

A Day One
let down

SPORTS REPORTER from Lord's

The biggest strength of Bangladesh cricket is their loyal band of supporters. Even at Lord's there were plenty of them wearing the red-green shirt.

But they were utterly disappointed with the performance of Habibul Bashar's men on the opening day of the first Test.

The Bangladeshi expatriates came in small groups from different parts of England and even from Scotland anticipating some fight from their beloved team.

Some enthusiasts also arranged off the field entertainment during breaks.

Attired in traditional panjabi a singer crooned popular Bangla songs during the lunch break with hundreds of Bangladeshis cheering all the way. Even an English gentleman tried to dance to the tune.

It was certainly refreshing after watching an inexplicable batting display by Bashar's men.

"I have come from East London to watch the match. But the batting really let us down," said 20-year-old Hasan, who was sporting a Bangladesh shirt.

Asked whether he will come again tomorrow he replied positively.

"Off course I will come and hope that they would do better in their second innings."

There were also a few thousand school children who came to Lord's form different schools of London including the Tower Hamlet, where most of the Bangladeshi children study.

Although all were disappointed, the mood is not as hostile as it can be in Dhaka after a debacle.

AFC CUP

Muktijoddha
finish bottom

SPORTS REPORTER

Like fellow Dhaka giants Brothers Union, Muktijoddha Sangsad also finished bottom of their group in the AFC Cup when they lost 2-1 to Jordan's Al Faysali in the last match on Wednesday.

Moayad Mansour scored twice, in the 12 and 24 minutes, for the home side at the Amman International Stadium while Muktijoddha's Rwanadan defender Harry pulled one back three minutes after the break.

Muktijoddha, who had lost 3-0 to group champions Faysali at home, finished with four points, three behind Kolkata giants East Bengal who dashed Turkmenistan side Nebitchi's hopes to advance to the quarterfinals with a 3-2 home win.

East Bengal's Nigerian striker Earnest Jeremiah scored a hatrick as Nebitchi, who had high hopes to qualify for the last eight as one of the three best group runners-up, crashed out.

Nebitchi's defeat allowed Singapore champions Tampines Rovers, New Radiant of the Maldives and Lebanon's Al Ahed, to secure their passages into the last eight.

Jordanian Al Faysali and Al Hussein, Lebanese clubs Al Ahed and Al Nejme and Sun Hei of Hong Kong are the other teams to go into the AFC Cup quarterfinal draw to be held at AFC House in Kuala Lumpur on June 15.

The quarterfinals will be played over two legs on September 14 and 21.



Did U Know?

The idea of an Olympic flame burning from the start of the games to the closing was first introduced in the Amsterdam Games in 1928.

What to
WATCH

TEN Sports

French Open
Third Round, Day 5
Live at 3:00 pm
West Indies vs Pakistan
First Test, Day Two
Live at 8:00 pm
ESPN

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

STAR Sports
Azlan Shah Cup Hockey
India vs New Zealand
Live at 2:00 pm
Australia vs South Korea
Live at 4:00 pm

A sorry batting tale



AL-AMIN from Lord's

There were nearly 16,000 cricket fans at Lord's to watch Bangladesh's first Test against England and most of them could guess that the tourists were in trouble after Michael Vaughan won the toss and decided to bowl.

And true to their fears the Tigers were bundled out for 108 fifteen minutes after lunch - Bangladesh's lowest score against England. The wreckers as expected were the four pacers with Matthew Hoggard claiming 4-42, Steve Harmison 2-38, Andrew Flintoff 2-22 and Jones 1-4.

England had a fifth bowler in off-spinner Gareth Batty but poor Batty, coming in place of injured Ashley Giles, did not get the chance to bowl

a single delivery.

The avalanche started at 11.13 when Nafees Iqbal helped a rising ball from Harmison to first slip to his English counterpart Marcus Trescothick and finished exactly in two hours and 39 minutes.

But then there was a feeling that the four-pronged English pace attack was not really unplayable for the Bangladeshi batters. Hoggard and Harmison did bowl well after lunch but they really struggled to control the new ball. Not only that, Hoggard alone bowled five no balls compared to Harmison's three and Bangladesh reached 31 without any trouble.

But trouble started when skipper Habibul Bashar played an outrageous pull shot after facing just three deliveries. True that Bashar is a compulsive stroke-maker but that does not necessarily mean that he has got the license to cause the downfall of a team under world

media spotlight for the wrong reasons.

"You should blame it on your captain because he started it all," said an English journalist.

Like Bashar, a level-headed Aftab also committed Hara-kiri and an over-smart Ashraful prepared for a premeditated pull shot only to see an yorker from Flintoff.

Javed played within himself to score highest 22 but he too departed playing a false shot against Jones.

Wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud is the only batsman who can consider himself unlucky after being adjudged leg before by Indian umpire Krishna Hariharan although television replays showed that the ball struck Mashud outside the off-stump.

And 16-year-old Mushfiqur Rahim, who scored 19 on his debut, was undone by the gem of a delivery from Hoggard with the ball leaving the batsman late only to knock the off-stump.

But the Bogra lad at least showed the temperament and technique needed to survive in a five-day game. He also struck three in a total of 12 boundaries in the Bangladesh innings.

