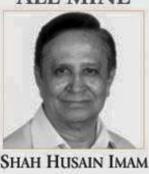


Good cricket is not enough, better cricket expected!

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

THE second and final Test is on at Christchurch. The Tigers, hopefully, are going to make their last stand in the same venue they had launched their



PHOTO: AFP

cricket expedition against New Zealand on December 26 last year. Is their ammunition still dry and live enough to give a crackling fight to the Black Cats after all the defeats sustained by our national team? What are our takes from the last Test match? The clichéd argument has been to build on the positives and avoid the negatives. We have been saying all these after every failed encounter and equally frequently dumping them on the ground. The sparkle of our performance has been individualistic, falling critically short of delivering collectivised team-driven success. Why? Because after each laurel, far from replicating it, back-to-back (remember Ken Williamson here!) we almost habitually slacken as if one good performance is one too many. After good batsmanship, the performer's legs jam to drop a dolly but a potentially game changing catch. On the third day of the last Test, catches were dropped off the bowling of Taskin and Mehdi Miraj Hassan. Were this not to happen, New Zealand would have appeared on the fourth day with a much reduced score than 303 for 7. Altogether 4-5 opportunities for taking wickets went down the drain. Another oft-repeated resolve you get to hear is, "It is a new game and we

shall try something new here". The new seldom comes about. Try as you must new things, watchful of the ebb and flow or highs and lows of a match to train your gun on the opponent but never forget your one deficiency. Develop a killer instinct and never flinch from displaying it like New Zealand does to perfection. The whole nation is so committed; I saw two small girls holding up two thin placards, one reading: "Wagner wag the Tigers' tail"; and the other was full of cricket sense, urging their national side to up the run rate to 3.6 per over (on the fifth day)! Why did we declare at 595 for 8

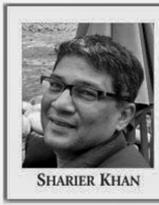
when Sabbir was on the crease after his half century? Could we not add more runs to save the match? Declaration is a tactic, and not a feel good fiction! Among the positive records were the dream-come-true partnership between Shakib and Mushfiqua and the sprightly five catches taken by substitute wicket-keeper Imrul Kayes, only second time in cricket history. While these dazzle as spectacular milestones, one particular record is heart-breaking, never ever, we must add: It is a shame that we lost the Wellington Test after having scored 595 runs. In 123 years of cricket history this is the second debacle of its type; but

again the last time it happened was in an era of timeless Test matches—seven—day long. Well, you may ask why must we be so touchy over the prospect of Banglwash. After all, it's not just New Zealand which got a series wash from Bangladesh; other formidable visiting sides have been trounced by Bangladesh on its grounds. These keep happening in bilateral series between top teams played on each other's ground. A team playing on its home ground has an edge over a visiting opponent. In a sense, the exchanges are even handed. Since we are coming of age in world cricket we must learn to

cope with reverses. The Tigers with their back to the wall have nothing to lose, but everything to gain from a fresh strategic start backed by vigorous mental, physical and skill training regimens. Some tend to point to the robust physical features of New Zealanders, Australians providing them with stamina vis-a-vis Bangladeshis. The tragic injuries of Mushfiqua and Imrul Kayes who could be match saviours or even winners in the last two days of the first Test match, and may be missed for this one, tend to cross one's mind. But an informed judgement on the issue would suggest that Wagner, Southee and Bolt bowled high rising bouncers, some 51 at Mushfiqua who had earlier retired hurt but returned to play on the fifth day to save the match. That time a bouncer hit his helmet, sent him reeling on the ground and eventually he was taken to hospital. Imrul who was batting brilliantly was hurt while rushing to the wicket to complete a run. The Wagner bouncers were relentlessly frequent which made the umpire to warn him once. But according to the rules if he had received a second warning he would have been ordered out of the field. The physical feature-related argument about stamina or prowess is refutable; just look at the Sri Lankans with similar stature as ours! But that has not stopped them from dominating the cricketing scene for a long time. On the other hand, well-built Afghan, Irish cricketers though improving their performances, still have a good distance to cover before being elevated on the cricketing scale. The writer is a current affairs commentator and former Associate Editor, *The Daily Star*. E-mail: shahhusainimam@gmail.com

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Gang culture stems from poor social environment, not external influences



SHARIER KHAN

DOES a teenager become a violent member of a gang just by following 'western' culture and using the internet? Do teenagers form gangs by playing Clash of Clans on mobile phones? Is gang culture a new phenomenon in Dhaka or Bangladesh? Reports in various newspapers following the brutal murder of 14-year-old Adnan Kabir in Uttara in early January raised these questions. There are a dozen graffiti-wielding and bike-riding violent gangs in Uttara. The reports say these gangs beat up people and their opponents to let them know who was in charge. Their main motivation, according to the reports, is to establish domination in the area. The gangs use social media to threaten each other's groups or their targets and so on. These reports also quoted various persons saying that these teenagers had become gang members under the leadership of petty local young criminals and also under the influence of external influences and the internet. Is that a fact? That the teenage years are a problematic period is obvious due to the presence of the Juvenile Correction Centre in Tongi. Gang culture has been there for a long time in Dhaka. But in the past, the number of gangs was small. Their activities were befitting with their

