

## BEYOND THE BOUNDARY

Outsourcing:  
Tempting but  
Not Quite  
Cricket

SHAKIL KASEM

Honest confessions up front, I did not have time for the match yesterday. Primarily because I had got the timings mixed up, by the time that was sorted out I had to be involved with other issues of major import, so to speak. Not that the outcome was not predetermined, Netherlands hardly the sort of opposition to send chills down the collective spine. And so it transpired: comfortable coasting for the home team, Chittagong ending up with a hundred percent success ratio. Two teams of contrasting strengths biting the dust.

For Bangladesh it was of course all or nothing, and at no stage was it felt that there was a major upset in the offing. One of the more predictable non-performers in this competition has been the Netherlands. Try as one might to be politically correct in explaining the Dutch presence in 2011, the fact remains this team has hardly done anything of note other than ten Doeschate setting some tongues wagging against England. But then England (don't we all know) have that kind of effect!

Moving on to the bigger picture, having dispensed with the nitty gritty that of the Tigers coasting home by 5 wickets what lies ahead? The South Africans, for a start so far one of the more business-like, no-nonsense teams in the group. Having pummeled the Indians into submission with sheer pace, there is an air of invincibility about this team. Taking two points off this side would be one of the biggest challenges that the Tigers think tank had realised quite some time ago. Permutations have to be an honest ally for at least three teams of this group in the last of the remaining matches.

West Indies really need to power through against England, the favourite scratching post for most sides as it seems. For England the next match is a must-win issue, failing which the curtains descend quite abruptly on their incipient intentions for any further involvement with the rest of the contenders. So far they have been really poor pretenders.

The West Indians have quite a bit to play for and I half suspect we have not seen the best of them as of yet.

The results that have come Bangladesh's way have been inconsistent, coasting across both extremes of performance levels. But one redeeming feature of this side has been its ability to win close matches. How close can the match against South Africa get is the question that is moot to most. A fear of failure lurks in the corners of the minds of all concerned with planning and implementing. In this age of globalisation and multi-dimensional tasking, perhaps we might consider the option of outsourcing the actual effort of getting us through to the next round. Assert oneself and let the work be done elsewhere. Tempting surely, but admittedly not quite cricket.



**FLYING THE FLAG:** No doubts about who she is supporting as she waves the Bangladesh flag from the stands of the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium during the Tigers' win over the Netherlands yesterday.

PHOTO:  
ANISUR RAHMAN

## The roar is omnipresent

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM from Ctg



In a match where Bangladesh all but meandered to a win, the one true highlight for keen cricket followers was the point in the first innings when the world's best all-rounder marked out his run-up to bowl at the best all-rounder in the world.

But all things said and done, Shakib Al Hasan (ranked number one) and Ryan ten Doeschate (statistically number one) aside, Bangladesh versus Netherlands at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium is not a fixture that should generally inspire much fanfare.

The match itself was no classic; a subtle, low scoring affair fought out under the increasingly pulsating sun. Truth be told, Bangladesh have played much better than this and the Dutch, suffice to say, will be remembered in these parts more for their football than their skills at wielding the willow. There was also no chance of a Tamim special, the hometown left-hander succumbing to his second duck in the tournament, perish-

ing in the first over. And the closest thing to football at the ground was Netherlands opener Wesley Barresi whose name is the conjunction of two famous and popular players of the beautiful game.

But despite all of this, one glance at the 17,002 packed into the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury stadium on this Monday would have told you a different story.

Then again, cricket in the sub-continent is a different beast altogether and for the thousands who usually gather at the stadiums, winning is an important but not a defining factor. It sounds strange, especially since the events that have followed on from Bangladesh's recent wins and losses but to the general fan yesterday, while Bangladesh's glory was imminent, achievable and important, something to the contrary was not going to stop them from having a good time.

The feeling perhaps was borne out of a sense of complacency at the opponents, but the Dutch showed plenty of resolve to keep an expectantly rampant scoring-rate in check throughout the encounter. In the end, the 160 they got was never going to be enough, but the Europeans ensured that the Tigers did not rack up the score in record time.

Regardless, the cheering never stopped; not for the beating sun, not for the oppressive heat and not even for the sweltering humidity. But one thing that it did ensure was that a large number of supporters had to abandon their uncovered seats to seek what little shelter they could under the feeble overhang of the turnstiles. This, then, gave off the impression of a marginally empty stadium, which for fans watching on television might have been misleading. The atmosphere was nowhere

near the intensity that marked the England or Ireland match, but for a day match this was as colourful, boisterous and light-hearted a crowd as you could wish to see anywhere in the world.

And it was not just restricted to Chittagongians. Many countrymen had made the trip from surrounding areas while some even braved ten-hour-long bus journeys from Dhaka the night before for a chance to say that they were there for a World Cup win. Mexican waves were the order of the day and beating drums and painted faces have almost become the norm at the stadium. For a select few, it was a case of loyalties divided as well; a small section of what appeared to be Netherlands supporters was later revealed to be a small collection of Dutch men and women with their significant others, some of whom were even Bangladeshis sporting the famous Oranje for the day.

