

# Walking off as a man

**Cricket**

**BISHWAJIT ROY**

The born fighter has decided to call it quits yesterday. He may be small in stature, but the lion-hearted Khaled Mahmud chose the right moment to sign off from international cricket after seeing the highs and lows of Bangladesh cricket.

"I think it is the right time to say goodbye to international cricket. It is not that I've just been dropped from the Test squad, but to avoid any further embarrassment," said the 32-year-old to The Daily Star Sport on Saturday in the evening.

Mahmud, who led the Tigers in three series since being named captain on April 24 in 2003, lost his place in the Test team when the selectors announced a 16-member tour party for Zimbabwe.

Mahmud, who attended his last training session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in the morning, took only an hour to make the biggest decision of his cricketing career after a meeting with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Ali Asghar at his Gulshan office.

Although he did not wish to elaborate about his meeting with

the BCB boss, however, Mahmud told this correspondent that it had certainly helped him to take the painful decision.

"I've tendered my resignation and hopefully the Board will accept it," said Mahmud adding that he has submitted the letter at around 4pm.

"I have been feeling the pinch of non-belonging during the training for the last few days. I was not getting enough chances to bat in the nets and also I noticed that the bowlers were acting funny whenever it was my turn," said Mahmud who made his international debut in 1998 against India.

"This is not the way to behave with a captain who should always command the respect of his teammates. And if this trend continues Bangladesh will never get a good captain in the future," said the hero of Bangladesh's last one-day victory against Pakistan in the 1999 World Cup in England.

"I admit that I have shortcomings and I'm average too. But can anybody tell me how many consistent performers are there in the team right now? I have failed in the home series, but it is unfair to judge one when everybody should share the blame. Another thing they seemed to have forgotten is that

how the same set of players performed well in both Australia and Pakistan," remarked Mahmud, who has played 12 Tests since making his debut against Zimbabwe in November 2001 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"I love the game very much and I always treasured self-respect above everything throughout my career," said the often outspoken Mahmud, who turned down the offer of taking over the captaincy from Aminul Islam during the 1999 World Cup.

Known for his great team spirit, Mahmud picked up the pieces of the disastrous 2003 World Cup campaign and moulded it into a disciplined and fighting team on the ground. His leadership quality was never questioned despite nine Test and 15 one-day defeats during his reign.

The father of two sons, Mahmud's decision was wholeheartedly supported by his life partner Romana.

"We may suffer financially but I always wanted him to live with dignity and pride and that's why we have always stood by him," she said.

Asked to choose his finest



KHALED MAHMUD

# Bashar replaces Mahmud

**Cricket**

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed yesterday named Habibul Bashar as the new Bangladesh captain while announcing a 16-man squad for the Zimbabwe tour.

The decision heralded the end of Khaled Mahmud, who led the Tigers in three series before being thrown into the deep end. Mahmud also lost his place on the Test side, but was offered a chance to contribute to the one-day team.

Although the captaincy job has been a game of musical chairs, but this time the decision to remove the captain came from the selectors after the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) opted not to get involved.

"We have tried with Mahmud for quite sometime, but unfortunately he does not fit in the Test side. But we feel he can still contribute in the one-day version," Faruque told reporters after announcing the squad for the two-match Test and five one-day internationals series.

"Mahmud will join the team for the one-dayers and two will return home after the Test series is over," said Faruque adding that Bashar would also lead the one-day side.

Mahmud came under fire after the home series against England for a poor run of form both with the bat and ball. The gutsy all-rounder however won a lot of praise for the manner in which he restored discipline and cohesion in the team after taking over from wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud in April last year.

His hopes of retaining the job for at least one more series bright-

## SQUAD

Habibul Bashar (captain), Rajin Saleh (vice-captain), Khaled Mashud (wicketkeeper), Tapash Baisya, Hannan Sarker, Shahriar Hossain, Mohammad Ashraf, Tarek Aziz, Manjarul Islam, Anwar Hossain Monir, Mushfiqur Rahman, Alok Kapali, Mohammad Rafique, Alamgir Kabir, Monjurul Islam and Al-Shahriar.

