



PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

MARKS OF POLICE POLITENESS! (L-R) Commonwealth Games and SA Games gold medalist Asif Hossain Khan, Shoebuzzaman, Ali Hossain Shipu, cook Jahangir and Jannatul Ferdous at the Metropolitan Hospital in the city.

The Black Monday horror through their eyes

The events that transpired during the afternoon hours of Monday, the second of October can be described as nothing short of heinous. It is indeed a sad day for a country when one of its golden sons is granted no respect and massacred without mercy by the very men who are supposed to be his protectors. The story of Asif Hossain Khan and his fellow shooters needs no repetition; enough column inches have been directed to it already. But justice has yet to be served. Therefore the story of a few innocent sportsmen whose only crime was to be in the wrong place at the wrong time continues. What lies ahead for these few men whose lives have been irrevocably damaged by the madness of a few hours is up to debate. What is not is the fact that what has been done to them is a crime of the highest order. We can only hope for justice and hope that the adversity they have faced does not break them but motivates them to break previously unattainable barriers. Here for the first time, is the story of Asif, Shoeb and their fellow shooters through their own eyes as told to **The Daily Star Sport** reporters **Mohammad Isam** and **Quazi Zulquarnain Islam**.

ASIF HOSSAIN KHAN (Commonwealth Games Gold Medalist)

It was between twelve-thirty and one, when news suddenly reached us that there was a commotion at the gate. We were not really aware of what was going on but Shoeb Bhai and a few others including me went to check out what was wrong. We went out and saw that there was a fight going on between some police personnel and the guard at the gate. Shoeb Bhai took charge and went to mediate with the officer in charge. Things seemed to reach an impasse but suddenly without any warning whatsoever Shoeb Bhai was hit from behind by the police three or four times. Those of us who were there jumped into

action to save him and separate him from the police. There was a lot of pushing and shoving going on but we managed to separate him and run back into the relative safety of our quarters closing the main door behind us in the hope that it would keep the police away. We did not realize how wrong we were. As each of us escaped to where we could, the police climbed the walls and set upon anyone they could find. I had chosen the field as a sanctuary but I was wrong. The police found me and took me into custody. They piled me into their vehicle and took me to the Gulshan Station along with Shoeb Bhai and Jahangir. Little did I know then that the nightmare had only just begun. The police behaved atrociously and swore at us using

expletives that I cannot repeat. The accused us of "getting fat on government food" and when they learned that I had won gold in the Commonwealth they said that it had made me "big-headed." They also taunted Shoeb Bhai asking him whether he taught us "shooting or fighting." They put five of us in one cell, flipped us over and beat us mercilessly on the soles of our feet, the ankles, thighs, knees and hips. They used a variety of weapons including rulers, tree branches and even hockey sticks. There were seven policemen and three were clothed while the rest were plainclothed. In spite of our screams of agony and protest of innocence they paid no heed and continued with the beating for a long time. I don't

remember how long exactly because time had lost all meaning by then. I screamed and fell in and out of consciousness, only peripherally aware of what was going on. By this time the media had gotten heed of what was happening and they had come in droves. That made the police stop beating us but there was more to follow. We were handcuffed and all of us were piled into the back of a microbus and taken to court. The media had already crowded there by that time and from then on the treatment was a lot kinder. The people from the press kept asking me a lot of questions and even though I wanted to answer I was not able to. A lot of people sympathised with us at court and even apologised. There must

have been a lot of paperwork involved but by that time I was not aware of anything. All five of us were put in one cell and presently I was given papers to sign for my release on bail. It was officially the end of my physical nightmare but the beginning of the mental one. A few hours of madness may change my life forever.

The days following this episode has for me been a ride through a roller-coaster of emotions.

At times I feel rebellious and feel like tearing everything apart at the frustration of how something like this can happen. But other times I realize that things like this happen in our country all the time and nothing is ever set right. There is a lot of attention devoted to it for a short

period of time and then it fades away. This is nothing new. The same thing happened with the journalists a few months ago and with a cricketer as well and now this fate has befallen us.

What can we do? Sometimes I think that togetherness in the sporting community is vital. That is the only way this might be resolved.

But in my pessimistic days I think that this is the way it is now and there will be no resolve. I have lost all vestige of hope.

My talent as a shooter has taken me to numerous countries and the one thing I have always seen is that the people always treat the police as friends. In our country it has come to the stage where we are apprehensive about meeting a police officer.

The first letter in the abbreviation Police, P, stands for politeness. And from my experience I must say that our police lacks that.

We are but sportsmen who travel to different countries and give our best to highlight our country on the international stage. We have no interest in politics nor are we terrorists. So this treatment defies all logic.

SHOEBUZZAMAN (Junior coach)

The morning's practice was at an end when, suddenly, our range boy Sabu came running in, telling me that there is a scuffle outside the complex with the police. It was around 12.30pm in the afternoon and we were all preparing for the mid-day rest which precedes the

evening session.

I walked outside to the front gate with Sabu when I saw a commotion, and a lot of uniformed and plain-clothed policemen. Amongst all those people, I spotted one of our guards Jumman, being battered. That actually made me realise that the situation is quite serious. I took a police officer aside and said to him, "Let's get inside and talk about this."

