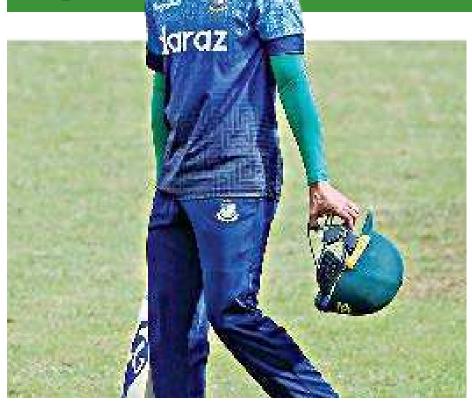
T SPORTS Bangladesh vs New Zealand Second T201 Live from 4:00 pm

**SONY SIX England vs India** Fourth Test (Day 2) Live from 4:00 pm **STAR SPORTS SELECT** 

1&2 US Open Third Round Live from 9:00 pm & 4:30 am (Saturday)



After an instrumental all-round performance against New Zealand in the first match, all eyes will be on Shakib Al Hasan as he remains a major threat for the visitors in today's match.

## Tamim's decision opens door for others

SPORTS REPORTER



Tamim Iqbal's decision withdraw from consideration for the upcoming ICC World T20I will surely have a

positive impact on those contending for Bangladesh's opening slots, which remains among the major areas of concern for the team management before announcing the

Despite being the most successful opener that Bangladesh has produced over the years, Tamim's decision to opt out of the World Cup -- which came in light of the fact that the left-hander had not played a T20I for the past 17 months -- was huge given that he would have been an automatic choice based on his wealth of experience if he could recover from a knee injury ahead of the mega-event.

His extended absence from the shortest format was one of the reasons, but the way he emphasised the word 'fair' and said that he did not want to take the place of someone who has been playing T20Is during this period was exceptional.

Now, the onus will be on the likes of Naim Sheikh, Liton Das, and Soumya Sarkar to utilise the huge opportunity. At the same time, it will be important for these three players to engage in healthy be harsh to judge batsmen, especially over competition among each other for a place in the Tigers opening slot.

Naim is the top-ranked Bangladesh batsman in the shortest format and the

left-hander has managed to provided some assurances from one end in recent times.

The 22-year-old also showed a great deal of resilience in the home series against Australia, when the pitch made it extremely difficult for batsmen to play their shots.

Liton Das, who will be making a comeback to the side against New Zealand after missing out on the Australia series, will need to gain in confidence so the selectors may bank on the pair of Naim and Liton as first-choice openers for the World Cup.

However, both Naim and Liton missed out in the first T20I against New Zealand as they opened in chase of a small 61-run target on yet another slow and low Mirpur

Despite scoring two fifties in three games in Zimbabwe, Soumya Sarkar failed in all five matches against the Aussies and it will also be important for the think-tank to provide the left-hander with confidence ahead of the mega-event.

The series against New Zealand will be the Tigers' last international assignment ahead of the World Cup and with Tamim making way for these cricketers, it will be important for the likes of Naim, Liton and Soumya to get relief by not worrying about losing their place and make the most of the opportunity.

One should also mention that it will their performances at home as the Mirpur pitch has proved to be extremely difficult. But despite the fact, someone needs to put their hands up to take the challenge

AFP, LONDON

## Kiwis put on a brave face

SPORTS REPORTER



There is an air of uncertainty in the New Zealand camp following seven-wicket

defeat to the Tigers in the first T20I of their five-match series. Despite coming to Bangladesh having simulated slow and turning pitches in Lincoln, the Kiwis were caught off-guard by how difficult it is to actually bat in these conditions. The short turnaround comes almost as sweet relief, not sweating out on details on such trying conditions.

There will be positives for the Kiwis as they take on the Tigers today in the second T20I. Left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel returned the second-most economical figures for a New Zealand player in T20Is in the first game and was able to pressure the Tigers' batsmen, conceding just seven runs from four overs and bagging a wicket.

And the visitors' surprise regarding the first T20Is wicket was apparent when Patel spoke to the media yesterday.

"It is nice to finally get out there [on the ground]. Obviously, we have been training for a few days prior to that but you never know what it is going to be like until you get out into the middle," Patel insisted.

A few meetings took place in the Kiwi camp yesterday as they looked to overcome the jarring sensation time before the game was to not



The wicket of Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium has once again become a topic of discussion as New Zealand were bundled out for their joint-lowest total of 60 runs in the first match. Coaching staff of New Zealand team inspect the pitch on Thursday ahead of the second match, on a day when neither team took part in practice sessions. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

of being bowled out for their joint- only get ready but also to flush mandatory quarantine. lowest T20 score in the first T20I. There is a lot of inexperience in the lineup and none of the players in the current outfit are likely to make it to the T20 World Cup in two months' time. So, the Kiwis took their time to analyse the conditions

"It's about getting a clear idea of what we experienced yesterday [Wednesday] and what our plans are going forward," Patel reiterated.

Coach Glenn Pocknall had spoken after the match on Wednesday, saying that the little

some bad memories of their experience. He too identified that the Bangladesh team were an in-form unit and discussed a way of dealing with them in such conditions.