**Officials:** Dav Whatmore (coach) and Abdul Latif Khan (manager)

ened when the selectors included him in a list of 20 probables. But Mahmud lost the race for the lone seamer all-rounder's slot to Mushfiqur Rahman, who was the lone consistent performer against England in October-November.

The chief selector said that Bashar was the best possible choice to lead the Tigers, who are yet to win a Test match in 26 attempts.

The 31-year-old from Kushtia became the fourth captain since Bangladesh attained Test status in June 2000. But the country's top batsman will certainly feel the heat of the hot seat when Bangladesh make their second trip to Zimbabwe next month with a realistic chance of coming out of the defeat circle in both versions of the game.

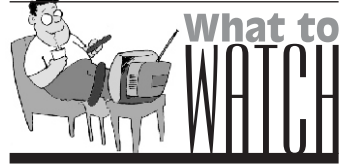
"I'm extremely delighted at the news of my appointment and it's an honour to lead my country. My job as captain will be to restore confidence in the team. We have been losing ever since we got the Test status, so my target will be to make a

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## Did U Know?

The world's toughest motor rally is said to be the 3000 miles five-day Kenya Safari Rally. In 1981, Kenyan Chandreshkhar Khimji became the first man to achieve a hat-trick.



**ESPN**

South Africa vs West Indies  
First ODI  
Live at 6:27 pm  
**STAR Sports**  
Australian Open  
Men's/Women's Fourth Round  
Live at 6:00 am  
Gillette World Sports Special  
Int'l Sports News  
Taped Version at 4:30 pm



**Nat'l Cricket League (Day-2)**  
Chittagong vs Dhaka  
Venue: Comilla Stadium  
Khulna vs Sylhet  
Venue: Shamsul Huda Stadium, Jessore  
Rajshahi vs Jessore  
Venue: Rangpur Cricket Garden



## Inzamamul Haq

(Pakistan cricket captain)  
"I am grateful to Almighty Allah and the PCB and will continue to do my best to mould this young team into a stronger combination."  
After retaining captaincy.

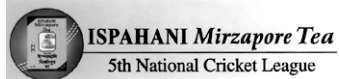
## V' ball training

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali**

A seven-day training course for volleyball players began at the Habibullah High School playground under Dumki upazila in the district on Friday.

A total of 48 participants are taking part in the course, organised by the district sports association (DSA).

# Salahuddin shines on rain



**SPORTS REPORTER**

Inclement weather played spoilsport yesterday in all but the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea Fifth National Cricket League match between Chittagong and Dhaka at the Comilla Stadium.

A soggy pitch prevented any play at the Rangpur Cricket Garden in the game involving Rajshahi and Barisal. Sylhet batted only 17 overs against holders Khulna and scored 31-2 before proceedings came to an early halt away at Jessore.

At Comilla, Gazi Salahuddin hammered a half-century as Chittagong scored 254 in their first innings after deciding to bat against Dhaka.

The one down right-hander

belted nine boundaries in his 98-ball 64.

But some brilliant late-order batting by Mukter Siddiqi and Ahsanullah Hasan enabled Chittagong to build a respectable total. They shared 53 runs for the eighth wicket.

Number nine Hasan was not out on 44 while Mukter struck a 23-ball 37 with seven hits to the fence.

Spinners Elias Sunny and Mosaddeq Hossain picked up three wickets each.

By the close Dhaka had reached 38 without loss in 11 overs.

## SCORECARDS

Scoreboard of the two four-day Ispahani Mirzapore Tea Fifth National Cricket League matches played at different venues across the country yesterday:

## CHITTAGONG V DHAKA

Venue: Comilla Stadium				
<b>CHITTAGONG:</b> First innings				
Anisul c Sohel b Elias	27			
Masum c Sakib b Neeyamur	20			
Salahuddin c Sajjad b Sohel	64			
Faisal c Sakib b Sanwar	13			
Azam c Halim b Mosaddeq	12			
Arif b Elias	10			
Sabbir lbw b Elias	3			
Muktar c Sumon b Mosaddeq	37			
Ahsanullah not out	44			
Muballik lbw b Sanwar	4			
Raihan b Mosaddeq	15			
Extras: (b-2, lb-1, nb-1, w-2)	5			
Total: (All out in 76.2 overs)	254			
Fall of wkts: 1-35, 2-59, 3-82, 4-113, 5-140, 6-152, 7-154, 8-201, 9-206, 10-254.				
<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>
Neeyamur	8	2	27	1
Mahfuzur	12	2	45	1



PHOTO: STAR

An emergency meeting of the Bangladesh Football Federation is in progress at the federation office at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Office hockey

**UNB, Dhaka**

Both the Super League matches of the Office Hockey League ended in draw on the opening day at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

In the day's first match, Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protisthan (BKSP) drew with Morning Sun 2-2 after leading the first half by a solitary goal.

