

# SPORT



PHOTOS: AFP

The Bangladesh team management would have pinned their hopes on the three big guns – Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal -- to fire with the bat. While the former two followed the script of the innings, falling cheaply and haplessly, Tamim proved to be the odd one out, playing a measured knock of 95 off 114 deliveries.

## Oval covered in green

AL-AMIN from London

During the opening game against England, the green shirts were quite visible amongst the dominating whites. However, when the Tigers returned to play Australia in their second Champions Trophy fixture yesterday, The Oval was practically painted green.

The ground was not fully packed but the atmosphere surrounding the encounter was more as if the Tigers were playing on their home turf, with every run being cheered on

with deafening roars. It was the first day of the week and despite the threat of rain and the aftermath of the terrorist attack in London, which occurred in the early hours on Sunday, Bangladeshi expats living in England flocked to the arena in droves.

"I bought tickets for Bangladesh's two games eight months ago. Tickets are very expensive here if you buy them late. In the opening game against England prices rose to 150 pounds," said Obaidur, who was enjoying his time at the main entrance of The Oval with other festive Bangladeshi fans.

Obaidur came from East

London, which is not too far away from the stadium, with his friend Sumon. Both are employed at superstores and had to take a day off to watch the game.

"It's like a festival whenever Bangladesh come to play in England. The game also gives us an opportunity to get together. Life is very monotonous here. You work here six days a week and don't get enough opportunities to meet each other," continued Obaidur, who is in his 40s.

Sumon, who became a bit emotional, expressed how he desperately feels for his country.

"When I was in Bangladesh I felt nothing. But after coming to England I can't explain how much I feel for my country and wish to contribute in any small way possible. Our cricket team has given us something we can be very proud of. Now we don't need to say that Bangladesh is an independent country which lies next to India. Our cricket team has given us our identity," said Sumon.

The two seemed confident of a Bangladesh victory against Australia. However, it was too big of an expectation as Bangladesh have



Bangladesh supporters were in numbers and in full voice, as always, at The Oval in London yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

## Finn eyes spotlight

AFP, Birmingham

England fast bowler Steven Finn hopes to make the most of his late call-up to Champions Trophy duty when the tournament hosts face New Zealand in Cardiff on Tuesday.

Finn was left out of England's original squad for a tournament featuring the world's top eight one-day international teams.

But the 28-year-old Middlesex quick was recalled Sunday after pace bowling all-rounder Chris Woakes broke down with a side strain after during England's opening eight-wicket win over Bangladesh at the Oval on Thursday.

"It's always frustrating when you are left out of squads, but you have to roll with the punches," Finn reporters in Cardiff on Sunday.

"If you get too down-hearted it can affect you more."

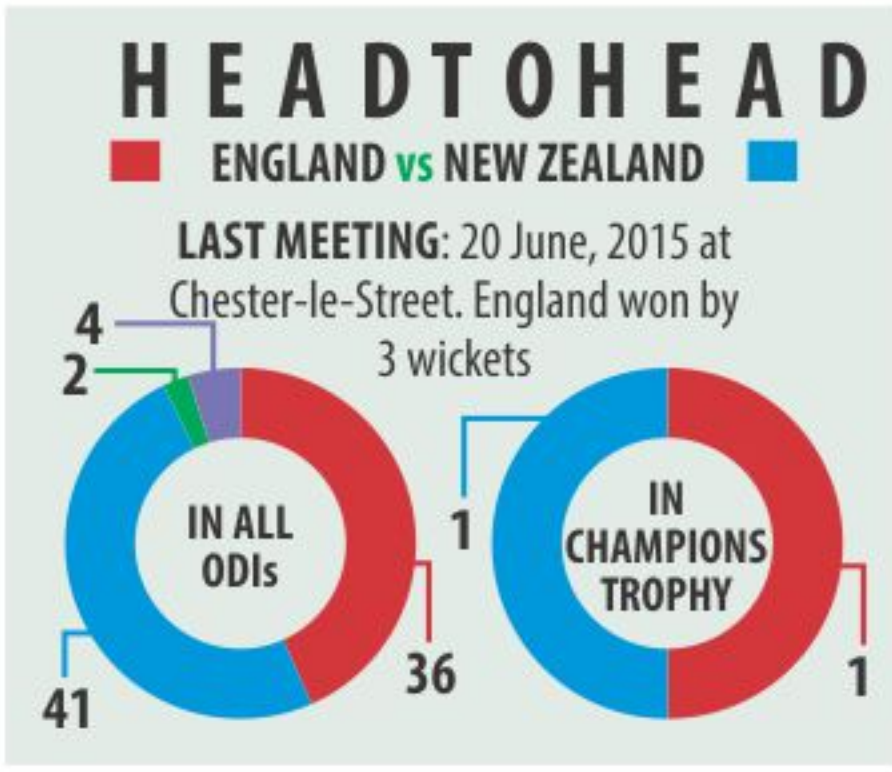
"I just focused on keeping my head up and fighting my way back into the team."

