

'Elbow on C'Ron unintentional'

Levante defender David Navarro said he did not intend to hurt Cristiano Ronaldo after his leading elbow caught the Real Madrid forward in the face and opened a nasty gash above his left eye in Sunday's La Liga match.

"It was an accident, at no time did I try to cause harm to Cristiano Ronaldo," Navarro, who has a history of violent conduct, said on Levante's website.

Navarro had contacted Ronaldo on Monday to ask after his wellbeing and wish him a speedy recovery, Levante



Debutant off-spinner Shohag Gazi in his bowling stride during the first day of the first Test between Bangladesh and West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The off-spinner from Patuakhali had a wonderful debut as he took three wickets for 97 runs.

PHOTO: STAR

THE MOMENTS

SPORTS REPORTER

Spinning beginning

Bangladesh opened the bowling with debutant off-spinner Shohag Gazi and it took everyone in the stadium, except the squad, by surprise. The move was criticised by majority of the journalists in the press box after Chris Gayle greeted him with a six over long-on. The criticism continued throughout the over as Gayle smashed 14 runs in it.

Helmet in the way

With the score on 46, it seemed as though Shohag had gotten his second big wicket after Gayle's when a down-the-track stroke by Kieron Powell was caught brilliantly by Rubel Hossain at point. Replays, however, showed that the ball had deflected off the silly point fielder's helmet. Powell went on to score a century.

Short ball & the dance

After dismissing Marlon Samuels with a short ball, Shahadat Hossain appeared to have choreographed his own 'Gangnam Dance'. But whatever it was, it didn't work out for Shahadat as

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Windies in command

BISHWAJIT ROY



Can anyone recall the first ball of a Test match disappearing for six? Even in these T20 times, it was a rare occurrence when West Indies hitman Chris Gayle clobbered the offering from Bangladesh debutant off-spinner Shohag Gazi, who delivered the first over of the match, over long on for a maximum. The fourth ball met a similar fate, and it was pretty clear that the formidable Jamaican had set out to punish Bangladesh skipper Mushfiqur Rahim's gamble of opening with a spinner.

West Indies were undoubtedly the team on top -- centuries from young Kieran Powell and seasoned Shivnarine Chanderpaul carrying the visitors to 361 for four -- when the first day of the first Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium drew to a close yesterday, but Bangladesh won the opening exchanges, unthinkable perhaps at the end of the first over. But that is part of Test cricket's charm, which Bangladesh have been deprived of for eleven months.

If Mushfiqur's gamble seemed foolish at first, it proved inspired when Shohag, possibly the only bright spot for the hosts on an otherwise lacklustre day, had danger man Gayle caught at long off trying a repeat of his opening over fireworks off the last ball of the fifth over. It was a nightmarish start for the debutant, whose first over cost 18, but the prize wicket must have given him succour to put in the best performance for the home side on the opening day.

The first session belonged to Bangladesh, as Darren Bravo was caught off Shahadat Hossain in the seventeenth over before Marlon Samuels became Shohag's second victim just before lunch. Three big wickets were taken, although the visitors were scoring at a fair clip, reaching 107 at the end of the first session.

But determined batting from Powell, who had a reprieve on 7 when a catch was disallowed after the ball ricocheted off the silly-point fielder's helmet before landing in Rubel Hossain's hands, and Chanderpaul not

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CLEAR Today's Score Card

WEST INDIES: First innings				
Gayle c Mahmudullah b Sohag				24
Powell b Sohag				117
Bravo c Rubel b Sohag				14
Samuels c Sohag b Shahadat				16
Chanderpaul not out				123
Ramdin not out				52
Extras: (lb-7, w-1, nb-7)				15
Total: (For 4 wks in 90 overs)				361
To bat: Sammy, Permaul, Narine, Best, Rampaul.				
Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-74, 3-106, 4-231.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shohag	32	6	97	3
Shahadat	14	0	73	1
Rubel	9	0	54	0
Mahmudullah	7	0	29	0
Shakib	19	2	69	0
Naeem	8	1	24	0
Nasir	1	0	8	0
BANGLADESH: Tamim Iqbal, Shahriar Nafees, Junaed Siddiqui, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah, Naeem Islam, Sohag				

'Batting with Shiv helped'

NAIMUL KARIM



It was a display of attacking left-handed batting that stole the show at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday. West Indies opener Kieran Powell and veteran middle-order batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul entertained the crowd with their respective tons. The West Indian batsmen, who are separated in age by almost two-decades, brushed aside the spin-dominated Bangladesh bowling attack.

While Powell used a lot more bottom-hand in his shots, the experienced Chanderpaul drove elegantly through the covers. Apart from a close LBW shout against the veteran during an attempted sweep off Shohag Gazi, the batsmen provided absolutely no chances to the Bangladeshi attack. "Before coming to this series my aim was to score a hundred. Now I have got to see what else I can achieve," said Powell in the post-day conference.

Powell shared a stroke-filled partnership worth 125 runs with Chanderpaul and in the process took the visitors to a commanding position from a tricky 106 for 3. The latter's ability to hit the ball into the gaps and Powell's timing shifted the momentum in West Indies' favour.

"Batting with an experienced player like Shiv (Chanderpaul) helped me a lot. He kept telling me to be patient and asked me to play my natural game," said Powell.

