

## SPORT



Pakistan fast bowler Hasan Ali ran through South Africa's middle order with a three-wicket haul in their Champions Trophy Group B match at Edgbaston, Birmingham yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Univas/Berger Paints

## 'We'll be up there with Kiwis'

AL-AMIN from Cardiff

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal did not train at the Sophia Gardens in Cardiff yesterday as he was rested to nurse a bruise on his right rib, which he sustained during his fabulous 95 against Australia at The Oval on Monday.

Instead, he was happily complying to a series of questions from the strong band of Bangladesh reporters while others were enjoying their time in the middle under a glorious sunline in the naughty English weather which was very windy and cloudy just the other day.

Tamim was not part of the Bangladesh team that famously won against Australia in Cardiff in 2005, but his older brother Nafis Iqbal was the opening batsman of that team led by Habibul Bashar.

So the obvious question Tamim was confronted with was whether that victory would give them added inspiration going into their crucial game against New Zealand.

"There is a history in this ground. Our effort will be to keep that history. But to do that we will have to play good cricket. If we don't play good cricket, neither the history nor the ground will help us," said the opening batsman, who is still in pair both physically and mentally after that near-

losed to have back-to-back centuries.

"It would have been a personal achievement for me. But I think I would have been happier if my contributions had been for the winning team. I have scored 51 against India long ago and I was so happy that it won us the game in that [2007] World Cup match in Port of Spain," said the left-hander, who has been growing wiser and more mature with every passing innings.

"For the past two-and-a-half years I have been in good form. I'm focused on making those good starts count. I have had no problems with my technique. There are a few finer details I always work on. I have scored a few centuries over the last couple of years. But to be honest centuries are very special and the two innings I played against England and Australia will be very close to my heart."

"You will also have to understand, hundreds will count for nothing if your team loses. There was a time when a century was regarded as very big, but now our effort is to win games. It is more satisfying for me if I score 70 and my team wins the game," the left-hander contin-

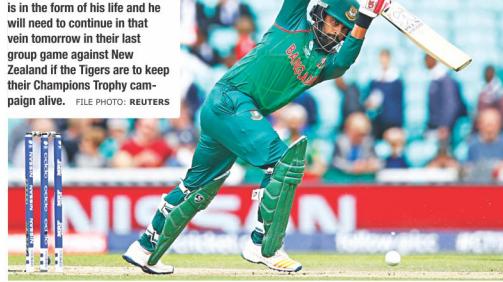
ued.

Asked how disappointed he was to miss a partner while batting against Australia he said: "I think Mashfiqur [Rahim] was a bit unlucky when we were building a partnership. Shabik [Al Hasan] was also unlucky and had he been around we could have pushed the total beyond 250 which could have been a competitive score."

When his attention was drawn to how scary it is for a batsman to bat with a fragile tail, Tamim said: "Their job is to bowl. But if they could add 15 runs it would ultimately contribute another 30 runs to the total which is very important. I think they also need [to pay] more attention to their batting."

Bangladesh lost their last four wickets for just over 100 as Tamim's dismissal against Australia. He batted well in the last over to come to the party against the Black Caps on Friday.

"We have played a lot of games against them. This is a team we always feel confident playing. They are a very good side. But we will be right up there with them," said an assertive Tamim.



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal is in the form of his life and he will need to continue in that vein tomorrow in their last group game against New Zealand if the Tigers are to keep their Champions Trophy campaign alive.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

## Apologetic Wahab

APP, Birmingham

Pakistan paceman Wahab Riaz took to Twitter on Wednesday to apologise for his lacklustre showing against arch-rivals India in the Champions Trophy, saying he had "let down his team".

The 31-year-old left-arm quick was smashed for 87 runs in 8.4 overs when the Asians giants met in their Champions Trophy opener in Birmingham's Edgbaston ground on Sunday.

Wahab tweeted Wednesday: "My performance has let down my team.

"I tried my best but it was not good enough. I'm heart broken as well."

## India looking for another rout

APP, London

Virat Kohli has urged India to produce a repeat of their Pakistan demolition when they face Sri Lanka in the Champions Trophy on Thursday.

Kohli's side made a memorable start to the tournament as the defending champions crushed arch-rivals Pakistan by 124 runs in Birmingham on Sunday.

After India piled up 319 for three in 48 overs, they turned the screw on Pakistan, dismissing them for 164 as they failed to chase down a rain-reduced target of 289.

It was the perfect response to reports of a rift between India captain Kohli and the team's coach Anil Kumble.

Kohli knows momentum can change quickly in one-day competitions,

especially against a desperate Sri Lanka team, who will be led out by fit-again Angelo Mathews looking to bounce back from defeat to South Africa in their opener.

But Kohli hopes the confidence

youngsters coming in and gradually getting towards strengthening their form from that, from the team's point of view, it's a massive win for us.

"Just the way we played and the confidence we showed throughout the game was something that was very pleasing to see as a captain."

A repeat of that batting blitz against Sri Lanka at The Oval would put India on course for the semifinals and Kohli expects Yuvraj Singh to lead the charge again.

Beaten by 96 runs by South Africa, there is no margin for error as Sri Lanka as well as India to avoid elimination. Adding insult to injury, Sri Lanka were

later found guilty of a slow-over offence by the ICC, with their stand-in captain Umar Tharanga banned for their next two matches and players fined.

boost from beating Pakistan will help India secure another victory in their second Group B match.