Tom Latham and Henry Nicholls had put on a good partnership of 34 runs and those are the kind of contributions the Kiwis are hoping for. They will be further reinvigorated by the return of batsman Fabian Allen, who returned two negative Covid-19 tests, while Matt Henry is set to join the squad today following his

Pocknall added that 25 more runs would have made the first T20I more interesting, but they were yet to face the full vigor of Mustafizur Rahman's cutters due to the toporder slump. Thus, the benefit of not having too much time to ponder was obvious with their task probably set to get harder.

"When it's [fixtures] condensed like this, you don't have much time to dwell on the past. I guess we're going to see how we can improve and where we can improve. Looking forward to the game coming up, Patel concluded



SPORTS REPORTER

Boat Race is a very popular game in riverine areas of Bangladesh. Villagers of Mogolgaon organised a rural traditional ceremony in the form of a rowing competition, held over Chengerkhal river vesterday. A total of fifteen boats from different parts of Sylhet Division took part in the century-old competition. The winner, runner-up and third place holders each received a horse, a goat and a Television set, respectively.

at this year's Euro 2020, winning the Golden Boot.

And he could equal the record of playing at five World

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner, who

secured a return to United from Juventus



This is not the case this time around due to the conditions created by continuous rain. We wanted to feature two separate venues but they wanted a single venue instead. It's hard to hope for sporting tracks when five matches have to be played in the span of ten days. One more point, the wicket remains the same for both teams.

> AKRAM KHAN BCB DIRECTOR

Salahuddin joins

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi

Salahuddin reached Bishkek yesterday to inspire the

national football team as they gear up to start their Three

Kazi Salahuddin, in the middle of last month, wanted

Nations Cup campaign by taking on Palestine on Sunday.

to be part of the national football team after he shared

his technical knowledge with head coach Jamie Day over

a meeting. He also expressed his desire to watch all three

matches in Kyrgyzstan and travel with the team during

Central defender Riyadul Hasan Rafi believes the

presence of BFF president will be an additional inspiration

Salahuddin may share his thoughts with Jamie after watching last night's opening match between Kyrgyzstan

and Palestine but the British coach will badly miss the

services of his compatriot Stuart Watkiss, who is no longer

'We have been together for a long time, so he will be

part of the national football team's coaching staff.

October's SAFF Championship in Maldives.

team at Bishkek



## **Bowlers put England** on top

REUTERS, LONDON



Seamers earned England early control of the fourth Test against India despite Virat Kohli's fighting fifty on the opening day of the contest at the Oval on Thursday.

Kohli made 50 but India could not really recover from a top-order collapse and were reeling on 122-6 at tea. Ollie Robinson had Kohli caught behind.

Put into bat, the tourists found themselves early on the back foot after losing their top three batsmen in the morning session.

England captain Joe Root pressed Chris Woakes into service after James Anderson had proved expensive in his wicketless first spell and the bowling change immediately worked.

Playing his first test in 12 months, Woakes struck in his first over to trigger a mini-collapse.

The seamer surprised Rohit Sharma, who made 11, with extra bounce and Jonny Bairstow, replacing Jos Buttler behind the stumps, took the catch.

Robinson dismissed KL Rahul lbw for 17 and Anderson returned to account for Cheteshwar Pujara to reduce India to 39-3.

## **HISTORY MAN RONALDO** 'not closing the count'

Cristiano Ronaldo signalled his intention Cups should Portugal make it to Qatar next year. to keep playing for Portugal for "years to come" after breaking the all-time international goalscoring record of 109 previously held by Iran's Ali Daei. The Manchester United forward scored twice in the dying minutes to move to 111 international goals as Portugal came from behind to beat Ireland 2-1 in World Cup qualifying on Wednesday. Ronaldo, who is the all-time top goalscorer in the Champions League and the leading marksman in

Real Madrid's history, led his country to their only major tournament win at Euro 2016. The 36-year-old spoke of his pride after his latest milestone. "From all the records that I have broken during my career -- and fortunately there have been a few -- this one is very special for me and it's certainly on the shelf of the achievements make me truly proud," Ronaldo said in a post on Instagram. "Scoring 111 goals for Portugal means 111 moments like the ones we experienced today in Algarve, moments of worldwide union and happiness for millions and millions of



this week, hinted he has no intention from international retiring football in the Thank Portugal. you Thanks to all my teammates and opponents for making this journey so unforgettable," he added. "Let's keep meeting inside the pitch in the years to come! I'm not closing the count just yet. "Portugal face Qatar in a friendly on Saturday before travelling to Azerbaijan on September 7. Thanks to Ronaldo's rescue act in the Algarve, Fernando Santos's men top Group A of European qualifying, three points clear of Serbia, who have a game in hand. Meanwhile, Manchester United captain

> Harry Maguire hailed Ronaldo's return to the club and said the "greatest player to play the game" will have a huge impact at Old Trafford.

"It's amazing to have Cristiano join us, and come back home," Maguire said.



missed," was Jamie's simple reply after working with the boys for four days in Bishkek.

The boys have worked hard in the last few days. Some look a little tired, carrying a few knocks and sores, but they are giving their best," Jamie said while hinting that the two expatriate players -- Tahmid Islam and Rahbar Wahed Khan -- need time to settle down.

"I think it is very tough for them travelling for two days and settling into a new squad. So hopefully a few more

"[Rahbar Wahed] Khan's bag was lost on the plane and was just received while Tahmid is very young, so it will take time," said Jaime.