

BEYOND THE BOUNDARY

## Slum Dog Millionaires

SHAKIL KASEM

It was more than what could be asked from a cricket match. Or at least from a cricket match in which Bangladesh is a major protagonist. It was a tale of twists and turns and then more twists. It was a roller coaster ride of a flood of emotions that ebbed and flowed with as much of the intensity of the currents of the Karnafuly on whose banks this cricketing drama was enacted. It was in the end a tale, told not by idiots but by commentators and experts made to look like ones, full of sound and fury and signifying some of the most obvious.

Quite frankly, if England make it to the next phase of this competition the unspeakable must be told. If it is not considered a travesty, it nevertheless comes very close to that. Flat and insipid throughout the tournament England had managed to limp and stutter to where they were in Chittagong last Friday. One of the more unexplained mysteries of modern sport is why any England team, be it football or cricket, is considered by the English media as God's gift to the games in question. A display of rank ineptitude with bat and ball further fuelled this speculation in my fevered mind as Bangladesh met the English challenge head on with no holds barred.

Fresh from the rather forgettable non-exploits of these teams in their last matches against South Africa and West Indies, it was a question of coming to terms with their respective neuroses. And here, bless their collective front foot forward the Tigers found their bite more effective than the low pitched growl we were getting so much used to of late. For once the toss made the difference, the dew arrived on time and the bowlers remembered which plan was to be followed for the day. England made too much of the probable conditions and were predictably at sea against a Bangladesh attack which was imaginative, had variety and was backed up by sharp cricket in the outfield.

But it could have gone so very well for England. Prior to the moment Prior's brain went on vacation, the English batting looked like settling down for a long haul in the middle. Suddenly pressurised into some soft dismissals the middle order threatened to opt for quick decline and demise. Had it not been for Eoin Morgan remembering to bring his trusty wad of scotch tape along, the middle order would have dissipated even quicker than it eventually did. Trott had trotted on in the manner he has done the past few matches, but in the end the sheer inability of the rest of the batting to come to terms with a four pronged spin attack was starkly evident.

For Bangladesh to have emerged from the debris of their debacle last week in the manner they did, absolves them for the time being of being considered Public Enemy to the fans at large. For once the team looked like a unit with a purpose; a game plan was in evidence and more importantly appeared to be carried out. For the present the heads which were at risk to have been rolled will remain in place, the knives will go back to their sheaths and life would be rosy again for players, management and selectors alike. The batting played to its strengths and barring a hiccup or two looked far more in control than the English. As a tool of excitement perhaps, the ninth wicket was left with the small matter of scoring 50 odd for the Tigers to stroll home satiated with the biggest kill of them all. An English lion, lost in the subcontinental wilderness, exposed and vulnerable to some over thinking on its part and having to pay the ultimate fatal price.

In the end the Tigers have displayed some newfound confidence. There was motivation and intent for all to see. Black Friday was forgotten and more importantly forgiven. The numbers game is again the one to play. It was time to be a slum dog millionaire.



A host of young fans congregate outside Hotel Peninsula in Chittagong yesterday morning to greet the Tigers for their heroic two-wicket victory over England the previous night.

PHOTO:  
ANISUR RAHMAN

## Inspired by Tigers

AFP, Pallekele

Zimbabwe's Brendan Taylor said Bangladesh's shock win over England was an "inspiration" and would give his team belief in their must-win game against Pakistan on Monday.

Bangladesh kept their World Cup chances alive with a dramatic two-wicket victory on Friday thanks to a match-winning ninth-wicket partnership of 58 between Mohammad Mahmudullah and Shafiqul Islam.

"Absolutely, that's an inspiration," said Taylor after a practice session on Saturday. "We know that it's a must-win game for us but at the same time it's a huge challenge for us so we got that belief that we can win."

Zimbabwe, with two points from four matches, can put an obstacle in the way of Pakistan's progress to the quarterfinals if they pull off an unlikely win and keep their own slim hopes of qualifying alive.

## Cooped up celebrations

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

The Tigers had to celebrate their thrilling 2-wicket win over England in a distinctive way: by sitting in the team bus for more than an hour at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium here in Chittagong late on Friday night.