times. There was no social media till a decade back. So they used to threaten each other via phones or in person. From the sixties up to the eighties, we have witnessed or heard of gang fights. It was typical for gangs to use hockey sticks, machetes and knives. Some gang members later became hard-boiled criminals, others returned to 'normal' lives. We have had gangs at the bottom-tier of the society all along. Street kids who buy and sell drugs and get involved with all sorts of lower level crimes ran various gangs. But they remain under-reported. Gang culture has always been about domination; about gang members becoming 'respected'. The gang members we knew in our childhood in the early eighties were poor students and had low self-esteem. By becoming a gang member or gang leader they could become 'someone' others feared. But then again not all poor students with low self-esteem were gang members. The actual reason why some teens chose to become a gang member is psychological and it is due to the social conditions surrounding them. Teenagers are the most ignored or misunderstood generation in our society. And yet, as natural hormonal changes kick in between the ages of 13-14, every human being undergoes rapid psychological changes that he/she really does not understand properly. In general, the teenage years are the most vulnerable period for any human being due to various psychological disorders, depression, violence and all that. This is also the age of experiencing a great deal of new emotions,

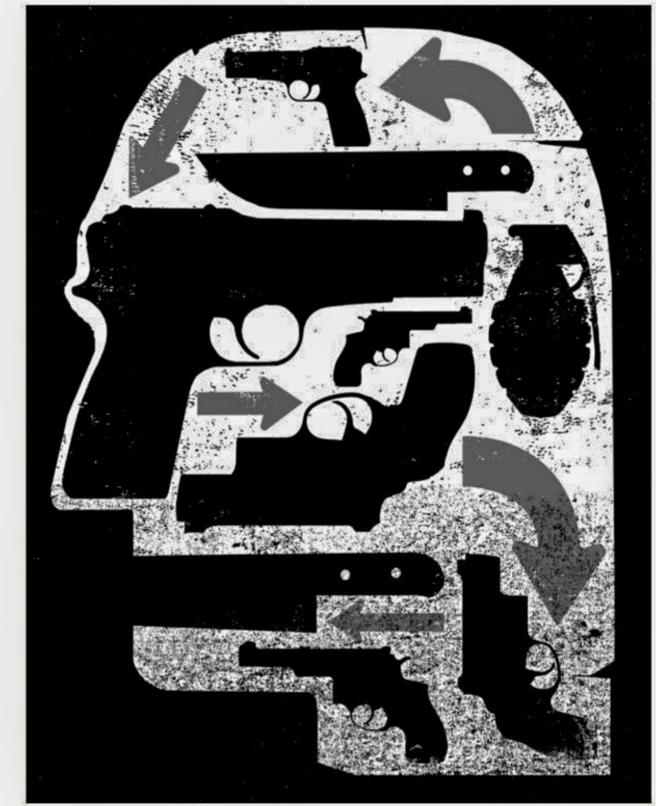


ILLUSTRATION: EDEL RODRIGUEZ

channel their emotional and hormonal changes to good use. But someone like a guardian or a friend has to stand by the side of that teen. Otherwise, that teenager may become a gang member or any other unwanted thing. The juvenile who is undergoing hormonal transformation may become too sensitive about his or her status in the world he/she lives in. If he/she is feeling too small, rejected and underpowered, he/she may find refuge in a gang with a fake sense of becoming 'respected'. They can alternatively become a deadly militant—as we have seen in recent times. Our state and our city do not offer proper platforms for teenagers or children. It is a country that thinks of nobody but the adult men. Why does it surprise us when we see teen gangs killing teens or, a teen militant fighting the cops thinking he was serving a divine cause? If we want to contain such destructive trends, stop blaming 'western culture' or the internet. Instead offer these kids an environment of hope, joy and inspiration. Give them playing fields in every community. Give them cultural platforms to practice various forms of creativity. Give them platforms that are so attractive that even a teen from a troubled family would try to find happiness there. Until then, expect more teens to go down the drain. The writer is Deputy Editor, *The Daily Star*.

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intellectuality and creativity. They become somewhat distant from their parents suddenly as their friends become more important in their lives.

In most cases, we survive this phase without much trouble. For some, it may be very difficult if they do not find their surrounding supportive. It is possible to

QUOTABLE Quote

RALPH WALDO EMERSON
AMERICAN ESSAYIST, LECTURER, AND POET

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children... to leave the world a better place... to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- Travel stops
- Refinery input
- Lisbon's place
- Shoulder muscle, for short
- Prop for Bug
- Done
- Capital of Jordan
- Kind of ballerina
- "And -- thou slain the Jabberwock?"
- Diminish
- "Understood"
- Stop
- Winter personified
- Criminalize
- Wee
- Being
- Union foe
- Horse controls
- Barn compartment
- Advantage
- Dog
- Sightseeing jaunt
- Come in
- Tricket stub datum

DOWN

- Book after Jonah
- Bush's successor
- Contract makeup
- Unpredictable
- Circus beast
- Convened
- Scents
- Improves
- Silver or sodium
- Leave high and dry
- Jury members
- Southpaw
- Revue acts
- Unknown woman
- 23 West Indies island
- 24 Bed occupants
- 25 Calais caps
- 28 Like helium
- 30 "Hush!"
- 31 Filled with energy
- 32 Run, as color
- 34 Address for a king
- 36 Hawk's hope

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

P	I	C	O	T	F	E	W	E	R
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