Even before I could finish my sentence, I was smacked on the back by what I think was a stick. I turned and just ran inside without blinking an eyelid. Jumman, or was it someone else, locked the gate

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SL discomfort delights Tigers



BISHWAJIT ROY from Chandigarh

Bangladesh think-tank was not worried with the pacy wicket at Mohali where they will play their opening game in the preliminary round of the ICC Champions Trophy against in-form Sri Lanka tomorrow.

Rather they looked at the bright side of it, as the team management now believes that the conditions will suit their seamers Syed Raseel and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza immensely.

"I hope that the Mohali wicket will help our seam bowlers and moreover, it is encouraging to see that the Sri Lanka top-order were found it uncomfortable against the moving ball

during the practice game today," said coach Dav Whatmore who sent his new ball bowlers Mashrafe and Raseel and opener Shahrir Nafees and Mohammad Ashraf to watch the morning session.

Sri Lanka won their practice match against PCA President's XI by 84 runs, thanks mainly to Farveez Maharoof who helped his side recover from an early collapse to put up a decent total of 267 for eight in their 50 overs. Sri Lanka then restricted the home side for 183 for 7 in 50 overs.

Whatmore has a very simple strategy to cope with the dew factor, which is crucial for the team batting second.

"In that case, we should bat cautiously for five or six overs. The openers should try to stay in the middle and I believe if we could

managed those first few overs then the dew factor would be an advantage for our team as the ball becomes heavy and wet which would make it hard for the bowlers to grip," explained the Sri Lankan-born Australian coach.

Bangladesh team had their first practice yesterday at the Mohali ground where chief selector Faruque Ahmed along with manager Khaled Mahmud took a look at the pitch and ground conditions.

"There is a lot of grass on the pitch so that the seamers will get movement from the surface. But curator Daljit Singh assured us that he will cut off some grass tomorrow. The outfield looks fantastic," said Faruque.

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ESPN-STAR's unfriendly offer

SPORTS REPORTER

ESPN-STAR Sports on Thursday expressed its desire to extend its broadcasting partnership with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for the next six-year cycle.

But the board, who are looking for more lucrative candidates for the TV rights, gave a lukewarm response to the leading Asian sports broadcaster's desire of winning the bragging right for a second successive term.

"We have received a letter from the ESPN-STAR Sports today. But my first reaction about the content of the letter is that it is unfriendly," said BCB CEO Mahmudur Rahman without elaborating.

"Over the last many months we have communicated to BCB our strong interest to renew the existing agreement. We wish to continue playing the role of a catalyst for the cricket's growth in Bangladesh as we look forward to move into the next phase of our relationship with the BCB. We look forward to negotiations starting soon in accordance with our con

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GP stays CCL sponsors

UNB, Dhaka

Country's leading cellular phone operator GrameenPhone has for the fourth consecutive time become sponsors of the Corporate Cricket League (CCL) that begins tomorrow in the city.

Holders Beximco Group will play Chittagong Port Authority in the inaugural match of the 12-team CCL at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Member secretary of the league committee Mohammad Ali Hossain gave details of the tournament at a press conference at a local hotel yesterday.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) vice-president and its marketing and commercial committee chairman Aziz Al Kaiser Tito, GrameenPhone head of marketing Rubaba Dowla Matin and additional general manager Ghalib Ahmed Ansari and BCB CEO Mahmudur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

Tito informed that GrameenPhone will provide Tk 15 lakh for this season's CCL.

He said the BCB is now working on telecast of local matches on television.

"We will definitely include such

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Club Cup Mohammedan's

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Maksud Alam Habul set an equaliser and struck a 71st minute golden goal to dethrone Abahani as Club Cup champions and gave Mohammedan Sporting Club their third title with a 2-1 victory in the final of the Shah Sports Club Cup final yesterday.

Musa Mia put Abahani ahead in the 45th minute at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium but captain Mahubullah Shakil's valiant display under the bar inspired Mohammedan to come back and force a 1-1 draw in regulation 70 minutes as substitute Rashed Hasan Rony cancelled their archrivals' lead with his first hit of the game.

The extra-time was 30 seconds old when the long-haired Habul, receiving a left-flank pass from former Abahani player Shamim Reza, turned on his heels and blasted a powerful hit into the bottom corner from top of the box to bring a stunning conclusion of the eight-team meet.

"We kept our cool because we knew we would get a few chances against Abahani, who were a stronger side. It paid good dividend

because they missed a number of chances in the end due to hurry," said Mohammedan skipper Shakil. "The team spirit was great," the goalkeeper added.

The way Abahani dominated the embarrassingly one-sided first half cleared any doubt that Mohammedan began as underdogs. Having scored 20 goals in the past four matches, Abahani attackers Shuva, Sumon, Jimmy and Musa fired blank in the crunch time.

After Sumon put the ball wide of the unguarded post in the third minute, there was no respite for the Mohammedan backs against relentless sky-blue tides. But Shakil stood tall and denied a series of rival attempts on one-on-one to keep the black and whites in the game.