He added: "It's obviously very sad for Chris Woakes, who is a good friend of mine, but I am glad that got the call."

Finn could well go straight into England's XI in Cardiff if, as happened against Bangladesh, they opt to play just the one spinner.

He sealed his return to international duty on the back of taking two wickets in front of the selectors for the second-string England Lions in a 144-run win over South Africa A at Northampton on Saturday.

"I knew James Whitaker and Mick Newell



were there watching me," said Finn. "You feel that pressure, I suppose, knowing they're watching you to call you up for this game."

"But that is no different from every time I pull on an England or Lions shirt."

New Zealand endured a frustrating wash-out in their Group A opener against Australia when seemingly well-placed for victory.

"The nature of this tournament is that every game is basically knockout," said New Zealand captain Kane Williamson whose superb hundred was ultimately trumped by the rain.

"We played some good cricket and we can't control the weather, although it is a little bit frustrating."

England's Joe Root, another of the world's leading batsmen, made a century too in his first innings of the tournament against Bangladesh.

But while the sometimes excitable Root can be goaded into error, Williamson rarely looks anything other than serene at the crease.

### BD-AUS SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH:	R/B	4s/6s		
Tamim c Hazlewood b Starc	95/114	6/3		
Soumya c Wade b Hazlewood	3/11	0/0		
Imrul c Finch b Cummins	6/16	0/0		
Mushfiqur lbw b Henriques	9/20	0/0		
Shakib lbw b Head	29/48	2/0		
Sabbir c Smith b Zampa	8/14	0/0		
Mahmudullah b Zampa	8/11	0/1		
Mehedi b Starc	14/26	1/0		
Mashrafe b Starc	0/2	0/0		
Rubel b Starc	0/1	0/0		
Mustafizur not out	1/4	0/0		
Extras: (lb-6, w-3)	9			
Total: (all out in 44.3 overs)	182			
Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-37, 3-53, 4-122, 5-141, 6-153, 7-181, 8-181, 9-181, 10-182.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Starc	8.3	2	29	4
Hazlewood	10	0	40	1
Cummins	8	1	22	1
Head	8	0	33	1
Henriques	5	0	30	1
Zampa	4	1	13	2
Maxwell	1	0	9	0
AUSTRALIA:	R/B	4s/6s		
Warner not out	40/44	2/0		
Finch lbw b Rubel	19/27	3/0		
Smith not out 22/25	1/0			
Extras: (lb-1, w-1)	2			
Total: (For 1 wkt in 16 overs)	83			
Fall of wickets: 1-45				
To bat: MC Henriques, GJ Maxwell, TM Head, MS Wade, MA Starc, PJ Cummins, A Zampa, JR Hazlewood				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mustafizur	5	0	27	0
Mashrafe	6	0	30	0
Rubel	4	0	21	1

## The man with the Midas touch

SPORTS REPORTER

"We have a very good team and everybody played their part but Nasir (Hossain) deserves special credit," said Gazi Group Cricketers coach Mohammad Salahuddin.