An aggressive batsman by nature, Powell first faced Bangladesh in a one day international in

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POWELL ... 117

Decent crowd

SPORTS REPORTER

The Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur isn't necessarily everybody's favourite place to hang out during a Test match beginning on a weekday. However, the return of Test cricket in Bangladesh after almost eleven months seemed to have attracted quite a few spectators ranging from different backgrounds. The General gallery was almost full in the first session of the game with the big screen at Mirpur proclaiming the presence of approximately 6500 people in the stadium as early as the morning session.

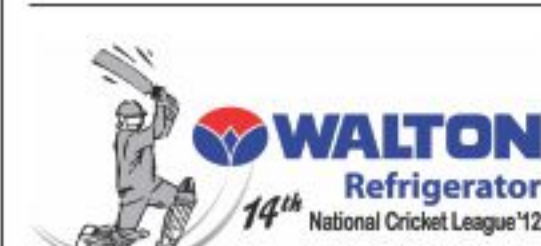
Different people, of course, had varied reasons to come to the ground. "It was a sort of a dream to watch Chris Gayle bat. I saw him playing in the big leagues on television and I am not sure if I can get a ticket for the one-dayers, so I didn't want to miss this opportunity," said Parvez Shah, a student from Shahjalal University.

The low ticket price of just Tk 20 also brought many people to the stadium. "I live nearby and I

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'It's just like an NCL match' for Shohag

BISHWAJIT ROY



It is definitely too early to say that Bangladesh have found the quality off-spinner they have missed for so long, but it was encouraging to watch Shohag Gazi bowling in his debut Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Bangladesh had been searching for an off-spinner for long and the arrival of the 21-year old spinner was cause for some hope, especially the way the young man came back after he was hit for a six off his very first international delivery by the dashing Chris Gayle.

The Barisal spinner recovered from the early hiccup to become the most successful bowler on the day by picking up three wickets, including that of Gayle who was deceived in flight, and his bowling performance was the only highlight for the home team on the day apart from their impressive fielding performance on a difficult outfield.

Shohag got the call-up to the national team because of his outstanding performance in the domestic competition as well as with the A team and Academy team over the last three years. Interestingly enough, he thought of his first international match as another National Cricket League game, which might be the reason he could keep his cool and was not too

excited despite Gayle's scalp. As he said after the day's play, opening the bowling was not new to him, having done it several times in first-class matches and he felt a similar sort of excitement (after getting the wicket of Chris Gayle) that he always felt after taking a wicket in first-class cricket. It may not have been new to him, but it marked the first time in 103 years that a debutant spinner opened the bowling in a Test.

"The Gayle wicket was not a target; rather I wanted to bowl well and bowl a good line and length similar to my performance in the National Cricket League. Obviously it (the wicket) makes me happy whether it was Gayle's or not, just as I was happy during the National Cricket League," said Shohag after the day's play, adding: "Actually in first-class cricket I opened the bowling as well, so it wasn't a new experience".

When asked about what his captain said after he was punished by Gayle, Shohag said: "Captain (Mushfiqur Rahim) just told me that he (Gayle) is not comfortable with my bowling, that is why he was charging me and so I bowled accordingly. There was a bit of turn in the pitch initially so Gayle tried to play over mid-on but got caught and I got my first wicket," he added.

He also said that bowling coach Saqlain Mushtaq asked him to continue bowling to

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Abahani off to a flyer

SPORTS REPORTER



The sixth edition of the professional football league, the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League, got off to a raucous start as holders Abahani handed a 3-0 defeat to Feni Soccer Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Two goals from winger Towhidul Alam, after the opener from Ghanaian striker Twum Frank, all in the space of six minutes, gave Abahani a convincing victory in the match which was inaugurated by BFF president Kazi Salahuddin.

However, it took the Sky Blues 41 minutes to break the five-man defence of Feni

Soccer marshalled by Markson Gray, Mosfiq Uddin Shimul, Abu Sufian, Mowdid Ahmed and Allauddin. Once the deadlock was broken, the floodgates opened and two goals followed in quick succession. The margin could have been bigger had it not been some brilliant saves from Feni's substitute keeper.

The win kept Abahani's unbeaten record against Feni intact and took their win tally against the club in the professional league to six in seven matches.

"The first match is always important and difficult and the result of today's match is good but I am not satisfied with the performance of the boys," said Abahani's new Iranian Ardeshir Pournimat Vodehi, adding that they need

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Abahani winger Towhidul Alam (R) shakes off his marker during their Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Towhid scored two goals to help Abahani to a 3-0 victory.

PHOTO: STAR

Reefat, Debaraj in lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Grandmaster Reefat Bin Sattar regained the lead in the Healthcare Pharmaceuticals Ltd 38th National A Champions along with FM Debaraj Chatterjee at the close of the sixth round at the Media Centre of the Bangladesh Olympic Association yesterday.

Reefat defeated Jamal Uddin while Debaraj beat FM Taibur Rahman to secure five points each from six games.

Holder GM Ziaur Rahman and IM Minhazuddin Ahmed shared the second position with 4.5 points each while three players -- GM Niaz Murshed, FM Nasir Ahmed and Golam Mostafa Bhuiyan -- were jointly in third position

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