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Exciting cricket

The second Twenty20 World Cup began in England with the opening ceremony taking place at the Lord's in London - the home of cricket - on 05/06/09. It is apt that the country which invented the "gentleman's game", including the exciting 20-over format known as Twenty20, would host this tournament. If the last T20 World Cup, hosted by South Africa, culminating in the nail-biting final between the Asian powerhouses India and Pakistan, is anything to go by, this year's event also promises to be a spectacular one. The Twenty20 format of the game has evolved rapidly since the inaugural World Cup and is now the fastest growing sporting competition in the world. The success of the Indian Premier League (IPL) has provided great publicity regarding this sport, however, it could well be argued that the increasing popularity of T20 is at the expense of the 50-over version of the ODI game or the traditional five-day Test matches, rather than other

expect them to beat Ireland (although they should not underestimate the plucky Irish) and if they have momentum behind them they are certainly capable of surprising a few in the Super 8s, especially with Sakib Al-Hasan, officially the world's best all-rounder, in their team.

The other main contender for the T20 World Cup has to be South Africa, although they have a reputation of choking in close matches and have never won any World Cup competition. They have one of the best squads suited for the T20 format and several of their players are star players of the Twenty20 (domestic) Cup in England. The Group of Death is Group C where Australia, Sri Lanka and West Indies will be competing for two places for the Super8s. West Indies are the 3rd seeded team in this group and are not expected to qualify to Super 8s according to the ICC-ODI Rankings (where they are the 8th best team in the world) and they lost both