Such 'mutiny' might have been derided with chants of 'turncoat' a few years ago, but today they were just the target of some good-natured

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De Villiers in  
injury scare

AFP, Kolkata

In-form South African batsman AB de Villiers has undergone a scan on a left thigh injury ahead of Tuesday's World Cup match against Ireland at Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

De Villiers suffered the injury during his half-century in South Africa's three-wicket victory over India in Nagpur on Saturday and was forced to bat with a runner.

South Africa coach Corrie van Zyl said Monday the injury was not "major". "We are waiting for the doctor's report," he said.

De Villiers is the tournament's third-highest scorer with 318 runs after Indian openers Virender Sehwag (327) and Sachin Tendulkar (324). He has already made two hundreds and one half-century in four matches.

De Villiers, originally named in the squad as a wicketkeeper-batsman, did not keep wickets in the last two matches.

South Africa have also yet to decide whether to name leg-spinner Imran Tahir in their playing eleven for Tuesday's match.

Tahir, his team's leading wicket-taker with 11 victims, also missed the last game against India due to the fractured left thumb.

## SOUTH AFRICA V IRELAND: KOLKATA

## Proteas afraid of Irish spirit

AFP, Kolkata



South Africa will be wary of Ireland's fighting spirit when they seek to nail down a World Cup quarterfinal place on Tuesday.

Ireland have been the most impressive of the non-Test nations, pulling off a shock win over England and testing favourites India and the West Indies before losing.

South Africa, with six points from four games, will be assured of a place in the last eight with a victory while Ireland, with two points from four matches, only have a slim chance of qualifying.

The momentum is currently with South Africa who bounced back strongly to defeat India by three wickets in a tense finish in Nagpur on Saturday after losing a close match to England.

"Saturday's win is a massive step forward in the self-belief department for us and we can play with a bit more freedom," South Africa captain Graeme Smith wrote in his column in an Indian newspaper on Monday.

"That doesn't mean we think we can just walk in and knock Ireland over on Tuesday. Many of the guys in Ireland have played county cricket. As a team they have got good cricket sense, can be dangerous and have to be taken seriously."

South Africa have shown they have depth in both bowling and batting. Their spinners, Imran Tahir, Robin Peterson and Johan Botha, were superbly backed by pacemen Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel in previous games.

The Pakistan-born leg-spinner Tahir, with 11 wickets in three matches, missed the last game due to a fractured left thumb and South Africa have to decide whether to play him against Ireland.

South Africa's batting looked solid against India, especially after Jacques Kallis's return to form with a 69 in Nagpur after contributing just 21 in the first three matches.

"We know South Africa are one of the favourites to win this World Cup. Hopefully, they will relax a bit (after India's match) and give us a

chance," said Ireland all-rounder Andre Botha.

"Maybe they will have a couple of hangers. We know we have to win the last two games and we are not going to back out. Everyone's up for the challenge."

Ireland not only made India battle for victory with their gritty display, but also gave a scare or two to the West Indies before losing by 44 runs inn Mohali.

"It's not just the West Indies game, we were in with a chance even against Bangladesh and India, but failed to get over the line," said Botha.

Ireland are sweating over the fitness of in-form paceman Trent Johnston who suffered a knee injury against India.

Johnston, who missed the last match, is his team's second-highest wickettaker with six in three games.



**PULL NO PUNCHES:** Ireland will hope to come out punching in today's match against South Africa, and Ireland bowler Trent Johnston practises to that effect during a training session at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO:  
AFP'India win is  
a real tonic'

AFP, Kolkata

South Africa's thrilling three-wicket win over India was the perfect psychological boost the team needed after the shattering loss to England, Proteas coach Corrie van Zyl said Monday.

South Africa were staring down the barrel when India raced to 267 for one in Nagpur before the hosts slipped to 296 all out.

They then hit 13 off the last over to secure a victory which means they can wrap up a quarterfinal spot on Tuesday by beating Ireland.

"The win against India was good for us and our morale. It was a psychological boost for us and a very important game in the tournament," said the South Africa coach.

Van Zyl said he would field the best available team against Ireland, who have already upset England.

"We are fully aware of what Ireland have done. It's important to prepare not just from a tactical but from a mental point of view," he said.

"Ireland are tough opponents. It's not just their fielding but how they are playing in the tournament. They have really played well."

Eden Gardens  
finally joins  
the party

AFP, Kolkata

Kolkata's iconic Eden Gardens, which was embarrassingly stripped of its opening World Cup clash last month, finally joins the party on Tuesday, but the celebrations could turn flat.

The historic venue was scheduled to host four World Cup matches but missed out on the high-profile game between India and England on February 27 due to delays in renovation work with the match shifted to Bangalore.

Eden Gardens now boasts a modern look but with the capacity reduced from 90,000 to 65,000.

"Coming to India, you always hear of Eden Gardens as one of the big grounds, like going to England and playing at Lord's," said Ireland skipper William Porterfield.

But the famous arena will not be full when South Africa clash with Ireland on Tuesday as Indian grounds only tend to fill up when the home side plays.