

Tigers target batting

BISHWAJIT ROY

The series between Bangladesh and India so far has generated a lot of heat both on and off the field. If India's stand-in skipper Virender Sehwag started it by terming the Tigers an 'ordinary side' before the first Test, then BCB president AHM Mustafa Kamal fanned the flame by raising questions about the integrity of the Bangladeshi players.

But ahead of the second and final Test which starts today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, the Tigers' main focus was to improve their batting as lack of application in that department was the reason behind their lost opportunity in the Chittagong Test.

The question remains whether the

Bangladesh top-order can find their feet in the second Test after a disappointing performance in the first? Before the start of the series, the main concern was the inexperienced bowling attack, but the bowlers put up a reasonable show against a vaunted batting line-up. And now with the first Test gone, the batting headache returns. The team management is most likely to bring in one change in the top-order as left-hander Zunaed Siddiqui is all but confirmed to replace Shahriar Nafees who has had a terrible comeback to the longer-version cricket after a two-year break. All-rounder Nayeem Islam has been called in for the Test, but it was mainly because of the next tour to New Zealand as the Tigers are scheduled to fly out on January 28, the last day of the Test.

It's however not at all a matter of changing players rather everybody will

be looking to see whether the top-order batsman learnt from their mistakes in the first Test on a very good batting track. One can't forget the way Tamim Iqbal gave away his wicket after settling in the middle in the second innings, the dismissal of wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim in the first innings, apart from dismal showings from Mohammad Ashraful, Shakib Al Hasan and Rokibul Hasan, who is considered as a good longer-version batsman.

Left-handed opener Tamim, who turned up at the pre-match press conference, however expressed his optimism in the second Test.

"We played well in Chittagong but we made some mistakes there. We'll try not to repeat those. We hope we'll have a positive outcome from the Dhaka Test. It might be a

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Dhoni not like Sehwag

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahendra Singh Dhoni returned to take the helm from Virender Sehwag to lead India against Bangladesh in the second and final Test and showed due respect to his opponents.

The wicketkeeper-batsman, who was out of the first Test due to back spasm, was just a stark contrast to Sehwag while talking about the Tigers during pre-match press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, no matter his side is 1-0 up in the series after winning the first Test by 113 runs at Chittagong.

"That's why they [Bangladesh] are playing. If there is no hope, there is no point playing Test matches. Whichever

side it may be you play to win. Test cricket is longer format. You have to keep on doing well. You have to play good and consistent cricket over a period of time. In cricket anything is possible. But they have to do really well to win a game," replied Dhoni when asked whether he believed Bangladesh could beat India which hardly matched the comments made by Sehwag who bracketed the Tigers as 'ordinary'.

The smiling India skipper has also differed with the Sehwag's statement that Bangladesh has hardly got the ability to take 20 India wickets even after the Tigers' impressive bowling in the Chittagong Test where the hosts took 18 wickets.

"You should not really take any side lightly. At the end of the day you need to bowl ten balls in the right areas. It does not matter who the bowler is. If you

bowl in good areas, the batsman commits some mistake. There is no good reason why your side can't take 20 wickets. It's about creating that pressure. It is very important to bowl in good areas. That's what they need to do right now," he responded adding that Bangladesh bowled reasonably well in the first Test.

"After the fourth day, only one result was possible [in Chittagong]. Whoever has played cricket, knows what result was possible on the fifth day. But of course, they have done well. They bowled good line. They did reasonably well," he added. India, the top-ranked Test side, will be boosted by the return of Dhoni and off-spinner Harbhajan Singh though they will miss the services of middle-order batsman VVS Laxman.

"Bhaji [Harbhajan] is fit. I have done

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

LOOKING INTO A BAT-ING PROBLEM: Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan (L) takes a look at opener Tamim Iqbal's bat during a practice session on the eve of the second Test against India at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni (R) gives catching practice while his deputy Virender Sehwag looks on at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. Dhoni missed the first Test in Chittagong due to injury.

Electronic board yet to be installed

SPORTS REPORTER

The electronic scoreboard for athletics arrived over one-and-a-half months ago yet it remains uninstalled at the Bangabandhu National Stadium with only five days remaining to the start of the 11th South Asian Games on January 29.

