

Pickings on road to cricketing powerhouse

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

AFTER six consecutive wins against world class cricketing sides and 11 months of hibernation, the stage was set for three ODIs against an improving

Afghan side, an associate member of the ICC. The latter played reasonably well against us but we did outclass them in the last match of the series.

That was a befitting warmer to the ODI series in Bangladesh against a formidable younger English side led by Jos Buttler. This has been a hard-fought series of sharply fluctuating fortunes, at times making the matches look as if these could go either way. Even the tight results—England winning the first ODI by 21 runs, Bangladesh leveling off with a 34-run victory in the second and England clinching the decider by four wickets—could not have fully depicted the fiercely competitive nature of the contests.

The series winning four-wicket victory by England involved a spell over which the equation closed in on 81 runs for 81 balls. At that stage, Imrul Kayes who had been thought fully positioned at slip to the bowling off Taskin dropped a regulation catch. If held, it would have proved quite a turning point in the match. In the first ODI two catches were dropped off Taskin's bowling. You could almost feel the truth of the statement that catches win matches.

One cannot but point out the poor fielding of the Bangladesh side in the first ODI; we saw hardly any neat picking of the balls. It was for the most part sloppy, even clumsy. Since the first ODI though fielding improved to a great extent.



Bangladesh and England players shake hands with Chris Woakes and Ben Stokes after the England team won a hard-fought series 2-1 by winning the third ODI at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong on October 12.

There were some outstanding features of Bangladesh's innings in the last ODI. These include the best opening partnership between Tamim and Kayes and the highest seventh wicket partnership of any Bangladesh side in one-day internationals. As the series progressed our batters who had initially struggled with short balls, started coping with them better. They would show awareness of where the fielders were and found gaps to score runs through.

Not to mention Bangladesh losing all the three tosses, which for England were good strokes of luck barring the second ODI where captain Mashrafe Murtaza's stellar performance with bat and ball

gave Bangladesh the leveler win. In particular, losing the third toss to England proved consequential. Bangladesh was put to bat on a rain-soaked slower pitch and outfield. From that standpoint, Bangladesh's score of 277 looked impressive. Yet with a faster outfield the flow of runs tally could be better. By contrast, in a drying pitch and outfield after Bangladesh's innings England could bat with relative ease.

On the other hand, as the dusk fell, dew factor came into play with our bowlers having difficulty gripping the ball. Former English captain, now a commentator Nasir Hossain termed the dew a 'real hindrance.' Pacer Shafiu gave a crucial

breakthrough by ensuring the fall of third wicket at 172 in the decider ODI. It was a potential turning point as the English batters right through the fall of three more wickets subsequently held their ground keeping the score board ticking to bridge the gap with the required run rate.

Some English commentators termed the encounters "a thrilling series"; an even contest between bat and ball' (Nasir Hossain); and Bangladesh being "a difficult team to beat." "They were no longer the pushovers of past tours here," added English vice-captain Ben Stokes.

With the series leveler promising a dramatic climax at the decider round in

Chittagong, and an atmosphere of tension prevailing, there has been an issue touching on sportsmanship.

A post-2nd ODI report in The Telegraph had the following story line: England lose as Jos Buttler and Ben Stokes have heated words with hosts.

To a question as to why the English captain lost his cool, his reported reply was, "Mainly just the way they celebrated by running towards me and giving me a bit of a send-off."

The ICC match referee Jagaval Shrinath having reportedly fined Mashrafe Murtuza and his teammate Sabbir Rahman 20 percent of their match fee and officially reprimanded Buttler, the matter was left behind.

Mashrafe took a dignified stance when an English reporter was supposed to have suggested whether Bangladesh captain would apologise. Mashrafe ruled that out, saying they did no wrong as they were just celebrating a win.

Such things have happened in the highly combative world of cricket. Here is an anecdote among a plentiful of them, some very nasty in tone and temper, relating to the Ashes series and Indo-Pak encounters: Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly famously brandished his jersey at Lord's balcony when India beat England in a memorable Natwest Trophy Final in 2002.

Ganguly's celebration was a retort to Andrew Flintoff's shirt-waving celebration after winning an ODI match in India helping England to tie the six match series 3-3.

The ICC and members and national sides should know where to draw the line between enthusiasm and unsportsmanlike behaviour for the good of world cricket. For our part the crowds may occasionally applaud good performance by English players to make them feel more welcome and that we can appreciate good cricket.

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Cat Fight

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

Needless to say that the one day series of the Tigers versus the Lions is another fierce and passionate battle, but this cat fight comes with a lot of firepower that pales the US Presidential race into insignificance.

SAMSUNG halts the production of the Samsung Note 7 smart phone after the incidents of battery explosions. Sigh, I wished this cause and effect applied to all

the armaments companies in the world – we'd at least see the end of war in Syria.

