



Star Sport Special

DHAKA SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1998



The picturesque Bangabandhu National Stadium, the venue for all the eight matches of the Wills International Cup.

Lunch at Lord's

By Tawfiq Aziz Khan

While the Bangladesh Cricket Board is bustling with feverish activity, and fans are engaged in pitched battles on the streets of Dhaka for tickets of the Wills International Cup, my mind goes back twenty years—in 1979.

It was then luncheon interval at Lord's.

The press enclosure was full to its capacity with the most famous and important cricket writers of the time. I was just thrilled to be amongst the august company.

On that summer Saturday, the 23rd of June, I was introduced to the voice of summer John Arlott by my genial guide Robin Marlar. Himself a cricketer of no mean reputation and calibre, he had a suave access to places and persons around that Ivory Tower at the Mecca of cricket. In addition to that he was also an important appendage to the elite community of English cricket writers.

I was handed my credentials as the lone representative from Bangladesh by Mr Fairley, if I could correctly remember. He was very enthusiastic and filled me in with the information that I would be lucky enough to have Ted Dexter, the former England captain who took out an England team in 1961 to Dhaka and then turned a writer, as my close neighbour on the right. But the most exciting news was to have John Arlott as my immediate benchmate on the left. This was an unexpected opportunity for me to rub shoulders with one of the pioneers of cricket broadcasting.

Back in a small town of northern Bangladesh my friends and I had followed John Arlott since the summer of 1954 as he brought the majestic gait and fascinating subtleties of the game to our young, fresh and uninhibited minds from a far away island. He had a profound influence on all of us, and hardly had I thought that I would be carrying that influence within myself for such a long time.

It was the final of second Prudential World Cup. The tournament started on June 9 at four venues simultaneously. Champions West Indies and the hosts England reached the final.

Further surprises were in store for me. It was beyond my comprehension that personalities like Sir Len Hutton, Keith

Miller, Freddie Trueman, Dennis Compton would grace the press box with their presence and some of them actually took up a pen in hand instead of bat or ball. Another surprise was Jim Laker on the microphone at the TV room along with Richie Benaud.

West Indies had a disastrous start with Gordon Greenidge running himself out and Haynes, Kallicharran and Lloyd all going cheaply. Suddenly it came to my

fashion at 286 for 9, leaving England with a challenge of scoring 4.78 runs per over.

It was not a tall order but a difficult one indeed.

Outside the enclosure the personalities engaged themselves in small talk, not at all discussing cricket. Each one of them had his own little problems starting with Sir Len's back pain to Miller losing bets on Melbourne racing. Compton was rather quiet, nodding occasionally with a pleasant smile.



Freddie Trueman (back to camera) talking to Sir Leonard Hutton at the Press enclosure at Lord's on 23 June 1979 during the final of World Cup. — Photo by author

mind that I had bought two £6 tickets at £10 each from one Mr Jock at the entrance to the St James Wood station for my nephew and his friend and phoned them to meet me at the W G Grace gate. I excused myself from John and sprinted towards the gate. My nephew Asif was waiting patiently with his friend Mokarram (Micky) there. Asif turned out to be a fine cricketer at one time but did not play for long. His son Ashad is already a cricket addict at the age of 3. I hope he takes up from where his father has left off.

Back in the enclosure I found Viv and King murdering the likes of Boycott, Gooch and Larkins—the part-timers. This was a penalty that England paid for not including an extra bowler in the side—a heavy price indeed.

West Indies finished their quota of 60 overs in splendid

Of course, John had other priorities. He was to appear briefly on TV but in the meantime wanted to get himself updated on the cricket scene of Bangladesh.

He asked a lot of questions and showed immense interest. He retired from his broadcasting career the next year. Inside, we were presented with a big lunch box, designed very beautifully and packed professionally with delicious items by the Prudential people.

But Prudential was not so prudent in their choice of menu, at least for the people of the sub-continent. Two mouth-watering, delightfully pinkish pieces of meat, neatly placed on green lettuce beckoned me. I looked at Robin for his approval. He watched very carefully and said, "I think you better not." My luncheon was spoiled, but Lloyd lifted the trophy.

