

Star SPORT

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Mancini plays prankster

Manchester City coach Roberto Mancini surprised journalists on Friday by turning up for a press conference disguised as his assistant coach, David Platt. Platt stood in for Mancini at the press conferences before and after last weekend's match with Tottenham Hotspur and Mancini made reference to that by donning a mask of the former England international. "Do you prefer David or me?" he asked, before removing the mask. There have been tense exchanges between Mancini and reporters in recent weeks.



Fiery West Indies paceman Tino Best (L) celebrates rattling the Bangladesh batting by taking five wickets in the second innings of the first Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. (L) Bangladesh skipper Mushfiqur Rahim (L) departs with a bowed head as Nasir Hossain makes his way to the crease.

PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

Lot better than a mere defeat

BISHWAJIT ROY



In future when someone, other than those who keenly followed the five-day classic, looks back at the first Test between Bangladesh and West Indies he or she will only see another defeat of the Tigers. But the scoreline of the 77-run loss will not reflect how intensely the game was fought at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. And there was reason for the home team's members to hold their heads high despite the defeat as they really fought hard in their first match in a year against the Caribbean side. Credit should be given to the West Indies bowlers, especially Tino Best, for initiating the collapse with raw pace and an array of short balls. While the local boys showed the character that fans had been crying out for long, it was not an easy task for a team like Bangladesh to chase down a target of 245 on the fifth day track or survive 78 overs for a creditable draw.

Perhaps the Tigers lacked the ability and experience to maintain the intensity till the fifth day and mental fatigue and lack of physical strength also might have been the reason that Bangladesh's dream of winning a Test match against a full-strength side in their 74th attempt remained unfulfilled. Having said that, one must also not forget the manner in which some batsmen surrendered their wickets in the second innings.

Their valiant effort may have been in vain, but Bangladesh can draw inspiration from the way they applied themselves in all disciplines during the first four days and a part of the fifth.

Bangladesh finally discovered an off-spinner in Shohag Gazi who showed his nerve during a memorable debut that yielded a nine-wicket haul. Pacer Rubel

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

Sammy encouraged by 'defensive' Tigers

NAIMUL KARIM



West Indies captain Darren Sammy's reaction at the post match press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday perhaps best described the way the game's balance 'see-sawed' from one side to the other. It was, in a sense, a mixture of both joy and relief that engulfed every statement made by the visiting captain.

"If you remember, in the press conference we had before this series, I said that we had a lot of respect for

Bangladesh and we were not going to take them lightly and we didn't," said Sammy, reiterating his team's approach in this series. "Had we taken them lightly, the result after the first innings would have caused panic in our dressing room. It was a hard-fought Test match and it will definitely boost up our confidence and improve the attitude of the players in the dressing room," he added.

Sammy, who marshalled his bowlers accordingly in the last session of the Test, stated that it was the 'different attitude' shown by the

Bangladesh batsmen that gave him the confidence to take an attacking approach. "Normally, Tamim (Iqbal) and the other Bangladesh batsmen go after the new ball. So to see them coming out there and leaving deliveries alone, I kind of liked it. Had they got off to a flier, then we would have to pull back. So when we saw them playing defensive we became more comfortable," explained Sammy.

When asked which was the turning point of the match, Sammy was unwilling to single out a specific

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

'Would have been happier if won'

SPORTS REPORTER



A mere glance at the scorecard reveals the influence that Shohag Gazi has had on Bangladesh's bowling in this Test match. Of the 14 wickets that Bangladesh took, nine of them were taken by the off-spinner. His 6 for 74 in the third innings of the Test is the best bowling figure by a Bangladesh debutant, surpassing pacer Manjural Islam's 6 for 81 in 2001. Perhaps more importantly, he has filled the off-spinner's void in the national team, a void that the selectors had been

wanting to fill for some time.

The bowler's resilience was evident for all to see as he came back after being hit for 18 runs in his first over in international cricket to take nine wickets by the end of the match.

"I am obviously very happy because I performed very well. There were a lot of expectations on me and I didn't want to disappoint. But honestly speaking, I would have been happier had we won the game. At the end of the day it's the result that matters," said Gazi.

The off-spinner took all of the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 6



Bangladesh's debutant off-spinner Shohag Gazi (R) celebrates one of his West Indies victims with skipper Mushfiqur Rahim on the fifth morning of the first Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. Shohag ended up with six wickets in the second innings to add to his three in the first.

PHOTO: STAR

Isaac for Pakistan tour



SPORTS REPORTER

International Cricket Council (ICC) president Allan Isaac, who came to Bangladesh on Friday on a two-day 'goodwill' visit, stated that the ICC would readily support a tour of Pakistan if Bangladesh decided to travel.

