

## Munna: 1966-2005

### Last defender finally beaten

SPORTS REPORTER

He gave up the fight for life when the city was still asleep. And when people woke up to hear the first news bulletin they learnt with great sadness that Monem Munna was no more.

The 39-year-old football icon breathed his last at 6 am on Saturday, ending an 18-day struggle with septicaemia at the Bangladesh Medical College and Hospital (BMCH) in Dhanmondi.

One of the finest defenders Bangladesh football has ever produced, Munna's death left the sports fraternity in deep shock and people from all walks of life found it hard to come to terms with the untimely demise of a player, who ruled the pitch like a king during the 80s and 90s.

Sports lovers rushed to Abahani club, the second home of the famous footballer, to pay their last respects. And it was especially heartbreaking for his wife Yesmin as the day was to be their 12th marriage anniversary.

Fans and football players cried in silence as Munna's body was carried out of the field where he often trained with the club's official flag flying at half-mast.

His body was then taken to the Bangabandhu National Stadium,

where he was cheered by thousands for two decades. But yesterday another thousand assembled on that green top only to say their final farewell to a great entertainer.

"It is painful to see (Monem) Munna bhai leave us so quickly. I have never seen such a dominant character on the field in any sport of the country," said cricketer Khaled Mahmud.

"I think Munna bhai was a rare player who could bring spectators to the ground with his sheer charisma," said national defender Hasan Al Mamun.

The death of Munna indeed closed a golden chapter in Bangladesh football that saw him being revered as a giant both in Dhaka and Calcutta leagues.

Munna never looked back once he was spotted playing for his school team Narayanganj that won the district football title in 1981.

A quick learner Munna, who was always known as a straight talker, made his national team debut at the age of 18 during the Seoul Asian Games in 1986. He led the national team to the Beijing Asian Games in 1990 and it was under his captaincy that Bangladesh won their first international trophy in the four-nation tournament in Myanmar in

1995. In the same year Bangladesh finished runners-up in the Madras SAF Games. No challenge was too great for a charismatic Munna, who captured the hearts and minds of Indian football fans during his three-year stint with Calcutta giants East Bengal in the 1991-93 season.

But the best of Munna was seen and talked about during his 12 glorious years with Abahani. He led the popular Sky Blues to lift the coveted Premier League title twice.

Having retired in 1997, the one time highest paid footballer of the country paid a heavy price for leading a 'could not care less' lifestyle. "It was impossible for Munna bhai to think of anything but football which finally took a heavy toll on his life. We always requested him after his operation not to take the pressure but like the man he was he always said: 'It is impossible for me to live without football,'" said midfielder Arman while reflecting on the headstrong character.

Munna was diagnosed with kidney related complications and underwent a transplant operation in Bangalore in January 2000 and returned to football in a different

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LEAVING FOR THE LAST TIME THE PLACE HE LOVED MOST: The coffin of Monem Munna (insert) is being carried out of the Abahani Club yesterday afternoon. Munna's first namaj-e-janaza was held at the club.



### Did U Know?

About 42,000 tennis balls are used in the plus-minus 650 matches in the Wimbledon Championship.



**Brett Lee**  
(Australian fast bowler)  
"I have not seen a problem with the way the Australian cricket team has been appealing and we only appeal when we think it should be out."  
While countering Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer's comments on umpiring decisions.

### What to WATCH

- ESPN**  
South Africa v England  
Seventh ODI  
Live at 2 PM  
English Premier League  
Man City v Man United  
Same day delay at 11 pm
- STAR Sports**  
Football Extra  
Live at 9 am  
Primera Liga  
Real Zaragoza v Barcelona  
Repeated at 10.30 am  
Indian Premier Hockey  
Hyderabad Sultans v Sher E Jalandhar  
Live at 8 pm  
Primera Liga  
Osasuna v Real Madrid  
Live at 12 am (Monday)

### Inzamam to visit India before tour

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq is scheduled to visit India for a commercial shoot and to offer prayers in Ajmer before the series begins, according to a report in the Times of India.

A spokesman for the company that looks after Inzamam's profile in India said, "This is a personal trip but Inzamam will be doing some commercial activities too. It has nothing to do with the coming India-Pakistan series."

Au contraire, it has everything to do with the series. TV watchers, prepare yourself for a barrage of commercials prominently featuring Inzamam. And if Doordarshan broadcasts the series, the popular shot will inevitably coincide with the first ball of every over.

### Venues beef up security

CRICINFO, undated

After a thwarted attempt to damage the pitch at Mohali, the Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) has beefed up security ahead of the tour by Pakistan.

IS Bindra, the head of the PCA, said that while the vandals' efforts had hurt the image of the stadium, the spruced up security would help it remain a "super and safe venue".