No cheer for Bangladesh at Bangabandhu

Nizamuddin Ahmed

Most people with any interest in sport would say that Dhaka was a blessed city. A massive ensemble of cricket stars, all gravitationally interacting as well as opposing in other energy forms, are now orbiting about a common nucleus—the Bangabandhu Stadium.

For the first time in the history of mankind, nine (meaning all) Test-playing teams will be playing in a tournament, unique as it is, on one single ground. Never before has the stars of a galaxy been so localised. Never before perhaps was the view of a galaxy so threatened by mundane clouds and the after-effects. Despite the looming menace, the nation waits in anticipation, praying for the driest October since the Persian astronomer, al-Sufi, discovered the first galaxy.

I should have been elated, not so for the rains. Rather I should have been dancing in the rain. But I am thoroughly dejected, overtly disappointed. For to me the happenings at the Bangabandhu will be no more than watching another cricket tournament on television. Like any other big tournament, we shall only be watching. Like in the past, we shall have to remain content with being bystanders to the hopes and aspirations, successes and failures of others. It is hardly painful on television; it could be heart-breaking when the carnival is on your own backyard.

I feel bitter deep inside wondering what could have been. Another star in the Milky Way would not have spoilt the party. Nor would it possibly have mattered to the International Cricket Council (ICC), the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) or their international sponsors, but to every Bangladeshi the participation of Bangladesh would have made a world of difference.

Globally, the inclusion of Bangladesh would have had a tremendous impact. It would have encouraged smaller cricketing nations to organise such events in their countries and regions. What better way to globalise cricket? Isn't that ICC's sworn objective?

Whereas we are more accustomed to assuming that such international meets are naturally between teams representing

countries and hence the fervour, all the nine participating teams in the Wills International Cup, a one-chance challenge, do not fit the definition of a 'country'. By definition, a country is a nation or state, a territory or people of a nation or state, a large tract of land distinguishable by features of topography, biology, or culture; a rural area.

Adam Hollioake's England is a political division of the island of Great Britain and with Wales, constitutes the principal division of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Great Britain is a member of the United Nations, not England.

Brian Lara's West Indies, contrary to popular belief, is not a single country. It is more like a region of several countries and many colonies, dependencies and territories. It is an archipelago of about 1,200 islands in the northern part of the Western Hemisphere, dividing the Atlantic Ocean from the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.

Steve Waugh's Australia, Mohammad Azharuddin's India, Stephen Fleming's New Zealand, Aamir Sohail's Pakistan, Hansie Cronje's South Africa, Arjuna Ranatunga's Sri Lanka, and Alistair Campbell's Zimbabwe are states by political definition.

So is Bangladesh and it is largely rural, too. Save this manner of statehood, in which we differ with two of the participating teams but share with the other seven; there are several more pertinent factors that we have in common with all the nine.

All the nine participating teams have one-day international (ODI) status, so does Bangladesh. In fact, we are the only ODI team who shall bear witness to the proceedings in person but whose sweat shall NOT moisten the verdant carpet at Bangabandhu.

All the nine participating teams will be featuring in the 1999 World Cup in England; so shall Bangladesh. In fact, we are the only World Cup team who shall be listening to the cheer and the applause in person at the Bangabandhu, but there shall be no cheer for Bangladesh at Bangabandhu. I have no doubt that the Father

would not have approved of such a cruel irony.

Each of the nine participating teams, except the eventual champions, risks being eliminated after the first defeat. In fact, five of the nine will make their exit after their first match. Given all the uncertainties of the glorious game that is cricket so perhaps would Bangladesh. But, it would not have cost the ICC or the BCB as much as bringing any of the other nine. In fact, we would have been relatively cheaper to accommodate. No air fare.

None of the nine participating teams are hosting the Wills Cup, we are. As famous hosts since the first Arab Muslims began to arrive on our shores in the 8-9th C., the enthusiasm of our crowd is unmatched in the annals of the big and the famous, the noisy and the fervent. Allow me to translate an excerpt from Muntassir Mamoon's Bangla article 'Dhakay cricket-er shooru' (The beginning of cricket in Dhaka):

Once (in 1876) a match was being played between the home players and the English living in Dhaka. The spectators were supporting the local players. An English newspaper wrote: 'The place was densely crowded by Native Spectators who caused great annoyance to the players while the game was going on, by shouting and clapping at any mishap of the opposite party in a most rude and unbecoming way, while they rather too vociferously applauded any piece of good luck that attended their own countrymen. But what was even worse, they often managed to obstruct the ball from going as far as it would have gone, had it not been stopped on its way by a number of noisy Natives.'

