

Missing only is the Tigers' roar

AL-AMIN from Lord's

The first Test between Bangladesh and England at Lord's might have turned out to be a mismatch, but that had little bearing on the turnout of spectators.

The first day drew nearly 16,000 crowd at this magnificent venue and despite the poor showing by the visitors, the second day attracted an even bigger audience.

The whole stadium was abuzz with screaming children and applause from grown up men and women, who cheered every good shot that pierced the lush green carpet and crossed the boundary.

There was festivity all around and with the football season just over fans quickly moved to the cricket field to enjoy the first sunshine of summer.

The mood outside the ground was also not less vibrant with a few hundred playing the game of cricket with a plastic bat and a ball in their hands.

Although the press box, which gives someone the impression that a space craft had just landed near the western end of the venue, is soundproof the authorities planted the electronic devices so that the media is not deprived of the faintest of nick or the deafening roar.

Lord's has everything a cricket match needs. The only shame is that the Bangladeshi cricket have failed to join the party.



THE SUCCESSFUL TIGERS: Bangladesh spinner Mohammad Rafique successfully appeals for a caught-behind decision against England opener Marcus Trescothick, who fell only six runs short of his double century, while fast bowler Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza (R) in his delivery stride on the second day of the Lord's Test on Friday.



PHOTOS: FOCUSBANGLA/APP

Bashing as expected

Cricket

AL-AMIN from Lord's

"It probably couldn't get much worse," was exactly what Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore said while talking to reporters on Thursday after the first day's play at Lord's.

A grim-faced Whatmore also knew that his arguments would not be as strong as anybody liked after his team got bowled out for 100 odd runs on the first day of the English summer.

He tried to establish the fact that the conditions here were fairly different to what his charges experience in Bangladesh but that was the lamest excuse for anyone to accept after the manner in which his batters were involved in a race of how quickly they presented their wickets.

The 50-year-old also tried to play down the carnage by saying: "There were indications that we can slowly keep going in that way," referring to the small but steady first wicket stand of 30 odd runs.

But it was not enough to prevent the international media including the English section, who believe that Bangladesh barely deserve a place in the elite Test family.

And the uproar in the English media on the following day was

humiliating to say the least for Bangladesh.

"There is no handicap system in Test cricket as there is in horse racing or golf, but on yesterday's evidence in the first power Test at Lord's it would require England to give Bangladesh a start of 200 runs and three wickets in each innings before a decent contest emerged," wrote Derek Pringle in his Friday's column for The Daily Telegraph.

The report also carried the headline "Callow Bangladesh are exposed".

He also summed up the attitude of the Bangladesh batsmen quite nicely.

"They were not frozen in awe. Quite the opposite in fact, as batsmen keen to impress on this hallowed ground, showed that had the shots if not the shot selection. Hit and hope..."

"But that has proved a hopeless adventure and they are repeating it again and again and this time blame it on the Bangladesh captain."

"He is the one who plays his shots and plays his natural game. It can be explained that way. But I'm sure he will not mind to see the replays and have a peep to see the kind of swing Hoggard was getting at that time," Whatmore remarked about the reckless pull shot of his captain Habibul Bashar.

Asked whether Aftab Ahmed

knew how to defend a ball, Whatmore wanted to look on the brighter side of it.

"When he hit the ball he hits so cleanly. Had he been choosy and stayed there a bit longer he could have hit more of those shots. But definitely he knows where the problem is and hopes to sort it out next time," said Whatmore.

But this is not for the first time Bangladesh have pressed the self-destruct button and Whatmore hoped that it would not be repeated again. It now remains to be seen whether our batters can apply themselves in the way Test cricket should be played or at least the way 16-year-old Mushfiqur Rahim is trying.

"Little Mushfiqur Rahim is a class above the others. He missed a couple but he got out to a magnificent delivery on top of his off-stump. And thinks he has got a bright future," said Whatmore about the only Bangladeshi player who got some credit from the English media.

"There are glimpses of a rosier future. Mighty atom Mushfiqur Rahim overcame nerves to look as composed as any 16-year-old making his Test debut deserved to be against Stephen Harmison and Co," wrote Pringle.

Premier League kicks off today at BNS

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The most anticipated domestic competition the Premier Division Football League sponsored by Premier Bank kicks off today with holders Brothers Union taking on promotees Dipali Jubo Sangha in the opening day fixture at 6 pm.

Although sponsorship proved to be tricky issue for the organisers that forced them to put back the league by eight days, however now hopes are high that the football-crazy public will flock to each and every game, which returns to the

Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) after three seasons.