In the day's other match, Bangladesh Army shared points with Friends Library Limited in a 1-1 affair after dominating the first session by a lone goal.

## Int'l Open chess

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman lost against D Harika of India in the third round game of the first International Open chess tournament which is now being held at Chennai, India.

Zia earned 2 points, IWM Rani Hamid and Zakia Sultana earned 2 points each and Afroza Khanam Bably and Hafizul Islam Chapal earned 1 point each after end of this round.

# Eng decide later

**Cricket**

**AFP, London**

England cricket officials have delayed making a decision on whether to tour Zimbabwe later this year because they want to study the advice of the British government.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) had set themselves a deadline of next Thursday to decide whether they will go ahead with the November tour or bow to pressure to pull out because of international concerns over the regime of President Robert Mugabe.

But in the light of a report published by senior ECB official Des Wilson earlier this week concluding that England would be justified withdrawing from the tour on moral grounds, the ECB announced on Friday it needed more time to make its decision.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has urged English cricket chiefs to reconsider the tour.

In a letter to the ECB, Straw drew attention to the "appalling human

rights situation" in Zimbabwe and added: "The situation in Zimbabwe is worse today than it was during the World Cup last year."

England promised to tour Zimbabwe in exchange for the Zimbabweans visiting England in 2003. That tour had been in doubt after England pulled out of a World Cup match in Harare in February.

The ECB management board now plan a full debate on Wilson's report at next Thursday's meeting before passing on their views to the Executive Board, who will analyse the possible implications for English cricket should they decide to withdraw from the tour.

"The decision the Management Board will have to take is a very difficult one and involves balancing a whole range of factors," explained Tim Lamb, the ECB's chief executive.

"We must do this decision justice and the management board feel they need a little more time to make a thoroughly informed decision."

"Obviously, the Government's explicit view on the tour will be carefully considered and we're

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## Premier Football League restarts tomorrow

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The Western Union Premier Division Football League resumes tomorrow at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The stalemate ended when Mohammedan Sporting Club agreed to return to the League following a Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), which sat for an emergency meeting to find a way out, decision to withdraw a one-match suspension on its captain Jewel Rana.

"Jewel Rana submitted a mercy petition to BFF president SA Sultan requesting withdrawal of the ban and the president revoked it using his power," said BFF general secretary Anwarul Haq Helal yesterday.

Mohammedan threatened to boycott the League after the Dhaka Mahanagari Football League Committee (DMFLC) deducted one point from their account and declared Muktojoddha 2-0 winners after they refused to play the remaining eight minutes of the match on January 15 following a refereeing decision.

DMFLC also banned Jewel for his misbehaviour with match officials during that match.

The black and whites however said they were playing in response to a BFF call to end the stalemate and to honour the requests of its former players and well-wishers.

"The much-talked about refereeing decision was surely a wrong one and the subsequent action was also unfair," said a Mohammedan statement yesterday.

Helal also informed that they had directed DMFLC to resume the league from Monday which secretary of the League committee confirmed.

The DMFLC, in an emergency meeting on Wednesday, postponed all the matches of the League until January 24.

## School cricket Rayer Bazar High outplay Child Care

**UNB, Dhaka**

A 91-run knock by Asif guided Rayer Bazar High School to a massive 152-run victory over Pre-Cadet Child Care School in one of four Dhaka Metropolitan Zone qualifying matches of the Standard Chartered 22nd National School Cricket Championship at the Uttara Police Lines ground yesterday.

In another match, two half-centuries from Rana and Imam enabled Shapla Kindergarten to beat Moon Light Kindergarten by 142 runs at the Mirpur Outer Stadium.

