

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 Bangladeshi 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 mould 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

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1



KHALED MAHMUD

Bashar replaces Mahmud

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed yesterday named Habibul Bashar as the new Bangladeshi 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 team.

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 Ashraful, 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

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

Salahuddin shines on rain

ISPAHANI Mirzapore Tea 5th National Cricket League

SPORTS REPORTER

Did U Know?

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

What to WATCH

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
Intl Sports News
Taped Version at 4:30 pm

DAY'S EVENT

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

TALK TURKEY



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 Bhashani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

In the day's first match, Bangladesh Krira Shikha 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 and Zakia Sultana earned 2 points each and Afroza Khanam Rabi and Hafizul Islam Chapal earned 1 point each after end of this round.

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

venue: Comilla Stadium

CHITTAGONG: First innings

Anisul c Sohel b Elias	27
Masum c Sabik b Neeyamur	20
Salahuddin c Sajjad b Sohel	64
Faisal c Sabik 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.	
Bowler	O M R W
Neeyamur	8 2 27 1
Mahfuzur	12 2 45 1

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 Mahanagar Football League Committee (DMFLC) deducted one point from their account and declared Mukti Joddha 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 spokesman 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-runs 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 Metropolis 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, Nururza-man 27, Tanvir 20; Tuhin 3/44, Masud 2/24 and Saju 2/27).

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

India win a cliff-hanger

Cricket

AFP, Adelaide

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 way which was clearly in his grasp.

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

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 anywicket.

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 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.

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 wicket.

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

Earlier, Zimbabwe had sent India on 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 Ibrahim 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 partner.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5



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 Duddia.

Singer chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Debaraj Chatterjee took the solo lead in the preliminary phase Singer