

## A king and his Test baby

AL-AMIN

When cricket's governing body ICC met in Lahore on October 16 it was not surprising that cricket affairs of Bangladesh along with Zimbabwe topped the agenda for all the wrong reasons.

The game's experts branded Bangladesh as a team not competitive enough to meet the desired standard so the argument was they should play fewer matches.

The Zimbabwe cricket authorities went into the meeting with a racist's tag after a nearly six-month dispute with their rebel captain Heath Streak.

So in the gentlemen's court both boards in question felt they needed strong representatives to tell their sides of the story to the other eight apprehensive full member-nations.

It was however not clear how Mahbubul Anam, who represented Bangladesh in Lahore, fought the case for the cricket-crazy South Asian nation or whether the Zimbabweans stunned the audience in silence with an emotional speech on racism that the Heath Streak's forefathers had firmly planted in the former Rhodesia.

We are however only interested to know if Mahbub had made an honest statement about a Test baby that was born in June 2000 which is now being nourished at the hands of a submissive king whose every decision is influenced by a powerful 'prince'.

Did he tell the progressive moves the king had taken ever since a court verdict suspended a democratic body thanks to a little twist from a modern-day 'Mir Zafar'?

It augured well at the onset as the king quickly realised the need of a set of advisors to take care of the baby. They sat together and after burning the proverbial midnight oil came to the conclusion. The baby should grow up like an Australian infant does. The argument behind that was very, very strong -- the Aussies are the best.

So they started to fill every coaching position with an Australian no matter whether someone is a human movement specialist or a rugby expert. The odd pick in an otherwise all-Australian combination was a Zimbabwean, who was the commander-in-chief. The outcome was predictable and the king got some test-tube babies.

But just when the king took them out in the open air to acclaim his biggest success in three years he got the shock of his life. He found them physically strong but felt that somewhere along



ALI ASGHAR

the manufacturing process something had gone wrong. They are not ready to take up the battle.

In the meantime those who are already fighting and losing the battle one after another started to send SOS signals. But the king, who was working in a High Performance laboratory, suddenly discovered that he had nothing in reserve.

The fear of a premature demise of the baby gripped the ruler and suspecting an outcry from his subjects, the king cut off all communications and apparently decided not to face the masses.

His fears are not baseless. A huge rage is brewing up in minds of those subjects.

Their first point of dissatisfaction was how could the king be so preoccupied with the welfare of only 20 odd babies. He spent all his time and money in bringing them up. His one-track obsession left him oblivious of what was happening in other parts of his kingdom. His domestic structure, on which the Test baby came into being, was on the verge of collapse. The caretakers who selflessly looked after it long before he came to power had lost their jobs.

The king was shielded by a council of advisors, who in reality had little connection with what was going on outside the castle. The children of his subjects were denied a chance to prove themselves through a competition that was very popular in the past.

Another failure on the king's part was his inability to set the 15 centres of excellence.

Now the king must decide. He either has to relinquish his authority acknowledging that he was a puppet ruler paving the way for the crown prince to take over or he could bow to the demand of his subjects and return to a democratic rule.

## We make it more colourful

ZAKARIA SIMON

You probably would not call something a sport if someone does not watch it. Sports and spectators have been complementing each other ever since both terminologies came into being.

Over the years cricket has stood the test of time and has always been gaining popularity around the globe.

And with the game now in the modern day, ad men are catching the idea of pushing their products through 'people power' using an array of gimmicks. Crowds love to

get involved into the game by flashing placards with the number of runs written on them, which are sometimes sponsored. Also another way to bring crowds closer to the game is by showing clever TV replays on giant screens. Whatever the verdict may be, the spectators know how to express their emotions the only way possible -- through thunderous cheers or clapping.

Indeed thanks to the power of television and for that matter satellite channels, crowd behaviour has become an integral part of matches anywhere in the world. Not only that they are very fashion conscious

while supporting their national teams and often sport similar colours. And like their heroes who battle it out on the field, the fans copy the combatants and put on the war paint.

Crowds have come to appreciate the value of instant fame when a camera zooms in on them because they know wearing colourful masks or flashing carefully crafted messages can really catch the eyes of the world.

Come to Bangladesh, you will find a perfect combination of the above elements. The game has really generated a huge

amount of passion among fans of all ages here. No matter how old or young one is and how much cricketing knowledge s/he possess, a fan can easily recognise a Tendulkar or a Lara without wasting a moment, leave alone the Bashir or Rafique.

It doesn't bother the crowd here at all if it is a local club game or a one-day international or even a Test match between two outsiders, they will just be there to enjoy and

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JUST FEEL THE HEAT: Spectators in the country will not leave any space empty during a cricket match.

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