While unable to shrug off our genetic trait of being noisy, the difference today is that we would applaud any good shot, any spectacular catch, any piece of devastating bowling by anybody in the world; of course, with a lot of noise. And, that Sir, is the very charisma of one-day cricket.

We haven't done very well in recent months. True, very true. But everyone deserves a second chance or even a third and a fourth. Mark that man Taylor. He was so down under that even

a five-year old was looking down on him. At one stage, he was on the verge of losing his captaincy as well as his team slot. And, last week he could afford to let a beckoning World Record pass by seductively close. Magnanimity has its virtues.

If the downs and ups of an illustrious Aussie individual are not considered an apt analogy, let us discuss team. Should anyone consider our 63 total against Northern Ireland with seriousness? Of course not! It is not the smallest total in international cricket. Some from the participating nine have much lower scores than that.

We now have a fantastic lighting system; some of the great have been quoted, as saying it was 'the best'. We have a very modern electronic scoreboard; some of the experts have been heard saying it was 'the latest'. Our organisation capabilities have been tested before and our men have come out with distinction. The world knows today that BCB does not stand for bravo, cricket bravo.

So, where was the problem? Sale of tickets? Nahhh!

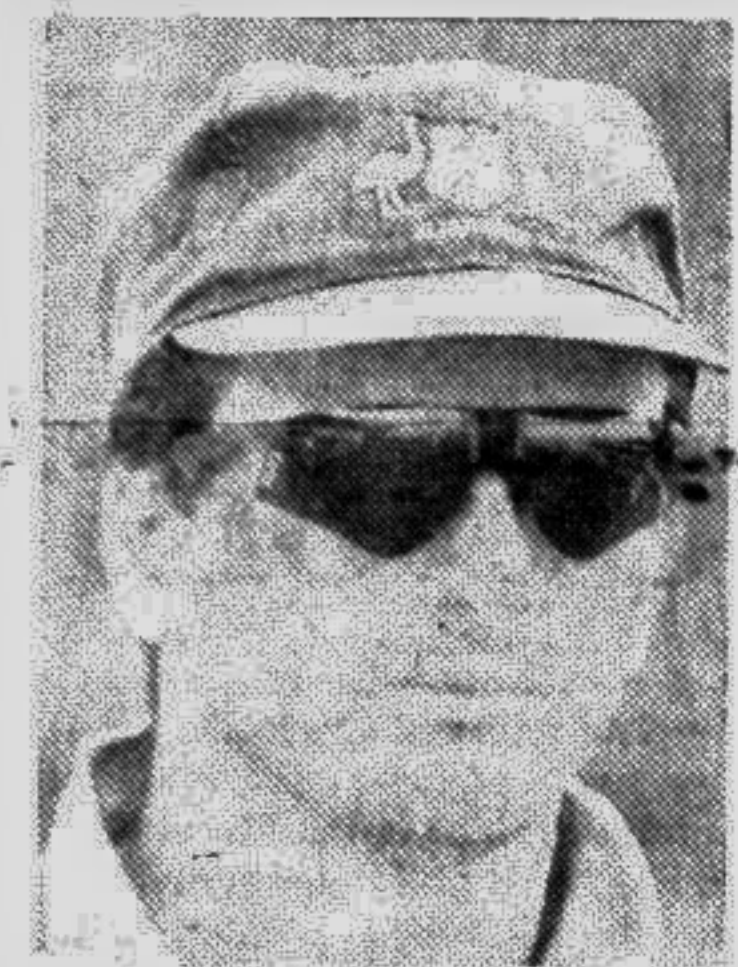
While the Zimbabwe-New Zealand and the England-South Africa matches were not sold out with as much urgency as the other contests, I would eat every bit of this paper if a Bangladesh-anybody match at Bangabandhu was not over subscribed.

So, where was the problem? Would the Test-playing nine mind? Nahhh!

England captain Adam Hollioake has already termed Bangladesh's exclusion as a 'shame'. No doubt many others in his rank would comment likewise.

