

# #RiseoftheTigers



## ISHTIAQ AHMED

As we grew up, watching the Bangladesh national team play cricket has been a mixed experience. A roller coaster ride maybe, but that doesn't entirely characterise the journey of Bangladesh cricket. It's more complicated than that – especially for those who have been following it for a long time.

Bangladesh got into the elite club of cricket by gaining Test status back in 2000. Becoming champions of ICC Trophy 1997 and beating Scotland and Pakistan in their inaugural World Cup in 1999 helped the cause, of course. But what also contributed to the fast recognition of Bangladesh as a Test playing nation is its huge fan base. ICC knew very well that cricket would gain popularity here. They knew it was a country full of potential.

How did it pan out for Bangladesh? Fifteen years later and after the most glorious achievement in our cricketing history, qualifying first time for the quarter finals of a World Cup, the Bangladeshi supporters, look back upon a path that ran both highs and lows.

So it hasn't been an easy ride. With negligible cricketing infrastructure and very few grounds to start with, Bangladesh stumbled initially, and that reflected in their performance as well. Bangladesh losing all six matches in their second World Cup appearance in 2003 speaks for itself. But it was the constructive phase.

Lots of young talents were waiting in the pipeline coming from the U-19 level and also from BCB Cricket Academy. National Cricket League also began to take place every year. New divisional stadiums were being built. We could sense that a change was in the air and good outcomes were on the cards. And so it happened. In the ICC World Cup 2007 held in the Caribbean Islands, three Bangladeshi teenagers single-handedly beat an experienced Indian side to knock them out of the tournament. It was the declaration of the arrival of a new generation of cricketers in Bangladesh – confident, determined and fearless. What they lacked however, was experience.

Eight years down the line and after a World Cup at home, the Tigers are

now on the verge of creating history at the fast, bouncy pitches of Australia and New Zealand. The three teenagers from 2007 have now become the mainstay of Bangladesh team, and this time around, experience is on their side. The team combination is well-balanced with adept batsmen, quality spinners and young, strong fast bowlers. It's a team that has been playing together for a while. It's a team that's confident and capable enough to beat any side.

We have always had raw, young talents. They came into the national side quick, showed bits and flashes of their skills and then disappeared far more quickly. Lost in oblivion, one might say. But it takes time to understand the responsibility of playing for a nation of 170 million cricket-crazy fans, who live and breathe the sport. It's a huge pressure, even more so on the world stage.

We all knew that one day these young talents would bloom. The time is now. The coming-of-age of the young Bangladeshi cricketers couldn't have come at a better moment. Tigers, it's your time to rise. Give it all out in the middle. With you the whole country sings, with you the whole country wins.

# LEND ME YOUR EARS

## IMANI KHALED

Gossip is wrong and hurtful. This is the simplest way the consequences of this almost insignificant word can be summed up. It is irresistible? I know. Whatever is being said about that person is true? Possible. People need to be made aware of this person? Your concern is appreciated. But where do all these put you? If you are not treated like a mystic or kowtowed for warning mankind about the many vices of the Ursulas or Scars around us, chances are you are being gossiped about too. Hurts, doesn't it? After everything you have done, risking your flawless reputation, pulling yourself down to the level of petty talkers, it is you who gets the label of "ultimate talebearer" pinned on your back. While you should not gossip in the first place (Even if you truly believe you know what sort of place procured that precious object everyone is ogling at, why ask and later embarrass the poor being? This does not put you in the right either), here are certain rules that might ameliorate your status as a tattletale.

The first rule of gossip is don't gossip. To put it even more succinctly, do not talk about other people's current affairs. There is a whole world out there creating wonders as you sit with your legs crossed, resting your face on your hand and observing, inspecting that pair of shoes or that new radiant, curious smile on that always-passive face. But if the pull of it is irresistibly strong, how about you muster some self-respect and

love for humanity and talk about it in a more subtle manner. Being very specific will only lead you to be gossiped about too.

Secondly, rein in that temptation. I understand how that small incident in the morning needs to be laughed about to help you survive the long day. But imagine yourself in those shoes. Imagine being insulted by the teacher for asking a terribly stupid question or for passing an inconsiderate remark on a poor soul because you are not in your right sense of mind since morning. Now imagine overhearing a group of insensitive teasers extracting the fun, wringing the thrill out of your fiasco. Don't you just want to punch them in the face? Curl up in a corner and cry your heart out? Say something so mean that would leave a scar on their minds forever? That is exactly how all your victims have felt.

If scandals breathe life into your almost insentient days at the university, make sure you tone it down a bit. A better idea would be to invest your energy on other things, like what the world is talking about at the moment. This might actually help you to wreak vengeance in a more sophisticated manner on that parochial diminutive being who created tales about you. A glorious future in the literary world may await them but a little sensitivity never hurt anybody.