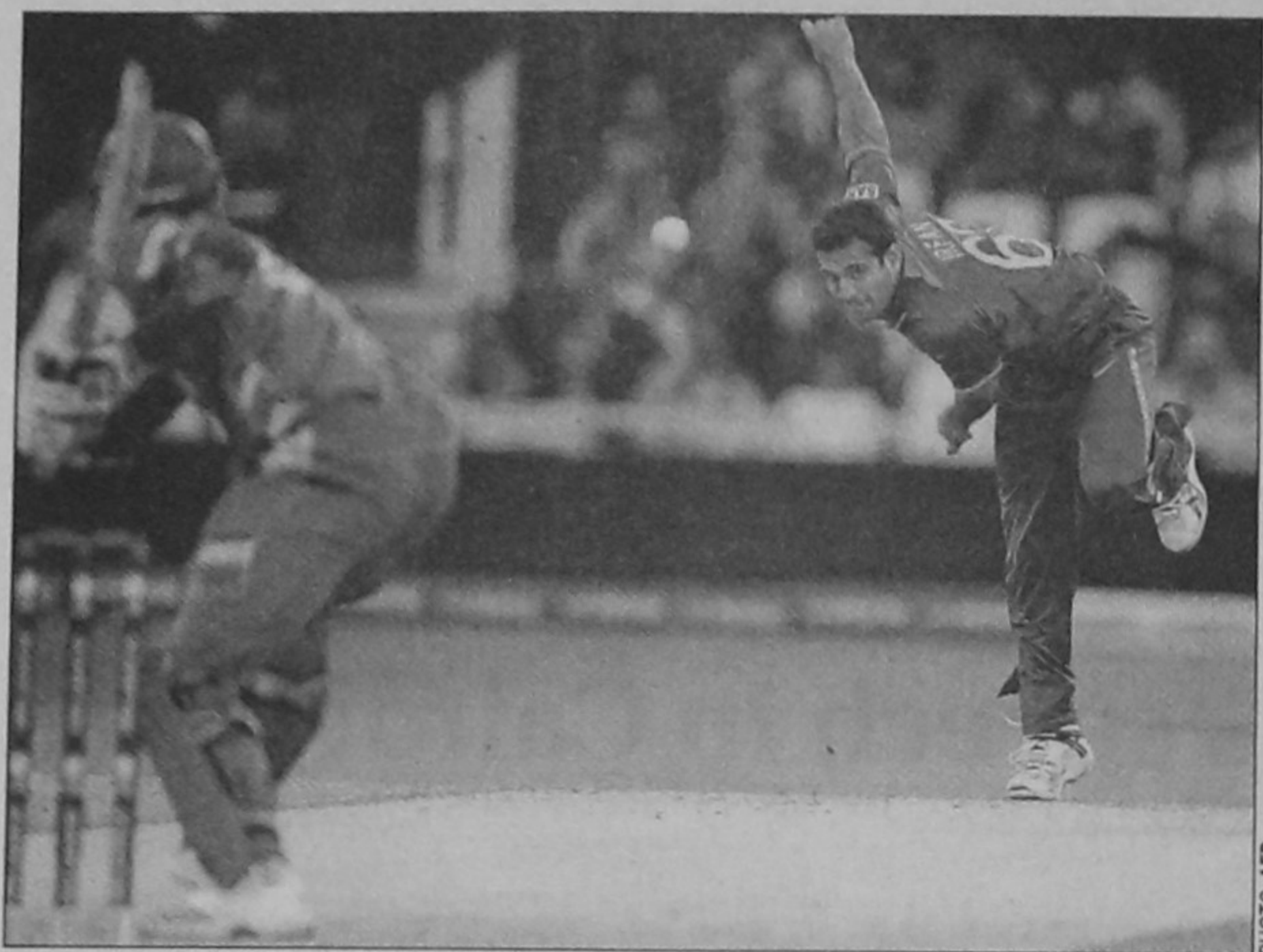


PHOTO: AFP

competing sports.

The inaugural T20 World Cup Champions India look to be the team to watch in this year's competition as well. India have considerable experience of this format as a result of IPL and their success in South Africa makes them favourites to retain this trophy. However, T20 is undoubtedly the most unpredictable format of cricket and there is better chance for "smaller" nations to upset the more established ones than is possible in the other two versions of the game. India, led by the impressive Mahendra Dhoni, have arguably the most match-winners than any other squad competing in the T20 World Cup. Bangladesh are expected for the first time to at least qualify for the Super8s (which they did in the previous T20 World Cup by knocking out West Indies) and anything less than that would be considered a huge failure, as their opponents in their Group are Ireland (who the South Asian nation should beat as a Test playing nation) and India. It should be interesting to see how they cope with this pressure, but I

the Test and ODI series comprehensively against England last month. I still, however, feel that they are the "dark horses" for this tournament along with New Zealand. If the West Indies qualify to Super8s and their inspirational captain Chris Gayle has a good tournament they will most probably go all the way. The hosts England will most likely not have a great tournament as they will be distracted from the Ashes series which begins in July and are heavily dependent on Andrew Flintoff (who will miss the tournament because of an injury) and Kevin Pietersen (who was also injured for the home series against West Indies and might well be rested for the Ashes).

It promises to be a fascinating tournament and England is most certainly the place to be in this summer for cricket lovers with the Twenty20 World Cup taking place in June and the small matter of the Ashes series in July and August.

Aranya Syed
University of London
London, England

Deforestation

Some people do not try to realise the importance of trees. They cut trees at random. This way, due to deforestation carbon dioxide is increasing worldwide. As a result, the world is becoming warmer. The sea level is rising and many parts of the world are going to be engulfed by the sea in near future. On the other hand, new areas of the world are turning into deserts because of deforestation. The removal of trees causes birds and other animals living on them to leave the place. It also causes serious damage to the soil, as trees give protection to soil as well. In the end, the soil gets sediment in the riverbed and causes frequent floods. So, if we destroy trees at random, one day the country will turn into a great desert. The living animals and birds will not find any food or shelter to live in. They will be destroyed. There will be no rain and consequently our agriculture will face a great crisis.

In the circumstances, immediate measures need to be taken to prevent deforestation.

Habibur Rashid Ismail
JRF Madrasa, Chittagong

Digital Bangladesh

The above topic seems to be the talk of the town, in drawing rooms, audio-visual and the print media in recent days. The news seems to be the "Holy Grail" for all the problems we have! It will give us the promise for the possibility of a sort of 360degree, 24X7

openness and transparency of interaction with most public issues; practically bringing the governance to the computer website and the mobile phone in a reasonable time frame, if my analysis is rational.