Aftab struck highest five and Javed hit three. Ashraful struck the other, a miscued pull shot that sailed over the slip cordon.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the first day of the first Test between England and Bangladesh at Lord's on Thursday:

BANGLADESH: First innings	
Omar c Trescothick b S Jones	22
Iqbal c Trescothick b Harmison	8
Bashar c G Jones b Hoggard	3
Aftab c Strauss b Flintoff	20
Ashraful lbw b Flintoff	6
Rahim b Hoggard	19
Mashud lbw b Hoggard	6
Rafique run out	1
Mortuza b Harmison	0
Anwar not out	5
Shahadat c G Jones b Hoggard	4
Extras: (b-1, lb-1, nb-12)	14
Total: (All out in 38.2 overs)	108
Fall of wkts: 1-31, 2-34, 3-65, 4-65,	
5	

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COMEBACK KINGS! Liverpool custodian Jerzy Dudek (C) being congratulated by Luis Garcia and Milan Baros as other players go wild after the win against AC Milan.

Liverpool walk alone
on top of Europe

AFP, Istanbul



Liverpool were crowned European champions for the first time in 21 years after beating AC Milan 3-2 on penalties in a dramatic final at the Ataturk Olympic stadium here on Wednesday.

Extra-time failed to separate the teams with the scores locked at 3-3 - this after Milan had led 3-0 -- and Jerzy Dudek saved spot-kicks from Andriy Shevchenko and Andrea Pirlo to seal Liverpool's fifth European triumph and complete the greatest comeback in the tournament's history.

Paolo Maldini, playing in his seventh final, gave Milan the lead after just 50 seconds before a double strike by Hernan Crespo appeared to have comfortably wrapped up the contest before half-time.

But Liverpool responded with courage and determination, erasing Milan's superiority in a mesmerising six-minute spell after the restart with goals from Steven Gerrard, substitute Vladimir Smicer, on his farewell appearance for the club, and Xabi Alonso, the Spanish midfielder following up after Nelson Dida had saved his penalty.

Milan's crushing defeat left them without a trophy, having been pipped to the Italian league title by Juventus last Friday.

Liverpool coach Rafa Benitez said Gerrard's goal early in the second half which made it 3-1 was the turning point.

"Steve's goal changed everything," he said. "We started believing in ourselves and then when the second goal went in we could really feel our supporters getting behind us."

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti was dumbfounded as to how his team threw away a match that was practically in the bag.

"It was a strange game, very strange. We had six minutes of madness that complicated things," he said.

"I thought after Liverpool pulled it back to 3-3 there was only one team in it. We created lots of opportunities and didn't take our chances.

"We played a great final and we didn't deserved to lose. The players ought to feel proud and although I'm unhappy, we lost with honour."

Benitez sprung a major surprise by selecting Harry Kewell ahead of the vastly experienced German Dietmar Hamman in midfield.

Kewell, an Australia international, has struggled to hold down a regular place this season due to injuries and a loss of form.

Crespo, whose goals put Manchester United out in the last 16, got the nod ahead of Filippo Inzaghi to partner Shevchenko up front.

Milan enjoyed the perfect start, taking the lead with less than a minute on the clock.

Djimi Traore fouled Kaka wide on the right and Andrea Pirlo curled the resulting free-kick into the box. The ball fell nicely for Maldini, at 36 the oldest man to score in the European Cup final, whose right-footed shot into the ground flew over the outstretched fingertips of Dudek and into the top corner.

The previous fastest goal in a European Cup final was scored by Enrique Mateos in the 1959 final for Real Madrid and was clocked at one

minute, but there is no exact recording.

Liverpool reacted positively with two chances in quick succession. John Arne Riise's powerful drive was charged down and seconds later a towering header by Sami Hyypia was smothered on the goalline by Dida.

Luis Garcia cleared Crespo's header off the line with his chest before Kewell pulled up with a hamstring injury and was replaced by Smicer.

Shevchenko had a goal ruled out for offside before Milan doubled their advantage in the 39th minute.

Kaka's beautifully-chipped pass found Shevchenko pulling out to the right and his low cross to the back

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PHOTO: AFP

(L) Captain Habibul Bashar walks back to the pavilion after getting out to a terrible shot. (R) Youngster Mushfiqur Rahim was all character as long as he was at the crease.

Div 1 soccer

SPORTS REPORTER

BRTC put an end to Victoria Sporting Club's winning streak in the First Division Football League when the two sides drew 0-0 at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

BRTC collected their first point after two defeats while Victoria, with two wins and one draw, stayed on top of the 8-team table with seven points.

Badda Jagarani will take on Mohakhali Ekadash in today's match.

Lara steadies
Windies

SPORTS REPORTER

Brian Lara's quickfire 44 helped West Indies recover from an early shock to reach 102 for three at lunch on Day One in the first Test against Pakistan at Bridgetown, Barbados yesterday.

After electing to bat, the home side lost opener Chris Gayle (4) and one-down Devon Smith (6) quickly to Shabbir Ahmed before Lara steadied the innings with his 41-ball knock featuring six fours. Ramnaresh Sarwan was dismissed by Abdul Razzaq for 19, bringing captain Shivnarine Chanderpaul who was batting on 14.