

# Whatmore looking for contributions from all

 Cricket

AL-AMIN from London

The biggest strength of Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore is his ability to handle his friends and foes alike. He is also a kind of character who takes adversity in his stride. And just one day before Bangladesh's biggest challenge against a vaunted England side, the 50-year-old looked as positive as ever.

"If you are expecting Bangladesh to go and win the chances of that happening given the results over four-and-a-half-years is pretty slim. But that's not to say we can't really show good progressive cricket. So, what I'm saying it's not fair to judge with a win or loss," said Whatmore ahead of the first Test starting at Lord's on Thursday.

"I can understand that a lot of interest has occurred with this tour. But the facts are that England are ranked second and Bangladesh tenth. So

there is a big gulf of difference between the two sides and you will have to accept that."

"I know their attack is such that their four pacers will be coming at us all the time like planes landing at Heathrow, Gatwick or JFK every five minutes."

But Whatmore was not interested about what England are capable of doing against his inexperienced side. Rather, he wanted to focus on the small contributions from his boys.

"Well, if we are bowling I expect my bowlers to give their opponents a hard time. And if we are batting I want the openers take the shine off the hard newball.

"In order for us to do well there are certain good things that need to happen over first day, second day, third day and fourth day. So, the batsmen need to bat wicketless sessions and make sure they do not loose wickets before or after breaks.

"We need to have a minimum of at least three 80-run partnerships.

He said the Tigers had a mixed bag

in three warm-up matches.

"If you say every batsman made runs over those three games, that had not occurred. The bowlers also did not hit the deck and bowl properly either. I think game one and three were okay but we had a bit of dip in the second one against Sussex. But if you are reviewing the whole lot I think it was good. We cannot always have every practice match perfect in our build up for a Test."

Asked whether it was a bit scary for him to see 20 wickets falling just over a day against Sussex, the Bangladesh coach replied in the negative.

"That sometimes happens in a shorter length of time than a greater length. But it's not scary for me because if you look at performances at county cricket over here sides have been bowled out for 130 or 140 and these things can happen but you never know when it is going to happen."

He also said that he was not worried about his non-performing top-order.

"It is good to have some runs before coming back in international duties but that does not guarantee anything."

But Whatmore was not so happy with the performances of his two left-arm spinners.

"The spinners had a hard time gripping the ball and controlling it that they usually enjoy on the sub-continent. But I think the they should quickly adjust to the conditions than the medium-pacers."

Whatmore, who last came at Lord's with the Sri Lankan team, said that that the wicket here in May-June has no devil in it.

"At the moment it appears lightish green but I think they will cut it a bit more. Generally speaking, this time of the year the wicket looks pretty flat here."



PHOTO: BANGLACRICKET.COM

EAT WELL, SLEEP WELL, TRAIN WELL! (L) Bangladesh wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud (L) talks to teenage prodigy Mushfiquur Rahim at the reception thrown by the Mayor of London on Tuesday. (R) Former England captain Nasser Hussein charms the audience with his speech.

## A reception to remember

 Cricket

ASIF SALEH, *Banglacricket.com*

The setting was beautiful overlooking Tower Bridge.

The Mayor of London arranged a lovely reception for the cricketers and British Bangladeshi guests at the City Hall. My mission was two fold. I wanted to capture as many photos as possible for banglacricket.com as well as to adorn the recently bought cricket jersey of the Bangladesh team with autographs of all our players.

It was pretty difficult to leave my

dignity behind and walk around like a star-struck teenager with a T shirt asking the players for their signature. Also it didn't help that I was middle aged and all these players are mostly in their teens or early twenties. However, I got this mission

accomplished within the first 20 minutes.

While I was getting the signatures, the actual ceremony began and speaker after speaker spoke. There was the Mayor, of course, with his right hand man Murad Qureshi, who spoke about London's bid for the Olympics in 2012. Then there was the Bangladeshi High Commi-ssioner to the UK, the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, the MCC President, the BCB President and the Chief Executive of the ECB. All of them piled away on the usual formalities. But the best of the speeches was left for last and that was of former England captain Nasser Hussein.

