

## MAMUN DOESN'T KNOW Asghar accepts resignation

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Ali Asghar yesterday accepted the resignation of joint-secretary and media committee chairman Reazuddin Al Mamun.

Mamun tendered his resignation on October 26 after feeling embarrassed at a sensational revelation that the board president had struck a 'secret' deal with Aston Moore over future sponsorship and TV rights.

"I have opened his (Mamun's) letter today (Thursday) and accepted his resignation. I've tried to change his mind but he was adamant to quit," Asghar told The Daily Star Sport over phone last night.

"We will discuss his possible replacement in the next board meeting that is likely to take place in the first week of December, said Asghar, who has been under pressure since The Daily Star ran a story of his undisclosed deal with Aston Moore last month.

Asghar's decision to accept Mamun's resignation gave a clear indication that the BNP lawmaker from Khulna survived a looming axe from the hot seat of the most affluent federation.

But the manner in which Asghar had shown the door to his 'beloved' advisor left a bad taste in the month.

While Mamun should have been the first person to get the news, Asghar disclosed it to a private television channel.

"I did not convey it to him (Mamun) that I had accepted his resignation. Actually, I have not spoken to him yet," said Asghar.

But the blatant remark evoked sharp criticism from Mamun.

"It's a shame that my president did not even bother to convey it to me personally. It hurts that I'm

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## Abahani, Mohammedan drawn together

### NFL now kicks off Nov 20

SPORTS REPORTER



NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Arch-rivals Abahani and Mohammedan were drawn in a 'Group of Death' along with last year's runners-up Mukti Joddha Sangsad in the final round of the Nitol-Tata National Football League.

The draw ceremony was held yesterday at Hotel Purbani amid fanfare but as soon as it was known that the three local heavyweights were lined up in Group B, faces became gloomy with thoughts of premature exits because none of the three teams have won a trophy this season.

The others teams in the group are Rangamati Mohammedan, billed as the strongest team among the six qualifiers, and Feni Soccer Club.

Defending champions Brothers Union head a relatively easy Group A with Bangladesh Army, Kacharipara Sporting Club of Jamalpur, Naba Nabin Shamabesh of Munshiganj and Khulna Town Club.

Although three teams from the same group have chances to qualify for the last four, it would be really difficult after a tough first-phase draw to stay in contention.

National team's Argentine coach Diego Cruciani pulled the first name

### GROUPS

**Group A:** Mukti Joddha Sangsad, Rangamati Mohammedan, Feni Soccer Club, Abahani and Mohammedan Sporting Club.  
**Group B:** Brothers Union, Kacharipara Sporting Club (Jamalpur), Naba Nabin Shamabesh (Munshiganj), Khulna Town Club and Bangladesh Army.

during the draw followed by former national footballers Azmat Ali, Sheikh Mohammed Aslam, Mohammed Mohsin, Salam Murshedi, renowned sports journalist Manzurul Haque actors Tony Dais and Priya Dais and model Lisa.

The finals of the fifth edition of the NFL, however, will start in Khulna on November 20 instead of 16 as the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has yet to confirm live telecast of the matches to be played outside Dhaka.

Tournament committee chairman Abdul Matlub told a press conference that they were confident that Bangladesh Television would reverse its decision and like the past, the matches will be telecast live from Khulna (Nov 20-24), Rangpur (Nov 30-Dec 4), Chandpur (Dec 9-13) and Cox's Bazar (Dec 19-23).

"Live telecast of the National

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## Bashar staying back at MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

Doubts over Habibul Bashar's switching teams for the coming Premier Cricket League was over when Mohammedan Sporting Club confirmed the services of the national cricket captain yesterday.

Bashar had a successful negotiation with his old club, which cancelled rumours about his moving to archrivals Abahani.

"I wanted to stay at Mohammedan and I made some demands. My club has fulfilled them," Bashar told reporters yesterday.

### BCCI AGM Nov 29-30

CRICINFO, undated

The adjourned annual general meeting of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will be held in Kolkata on November 29 and 30, SK Nair, secretary of the board, announced in Thiruvananthapuram.

Nair said the board has already sent out the notice for the meeting to all members and affiliated units.

The dates were decided after

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Aftab Ahmed, who took three wickets, of Gazi Tanks follows through on a delivery during their GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League clash against Araf Apparels at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on Thursday. He also scored 26.

PHOTO: STAR

## 7th Indo-Lanka ODI insured for Rs 7.45 cr

PTI, Vadodara

The seventh and final one-day international of the current cricket series between India and Sri Lanka, scheduled to be held at the IPLC ground here on November 12, has been insured to the tune of 7.45 crore rupees.

