

TIGERS COMPLETE MOON LANDING

The Daily Star
SALUTES THE
Tigers again

The Daily Star along with the whole nation takes the opportunity to congratulate Habibul Bashar and his men for their maiden Test victory. We hope that the Tigers' 226-run victory against Zimbabwe at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday in their 35th match will act as a stepping stone for greater glories in the days to come. Bravo Bangladesh!



THE KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOUR: Bangladesh spinner Enamul Haque (R) goes on a celebratory lap after dismissing Zimbabwe's Hamilton Masakadza (not in picture) while fast bowler Mashrafe Bin-Mortuza (C) chases him on the fifth and final day of the first Test at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Chittagong

When paceman Mashrafe-Bin-Mortuza was about to bowl his second last over at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday, he suddenly stopped at the top of his bowling mark.

Looking from a distance it appeared the 22-year-old was about to shed tears as emotion got the best of him with Bangladesh only a wicket away from recording their first Test victory.

His feelings at that very moment epitomised the pulse of an expectant father waiting for the delivery of a newborn. And it came soon afterwards when Mohammad Ashraf gleefully accepted a simple bat-pad offer from Zimbabwe's last man Christopher Mpofu at silly point off the bowling of Enamul Haque, who perhaps was the only Bangladeshi on the field showing no nerves.

The whole MA Aziz Stadium erupted in a chorus of noise and Habibul Bashar's men started a victory lap that the cricket-crazy nation had to wait for four years and two months.

And when the hysterical mid-pitch celebrations ended and the boys of Dav Whatmore caught their breath, there was only one statement on their lips -- "IT IS THE BEST DAY OF OUR LIVES".

"It's a dream come true for us," said Mashrafe in tears of joy.

"I got angry when I could not get any wicket in the morning. But I calmed down after taking the wickets of Chigumbura and Nkala after lunch. We have finally done it," the 'Narail Express' added.

Mohammad Rafique can count himself very lucky because he is one of the two players in the squad who was part of Bangladesh's first one-day victory against Kenya and today's historic 226-run Test triumph over Zimbabwe.

"I was there (at Hyderabad in 1998) when we won our first one-day match and I am here now too.

It's a great feeling and I think there is no looking back now," said the champion left-arm spinner of the country.

For Bashar, it was simply the best day of his life but Whatmore found it hard to separate his World Cup winning moment as coach of Sri Lanka and the Test victory of the Tigers.

"I am thankful to all those who helped me to come this far in my career. I am just happy to be a member of this team. Nothing is more important, even being captain of the side," said Bashar who led from the front with a pair of half centuries (94 and 55) in Bangladesh's 35th Test.

"I was in total blankness when the match was over. I can't remember what happened during those three or four minutes. We have been working hard for this and at last the victory has come. I give credit to all my teammates. It's tough when you are losing, especially for the captain. But the job looks easier now for me with this win."

The 32-year-old Bashar showered all praises to Enamul for his heroics on the final day.

"Enamul is an outstanding bowler. He was a bit tense in the first innings but came back strongly later to show his potential."

While reflecting on the early morning assault by the Zimbabweans, Bashar said he was never worried.

"They started well in the morning and I knew we needed one or two wickets to take control. We had a superb first innings with everybody contributing to the cause. We had good partnerships, good bowling, a unique team effort. Besides, the fielding was outstanding on the final day."

Whatmore said that he was extremely happy to be a part of history again after masterminding Sri Lanka's World Cup triumph in 1996.

"Being a part of history is something great. The relation between

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The making of history

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

There was a definite sense of inevitability about which way the first Test between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe was headed when the last day's play got underway. Zimbabwe were up against it on 46 for three and no Bangladeshi fan believed that there could be any other outcome but a Bangladesh victory.

However, there were still certain twists and turns on an eventful Monday that shaped the Tigers' historic maiden triumph in Tests. Here are some of the moments that stood out:

1. Overnight batsmen Hamilton Masakadza and Brendan Taylor adds 66 runs in the first hour with bold strokeplay to frustrate the

Bangladesh attack. Taylor survives two close calls as strong appeals from Mashrafe bin-Mortuza and Mohammed Rafique are turned down.

2. Taylor's luck runs out when he is adjudged lbw on 44. Enamul Haque (Jr) gives the breakthrough in the first over after the drinks-break. Having generally turned the ball away from right-handers, Enamul outfoxes Taylor who pads up to one that went with the arm. The impact was outside the off-stump but Sri Lankan umpire T Wijaywardhene thought the ball was going towards the direction of the stumps. It ends a stubborn 70-run partnership for the fourth wicket.