Interestingly, the electronic board will be installed on January 4, only two days ahead of the athletics events.

However, the installation will depend on the arrival of two technical men from Germany and the National Sports Council, country's sports regulatory body, will have little time to adjust the device if it does not work properly after installation.

The Bangladesh Athletic Federation had earlier wanted to install the electronic board at the BNS by January 10 to hold the last athletics trial before the final selection and for the athletes to practice on the new track with the sound of starter (pistol).

"Now, the athletes have been practicing with the sound of whistle and wood

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



BTV & NEO Cricket

Bangladesh v India
Second Test, Day One
Live from 9:30am
STAR Sports
Australian Open
4th Round, Men's &
Women's Singles
Live from 6:00am
ESPN
Australia v Pakistan
Second ODI
Live from 9:25am



Idea Cup Test Series
Bangladesh v India
Second Test, Day One
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla
National Stadium, Mirpur
Time: 9:30am

Best is just not good enough

ARCHITECT DR. NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

The retort by the Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan at last Friday's bonus-giving ceremony is not becoming of a true sportsman. It lacked humility, one of the prime traits of any person engaged in sports. That is one of the important lessons of sports that people try to emulate in real life. If your president cannot rebuke you Shakib, who can, who will?

Even on that occasion money was being given. If your integrity was under a question mark, there could have been deductions. There was none.

In no paid job, doing your best is enough. Results matter and make the difference. Your limitations is known and understood. Your lack of application (read attitude) is not. Defeat in the hands of India at Chittagong was not painful. Your integrity in trying was.

If you cannot take criticism, then it boils down to you getting bonuses when you do well, and we have to shut up when you do not.

The famed Indian cricketer Sunil Gavaskar, commenting on the Test match in his column in this daily, has also pointed out our players' lack of commitment, while in the same breath appreciating Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim, and even the all-rounder-ship of our skipper, that is you Shakib. So you three in the team think you deserve the high kudos, but if someone no less than the BCB president wants you to do better by pointing out your failures, you raise your hand and say that no one should question your integrity, that you are doing your best, that no one wants to lose.

Dear Shakib, this is world-level cricket. You are representing a country. From a child to a

ninety-plus years old Bangladeshi, from a pauper to a prince, they all look up to you. You are supposed to give your best, which clearly all of you did not, as again some of you showed.

Yes the board president could have chosen different words. Of course, it could have been a different forum. However, every board president censures a failed performance; look at the West Indies. Every cricketer in the world is lacerated by the country's journalists; look at India. Nowhere after a defeat by more than one hundred runs, a captain stands up to defend. Had you and your teammates defended that well in the match, if not win against Sehwag & Co., we might as well have drawn it for sure at Khudiram's Chattagram.

That is the kind of spirit with which a match should be approached. Bring in history, culture, the rivers, the sufferings, the pain, the hope, the people... Cricket is not about someone bowling and another swinging and missing all ends up, or someone giving it a good whack. To play consistently well you have to be beyond a cricketer, you have to garner every element in life and society that makes you a cricketer.

Humility is a virtue of man. If your performance and present world standing made you stand up and protest what many of us feel was a reprimand in good spirit, then Sachin Tendulkar would still have been captain, he could have asked to be the chief selector, he could very well demand to be the BCCI president, and consider seriously being a candidate for the Indian premiership; more people know his name than they do that of Manmohan Singh.

Calm down Shakib! Let your bat and ball do the talking. Every cricketer worth his salt has done so in the past.



PHOTO: STAR

Country's ace shooter Asif Hossain (R) sets his target on the bull's eye during training at the Gulshan Shooting Range yesterday. Asif is working hard to do something special in the upcoming SA Games that starts here on January 29.

Free entry for school kids

SPORTS REPORTER

School students will have free access to the second Test match between Bangladesh and India that starts today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, said a media release from Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday.

Students must be in school uniform and/or possess a valid school ID card in order to get this access. The students will have to enter the stadium through the gate 13 only.

BOA get Tk 18 crore as donation

SPORTS REPORTER

BOA got Tk 18 crore as donation from 26 institutions including Grameenphone and the representatives of the those organisations handed over the cheques to finance minister AMA Muhith, who is the chairman of the SA Games organising committee, at the newly-built Olympic Bhavan yesterday.