He spoke about how often he was on the other side and was bored to death listening to these speeches and now it was his turn to take revenge. Looking at the Bangladeshi cricketers at that point, it did seem like they wanted to be

anywhere but there. It was as if they could not wait to start hitting the ball. Hussein's message was of hope. Hope that we would follow Sri Lanka in their rise to the top of world cricket, reminding the audience that only twenty years ago, they were where we are now. But the most interesting aspect of his speech was his subtle hints at Dav Whatmore to include Mushfi-qur Rahim in the team.

"I hope to see him at Lords," said Hussein, "although that his not a decision for me to make, it is for some people quite a bit older than him to make."

I could not wait for the speeches to be over so that I could have a chat with the players. Bangladeshi players are not really known for their conversational skills in a foreign

land but nevertheless, I wanted to try. I first grabbed the lad from Keraniganj our dear Mohammad Rafique. He looked very despon-

dent and said he was ready for the action. However, his body language said the opposite. Then there was Ashrafur chirping away with everyone who was there. He was undoubtedly the most confident of the lot and was amazingly tiny and still managing to look like a school-boy.

There was Sumon (Habibul Bashar) and his ever present smile. He was very polite and mentioned that he was counting on our support at Lord's. There was Aftab, the only bearded player of the team. He looked very nervous. I don't know whether it was my recollection of the Shibir brothers of Dhaka University or if it was his nervousness, something put me off trying to have a chat with him.

Mashrafe was bored out of his mind and was looking at a Bangla newspaper listlessly. Javed Omar

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## Some solace for Greens

SPORTS REPORTER

BCB Greens took sweet revenge against BCB Reds with a massive 143-run victory in the third limited-overs trial game at the BKSP yesterday.

After two consecutive wins, Alok Kapali-led Reds were bundled out for 49 runs in 16 overs in reply to Tushar Imran's Greens' 192-9 in the allotted 45 overs.

None of the Reds batsmen could reach double digits and highest 19 runs came from extras.

Shafaq AJ Jabir, Mushfiquur Rahman, Tareq Aziz and Mohammad Shahajada claimed two wickets each to rattle the Reds innings.

In the Greens innings, extras (44) topped the scorecard also with handsome contributions from Nazimuddin (31), Naem Islam (32), Mushfiquur (34) and Faisal Hossain (25).

Two new ball bowlers Alamgir Kabir and Gazi Alamgir picked up three wickets each.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**BCB GREENS:** 192-9 in 45 overs (Nazim 31, Naem 32, Mushfiquur 34, Faisal 25, Tareq 16 not out, extras 44, Alamgir Kabir 3-32, Gazi Alamgir 3-35, Reza 2-23).

**BCB REDS:** 49-10 in 16 overs (Faruque 8, Kapali 3, extras 19, Jabir 2-13, Mushfiquur 2-6, Tareq 2-13, Shahajada 2-9, Tushar 1-5).

## A problem all coaches love to have

 Cricket

AL-AMIN from London

Dav Whatmore said that he loves to have more selection dilemmas like the one that young Mushfiquur Rahim has thrown after his outstanding showing in the two practice matches, which ultimately earned him a Test cap at Lord's.

"It was a great achievement for him first of all to get into the sixteen. The fact that he kept wicket and the way he played in the two matches was a very refreshing attitude when youngsters are given a chance and he was fantastic and that exactly what we wanted of a batsman, said Whatmore about the 16-year-old Bogra lad who is going to make his Test debut along with paceman Shahadat Hossain on Thursday.

Whatmore said that he had not seen Mushfiquur, who hit a half-century against Sussex and followed it up with a brilliant hundred against Northamptonshire, before



SHAHADAT HOSSAIN

but was aware that he did well with the Under-19 team in Australia last month.

"No, I have not seen him before because he was busy doing his stuff with the Under-19 team. He has certainly put us in a selection dilemma. It was a very good problem to have and I wish we have more in the future."

## 'Don't get carried away'

AL AMIN from London

While the rest of the members of the Bangladesh team are excited at the prospect of playing at Lord's, skipper Habibul Bashar warned that his charges should not get carried away and rather take it just like another Test.

"We should not think that we are playing at Lord's. We will be better off if we think that we are out there to play yet another Test match," said the Bangladesh captain ahead of the first Test at the historic venue.

The 32-year-old admitted that there was a lot of hype before the first Test at Lord's, considered by many as the home of cricket.