So be it. This will possibly increase transparency on most matters of governance related to increased public interface and scope for direct interaction on popular issues except for matters of national security and in a grave emergency.

Hopefully, it will be set up on a top down basis, with views from policy makers; and not relegated to lower level government functionaries only! However, one important matter seems to have been overlooked, and not considered for digital interface and interactions, although the whole subject is closely related to maximum two-way public interaction! One wonders if it was an oversight or based on hindsight? That important subject is politics! All avenues of political activities and interaction with many persons can be easily established, more so with the growing generation, our future, who are more digital savvy, thanks to the Internet and mobile phone accessibility! This will ensure maximum openness and transparency between the government and the governed! It will definitely encourage participative democracy with healthy two way exchange of ideas and actions.

Parties will have to have serious fore-thoughts before

putting up their programmes and proposed policies. Populist slogans alone will take them nowhere under this open mechanism. Once the political party gets the mandate to man the government, effective quarterly reviews can be easily programmed. The government will have to correlate their performance vis-à-vis their pre-election promises and give logical and acceptable reasons for any variance between performance and promise, throughout the tenure of their term of government!

The AL government has shown the way and hopefully they will put the policy of digital openness and transparency in governance, the sooner the better, which can be fine tuned as we learn our way towards a right mix of government authority and responsibility. At the least, they deserve thanks for taking the first step in the right direction.

S.A. Mansoor
Gulshan, Dhaka

Save the rivers

Hats off to your team for taking up the cause of our dying rivers. It is about time that this issue was taken up seriously. Hope this mission will be successful and our rivers will flow freely again!

Also please take up the cause of the beautiful lakes around the city and Gulshan/Banani in particular where every day fresh filling is going on.

Azra Azad
Gulshan, Dhaka

IPO applications

Various problems are being faced by individual or small investors in obtaining or getting information about refunds to unsuccessful IPO applications, viz.

Applications by Resident Bangladeshis (RBs) are relatively simple. Money is paid by cash or cheque to designated banks which issue a provisional receipt. After the lottery, refunds/allotments to applicants are distributed on a designated day by the organisation against the bank receipt.

Unclaimed refunds/allotments are then sent by courier to the designated addresses and delivered against the bank receipt. This usually works fine.

Recently, some refunds are being deposited directly to the bank accounts named in the IPO application form, which is even more efficient as it saves the applicant a long, tiresome and expensive journey to Motijheel or the Company office usually located there.

PROBLEM: a) Refunds/allotments sent by couriers are delivered at all times of the day, when the proper person may not be at home or has access to the Bank receipt. b) Sometimes direct refunds to banks are delayed and it is also difficult to get information from some banks as to how much has been credited and from whom. Some banks even charge for this service. c) If not delivered by courier, allotment/refund letters remain with the respective offices till collected. So if the bank is not cooperative, one never knows the position of refund/allotment until the applicant goes to the company office to collect them.

Applications in foreign exchange by Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) are more cumbersome and complex. First the exchange rate has to be found, foreign exchange draft made out and the applications with passport copies sent by courier to the Company Head Office that may be in another city. The company is supposed to issue a money receipt but it never does so. I have never received a single money receipt against the NRB applications I have made over the years.

PROBLEM: a) Applicant does not know if the application was received in time or not for at least 5-6 weeks, because there is no acknowledgement by the company. b) If the NRB refunds/allotment are not collected on the designated day, the real problem arises. The Company sends these by courier and are to be delivered only against "bank receipts" but most investors only have a courier receipt, as the relative money receipt is never issued. Why then does the company instruct the couriers to deliver the refund/allotments against money receipts (or bank receipts as the couriers call it), when they know that these have not been sent to the applicants? c) Even when FC drafts are received as refund and deposited in respective banks, the proceeds take a long time to be credited. Would it not be more efficient to refund on-line to respective F/C bank accounts, just like RB, and inform the applicants?