In a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, Isaac said that a team along with ICC's CEO is

working with the officials of both the boards 'to get cricket back in Pakistan'. "ICC's role was to provide match officials and referees and obviously it has some responsibility towards those people. We want cricket to get back to Pakistan as soon as possible," said Isaac.

Regarding the provision of the ICC match officials for the tour, Isaac said, "That work has been done at the moment and an assessment is to be done of the security. If the officials are not able or

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

THE MOMENTS

SPORTS REPORTER

Battle of the debutants

There were a number of similarities between Shohag Gazi and Veerasammy Permaul. They both love to smack the ball to the fence and all their wickets came off conventional spin-bowling. A battle between them, therefore, was bound to be interesting. Gazi had the edge initially, after he bowled Permaul off the last delivery of the fourth day. He also hit him for a six and two fours yesterday. Permaul though had the last word as he got his counterpart caught at mid-off, after Gazi tried to swing his blade once too often.

A tamed Tamim and an anti-climax

The visitors' early submission to Gazi got the crowd rolling. The 13,000 people in the stadium were cheering every run and for a moment resembled the ambience of a one-day game. It was set up like one with the Tigers needing 245 to win and Tamim's explosive batting in the first innings still fresh in the mind. This time he was more circumspect, but the crowd did not care. The scenario, however, completely changed once Tamim was caught behind off Rampaul in the fifth over.

'Fire in Babylon inspired me'

SPORTS REPORTER



West Indian bowler Tino Best perhaps bowled the spell of his life yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium as his maiden five-wicket haul in Test cricket, 5 for 24, turned the tables of a game that seemed to be heading towards a rare win for the hosts.

Unlike the previous sessions, Best repeatedly hit the right spots on the pitch and constantly irri-

tated the Bangladesh batsmen with his bouncers. The highlight of his bowling yesterday was a back of a length delivery that pitched on middle and leg and swung away from Shakib Al Hasan, who was squared up and had no choice but to produce a faint edge to the keeper.

"I just relaxed a lot. In the first innings, I was trying hard to get wickets. In the second, I tried to keep the head still and made sure that my action was right and that's all I did," said Best.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1



ICC president Alan Isaac (C) speaks as his deputy AHM Mostafa Kamal (R) and BCB president Nazmul Hasan Papon listen during a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium conference room yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

CLEAR MEN

Today's Score Card

WEST INDIES: First innings 527-4 dec (Chanderpaul 203 not out, Ramdin 126 not out, Powell 117; Sohag 3-145)

BANGLADESH: First innings 556

(Naeem 108, Nasir 96, Shakib 89, Tamim 72; Rampaul 3-118, Narine 3-148)

WEST INDIES: Second innings (over-

night 244-6)

Gayle c Mushfiqur b Rubel 19

Powell c Mushfiqur b Shakib 110

Bravo c Mushfiqur b Rubel 76

Samuels c Nafees b Shohag 1

Ramdin lbw b Shakib 5

Sammy lbw b Shohag 16

Permaul b Shohag 10

Narine not out 22

Rampaul b Shohag 5

Best b Shohag 0

Chanderpaul lbw b Shohag 1

Extras: (b-1, lb-3, nb-4) 8

Total: (All out in 74.2 overs) 273

Fall of wickets: 1-20, 2-209, 3-212, 4-

218, 5-225, 6-244, 7-249, 8-265, 9-265

Bowler O M R W

Shohag 23.2 2 74 6

Rubel 19 4 53 2

Mahmudullah 3 0 12 0

Hossain 7 1 34 0

Shakib 11 2 56 2

Islam 8 0 22 0

Nasir 3 0 18 0

BANGLADESH: Second innings

Tamim c Ramdin b Rampaul 5

Junaed c Ramdin b Best 20

Shahriar c & b Best 23

Naeem lbw b Permaul 26

Shakib c Ramdin b Best 2

Mushfiqur lbw b Best 16

Nasir b Permaul 21

Mahmudullah b Best 29

Shohag c sub b Permaul 19

Shahdat c Powell b Rampaul 4

Rubel not out 0

Extras: (b-1, nb-1) 2

Total: (All out in 54.3 overs) 167

Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-44, 3-51, 4-55, 5-

85, 6-106, 7-119, 8-159, 9-159

Bowler O M R W

Rampaul 11 1 32 2

Narine 18 1 56 0

Best 12.3 2 24 5

Permaul 8 0 32 3

Sammy 3 0 13 0

Samuels 2 0 9 0

Result: West Indies won by 77 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Kieran Powell.

Umpires: Richard Illingworth and

Bruce Oxenford.