We are a registered ODI side. We are in the 1999 World Cup. We are the hosts. This was our chance to contend on home ground with those with whom we shall have to contest in the cold of England's next summer. We would have perhaps played only one match but then so would several others among the big nine. We would have been buoyed by home support. Bangladeshi players would have been beamed across the world via satellite. We have let a great opportunity go by. Indeed it is a shame.

The Daily Star welcomes you



Steve Waugh

AUSTRALIA

Steve Waugh (captain), Mark Waugh, Darren Lehmann, Michael Bevan, Ricky Ponting, Brendon Julian, Andrew Symonds, Adam Gilchrist (wicketkeeper), Glenn McGrath, Damien Fleming, Michael Kasprovicz, Damien Martyn, Gavin Robertson, Brad Young.



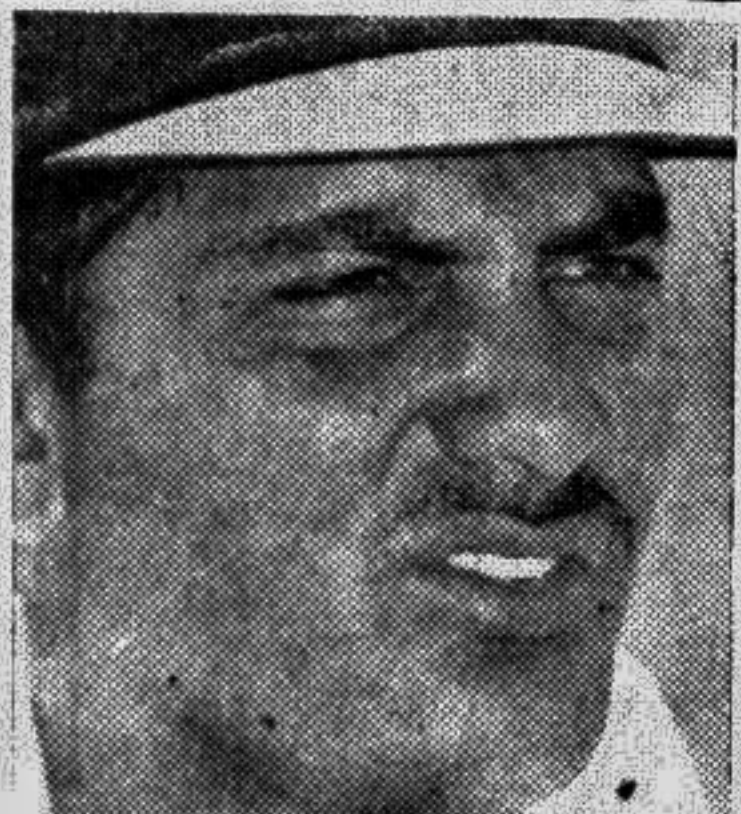
Adam Hollioake

ENGLAND

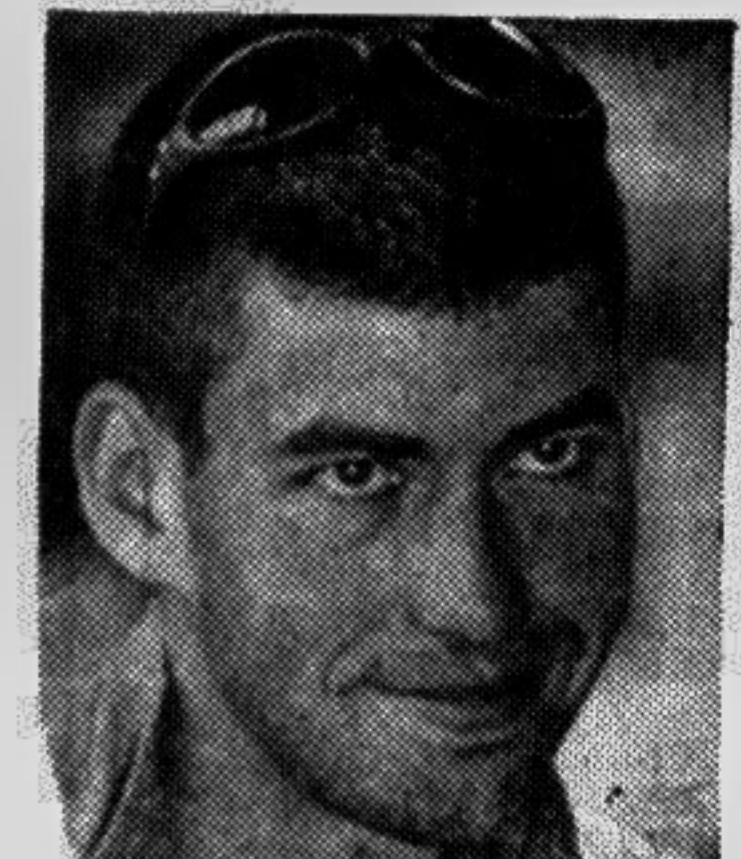
Nick Knight, Alistair Brown, Adam Hollioake (captain), Graeme Hick, Neil Fairbrother, Mark Ealham, Matthew Fleming, Anthony Giles, Jack Russell (wicketkeeper), Dougie Brown, Graham Lloyd, Ian Austin, Peter Martin, R Martin, Chris Silverwood.