Sikander Ahmed
Niketon, Gulshan-1, Dhaka

Media and collective thinking

The media is currently involved in generating public awareness on two vital issues - the Prothom Alo has launched a motivational programme as "Bodle Jao-Badle dao"; and The Daily Star with Channel i has put on the air a live programme: "Nodi Bachao-Desh Bachao".

There is no doubt these are valuable efforts on the part of the media. I wish them best of luck to achieve their respective objectives. However, my little observation as a long time community organiser are as follows on those public awareness programmes which include a qualitative message for the government to save rivers of the country going under the control of the land grabbers and upstream river management projects beyond our borders.

I am not sure about the end result of the "Badle Jao" slogan because I have doubt whether the sponsors and the pioneers of the slogan have themselves changed, perhaps not, because old faces are seen on the TV screen who are not above controversy. My strong feeling is that we need to replace them with new generation people who are above any controversy. I know that I am asking too much because of severe dearth of such people in Bangladesh. However, we will have to try for it.

I have a special request to the media to kindly bring qualitative change in your talk shows. It has become monotonous and a source of big irritation for those who can understand the typical positioning of the guests and hosts too. It is time to reduce the frequency and monopoly of the earmarked guests who are already exhausted.

Diversification of subjects is also needed. Please stop these monotonous and perverted talk shows. I would urge the producers and the moderators to kindly watch so-called talk shows in other countries and take good lessons from them, if you find any.

By the way, I am very curious to know whether the guests are paid any honorarium. Who bears the costs?

Quadir
California, USA

Crossfire killings

The Frankenstein has been let loose. Two innocent polytechnic boys are the latest victims. The government's election pledge is ignored. Ministers are expressing contradicting views. We are living in such a savage society that many of us even enjoy such annihilation. We have lost our faith in the normal process of criminal justice, but pretend to believe the stories of 'crossfire' and 'encounters'. Executive magistrates in their inquiries endorsed all the killings. Then where will the people go?

We do not want to see any more killing of such type. All such killings of the past should be probed and the killers must be punished. We are not living in jungles. We claim ourselves to be the citizens of a democratic country where the rule of law must prevail.

M.S. Huq
Uttara Model Town
Dhaka

Rab

The period of caretaker govt was more or less peaceful with crime rate at the lowest level. Why? Reports said it was the fear of getting killed in the 'crossfire' of Rab that forced diehard criminals to flee the country or hole themselves up in underground sanctuaries. Even jailed criminals did not dare to seek bail. This fact clearly indicates how beneficial Rab was for the common people and what a terror it was for the criminals. Now those who advocate for the dissolution of Rab are no doubt supporting the criminals. It is our misfortune that our politics has been hijacked by such people as cannot think of their existence without the active support of musclemen, goons and thugs. After all, what else could assure them of immense power to trample law as well as daily huge 'income' without investing a paisa? So... abolish Rab and let the common people go to hell.

M. Shawkat Ali
Uttara, Dhaka

Gandhian non-violence

When Mahatma Gandhi launched his non-violent movement to end the British colonial rule in India, he made it clear why he rejected all calls for a violent freedom struggle: "If Indians take up guns to kill the British, given India's great ethnic and religious divisions, they would still be using the same guns to kill each other long after the British had gone. I don't want India's freedom if it meant Indians would be free to slaughter each other. If India makes violence her creed, I will not care to live in India." Similarly, Israel has vacated Gaza, but Hamas and Fatah are still slaughtering each other. In the fight for control of Gaza, Hamas was accused by Human Rights Watch of "violation of international humanitarian laws in some cases amounting to war crimes."

Only by resorting to Gandhian non-violent movement, the Palestinians can help change that perception, leading to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Palestinians must reject Hamas and its violent methods, if peace is to have a chance.

Mahmood Elahi
Ottawa, Canada

Media and ministers

The national probe report on the BDR mutiny raised objections about role of the media in disseminating information during the mutiny. But it did not say anything about the comments of the ministers about the different "links of mutiny" just after the massacre took place. The national probe report did not find any such link. The media was giving true information but the ministers' comments were based on speculations and political motivation. Moreover, the comments might influence the investigations by different agencies. The report recommended formulation of a Code of Conduct for the media, specifying their role in consolidating national security. But why did it not recommend such Code of Conduct for the ministers?