BOA president and army chief General Abdul Mubeen, sports minister Ahad Ali Sarker, youth and sports secretary Mahub Ahmed, BOA secretary Kutubuddin Ahmed were among others present at the agreement signing ceremony.

Grameenphone was declared the platinum sponsor for contributing Tk 5 crore.

Meanwhile, the state-run banks had earlier contributed Tk 17 crore as the 12-day meet will cost Tk 170 crore.

AmEx Golf from tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

American Express Bangladesh Open 2010 Professional Golf Championship starts at the Kurmitola Golf Club tomorrow. The four-day event will be participated by 120 professional golfers from home and abroad. Top 10 professional golfers from India will be participating in the event while Bangladesh will have at least 25 participants including Siddique who is the highest ranked Bangladeshi golfer.

This Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) event is being organized by Bangladesh Golf federation and are sponsored by City bank Limited who are the sole franchisees of American Express cards in Bangladesh.

Federer marches on

AFP, Melbourne



The Grand Slam of Asia-Pacific

World number one Roger Federer will face old adversary and former finalist Lleyton Hewitt in the fourth round after striking ominous form at the Australian Open on Saturday.

The 15-time Grand Slam champion tossed aside 31st-seeded Spaniard Albert Montanes 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 in just one hour 48 minutes and declared he was ready to take on all comers.

Federer is expected to face a sterner test in the round of 16 on Monday against Australian two-time Grand Slam champion Hewitt, who had an armchair ride after former finalist

Marcos Baghdatis retired injured during their match.

The Swiss great leads Hewitt 16-7 and has won their last 14 encounters.

Other winners on Day Six were Serbian third seed Novak Djokovic, Russian sixth seed Nikolay Davydenko, Spaniards Fernando Verdasco and Nicolas Almagro and Poland's unseeded Lukasz Kubot.

The 2008 finalist and 10th seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga of France had a fighting 6-4, 3-6, 6-1, 7-5 win over German Tommy Haas and his next opponent will be Almagro, who ousted Colombian Alejandro Falla in straight sets.

Federer said he was in top shape for the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Khulna edge out Sylhet



SPORTS REPORTER

Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak turned in an all-round performance to help Khulna to a 49-run win in a thrilling last-day finish in their national League encounter at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday. Razzak's 74 runs with and seven wickets in two innings got him the man-of-the-match award and gave his side their first win in two matches in the current National League while the losing side Sylhet are yet to get off the mark.

Khulna started the day eight down for 188 in their second innings with Razzak

batting on 58 and Syed Rasel on nought. They took the score to 222 before Razzak became a victim of Sajju Datta after scoring 74 runs. He hit eight boundaries and a six in 124-ball knock. Four runs later Rasel got dismissed by spinner Nabil Samad for 22, leaving Sylhet with a 197-run target. Sylhet got to a very bad start as they lost their top three batsmen within 21 runs including that of skipper Rajin Saleh who scored only one. A good fourth wicket partnership between Golam Rahman and Alok Kapali gave Sylhet some hope but they were dealt a double blow when they lost both batsman with the score on 99. Golam Rahman was dismissed by Mashrafe

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

U-19s play HK in Plate quarters

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 play their quarterfinal match of the plate championship in the ICC U-19 World Cup against Hong Kong at McLean park in Napier today.

Bangladesh started the campaign with hopes of making it to the semifinals and got a good start beating Papua New Guinea in their opening match but had to bow out of running for the cup after losing the next two matches against west Indies and Pakistan. Bangladesh finished third from Group D ahead of Papua New Guinea and play Hong Kong who finished fourth team from Group A. If they manage to beat Hong Kong, they will face the winners of the other quarterfinal between Afghanistan and Papua New Guinea tomorrow at Fitzherbert Park.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Chairman of City Bank Limited Aziz Al Kaiser (3rd from R) hands over a cheque of Tk 30 lakh for the American Express Bangladesh Open 2010 Professional Golf Championship to the secretary general of Bangladesh Golf Federation Brigadier General (ret'd) Shafiquzzaman during a function at a city hotel yesterday.