Disclosing this at a media conference, Baroda Cricket Association (BCA) president, Chirayu Amin, said the insurance cover would encompass all the aspects of staging the match, including public liability.

Amin also said the BCA was installing a giant 20 by 27 feet LCD screen at the venue for the convenience of the spectators who could watch instant replays, match summaries, scores, statistics etc on it.

Amin also said that for the first time the media centre and dressing rooms of both the teams would have wireless technology installed for computer networking.

## BSJA condoles death of Enayetullah Khan

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA) yesterday condoled the death of eminent journalist AZM Enayetullah Khan, who was also the founding president of BSJA.

The BSJA also expressed its sympathy with the bereaved family and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul. Enayetullah Khan, who was 66, died of cancer in Toronto yesterday.

Enayetullah, who was president of BSJA from 1977 to 1984, was also a sports organiser and his tireless efforts gave birth to the organisation. He was also the cricket captain of BSJA.

## Vaughan out of first Test

AFP, Multan

Injured England captain Michael Vaughan has been ruled out of the first Test against Pakistan in Multan and opener Marcus Trescothick will lead the side, England cricket officials said Thursday.

"The England medical team confirmed Thursday that Michael Vaughan will miss the first Test in Multan starting Saturday due to a knee injury," an England and Wales Cricket Board statement said.

Vaughan will continue to receive treatment and further updates on his progress will be released, said the statement, which was given to media at a press conference in the central Pakistani city.

"The England and Wales Cricket Board have appointed Marcus Trescothick as captain for the first Test and he will continue to lead in case Vaughan misses any further matches," it added.

Trescothick described the loss of Vaughan as a "major blow" but vowed to perform well in the first Test.

"To lose him for the first Test is a major blow but we can take strength from the fact that we have played some outstanding cricket over the past 18 months and we are all up for the challenge on Saturday," the statement quoted Trescothick as saying.



Star of yesteryear Salam Murshedi displays the name of a club during the draw of the final round of Nitol-Tata Fifth National Football League on Thursday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Vaughan or no Vaughan

Cricket

AFP, Multan

England are hoping to bounce back from their woeful build-up to the first Test against Pakistan in Multan starting on Saturday -- whether or not injured skipper Michael Vaughan is playing.

Vaughan is said to be very doubtful for the Test and could even be out of the whole series after twisting his right knee in their warm-up match in Lahore on Monday.

In the same game the tourists -- who had come to Pakistan on a high after their historic 2-1 Ashes win over Australia in September -- suffered an embarrassing six-wicket defeat at the hands of Pakistan A.

"It's not ideal. But we have quality players and have faced such situations before and I hope they can lift their intensity to the level required for Tests," England coach Duncan Fletcher said on

Wednesday.

If Vaughan is ruled out, veteran opener Marcus Trescothick will most likely take over as captain, a repeat of their last year's Lord's Test against New Zealand when Vaughan hurt the same knee.

England successfully lifted their spirits to win successive home series against New Zealand and the West Indies and then beat South Africa away from home in 2004 -- after also losing to South Africa A.

They then polished off a hapless Bangladesh 2-0 and snatched back the Ashes from Australia after a gap of 18 years.

The winning streak helped England reach number two in the world Test rankings after years in the doldrums. They can seize the top spot if they win in Pakistan and then in India early next year.

But the wheels came off England's bandwagon as soon as they reached Pakistan, with their top order batsmen

flopping in both the side matches.

Even in their 52-run win in the tour opener at Rawalpindi, Vaughan, opener Andrew Strauss, Kevin Pietersen and Ian Bell performed poorly.

Trescothick, who hit an unbeaten 124 in the first match, failed twice in the second.

"We would have liked a few more overs for our batters but they are quality players and I hope they put up their best in the Tests," said Fletcher.

To exploit their rivals' misery, Pakistan have so far kept secret whether they will go with two leg-spinners or with three seamers.

But the home side will themselves miss Abdul Razzaq's all-round skills after he was ruled out of the first Test due to an elbow injury.

"We have yet to decide on a combination and a final team will be decided only after seeing the pitch on Friday," said captain Inzamamul Haq, whose side plays its third Test at the venue.

## Wanna be a Flintoff

Cricket

REUTERS, multan

Flamboyant all-rounder Shahid Afridi is keen to emulate Andrew Flintoff and play a decisive role for Pakistan in the Test series against England.