After such an exhilarating night, it is only natural for the team to rush off to the hotel after the initial celebrations inside the dressing room, as apart from the usual revelry, the players get very tired and are willing to hit the sack. But no such thing happened after the England win as both sets of players were seen standing near the main gate of the Chittagong venue, waiting to get clearance from the security forces.

Moments after Mahmudullah Riyad smashed Tim Bresnan through the covers, thousands of fans stormed the road -- that had already been cordoned off throughout the day -- only made

available for players, officials, VIPs and the media contingent. According to one source, as the crowd got closer, they were involved in an altercation with the police who pulled out. There were incidents of shoe-throwing while near the team hotel in the port city's GEC intersection, up to 20,000 people gathered to felicitate the Tigers. There too the security forces found it hard to clear the roads and it resulted in the whole city getting caught in gridlocks as the players remained in the stadium.

After around 1.30am in the morning, the roads were finally cleared and the long motorcade of vehicles took the 20-minute ride to the hotel with packed security in tow.

According to local reports, the crowds started to gather from different parts of the city, the larger groups coming from the neighbourhoods that had the giantscreens installed. Processions began on foot and on hired pick-up vans as people from all walks of life

tried to get a glimpse of the night's heroes.

"We enjoyed our win by sitting in the bus. We couldn't get out but we would have liked to have seen our public celebrate the victory with us. We know our public is happy for us," said coach Jamie Siddons yesterday.

Though security remained tight around the team hotel yesterday, it brought to question the ability of the security forces as well as the overall management near the stadium. There have been numerous complaints of a general lack of signposting and unhelpful volunteers. The fact remains that the location of the ground, some way outside the main city, always remained a bane for those who watched matches there and the circulating pathways never helped those who came to the ground with children. But as far as security was concerned, focus should remain more on common sense rather than high-handedness.

## Riyad can't say what it felt like

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

Praises came pouring on the Tigers after their glorious two-wicket victory over England in the ICC Cricket World Cup Group B match at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium on Friday. Jubilant young supporters, mostly students of different schools and colleges of the port city, brought out procession in front of the team hotel yesterday like the Friday night and people from different quarters congratulated Shakib Al Hasan's men, who were busy receiving calls on their cell phones.

The victory definitely came as a great relief for Jamie Siddons's charges who were under fire after hitting their lowest ODI total of 58 runs against the West Indies at Mirpur and most importantly this famous win, second against England after heroic five-run success in Bristol last year, kept Bangladesh's hopes alive in the World Cup. The heroic effort also brought back enthusiasm among the cricket lovers in the country.

Within a week the whole scenario has changed for the Tigers great come-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad, his cool unbeaten to script the win, informed were not in a party mood".

"True the victory came as a great relief because there was something for us to prove and that was the reason we failed to hold back our tears after the match. But we are not in a party mood; rather we are looking forward to the next game against Netherlands. The Dutch are a very good side, so we have to play our best cricket against them," said Riyad, who returned into the team after two matches and did something special to keep his place for the next game.

"After the victory first we offered the Esha'a prayers and then offered special prayers to thank Allah," added Riyad when asked how they celebrated their victory.

Riyad said that the turning point of the match was the Graeme Swann over that gave away 16 runs in the 42nd over of the match.

"Believe me I had a very strong belief that we were going to win the match. Swann's over was the turning point in the

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## Eng press grills players

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

The English press who were out in large number during the World Cup game against Bangladesh at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium here yesterday, slated Andrew Strauss's men for not finishing up the job they had come to do and singled out Graeme Swann for losing his temper.

"Crash, bang and wallop" screamed the Sun with a picture of a shocked Strauss, while the Guardian had the headline "England hit rock bottom" yesterday, reporting that "England were at their most capricious here. In the field their ill-temper was reflected by Swann, snatching his cap from the umpire Daryl Harper, after remonstrating with the

Australian on several occasions."

"It was not Harper's fault that Swann was compelled to bowl with a wet ball. There was more chance of seeing Swann with a smile than a parking meter in Chittagong, even though he managed to pick up two important wickets when he had a chance to bowl with the drier replacement ball in his second spell.

