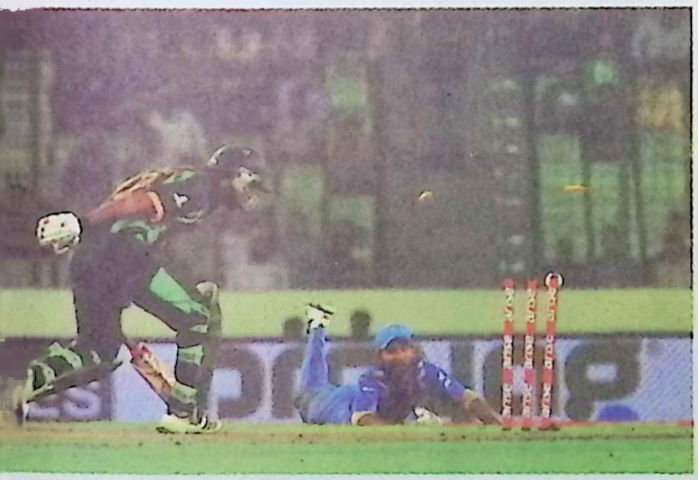
and are lacking even the scantest of patriotism?

With Pakistan we have several longstanding unresolved issues. Apology, asset sharing, war crimes, stranded Pakistanis... We just cannot stash them up in a cupboard. Nor can the nincompoops be allowed to cheer for them like they were their own players, and the flag was that of their own country.

To counter that idiocy (read *gaddar*) that brews a rivalry in their own *mahalla*, there is another group of unscrupulous people who travel to these stadiums with the Indian flag. *Tauba*! I can almost





PHOTOS: STAR FILE

hear our well-meaning Dadas laughing so loudly, saying in Bangla 'have you guys lost your head?'*Matha het hoye jacche.* Why should these idiots, snubbed by Mamata, sceptic of Modi, wave the flag of India? That is also another country. Somebody please tell these clowns that we are a different country with our own flag.

Reference here is to the Asian Cup cricket played at Dhaka in the month of our independence. What a shame! The Indo-Pak invasion is more disgraceful than our defeat to Afghanistan, not because many Bangladeshis found out about Karzai country for the first time, but because there is nobility in defeat but none in double-crossing the womb of your mother.

The shameful painting of the Bangladeshi cheek (*thuk!*) with either the Pakistan or the Indian flag takes me back to my own writing in this column on 20 April 1996 (that is 17 years ago) when I wrote:

"It was thoroughly dishonourable and utterly disgraceful the way Bangladeshis revered the Pakistani and the Indian flags at a cricket tournament held to commemorate the silver jubilee of our independence. Poor independence! The foreign flags were everywhere; atop staves (one had a *chan-tara* upside down), in placards, on their foreheads... but the most appropriate place must have been their face. You could slap it from dawn to dusk, from left to right, even if to try and pacify the soul of the unknown freedom fighter. How thousands must have thronged to the stadium but to watch some wretched sons of the soil trivialise their supreme sacrifice!"

For all the woes that we are going through, I blame the Bangladesh Cricket Board. If they could stop water bottles, food, banners, lipstick, tissues, etc. from entering the stadium at the 2011 ICC Cricket World Cup, there is no reason why they cannot stop a handful of locals from carrying foreign flags, decorating their face uglier with alien colours, and actually waving the flags on the galleries to destroy the sanctity of others. Just don't let them enter. Simply throw them out. Promptly arrest them on charges of being traitors and creating public disorder. Show some respect to the martyrs.

BCB has to stop this *tamasha* at the forthcoming ICC T-20 World Cup 2014 to be hosted by Bangladesh. Have our forces patrol the galleries and evict any political buffoon, male or female or animal, waving a flag of another country. This is the least expected from the BCB president, Nazmul Hassan Papon, whose father, our venerated late president Mohammed Zillur Rahman, was a valiant freedom fighter and one of the architects of this nation.

Yes, I can keep politics out of sports, but that standpoint is to keep politics out of my country's sports federations, to ensure selection of the most deserving players in my national team, to foster camaraderie between competing countries worldwide except Israel; but between two independent countries with a past, sports IS always politics. Ask any Indian and any Pakistani. Inquire of any Chinese and any Taiwanese. Ask any Englishman and any Argentinian.

Friendship yes, flags no. Appreciate yes, euphoria no. ■