According to the Indian Express, the floodlights will be switched on every night, armed guards will patrol the pitch, and daily sabotage checks will be conducted by the police. In addition, foolproof entrance passes will be issued.

The six men who attempted to damage the pitch were arrested and identified as members of a political party known for its anti-Pakistan stance.

Following the incident, the Delhi and District Cricket Association spruced up security at the Ferozeshah Kotla Stadium as well.

## Dhaka, Khulna off to fliers



SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka and Khulna launched their one-day campaign of the Ispahani Sixth National Cricket League in style thrashing Sylhet and Barisal, but for holders Chittagong it was a near-miss against Rajshahi who pulled off a six-run victory at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

Dhaka strolled to a nine-wicket win against Sylhet at the Bangabandhu National Stadium while Khulna

handed Barisal a 130-run defeat at the Khulna Divisional Stadium.

Khulna's easy sail means full points for them after their four-wicket victory in the four-day match on Friday.

**DHAKA V SYLHET**  
Young left-arm paceman Ashraf Haq took four wickets to send Sylhet packing for 76 in 29.3 overs and the match as a contest was all but over.

The visitors might have showed a great fighting back against Dhaka in the drawn four-day match, but they fell like a pack of cards after Golam Rahman Himel, who hit the first first-

class hundred of the season, was dismissed for 25.

Himel and his elder brother Golam Mabub (15) put on 43 runs for the first wicket, but after that the scoreboard resembled a telephone number with three batsmen being dismissed for ducks. Alok Kapali scored a struggling 4 before becoming one of the four victims of man-of-the-match Ashraf.

Dhaka, in their chase, milked the required 77 in 15.4 overs with Al-Shahriar hitting 37 off 25 balls that included four boundaries and two towering sixes. Opener Javed Omar scored an unbeaten 23 off 53 balls.

**KHULNA V BARISAL**  
Mashrafe-Bin-Mortuza lived up to his fast growing reputation as an all-rounder in the making when the national paceman hit a quick-fire 30 and then took three wickets to fashion a massive win for Khulna.

Sent into bat, the home side scored a fighting 210 before being all out in 48 overs. The striking feature of the Khulna innings without their inspiration captain and Bangladesh skipper Habibur Bashar was that the bottom five fired after they lost five wickets for 61 runs. National left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak, who batted at number ten, clobbered 35 runs off only 20 deliveries that featured three fours and a six.

Mashrafe also hit a six in his 34-ball cameo.

But what the 'Narail' sensation had done with the new ball along with experienced left-arm paceman Monjurul Islam was devastating. Mashrafe dismissed both openers and Manjarul ripped through the middle-order as Barisal lost their first six batsmen with only seven runs on the board from where they never recovered.

**RAJSHAH V CHITTAGONG**

Chittagong suffered a disappointing six-run defeat against hosts Rajshahi despite a fine half-century from national discard Ehsanul Haq and combative innings by Aftab Ahmed.

Set to score 219 for victory, Chittagong recovered from a bumpy start with Ehsanul and Aftab putting on 73 runs for the third wicket. Ehsanul hit 55 off 68 balls that featured nine boundaries. Aftab struck 47 off 62 balls. But Chittagong eventually

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AS EASY AS THIS WALK: Dhaka's Al Shahriar (L) and Javed Omar leave the field after guiding their side to a comfortable win against Sylhet at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Vaughan eyes winning end



SPORTINGLIFE, undated

England captain Michael Vaughan turned his attention to leaving South Africa on the back of a win after rain at Kingsmead denied the chance of a share of the one-day series.

Victory at Centurion on Sunday will see the tourists close the gap to 3-2 in the best-of-seven tussle.

Despite leading 1-0 with two matches of the series gone, England were overhauled in the next three matches by a South Africa team which held its nerve to edge some close encounters.

But Vaughan believes the tourists, inspired by newcomers Kevin Pietersen and Kabir Ali and old hand Darren Gough, have shown enough to be hopeful of a second triumph.

"We have to try to go out on a positive, that is the goal we are now

aiming for," Vaughan said. "We have beaten a good South African side once and might have beaten them more than that."

"There were a lot of positives from the series. Every game apart from the one at Cape Town were closely contested, we found out a lot about a few players."

Success in Friday night's day-nighter was far from a formality given their precarious position and the potency of South Africa's new-ball pairing of Shaun Pollock and Makhaya Ntini.

"We knew it was going to be tricky because batting under lights here can be quite tough," admitted Vaughan. "But you only need one crucial partnership to get you home when you are chasing a target like that and I thought we had a reasonable chance."

"We were aware that the forecast was pretty iffy, you can't help the weather."

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## Rafique out for a month

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace spinner Mohammad Rafique will be out of action for at least one month after he aggravated a hamstring injury during the last day of the four-day National Cricket League between Dhaka and Sylhet at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Friday.

