tournament set to be the biggest ever. The World Cup will kick off on June 11, 2026, in Mexico City, and end with the final on July 19 in New York New Jersey.

The expanded event will feature 48 teams and 104 matches across Canada, Mexico, and the USA, with around 6.5 million fans expected to attend. The Final Draw is set for December 2025.

FIFA urges fans to buy only from official sources and reminds that a match ticket alone does not guarantee entry into host countries. Visa remains the preferred payment method.

## Once-a-prodigy, Ayman returns to ‘same problems’ after 9 years

Three-time national champion **Ayman Ibn Zaman** made a return to the Bangladesh badminton scene after a nine-year hiatus by taking part in the 39th National Badminton Championships. Once a prodigy who won the 2013 Bangladesh Games men's singles title at just 15, Ayman also clinched back-to-back national titles in 2014 and 2016. After representing Bangladesh at both youth and senior levels, he moved to the United States in 2020 for higher studies and professional pursuits. Now 28 and working as a software engineer, Ayman spoke to *The Daily Star's* Anisur Rahman about his comeback, the evolution of badminton in Bangladesh, and his hopes for the sport's future. Following are the excerpts:

**The Daily Star (DS):** What motivated you to return to the national championships after nine years?

**Ayman Ibn Zaman (AIZ):** My main goal was to play in the national championships. Even though I live and work in the US, I've been consistently training and playing in state-level tournaments. I became champion in three US states and have stayed fit with the hope of representing Bangladesh again. I felt this was the right time to re-commit to the sport.

**DS:** Why did you stay away from Bangladesh's badminton scene for so long?

**AIZ:** I left in 2020 to pursue my Master's in Computer Science, which I completed in two years. I now work in the US and have permanent residency. While I was busy with studies initially, I returned to serious training once things settled. That allowed me to win titles in Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska, and rank among the top four in Chicago.

**DS:** You trained in Malaysia during your early career. Are you engaged in similar training in the US?

**AIZ:** Definitely. In Nebraska, I train with an international group of players, including shuttlers from Malaysia and China. Before major tournaments, I usually head to Chicago for one or two weeks of intense training.

**DS:** What changes do you see in Bangladeshi badminton since your departure?



**AIZ:** The facilities haven't improved much, but I do see a promising new generation of shuttlers, mostly between 17 to 25 years old. They're fitter and play a slightly different, more modern style. I believe the current batch has the potential to compete at the global level. Unfortunately, the lack of sponsorship and resources remains the same.

**DS:** How will you prepare if selected for the national team while living in the US?

**AIZ:** The federation is forming the national squad based on this championship. If I'm selected, I'll consider extending my leave to join

the camp here, especially since an Indonesian coach will be leading it. I'm already training regularly in the US, so I'll be ready either way. The SA Games are coming up, and I want to contribute.

**DS:** Based on your international experience, what's lacking in our shuttlers?

**AIZ:** The problem lies in the structure. Abroad, players are trained from the grassroots with strong foundations in technique, recovery, and mental resilience. By 17 or 18, their potential is already clear. In Bangladesh, we're hardworking, but we often lack the tactical know-how to handle pressure during matches.

**DS:** How can we overcome this gap?

**AIZ:** Consistent training and exposure to international tournaments are key. Competing regularly overseas improves match temperament and confidence. But it's expensive, and players need sponsorship or federation support to make it happen.

**DS:** What do players expect from the new committee of Bangladesh Badminton Federation?

**AIZ:** We hope the new leadership supports us with access to more international tournaments, quality coaching, proper nutrition, and high-level training. These are tough to provide, but if the federation can make it happen, I'm confident Bangladeshi players will deliver strong results.

MERCANTILE BANK  
CREDIT RATING



Year	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating	Date of Rating	Validity Date
2024	AA	ST-2	July 10, 2025	July 09, 2026
2023	AA+	ST-2	June 11, 2024	July 10, 2025

### Rating Description

AA	ST-2	Outlook
Higher Safety and High Credit Quality	High Certainty of Timely Repayment	Stable

### Credit Rating Information

Credit Rating Information and Services Limited (CRISL) has assigned the long term rating of Mercantile Bank PLC. at AA (pronounced as double A) and the short term rating at ST-2 on the basis of audited financials up to December 31, 2024 and unaudited financials up to March 31, 2025 and other relevant quantitative as well as qualitative information.

Mercantile Bank thanks to its all valued stakeholders for making it happen. The bank is upbeat of further upswing of its rating in future.

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