"Sir [Mohammad Salahuddin] gave me full freedom, which helped a lot," said Nasir Hossain, who finished the batting aspect of the season with only three runs against Prime Doleshwar in the rain-interrupted last-round match of the Super League, but still kept a staggering batting average of 240.

Thus the man who worked hard behind the scenes and the man who contributed heavily on the field complimented each other while talking about Gazi Group Cricketers' success in this season.

Salahuddin, a man who is highly respected by the players -- including the national players like Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur, Mominul Haque and many others -- just put another feather to his illustrious cap by winning the Dhaka Premier League title for Gazi.

The former national fielding coach had joined Victoria Sporting Club as a coach for the 2001-2002 season and became champions for two consecutive seasons. In the 2004 corporate cricket league Arafat Apparels became champions under his guidance. He coached Sylhet Royals in the 2013 BPL,

reaching the semifinal before moving on to coach 2015 champions Comilla Victorians.

"Honestly speaking I am not excited because it's my professional duty. We have a very balanced team and the advantage we had was that when we formed our team, we did not focus solely on national players," said Salahuddin.

Salahuddin expressed his satisfaction with the overall standard of this season's competition, especially praising the good umpiring that recently came under scrutiny following controversies in lower levels of domestic cricket.

"The umpiring standard was really good. The wickets were also good. The only problem remained with the hot and humid weather conditions. It was simply inhuman to play cricket under such scorching heat, so I request to arrange the competition earlier," he said.

"I want to focus on another issue, which is the widening gap between the national players and the rest of the players in the country. I think it's a negative trend and it has been happening due to the huge gap in practice facilities between the national and other players," he added.

Nasir also urged for a Premier League played in good weather. "It was unbearable heat this season. A lot of players had to leave the field with cramps after making 70-odd runs. You cannot play good cricket under such heat but still the players tried their best. I request to start the season earlier so that we can avoid this kind of heat."

## Abahani win hands Gazi title

SPORTS REPORTER

Rain played foul in one of the BKSP grounds, but in another ground of the sports institute, the curtailed-over match was completed via the Duckworth-Lewis method as Abahani won against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club to confirm Gazi Group Cricketers ascension to the Dhaka Premier Cricket League title yesterday.

The rain took Gazi's battle against

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**SK. JAMAL:** 162-7 in 30.4 overs (Mahabubul 60, Al Mamun 36, Fazle Rabbi 34; Afif 5-32)

**ABAHANI:** 124-4 in 17.2 overs (Target 124 in 20 overs) (Saif 51, Sadman 33, Mithun 29 not out; Tanvir 2-14)

**Result:** Abahani won by six wickets.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Afif Hossain  
**GAZI GROUP CRICKETERS:** 142-5 in 33 overs (Jahurul 50 not out, Mominul 38, Nadif 38; Forhad Reza 2-17)



Gazi Group Cricketers celebrate their title win in the Dhaka Premier League at the BKSP yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Prime Doleshwar to a reserve day today, with the former scoring 142 for five at BKSP-3, but Abahani posted a six-wicket victory over Sheikh Jamal riding on Afif Hossain's five-wicket haul with a hat-trick at BKSP-4 ground to confirm Gazi's title. Gazi Group and Abahani now both have 24 points and if Prime Doleshwar win today they will have the same number, but Gazi has advantage in the head-to-head stakes. According to the bylaws, if the team with the most number of wins over the other team(s) who are equal on points and have the same number of wins (head-to-head) and Gazi already have three wins out of six among the three teams.

The other final round match between Prime Bank Cricket Club and Mohammedan Sporting Club will also be settled today as the match went to the reserve day after rain stopped the proceeding with Prime Bank making 187 for six.

At BKSP, Sheikh Jamal scored 162 for seven in 30.4 overs before rain interrupted the match and when play resumed Abahani required 124 runs to score in 20 overs and the defending champions reached the target in 17.2 overs with six wickets in hand.