In recent times the emergence of Muktiyoddha Sangsad and Brothers Union have almost put the country's two crowd-pulling sides Abahani and Mohammedan to the shade. But the organisers were looking

RST WEEK'S FIXTURES

May 28: Brothers v Dipali (6pm).
May 29: Russel v Farashganj (5pm).
May 30: Muktiyoddha v Wanderers (4pm).
AKC v Fakirerpool (6pm).
May 31: MSC v Arombagh (5pm).
June 1: Brothers v Farashganj (5pm).
June 2: Russel v Fakirerpool (5pm).
June 3: Abahani v Wanderers (5pm).

forward to seeing the traditional foes make a solid challenge this time.

"We are very excited by the return of top flight football to BNS but at the same time it is essential that both Abahani and Mohammedan rise to the occasion for the fans' sake. People still enjoy watching them," commented Abdur Rahim, chairman of the Dhaka Metropolitan Football League Committee at a press conference at the BFF Bhawan yesterday.

In a bid to give the ten-team top league a competitive edge, the BFF has gone for a three-day inter-club players' transfer system.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 7

Emeka in Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Nigerian World Cupper Emeka along with two booters arrived in Dhaka on Thursday night to strike a deal with Mohammedan Sporting Club.

The popular club is looking to rope in some quality foreign players and also on the look out for a coach as they desperately try to overcome a wretched start to the football season.

Emeka, who played for the Black and Whites in the 80s, was expected to become coach of the Motijheel outfit while Jamaican striker Mariano Benjamin and Nigerian midfielder Tijani Batunga accompanied him in the hope of signing for the club.

Ron Azimge, a Nigerian defender had earlier reached the city also to sign for Mohammedan.

WI fail to build on brilliant Lara ton

Cricket

AFP, Bridgetown

A majestic 29th Test hundred from Brian Lara could not stop Pakistan from bowling out West Indies on the opening day of the opening Test.

The 37-year-old Lara hit the top score of 130 at better than a run a ball, but West Indies were dismissed for 345 in their first innings, and Pakistan, in response, reached 22 without loss from four overs before stumps were drawn on Thursday.

Lara, making a return to the West Indies line-up after being rested for the preceding three-match one-day international series, played some breathtaking strokes to collect 14 fours and four sixes from 120 balls in 2-3/4 hours of batting.

West Indies captain Shivnarine Chanderpaul added 169 for the fourth wicket with Lara and was the perfect foil for the batting superstar after West Indies won the toss and chose to bat on a hard, true Kensington Oval pitch under partly cloudy skies.

Chanderpaul fell eight runs short of his 14th Test hundred, after striking nine fours from 193 balls in just over four hours.

Abdul Razzaq, Shabbir Ahmed, and Danish Kaneria, all snared three wickets for Pakistan.

Lara and Chanderpaul gave substance to their side's innings, after West Indies courted early strife at 45 for three.

But when they were separated in the final half-hour before tea, there was little support from the rest of the batting, as no one else showed any purpose.

Lara reached his first Test hundred against the Pakistanis, when

he lofted two consecutive sixes off Kaneria over long-off to move from 90 to 102.

Kaneria, the target of much of Lara's punishment, had the last laugh when he deceived the great West Indies batsman and bowled him with a well-flighted delivery.

Lara has now scored a hundred against each of the nine other Test playing nations and has joined his elite contemporaries Rahul Dravid, Gary Kirsten, Sachin Tendulkar, and Steve Waugh in this achievement.

He completely dominated his stand with fellow left-hander Chanderpaul, after Shabbir, whose bowling action raised more than a few eyebrows, threatened to completely ruin the day for West Indies.

Shabbir made the early breakthroughs after West Indies chose to bat, when he had Chris Gayle caught at mid-off for four driving loosely off the backfoot, and Ramnaresh Sarwan caught at third slip for six in the first half-hour.

West Indies' position could have been more treacherous had second slip fielder Bazid Khan, making his Test debut, held a chance from Devon Smith on nine off Navedul

Hasan. Smith however, failed to make the most of his reprieve and he was caught at first slip off Razzaq for 19 when he edged a flat-footed drive to the same fielder.

Lara quickly shook off the rust and blossomed with a pair of spanking square drives off Razzaq, and when Chanderpaul joined him, they gradually wore down the Pakistani bowlers.

The two left-handers carried West Indies to 102 for three at lunch, and Lara set upon the Pakistani attack, particularly Shabbir, after the interval.

After Lara raced to his landmark, Yasir Hameed dropped him on 103 at slip off Shahid Afridi before Kaneria removed him.