"But when the match starts everyone should forget where they are playing and should think about how well they are playing against one of the best sides in Test cricket," said Bashar at a briefing with the Bangladeshi reporters on Tuesday evening.

He also did not agree that his boys should take inspiration from the fact that they are privileged to play at the grand old venue which had just hung a big portrait of Bashar along with England captain Michael Vaughan and Australian skipper Ricky Ponting, who will lead the world champions in the triangular one-day series after the Tests.

With the bruise still visible on his forehead, the flamboyant Bashar said that he was fit not only to play but also to execute his trademark hook and pull shots despite being hit during the second practice match against Sussex.

"It creeps when you are out of the field. But once you are in the middle that thing does not bother anymore because the focus is always on how to survive on the wicket rather than the thought of that pain"

He said that this kind of injury was always going to happen. "There is no question about not playing my natural game," said Bashar who loves to play pull and hook shots.

"One thing I liked about him was his desire to do something. He batted really well under pressure", said Bashar about Mushfiquur Rahim but instantly ruled out that the

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# Shahadat to get the English dancing

 Cricket

THE GUARDIAN, London

When Shahadat Hossain was told that his cricketing hero Steve Harmison suffers from homesickness on tour, his face lit up with relief. "I didn't know that," he said, "but I am happy to hear it."

While Harmison satisfied media bloodlust on Tuesday by agreeably proclaiming that England would show Bangladesh "no mercy", his young adversary was merely concentrating on keeping body and soul together.

Homesickness can be lost in translation but his honest appraisal of his first senior tour survived a translation from Bengali into Hindi

and, finally, into English.

Shahadat, facing his Test debut on Thursday at Lord's at the age of 18, has an endless supply of hand warmers to combat the chill of an English spring, but it is the froicour of English society that can stay in the bones longer.

"I miss the social structure that I have in Bangladesh," he said. "Without my family and friends around me, I feel quite lonely. Sometimes I feel that I want to get back to Bangladesh as soon as possible. It can be hard to manage without the warmth of my family and friends, and the people in Bangladesh."

Anybody who has travelled in south Asia will appreciate the culture shock faced by Shahadat and this young Bangladeshi team.

Bangladesh, in spite of its poverty, in spite of the fact that it is ranked as the most corrupt nation in the world, possesses a natural warmth; at its best, it is a gentle land of kindred spirits.

In England, Shahadat must contend with an elaborate and distrustful society where warmth is not readily given. And then he is thrown the ball, a debutant for statistically the worst Test team in the world, and asked to bowl out England.

But, for Shahadat, it is not just the contest that awaits, it is the honour. Asked to imagine a Test debut at Lord's, his eyes flew to the heavens in an innocent display of pleasure.

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PHOTO: STAR

Brothers Union's Russian striker Edwards jumps over Nejme defender Zaher to avoid a collision during their AFC Cup encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Wednesday.

# Oranges end on a low

## Nejmeh-2, BU-0

SPORTS REPORTER



match of Group C in the AFC Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The Lebanon league champions, who had ensured a quarterfinal berth before this game, did not even have to use their full strength to maintain a hundred per cent winning record with strikes either side of the break.

Brothers risking playing injured midfielder Hicham Inani but the National League champions suf-

fered an early setback when the Moroccan was forced off the ground after just 12 minutes.

The tremendous heat took its toll on Inani as well as the local players but the visitors looked comfortable, taking control with a string of passes. They also spotted the hosts' weakness on the right side of the defence pretty quickly and burst down the flank to create early chances.

With adequate feeding from the midfield, striking pair Ghaddar and Nasserredine showed exquisite skill and control to put the Oranges under tremendous pressure but young goalkeeper Tareq pulled off three spectacular saves inside ten minutes to hold them at bay.

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### TEN Sports

French Open  
Second Round, Day 4  
Live at 3:00 pm

West Indies vs Pakistan  
First Test, Day One  
Live at 8:00 pm

### ESPN

Bangladesh vs England  
First Test, Day One  
Live at 3:30 pm

Sportscentre  
Live at 10:30 pm

UEFA Champions League (Final)  
Ac Milan vs Liverpool  
Repeat at 11:00 pm

### STAR Sports

Azlan Shah Cup Hockey  
Pakistan vs New Zealand  
Live at 2:00 pm

India vs South Africa  
Live at 4:00 pm

Sportsline  
Live at 8:00 pm