The veteran left-arter, who sustained the injury during the home series against Zimbabwe last month, missed the one-day match for Dhaka against Sylhet yesterday. Dhaka captain Khaled Mahmud informed that doctor advised Rafique to take one month rest.

## Wanderers' easy win

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka Wanderers Club earned a convincing 3-1 victory over Mukta Bihanga Tarun Sangha in the Green Delta First Division Hockey League at the Moulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first half by a solitary goal.

Sumon Ali, Imran Haider and Sabbir Hossain scored one each to help Wanderers take a 3-0 lead within 46 minutes while Mahfuzul Haq netted the consolation goal in the 60th minute.

Earlier, a minute's silence was observed to show respect to the memories of former national football captain Monem Munna who died in the morning.

## No cricket at 2006 Asiad

REUTERS, New Delhi

Cricket will not feature in next year's Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, as planned because participating nations were only prepared to field junior teams, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) said on Saturday.

"The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) said they can only have an under-19 competition and it was not possible to include cricket under these circumstances," OCA secretary-general Randhir Singh told reporters. "The OCA is firm we'll have only the best."

Asian Olympics officials announced last year that cricket was set to make its Asiad debut in 2006, with a six-nation event approved in principle.

Officials from cricket nations, however, said top players would not be available because of international commitments.

Cricket featured in the 1998

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## BAF volleyball

UNB, Dhaka

The inter-base volleyball competition of the Bangladesh Air Force began at the Base Zahurul Haque yesterday.

Base Commander Group Captain M Mashui Azam inaugurated the competition as chief guest.

In the opening match, the hosts defeated Air Headquarters 25-18, 25-18, 25-15.

A total of six teams are taking part in the five-day meet.

## Rain gives SA series early



AFP, Durban

Herschelle Gibbs hit a flawless century for South Africa before rain washed out the sixth limited-overs international against England at Kingsmead Friday.

Gibbs hit 118 in a South African total of 211 all out.

England, chasing an adjusted target of 213 in 48 overs, were seven for two when rain ended play with the abandoned match meaning South Africa, holding an unbeatable 3-1 lead, clinched the seven-match series.

Gibbs was alone among the South African batsmen in mastering a disciplined England bowling attack in a rain-interrupted innings. He was on 103 and South Africa were 180 for seven when rain stopped play for 1 hour 40 minutes.

The match was reduced to 48 overs a side so there were 5.2 overs remaining when play resumed. Gibbs went for his shots and hit another 15 off eight balls before being caught at long-on off the last ball of the 45th over.

The last two wickets fell quickly with only three more runs added as South Africa failed to bat out their revised quota of overs.

Medium-pace Alex Wharf, playing in his first match of the series, took three for 48 in nine overs.

But England's outstanding bowler was his new ball partner Darren Gough, who took two for 14 in nine overs.

Shaun Pollock and Makhaya Ntini both produced some hostile deliveries when England started their innings.

Pollock had Marcus Trescothick caught at second slip for one and Geraint Jones fell to Ntini when he

top-edged an attempted pull against Ntini to mid-on.

It raised the possibility of an intriguing contest but rain drove the players off the field before Andrew Strauss, the next batsman, faced a ball.

Wharf put South Africa under pressure early in the match when he dismissed top South African batsmen, skipper Graeme Smith and Jacques Kallis, with successive deliveries in his second over.

Gibbs came out on a hat-trick with only one run scored for two wickets in 3.2 overs but his timing was immaculate from the start on a pitch which gave the bowlers some help under a heavily overcast sky.

Gibbs shared half-century stands with Adam Bacher, Ashwell Prince and Mark Boucher as South Africa built a platform for the sort of late innings onslaught which have marked their performances since they lost the first match of the series.

But South Africa suffered three blows shortly before the rain.

Gibbs reached his 15th one-day international century off 122 balls when he pounded Kabir Ali through the covers off the back foot for his seven four.

He also hit a six and three more boundaries before his 133-ball innings was ended when he tried to hit Ali for a straight six.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the sixth one-day international between South Africa and England at Kingsmead on Friday:

SOUTH AFRICA	
Smith c Trescothick b Wharf	1
Bacher lbw b Ali	15
Kallis c Strauss b Wharf	0
Gibbs c Collingwood b Ali	118
Prince c Collingwood b Giles	27
Boucher c Ali b Wharf	24
Kemp c Strauss b Gough	0
Pollock lbw v Collingwood	0
Hall b Ali	10
Ntini c Strauss b Gough	0
Nel not out	2
Extras: (b-4, lb-4, nb-3, w-3)	14
Total: (All out in 46.3 overs)	211
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-1, 3-53, 4-114,	

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SWEEPING THE ENGLISH AWAY: South Africa's Herschelle Gibbs follows through on a copybook sweep shot on way to his century against England in the sixth one-day international at Durban on Friday.