In the day's others matches, Nupur International School notched an eight-wicket victory over Renaissance Kindergarten at the Kalindi Cricket ground while Renaissance International School recorded a 52-run win against Golden Future School at the Uttara Friends ground.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**RAYER BAZAR HIGH SCHOOL:** 216/9 in 25 overs (Asif 91, Nuruzza-man 27, Tanvir 20; Tuhin 3/44, Masud 2/24 and Sajju 2/27).

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PHOTO: STAR

GET UP, IT'S YOUR TIME NOW: Just-named Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar smiles while going through a stretching exercise at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

# India win a cliff-hanger

**Cricket**

**AFP, Adelaide**

Two stunning centuries brought Zimbabwe agonisingly close to pulling off its first win of the triangular international one-day cricket series against India here on Saturday but in the end they were denied by just three runs.

Zimbabwe's batting finally stood up to be counted with Stuart Carlisle and Sean Ervine combining for a record international partnership for their country for any wicket.

The previous record was 187, which Carlisle put on with Grant Flower against Australia in Perth in 2000-01.

Carlisle finished with 109 from 128 deliveries while Ervine took 100 off 100 balls in a stand that added 202 to the Zimbabwe score.

It was Ervine's maiden international century and Zimbabwe's first double-century stand in one-day cricket.

But the spell was broken when Ervine was run out by Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly after a mid-wicket mix-up.

The pair had taken Zimbabwe from a struggling 46 for three as they set about reeling in India's 280

for seven, a total which featured yet another century to V.V.S. Laxman, who finished with his highest one-day total of 131 off 138 balls.

It was his third one-day century in the space of a week.

Dejected Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak said he was very disappointed to miss out on a win which was clearly in his grasp.

"Having gotten so close and then not managing to get over the line is very disappointing," Streak said.

The Zimbabweans needed a win to retain any hope of catching India in the one-day series for a place in the finals against Australia.

After five matches, they remain without a win.

Streak and all-rounder Andy Blignaut were faced with the task of getting their team over the line with nine runs needed from the final over bowled by medium-pacer Sanjay Bangar.

But Blignaut was caught by Laxman midway through the over, effectively bringing Zimbabwe's challenge to an end.

In the end, needing a six off the final delivery, Dion Ebrahim could only hit a two and Zimbabwe finished with five runs from the over.

Ervine's century included nine fours and a six, bringing up his ton

with a clever chipped shot over backward square leg for a boundary off paceman Lakshminath Balaji.

Carlisle followed soon after in the 48th over, hitting an Ajit Agarkar delivery straight to cover.

Earlier, Zimbabwe had sent India to an appalling start in the match before the ever-reliable Laxman once again stepped up to revive the innings.

In the end India's impressive tally belied the early trauma which saw it lose three wickets for just four runs on an excellent batting strip.

The opening-pairing of Bangar and Parthiv Patel both went for ducks and when Ganguly stepped up to the crease the Zimbabweans, still chasing their first win in the series after four losses, could smell blood.

Ganguly made one run and lasted just five balls before he holed out to Dion Ebrahim at square leg while trying to hook a delivery from Blignaut.

Both Bangar and Patel had been called into the Indian side following an ongoing ankle injury to master batsman Sachin Tendulkar and a shoulder strain to his opening

part

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## Singer chess

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Debaraj Chatterjee took the solo lead in the preliminary phase Singer 30th National Chess Championship with 7.5 points beating Arman Monir in the ninth round at the NSC yesterday.

Six players jointly shared the second position with 7 points each.

They are: FM Khandkar Aminul Islam, Shawkat Hossain Pallab, Saifuddin Lavlu, FM Sheikh Nasir Ahmed, Mohammad Javed and Aminul Islam Polash.

Lavlu beat Abdul Maleq, Javed beat Enayet Hossain, Mehdi Hasan Parag beat Sohel Chowdhury, Amin drew with Nasir, Pallab drew with Polash, Shakil drew with Monjur and Reza drew with Monir.



PHOTO: STAR

Chief cricket selector Faruque Ahmed makes a point to the reporters during a press conference organised to announce the team for Zimbabwe at the Bangladesh Cricket Board office yesterday. He is flanked by coach Dav Whatmore (L) and BCB CEO Macky Dudhia.