Pradyut Kumar Saha
Kalabagan
Dhaka

Icon of democracy

Our next-door Myanmar is a mysterious country, which has been ruled for decades by the military junta. Most of the countries in the world have snapped relations with this undemocratic country, albeit China supports it unanimously. Russia sells their arms and India also keeps good relations considering the economic perspective.

Aung San Suu Kyi who won the Nobel Prize for Peace is their voice of the people. This democracy icon has been in jail for 13 out of the last 19 years. It is clear that the military junta wants to keep her again in jail, so that she cannot disturb them anyway.

We want to see an end to this and at the same time Suu Kyi's unconditional release.

Harun-or-Rashid
Sobhanbag, Dhaka



PHOTO: AFP

Primary education

After assuming power, the Awami League government is considering expanding primary education up to grade VIII. We know that all the primary schools are now up to grade V and most of the schools are government schools, while the secondary education is just the opposite, most of the secondary schools are non-government.

We know the standard of the government primary schools. The students of the government primary schools come from the less privileged families, particularly in the big cities. Even the children of the teachers of government primary schools do not study in their schools.

A huge amount of money will be needed to expand primary education up to grade VIII. Some extra rooms have to be constructed and some new teachers will have to be recruited and some more things have to be done in this regard.

For ensuring quality primary education, the government itself and a lot of NGOs including BRAC, Plan Bangladesh are working. But matters have not improved much. I would like to draw the attention of the education minister and the authorities concerned to this issue. They should think deeply before upgrading primary education up to grade VIII.

Indadul Haque
Keya
Kumerkhali
Kushtia

River pollution

I sincerely thank The Daily Star for its efforts in getting attention of public to water pollution and river grabbing!

I hope the people in the government will realize the need for recovering the rivers and take practical steps to stop pollution of river water.

We, the local people, are the witnesses to these rivers' lives how many kinds of fish and other living beings were available in the rivers in the past. But now nobody wants

to touch river water! Contribution of these rivers to agriculture was huge!

Now we need joint efforts from the civil society and the government to help overcome this crisis.

Shall we again see the glittering movements of fishes - mola, puti, chela?

Amio James Ascension
Monipuripara
Tejgaon, Dhaka

No campus violence!

I feel very proud as I am a student of Khulna University (KU). KU has a good reputation, because it is the only university in Bangladesh where student politics is fully prohibited on the campus. So, we do not experience any campus violence. That's why we, the students of KU, can complete our undergraduate & postgraduate programmes in time without any problem. On the other hand, the students of Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, even Dhaka University, suffer due to session jam.

Although the caretaker government of Fakhruddin Ahmed initiated a move for clamping a permanent ban on student politics in public universities and colleges in a bid to restore proper academic atmosphere in the institutes of higher education, the major political parties did not agree to that.

Since the students are the future of the nation, everybody expects so much from them. Now, as a general student, I would like to request the government to take the initiative to bring peace to the campuses, so that the students can complete their programmes in time without any harassment and our higher education can take the right path.

Finally, I would like to appreciate the KU authorities' decision to ban student politics on the campus.

Md. Asfath Ullah (Siyam)

BBA, Khulna University

Encroachment on water bodies

I am reading all these articles on encroachment on water bodies along with pathetic excuses from government bodies, but will any real action be taken? I was surprised and pleased to see the CTG take on some high ups and free a lot of land in Gulshan, so it isn't just a pipe dream, anything is possible. Apart from our rivers, our lakes are still being encroached upon. On one side of Gulshan Lake, they are extending the boundary pavement as I write this and yet on the Badda side of the lake they are encroaching another few feet every few months! Do the lawmakers not see that the lake has another side other than Gulshan? Or are they turning a blind eye because they have a vested interest?

This should be investigated by whoever is responsible for Rajuk and DCC activities.

S. Choudhury
Dhaka



PHOTO: S. CHOUDHURY