"That nightmare against West Indies was being exercised, forgotten or forgiven by an adoring crowd; every wicket, every catch and the solitary run-out was cheered to the skies," wrote Vic Marks, the former England cricketer now the cricket writer for the Guardian.

The Daily Mail ran the headline "England's World Cup hopes hang in the balance", being critical of England's wayward bowling and poor batting. "With the exception of Jonathan Trott and Eoin

Morgan, England batted miserably, then gifted the hosts 23 in wides with the ball. More generally, their body language told of a team who have simply had enough after this most gruelling of winters."

The Sun also reported of an incident where Swann allegedly abused umpire Daryl Harper. "Spinner Swann exploded in anger as he struggled to grip a slippery ball because of heavy dew. TV commentator David Lloyd apologised on air to viewers after a stump microphone picked up an obscenity. Swann had to be calmed down by Strauss and James Anderson during the verbal battle with Harper," said the report.

The Daily Telegraph and the Daily Independent were also critical of England's inconsistency, calling the campaign a "ridiculous Cup story".

## CANADA V NEW ZEALAND: MUMBAI

# NZ have to do sans Vettori

AFP, New Delhi

New Zealand are hot favourites to seal a place in the World Cup knockout round when they face minnows Canada on Sunday but will have to do it without injured skipper Daniel Vettori.

Defeat in Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium would be a major shock for the Black Caps, who have a total of six points after thumping 10-wicket wins over Kenya and Zimbabwe, and a 110-run victory against Pakistan on Tuesday.

Their only blemish was a seven-wicket defeat against Australia. "No Dan Vettori, but no alarms. That should be the outcome of New Zealand's penultimate group game at the World Cup against Canada at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium," the New Zealand Herald said on Saturday.

The paper reported that the absence of Vettori would likely mean an opportunity for either

left-arm spinner Luke Woodcock or paceman Hamish Bennett. But it warned the Black Caps

"The players should be setting all expectations for the Canada game aside. If New Zealand



ONTO THE BUCKET, EASY: New Zealand all-rounder Jacob Oram takes a diving catch during a practice session at the Wankhede Stadium yesterday, ahead of today's match against Canada.

PHOTO: AFP

Vice-captain Ross Taylor will lead the side into the match full of confidence after starring in his side's win over Pakistan in Pallekele, smashing 131 in 124 balls after getting two early let-offs.

New Zealand hit an astonishing 100 runs from their final five overs with Nathan McCullum and Jacob Oram also joining in the batting blitz.

Vettori left the field during the match after injuring his right knee while attempting to take a catch and missed the remainder of the game.

A scan showed he had a mild strain of his post cruciate ligament and he is targeting the final group match against Sri Lanka on March 18 for a return.

Canada have no realistic chance of qualifying for the last eight but come into the match with confidence after registering their first win of the tournament against Group A whipping boys Kenya. Aside from that win, Canada have had a tough tournament with

three losses, crashing to overwhelming defeats to Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe before putting up more of a fight against Pakistan.

But Canada captain Ashish Bagai said the victory over Kenya would spur his team to perform well in their remaining group matches.

"We are looking to use this as a spark for the second half of the first round. My goal now is to get the batsmen who are performing to be consistent and leave the first round on a high," said Bagai.

The victory over Kenya was only Canada's second ever in a World Cup after a 60-run triumph against Bangladesh in the 2003 edition.

### NEW ZEALAND v CANADA

Matches: 2  
New Zealand win: 2  
Canada win: 0  
No result/Tied: 0  
First meeting: March 3, 2003, Benoni - New Zealand won by 5 wickets  
Last meeting: March 22, 2007, St Lucia - New Zealand won by 114 runs

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**WHICH COUNTRY HOSTED THE FIRST CRICKET WORLD CUP?**

Potato Crackers  
CRICKET GLEAN  
BOMBAY FRIES

SCRATCH AND WIN ATTRACTIVE BOMBAY CRICKET CARDS

For answer... see tomorrow's newspaper Yesterday's answer... Muttiah Muralidharan