

## Ripon, Saqlain called up for NZ T20Is

SPORTS REPORTER

Pacers Ripon Mondol and Abdul Gaffar Saqlain have earned call-ups as Bangladesh named a 15 member squad on Tuesday for their upcoming three-match T20I series against New Zealand.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced the squad for the first two matches of the series, which begins in Chattogram on April 27. The second match will also be held at the same venue on April 29, while the third and final T20I is scheduled for May 2 in Dhaka.

Experienced pacers Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed and Nahid Rana have been rested for the opening two matches, paving the way for a revamped pace attack.

Uncapped pacer Saqlain has received his maiden national call-up, having recently caught attention with skills well-suited to the T20 format. The 28-year-old also offers lower-order hitting ability.

Right-arm quick Ripon Mondol, meanwhile, has been rewarded for his consistency, particularly at the death. The 23-year-old has previously featured in three T20 matches for Bangladesh, all during the 2023 Asian Games cricket competition.

Both players impressed at last year's ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup and also in the Bangladesh Premier League earlier this year, often forming a pace partnership for the Rajshahi Warriors.

### SQUAD

Litton Das (Captain), Parvez Emon, Tanzid Hasan, Saif Hassan (Vice Captain), Shamim Hossain, Tawhid Hridoy, Nurul Hasan Sohan, Shak Mahedi, Nasum Ahmed, Rishad Hossain, Shoriful Islam, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Ripon Mondol, Saifuddin, Abdul Gaffar Saqlain.

## Tanzid turns corner in ODIs

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

For more than two years, Tanzid Hasan Tamim's One-Day International career drifted between promise and uncertainty. Tasked with filling a long-standing void at the top of Bangladesh's batting order after his debut in the 2023 Asia Cup, the left-handed opener showed flashes but rarely enough to shape results.

The shift began in T20Is at the start of 2024. Freed by the format, Tanzid's natural aggression surfaced, quickly turning him into a key figure. In 45 innings, he has struck 11 fifties -- already third among Bangladesh batters, behind Litton Das (16) and Shakib Al Hasan (13).

That surge carried into domestic cricket. In the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) 2025, he was named Best Emerging Cricketer after scoring 485 runs, including a century and four fifties. He followed it up by finishing as Bangladesh's leading T20I run-scorer in 2025 and added 356 runs in 13 innings in the BPL 2026, including a hundred in the final.

More importantly, the confidence built in T20Is has begun to translate into the 50-over format. After missing the ODI series against the West Indies in October, he returned strongly against Pakistan at home in March, scoring 175 runs in three



innings, including a century and a fifty, with Bangladesh winning both matches in which he made key contributions. He shared the Player of the Series award.

His impact was immediate. An unbeaten 67 off 42 balls helped chase down 115 with ease in the opener, while a composed 107 off 107 deliveries in the decider set up a total of 290, which Bangladesh defended comfortably. Since the Pakistan series, Tanzid has found a balance between aggression and

control, offering Bangladesh a level of stability they have long lacked at the top. Although he fell cheaply in the first fixture of the ongoing home ODI series against New Zealand, Tanzid responded with a fluent 76 off 58 balls in the second on Monday, ensuring a smooth chase of 199 -- the kind of situations that have often unsettled the Tigers in recent years.

One of the most notable aspects of his evolution is tempo. The 25-year-old has managed to sustain a strike rate above 100 in ODIs, addressing a long-standing issue at the top, while maintaining enough composure to build innings.

The contrast with his earlier struggles is stark. Criticised for his limitations in chases, his average in defeats had dipped to 12.9 -- compared to an overall ODI average of 26.16 -- contributing to Bangladesh winning just two of nine matches while chasing over the past two years.

Now, in the midst of a purple patch, expectations are rising. With stiff competition from Saif Hassan and Soumya Sarkar for the opening slot, Tanzid has strengthened his claim through consistency across formats. If this trajectory holds, Bangladesh may finally have found a dependable opener, and perhaps a long-awaited answer to a persistent problem.



Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Bangladesh's ODI captain, looks relaxed and in good spirits as he walks towards the team hotel in Chattogram yesterday after arriving with the squad for the final match of the three-match ODI series against New Zealand, who also reached the port city the same day. The Miraz-led Tigers levelled the series with a convincing win in the second ODI in Mirpur on Sunday and will be aiming to seal the series tomorrow.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## DORIELTON QUADRUPLE EASES KINGS INTO QUARTERS

Dorielton Gomes is the toast of his teammates as his four goals propelled Bashundhara Kings to a 4-1 win over Bangladesh Police in their Federation Cup Group B fixture at Kings Arena yesterday. The four goals, which took the Brazilian to the top of the scorer's chart with seven, helped Kings ease into the quarterfinals as group winners, edging Mohammedan on goal-difference as the latter qualified following a 4-0 win over Arambagh.

PHOTO: BFF



## Sports Card nod for Sura Krishna, Arafat

SPORTS REPORTER

Following The Daily Star's Monday report, titled "Recognition more honourable than money": Trailblazers speak out after sports card snub", State Minister for Youth and Sports Aminul Haque has confirmed that boxer Sura Krishna Chakma and triathlete Mohammad Shamsuzzaman Arafat are set to be included in the Sports Card scheme, designed to provide financial security to elite athletes.

Sura Krishna, Bangladesh's first professional boxer to win an international belt, and Arafat, a multi-podium Ironman athlete, were notably absent from the initial list, prompting them to voice frustrations on social media over the selection process. So far, 129 athletes have benefited since late March, with the total reaching 300 last week.

Minister Aminul yesterday told The Daily Star that while the initial plan is to bring 500 athletes under the scheme -- with performance reviews every four months -- the remaining 200 spots will be filled after the first review cycle, allowing more high-achievers in underrepresented disciplines to receive recognition.

Addressing the selection criteria, he added that nominees were first recommended by their respective federations before being finalised by government officials.



### The price of greatness

In the 1982 World Cup, Diego Maradona was fouled 50 times -- the second-highest number suffered by a player in a single edition of the tournament. He went on to better that record four years later, setting the all-time record by drawing 53 fouls during the 1986 World Cup, underlining just how difficult he was to contain at his peak.

\*\* Visit The Daily Star's website to also read: 'The most beautiful defeat'.

## Tigresses eye historic series win

SPORTS REPORTER

Riding high on their historic breakthrough, the Bangladesh women's team will look to secure their first-ever bilateral series win over Sri Lanka when they face the visitors in the second match of the ongoing three-match WODI series at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium today.

The Tigresses registered their maiden WODI victory against Sri Lanka in the series opener, overcoming a late scare while chasing 206.

Bangladesh seemed to be cruising at 199 for three, but a sudden collapse saw them slip to 200 for seven before the lower-order batters held their nerve to seal a three-wicket win. The victory also ended their long-standing four-match winless run against Sri Lanka in this format.

A win in today's match would not only seal the series but also mark Bangladesh's first-ever series triumph

over Sri Lanka across all formats. So far, Bangladesh have managed bilateral series wins against only a handful of sides, notably Pakistan and Ireland.

The two teams last met in a bilateral series in Sri Lanka in 2023, where the hosts emerged victorious in both formats -- winning the WODI series 1-0 and the WT20I series 2-1.

Ahead of the crucial encounter, the Bangladesh camp opted for a rest day, while Sri Lanka trained under intense heat with their full squad. Bangladesh officials confirmed that the players are in good condition despite the challenging weather and are fully focused on clinching the historic series win.

Sri Lanka, meanwhile, will be hoping for the return of their regular captain Chamari Athapaththu, who missed the opening match due to an ongoing injury. Her absence was keenly felt in the first game, and if she remains unavailable, it could further tilt the balance in Bangladesh's favour as they push for a landmark achievement.



## Landmark moment for NAYEEM

Off-spinner Nayeem Hasan reached a significant career milestone by claiming his 300th wicket in first-class cricket during the opening day of the Bangladesh Cricket League clash between Central Zone and East Zone in Sylhet on Tuesday. The landmark came when he dismissed opener Shadman Islam, providing a key breakthrough for East Zone.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK



PHOTO: MANCHESTER CITY

Manchester City travel to relegation-threatened Burnley in the Premier League tonight, eyeing a golden opportunity to draw level with leaders Arsenal. City, who have a game in hand, sit on 67 points, three behind Arsenal, who have led the title race since October and are chasing their first league crown since 2004. The Gunners have 70 points from 33 matches, but City's superior momentum, thanks to a potentially decisive 2-1 win over Arsenal at home on Sunday, has intensified the title race. City striker Erling Haaland, who tops the league's scoring charts with 23 goals, will be eager to add to his tally.