"Every game in this tournament is big, but we have a side with a few

more to give," said Kohli, who has been in their second Group B match.

"We always say we have a 'peaceful election'. But I'm in a place far away from my home where an actual peaceful election will take place from 7:00am to 10:00pm today."

## Cardiff then and now

AL-AMIN from Cardiff



Sophia Gardens is engraved in gold in Bangladesh's cricketing history. It was on this ground that Bangladesh pulled off a famous victory against Ricky Ponting's all-conquering Australia in 2005. That five-wicket victory is still considered one of the biggest upsets in one-day history.

12 years after that magnificent win in a game where Mohammad Ashraful scored a sumptuous 100 and Attaf Ahmed finished a chase of 250 in some style, hitting the first ball from Jason Gillespie for six, followed by an unforgettable single, a different breed of Tigers returned to this very ground with a higher ambition to fulfil.

They will take on New Zealand here tomorrow and victory will put them in a potential Champions Trophy semifinal, provided that England -- a team who have already made one stand with two straight wins -- beat their bitter rivals Australia on June 10.

Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is the only survivor of that victorious team from 2005. He was a vibrant young pace bowler then, but things have changed dramatically since 2005 and Bangladesh have become a more competitive team now.

The venue has also gone through a lot of changes and for the few reporters who made that trip to Cardiff in 2005, it was very hard to recognise the venue. As we entered the ground, the English sang along to their session we could not find any conceivable structure of the past. The venue, which has recently been renamed the City of Swalec Stadium, has got more metallic structures

than the erstwhile lush green.

The new generation Cardiff volunteers were also at a complete loss when this reporter wanted them to point out the famous tree near the boundary rope. A clerk of the facility, who watched that famous game, finally gave a vivid picture of where all those structures were.

I can still remember there was a press box that could accommodate only seven to eight reporters.

"Oh! The press box was right over there beside the manual scoreboard," said the witty Joan, who used two fingers to quote



unquote the press box, which was too small for comfort. The present players' lounge was actually a green bank and there was only one stand right at the opposite end of the member's lounge.

Only the green top in the middle, which has now got a more rectangular shape, provided some reflection of the past. A volunteer, who was very enthusiastic to show us the picture of that victorious team stuck the wall of what he described as the national gallery, could only remember that 'Ashraf' (Ashraful) scored a century in that match.

The adage goes that 'change is the most unpredictable aspect'. The venue has gone through a lot of changes and so has the Bangladeshi team. But that image in the gallery can be the biggest inspiration for the new generation of Bangladeshi cricketers to emulate that blast from the past.



Skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is the only one among the Tigers who was part of the team on June 18, 2005, when Bangladesh felled Australia in Cardiff, the venue of tomorrow's Champions Trophy match against New Zealand.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Elections: a study in contrast

AL-AMIN from Cardiff

It will be an election day in England today. Will it be the Conservatives staying in power or will Labour derethrone them? That is not something a sports reporter from a different country should really be interested in. But it is very interesting in the context of the happenings before an election, which is completely different from what we have in our country.

Our election is more like the Champions League final that took place in Cardiff last week where the whole city was in gridlock with influx of people. There was festivity, some sort of disorder and a financial windfall and the city cashed in every way possible.

The England polls, on the other hand, are perhaps more like the current mundane Cardiff despite the fact that an important cricket tournament is going on. No posters, no festivity, no disorder and a financial windfall and the city cashed in every way possible.

And they are very frank about it. Ask people and they will tell you which candidate they are voting for and there is no trick involved in it. This is a society where you will have to register well in advance if you want to vote. This is also a society where young people are less inclined to exercise their rights, something Labour would love to have. However, the Bangladeshi expats in England are as enthused to be part of the elections as they would be at home. You will even find a few posters if you walk along East London, where a strong Bangladeshi community resides.

But you will otherwise not find a single poster in public or private places in England because it is banned. Think of a national election in Bangladesh, we burn money like anything to showcase the campaign and that too at the expense of the general public. I have been to a little demo of an election campaign on a weekend. There were quite a few of a dozen door-to-door campaigns. But among them only one person entered the house of a prospective voter with the fear that a few more might disturb his own business.

We always say we have a 'peaceful election'. But I'm in a place far away from my home where an actual peaceful election will take place from 7:00am to 10:00pm today.

## SA-PAK SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA	R/B	45/5
du Plessis v Imran	33/0	0
Antia v Imran	16/0	0
de Pillis v Imran	26/4	1/0
Hilliard v Imran	0/1	0/0
Duminy v Asim Hossain	8/14	0/0
Parmeshwaran v Imran	10/0	0/0
Rabada v Imran	26/23	2/0
Morelet v Imran	0/0	0/0
Extras (B-1, w-1, sb-1)	2/0	0/0
Total (B-1, w-1, sb-1)	239	6
Fall of wickets (I-4, 2-41, 3-54, 4-98, 5-118, 6-187, 7-165, 8-213)	119	0
BOWLER	O	R
de Pillis v Imran	0	4/6/5
Antia v Imran	9	0/53/2
Imran	8	0/20/2
Hilliard v Imran	10	0/18/2
Duminy v Asim Hossain	3	0/20/1
Parmeshwaran v Imran	10	0/18/2
Rabada v Imran	31/23	6/0
Babar v Imran	0/0	1/1/1
Hilliard v Imran	26/27	1/0
de Pillis v Imran	16/17	3/0
Extras (B-1, w-1, sb-1)	6	0
Total (For wickets 27/27)	119	0

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