Wavell Hinds tried to pick up where Lara left off, but he was a poor imitation, although he and Chanderpaul took West Indies to 246 for four at tea.

After the break, Hinds was carelessly run out at the bowlers' end.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6

B'DESH V ENG SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of England's innings on the second day of the first Test against Bangladesh at Lord's in London on Friday:

BANGLADESH: First innings 108 (Omar 22, Aftab 20, Rahim 19; Hoggard 4-42, Flintoff 2-22, Harmison 2-38)

ENGLAND: First innings (overnight 188-1)
Trescothick c Mashud b Rafique 194
Strauss lbw b Mortuza 69
Vaughan c Mashud b Mortuza 120
Bell not out 65
Thorpe not out 42
Extras: (b-4, lb-11, w-3, nb-20) 38
Total: (For 3 wkts decl in 112 overs) 528

Fall of wickets: 1-148, 2-403, 3-415
Did not bat: Flintoff, G Jones, Batty, Hoggard, Harmison, S Jones

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|----------|----|---|-----|---|
| Mortuza | 29 | 6 | 107 | 2 |
| Shahadat | 12 | 0 | 101 | 0 |
| Anwar | 22 | 0 | 110 | 0 |
| Rafique | 41 | 3 | 150 | 1 |
| Aftab | 8 | 1 | 45 | 0 |

Barlow blames shot-hungry batsmen

BSS, London

Former Bangladesh cricket coach Eddie Barlow yesterday blamed Bangladesh batsmen for their debacle in the first innings of the first Test against England at Lord's on Thursday.

The former South Africa Test player was talking to Bangladeshi journalists at the press box of Lord's in the morning.

Barlow replaced Gordon Greenidge as Bangladesh coach after the 1999 World Cup. He, however, had to leave after a year after he suffered a heart attack.

After seeing the pathetic batting display from his former team, Barlow said that there was no demon in the wicket. "The reason behind it was that Bangladesh batsmen played too many shots early in their innings when balls tend to come late and their shot selection was poor."

"They lacked application and dedication."

Barlow, however said, Bangladesh has improved a lot. "They now seem a more professional outfit and a better fielding side." He also believes that Bangladesh has the potential to display a better brand of cricket.

Champs Trophy stays India to alter income tax regulation

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

India will amend an income tax regulation to allow the cricket-obsessed nation to host the Champions Trophy limited-overs tournament as scheduled next year.

Finance Minister P Chidambaram said on Thursday.

"The cabinet has approved amending the law so that India is not deprived of the tournament," Chidambaram told reporters after a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

According to current regulations, income tax is imposed on all earnings, including gate receipts and sponsorships, for international

sporting events held in the country.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) had said in March that the biennial Champions Trophy, the second biggest event after the World Cup, could be taken away from India and handed to Pakistan if tax exemption was not granted.

Indian cricket officials, led by former ICC chief Jagmohan Dalmiya, met Chidambaram and Singh earlier this month to request a waiver for the tournament which raises funds for the ICC's development program.

Chidambaram said in future tax exemption will also be granted to other sporting occasions "provided it was a truly multi-national event approved by an international body responsible for regulating the relevant sport."

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6

Bangladesh Open Tennis starts

SPORTS REPORTER

The Scandex Bangladesh Open Tennis competition began yesterday with 36 men's qualifying matches decided on the day at the National Tennis Complex.

The draw of the events was held on Thursday night.

Following are the top seeded players' lists:

Amol Roy of Engineers Club (men's singles), Amol Roy and Alamgir Hossain pair (men's doubles), Shifat Nushrat Baishakhi (women's singles), Baishakhi and Shathi Sarker (women's doubles), Omar Faruque (u-14 boy's singles), Kibria Aytal Jaman Vhabna (u-14 girls singles) and Arif Hossain (u-12 boy's singles).



Did U Know?

Pakistan became the second visiting team to post a total of 300 or more in West Indies. Sri Lanka had made 313 for six against West Indies at Bridgetown in 2003.



Tom Moody

(Former Australian all-rounder)
"I am very excited and honoured to be Sri Lanka coach."



| ESPN |
|--|
| England v Bangladesh First Test, Day Three Live at 3.30 pm |
| Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Hockey S Korea v Pakistan Live at 6 pm |
| TEN Sports |
| French Open tennis Third round Live at 3 pm |
| West Indies v Pakistan First Test, Day Three Live at 8 pm |
| STAR Sports |
| EPL Celebration Football programme Live at 7 pm |



Premier Bank Senior Div Football League
Brothers Union v Dipali JS
(Venue: BNS, time: 6 pm)