3. Enamul gets the prized scalp of Zimbabwe skipper Tatenda Taibu four overs later to virtually shatter the tourists' backbone. First-innings top-scorer Taibu departs for a 15-

ball duck as tries to turn the ball towards the on side, managing only to find the expectant hands of short leg fielder Aftab Ahmed.

Taibu swings his bat in the air in frustration, perhaps realising that it was all over for Zimbabwe. The Bangladesh team and small crowd also erupt in joy knowing that the visitors have lost their last recognised batsman.

4. Hamilton Masakadza shows his class as he reaches a half century and then points to the crest on his shirt as if to indicated that he'd fight till the last. However, on 56 he mistakes a straight drive and the bowler Enamul dives to his wrong side to come up with a brilliant low return catch. Enamul's fourth wicket of the innings sees Zimbabwe slumping to 126-6 in the 51st over, three overs before lunch.

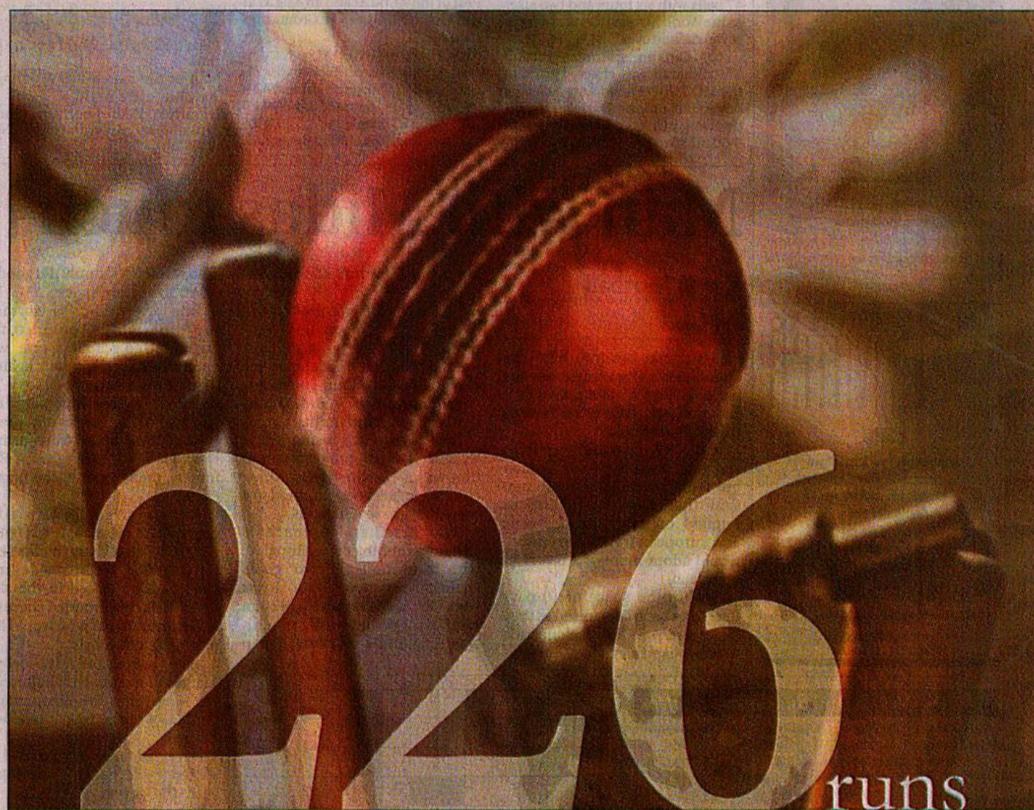
5. Whatever food they had at

lunch was apparently not sufficient as the Tigers are still hungry for more after the break. Captain Habibul Bashar goes for the kill and invites Mashrafe to bowl immediately after the break and the Narail speedster strikes in his second over. Elton Chigumbura, hero in the first innings with an invaluable 71, slashes hard at a wide ball with minimum footwork. He gets a bottom edge and wicket-keeper Khaled Mashud takes a low diving catch to his right.

6. Enamul goes for the jugular and Graeme Cremer's nervy push is taken at silly mid-off by Rajin Saleh who plucks it with one hand. Enamul has got a five-for!

7. In the 62nd over Muleki Nkala takes a mighty swipe at a good length ball from Mashrafe and misses it. No one knows where it is

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have made the tigers enter the cricketing archives.

CONGRATS!

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