But that won't happen. Just as the explosive Trump wouldn't step down even at the eleventh hour calls from his fellow Republicans. The battle for the next US President continues in full swing, though not without its share of over-Trumps and Hillary-ous moments.

But there were the likes of George Washington, FDR, JFK and even as recently as The Gipper. If mathematicians were to describe the historical trend of the US Presidential Election, they would simply say it is exponentially decaying. I pity the brand new voter who eagerly waits for eighteen years to finally get the right to vote and all he gets are the two choices...

But it is the digital age. Hence the 2016 US Presidential Election is

plagued with two digital issues: Trump with the 'wall' and Clinton with 'emails'. Trump has alienated many with his stance on aliens and Hillary Clinton with the use of her private email. But judging from the two debates to date, one has to say it's a cat fight befitting any Zee TV serial.

No matter what the outcome, the experience is that of death, near death or life sucks. The 2016 election is like a bungee jump. If Trump wins, that means the chord has snapped. If Trump loses narrowly, it's a near death experience with the head just six inches away from the ground before the rebound. If Clinton wins by a huge margin, it's a normal jump and you're back to the pangs of life while having to deal with her.

Given the choice on November 1, I would watch a third division football game in Bangladesh. In fact, any sport, no matter of what division and played against whom, comes with fierce passion and sentiments and with everything under the sun at stake. Needless to say that the one day series of the Tigers versus the Lions is another fierce and passionate battle, but this cat fight comes with a lot of firepower that pales the US Presidential race into insignificance.

Thus, emotions run high on the



second ODI between Bangladesh and England.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Sabbir Rahman are booked for Level 1 offences. They are fined and given demerit points. All for 'excessive' cele-

brations. Thank heavens the ICC didn't see the SSC kids celebrating their getting 5.0 GPAs who would be slapped with a reduced 4.0 GPA for 'excessive' celebrations with 'V' signs.

Buttler, take it easy, man! I know the

muggy weather can get to you. It does to me too. *Butterfly* — new addition to the Urban Dictionary — to be a spoiler and take the fun out of things. Example: Naveed Mahbub did not butterfly the GPA joke while alluding to the Buttler incident.

If I were in Mashrafe's place when asked whether there would be any apologies, I'd answer: "For our 190 seconds of celebration in my country and on my field? Sure! As soon as they apologise for their 190 years of celebration in my country." [Smirk]

Come on Buttler, Light My Fire! And he does. As do his team mates and their formidable opponents. After all, these are cricketing brethren. There is love. There is heat. There is the silent treatment, literally, as per the Facebook campaign for fans to remain silent in Chittagong when Buttler returns from the field. But it all ends with three superb games of cricket. After all, when it is the battle of the felines, one can expect nothing but the best.

Good going boys — on both sides!

The writer is an engineer at Ford & Qualcomm USA and CEO of IBM & Nokia Siemens Networks Bangladesh turned comedian (by choice), the host of ABC Radio's Good Morning Bangladesh and the founder of Naveed's Comedy Club. E-mail: naveed@naveedmahbub.com

QUOTABLE Quote

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE
Americanah

Racism should never have happened and so you don't get a cookie for reducing it.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- Tree part
- Momma's mate
- Dump output
- Speak loudly
- Food fish
- Play back
- One way to get up in the world
- Copycat
- Arm art
- Garden tool
- Approves
- Fierce fire
- Dance tape
- On the schedule
- Movie artist
- School worker
- Under arrest
- Lode setting
- Seizes
- Cuzco native
- Train stop
- Took in

DOWN

- Finish last
- Revered one
- Embedded spy
- Pithiness
- Turning point
- Verdi creation
- Signing need
- Snub-nosed dog
- Clumsy galoot
- Cookout site
- Singer Tori
- Not this
- Seep
- Bassoon part
- Old TV cop show
- Related
- Curbside cry
- Political alliance
- Wyoming city
- Fancy buttons
- Paris subway
- Skilled
- Wee
- In the past
- Enjoy a novel
- Future flower
- Try out
- Eat late

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

THIS IS MY UNCLE RUFUS OF PORK CORNERS, KANSAS. IS HE A CLOWN IN THE CIRCUS? NO, HE'S MY UNCLE RUFUS OF PORK CORNERS.

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

HI HONEY. HOW WAS... HERE, HERE AND HERE. A STINKY BABY, AN ANGRY NOTE FROM THE HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION AND A BROKEN REMOTE. IS THIS A BAD TIME TO ASK FOR A GLASS OF WINE AND A FOOT RUB? NOT OPTIMAL, DARRYL.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

S	C	A	T	P	A	S
C	A	N	O	E	D	E
A	D	O	P	T	E	A
M	E	R	C	R	A	S
S	T	A	S	H	E	D
S	K	I	E	S	M	A
D	A	M	O	O	M	P
S	E	C	T	R	A	S
C	L	A	S	H	E	D
R	A	D	I	I	N	A
U	N	I	T	S	E	A
B	O	A	S	B	E	D