INDIA

Sachin Tendulkar, Saurav Ganguly, Mohammad Azharuddin (captain), Rahul Dravid, Ajay Jadeja, VVS Laxman, Robin Singh, Sunil Joshi, Nayan Mongia (wicketkeeper), Javagal Srinath, Venkatesh



Azharuddin Prasad, Ajit Agarkar, Anil Kumble, Nikhil Chopra.



Stephen Fleming

NEW ZEALAND

Geoff Allott, Nathan Astle, Stephen Fleming (captain), Craig McMillan, Matthew Horne, Mark Bailey, Matthew Bell, Chris Harris, Adam Parore (wicketkeeper), Simon Doull, Shayne O'Connor, Alex Tait, Daniel Vettori, Paul Wiseman.

Take a Share

Balicharya Bldg

House # 17 Road # 14
Apartment : 1980 - 2115 sft
Duplex : 2510 sft

World - Tel	the Players
WELCOME TO DHAKA	
MINI WORLD CUP CRICKET '98	
the Commentators	the Viewers

স্বপ্ন ও আশার এক অদূর সমুদ্র

HAL-ETBL DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM
Kulsum (1st Floor), 40-41 Siddheswari Circular Road, Dhaka
Tel # 839557, 418796, 407075, Fax # 880-2-9346598
e-mail : halknl@bdonline.com

ইলেকট্রনিক্স জগতে বিশ্ব সমাদৃত GRUNDIG GERMANY এখন বাংলাদেশে

নগদ ও সহজ কিস্তির সুবিধা।

কিনলেই আকর্ষণীয় উপগ্রহ

২৫" টিভির সাথে ১টি GRUNDIG টু-ইনওয়ান
২১" টিভির সাথে ১টি GRUNDIG ওয়াকম্যান
১৪" টিভির সাথে ১টি GRUNDIG ওয়ান ব্যান্ড রেডিও

১৪" রঙিন টিভি
২১" রঙিন টিভি
২৫" রঙিন টিভি

৫ Years Warranty

মিনি বিশ্বকাপ ক্রিকেট উপলক্ষে বিশেষ মূল্য হাস!

SEARS Electronics Ltd

১৪৭/১, পুরাতন এয়ারপোর্ট রোড (বিজয় স্মরণীর নিকট) ফোন : ৮৮০-২-৮২০২১, ৯৫৫২৯৫৬, ফ্যাক্স : ৮৮০-২-৯৫৬৪০৬
পল্লবী সার্ভিস সেন্টার, নিরপুর ১১৫, ঢাকা। গাড়ীখানা রোড যশোর।
ঢিলার : কাজী ইলেকট্রনিক্স, তাজ বিপনী বিকাস, ২১৫ শহীদ বকিক সড়ক, মানিকগঞ্জ।
একেশ্বর : গ্লাসাই ইন্টারন্যাশনাল, রেডকল বিল্ডিং, ১১৪ মতিঝিল বা/এ ফোন : ৯৫৬৭৬০২, ৯৫৬৮০৮২।

GRUNDIG

দিয়ে বুচরা যন্ত্রাংশের নিয়মিত বিক্রয়োর উন্নত সার্ভিসের সুবিধা।
রঙিন টিভি মানেই ঝকঝকে নিখুঁত জীবন্ত ছবি