A goal by Jimmy was disallowed midway through the first half and the umpire awarded Abahani a penalty corner, the first of three in as many minutes but Rana and Issa Mia both put the ball straight to Shakil.

Mohammedan, who defended doggedly, earned one penalty corner and two corners but failed to test Abahani goalie Bappi for a single time.

Abahani kept the tempo and after squandering two more chances, Musa broke the deadlock with a rather "soft goal". The centre-half picked a long pass from their own

half, sliced through two defenders and put the ball past an advancing Shakil.

The Mohammedan stick wielders were protesting the decision vehemently for unknown reasons and pushed the umpires, injuring one match official who was later replaced by the reserve umpire. A Mohammedan staff also rushed from the bench to attack the umpires with a hockey stick. Shamim Reza was yellow carded and was out for five minutes.

Mohammedan were given a lifeline in the 53rd minute when the umpire denied Abahani off a certain penalty stroke after Shakil tripped Shuva yards away from the goal.

And as their rivals began to show tired legs, Mohammedan made most of Rajib's clumsy defending to equalise on the hour from their first shot on goal. Shamim Reza intercepted Rajib's weak clearance to find Habul who cut the ball from deep inside the box to Rony who slammed an angular hit into the far post just a couple of minutes after his arrival on the turf.

Abahani had another chance to settle the issue just before the final hooter but Jimmy's drag from a penalty corner was saved by Shakil to take the match into extra time.

"I am happy that I have won this trophy with a half a team compared to the others. You need luck to win

something and we had it. Abahani should have scored 2/3 goals in the first half and we would have had no chance at all. But we survived and my boys played well after conceding the goal," said Mohammedan coach Barkatullah Chapal.

Abahani coach Mahub Harun rued the missed chances and said that their forwards lost the game. "The finishing we showed in the earlier games was not there. They were technically wrong, hitting the ball instead of pushing it on one-on-one situations. Still, we were denied off a 100 per cent penalty and the boys lost concentration after the match was halted for a long time due to Mohammedan players' attack on the umpires," told Harun.

Mohammedan picked up Tk 25,000 and Abahani Tk 20,000 as prize money while Abahani's Mouddur Rahman Shuva was the top scorer with six goals.

Usha Kirra Chakra finished third with a 4-1 win over Mariner Youngs Club in the play-off earlier on the day at the same venue.

Krishna struck twice while Kamal and Rimon one each for Usha while Shishu found the mark for Mariners.

TROPHY TREATS

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chandigarh

The Tigers were not only impressed by the sector based city of Chandigarh but also its cricket facilities, especially when they have arrived from a city where the main stadiums are under piles of construction materials at the moment.

Bangladesh skipper Habibul Bashar and all his colleagues were excited with the practice facilities in the city and were also thrilled after their first experience at the beautiful Mohali Stadium and its indoor facilities.

"It's absolutely fantastic. What a beautiful stadium (Mohali) it is. I played at the Eden Gardens (in Kolkata) but I must say the ground here is totally different," said excited Faruque Ahmed.

The Punjab Cricket Association Stadium at Mohali is truly a fantastic venue with excellent practice facilities with ten lively practice pitches outside the ground and spectator-friendly outlook and it's already dubbed as best stadium in India.

"We are pleased to see this much of facilities provided to the cricketers. I cannot believe that there are almost 17 pitches in our practice match venue," said captain Habibul Bashar.

"It is specially refreshing for us to practice at such a good ground. And I think you can understand why," he added.

"It is impossible for our board to prepare its own ground like Chandigarh Stadium where cricketers can enjoy their training sessions? They can take lesson from here," said a senior cricketer citing

not to mention his name.

AWOL, CHAPMAN

Paul Chapman is enjoying a vacation while the Tigers are featuring in an important tournament, and on top of that -- on a tour.

It was learned that the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has not fired the fitness training coach.

Funnily, BCB accepted his condition while they contracted him for the job to give him the leave during this particular time to complete his marriage.

"How is it possible that the board accepted his condition? Is the authority aware about the timing? I really find it funny," said a very surprised Tiger.

"He settled his marriage date before making the agreement with us, and as a result we were bound to accept his demand. He is a trainer not the physiotherapist. There is an assistant coach (Salahuddin) with the team who has a knowledge about the matter," said BCB general secretary and cricket committee chairman Mahubul Anam over telephone.

Paul Chapman is supposed to join the team on October 9.

SHARMA NOT A TIGER

Bangladesh cricket team are struggling with their veteran liaison officer since they have arrived in the city.

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Did U Know?

Women competed in the hammer throw for the first time at the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000.



Ricky Ponting
(Australia cricket captain)
"It's obviously one we want to win. It is the second biggest one-day tournament in the world and it is one that has eluded Australia."



PHOTOS: STAR

BOTH SIDES OF THE GAME: Mohammedan players and officials (L) party with the trophy of the Club Cup hockey tournament after they beat Abahani in the final at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday. But things were not rosy at the stadium as seen in the above photo (a Mohammedan staff attacks the umpire with a stick after his side conceded the first goal).