"Flintoff is a fantastic performer and made great contributions to the England team in the last year. I am hoping to match his feats in this series," Afridi told Reuters on Thursday.

The 25-year-old made his debut for Pakistan at 16 and holds the record for the fastest one-day century scored off 37 balls in Nairobi against Sri Lanka in 1997. He said he now wanted to estab-

lish himself as a permanent member of Pakistan's Test squad.

"I have played just 19 Tests all these years and it does not satisfy me as a professional. Flintoff is someone who



SHAHID AFRIDI

has made impressive progress with bat and ball and is now a certain selection in England Test and one-day squads. I want to be like him."

Afridi has scored 1,198 runs and taken 35 wickets in his 19 Tests. Flintoff has scored 2,691 runs and taken 150

wickets in 53 Tests for England.

Afridi who also holds the record for scoring the second fastest hundred in one-day internationals, said he was more comfortable batting at the number six position in Test matches.

"I feel more relaxed at that position but if my team needs me to open and there is a crisis of openers than I have no choice but to say yes," he said.

Afridi has been tried several times as an opener in Test cricket with some limited success but on Pakistan's last series in the West Indies in May he scored a hundred in Barbados in the middle order.

The dashing batsman is also expected to bat lower down the order in the first Test against England in Multan starting on Saturday.

Afridi said he had been working very hard on his bowling in the nets as he felt he could play an important role in the coming series with his fastish leg-spinners.

"I think the pitches in this series especially the one in Multan are going to suit my style of bowling as there is going to be bounce in the these tracks," he added.

## Gazi Tanks, Epyllion almost through

SPORTS REPORTER



GrameenPhone CORPORATE CRICKET LEAGUE

Gazi Tanks and Epyllion Group looked set to form the semi-final line-ups from Group B when they won their respective matches of the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League on Thursday.

In another match, fancied Beximco also shrugged off a lowly Metro Real Estate to join Bangladesh Biman at the top of Group A table.

Gazi Tanks rode on a gutsy unbeaten 37 by former national captain Khaled Mahmud to post an exciting three-wicket win against Araf Apparels

at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Epyllion scored a comprehensive 70-run victory over Security Air Express at the BKSP ground in Savar. Both the winners are now leading the Group B table with seven points each from four games.

The defeat for Araf on the other hand dashed the apparel giant's hopes for advancing into the last four.

Beximco blew away Metro Real Estate by 107 runs at the Fatullah Stadium on a day where the ball dominated over bat. Beximco's 213 was the highest innings total while Security Air had the misfortune of scoring the lowest 82 on the day. Interestingly, there were only two half-centuries

scored in three games with Shamsur Rahman notching highest 60 -- more than one third of Epyllion's total of 152.

Mehrab Hossain Jr (50 off 62 balls) was the other half-century for Beximco.

### GAZITANKS-ARAF

Araf Apparels gave away a solid start when they were bundled out for 202 in 46.4 overs after they were comfortably placed at 114-2 after being put into bat. Aftab Ahmed, coming in as second change, dismissed opener Ehsanul H a q u e

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## Security up in Multan

Cricket

AFP/REUTERS, Multan

Pakistan will deploy 3,000 policemen and a team of sniffer dogs to ensure tight security for England's cricketers during the first Test in Multan.

Multan in southern Pakistan is the hometown of captain Inzamamul Haq

and England are playing at the stadium for the first time.

Uniformed and plainclothes police officers will cordon off the Multan Cricket Stadium in the central city -- where a car bomb killed 40 people in October 2004 -- for all five days of the game, which starts Saturday.

"We have made arrangements for tight security round the clock," Munir

Ahmed Chishtie, head of Multan's police security team, told reporters.

England agreed to the tour only after the Pakistani government assured them a level of security normally only reserved for heads of state. Even then they refused to play a Test in the volatile southern city of Karachi.

Michael Vaughan's men arrived in Multan on Wednesday morning but had to wait for a practice session at the stadium until the sniffer dogs and security personnel had given the ground the all-clear.

"We don't want to take any risks. These dogs will sniff the whole stadium before play starts on every day of the Test," Chishtie said.

"We will do it again on each day of the match as we don't want to take any risks at all," Multan district police officer, Munir Ahmed told Reuters.

The road to the team's five-star hotel will be blocked for ordinary traffic until they leave the city.

A number of foreign teams have refused to tour Pakistan because of security concerns following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States and the invasion of neighbouring Afghanistan.

Australia and the West Indies refused to play a series in Pakistan over security fears and the home team was forced to play both series on neutral venues in 2002.

New Zealand, who cancelled their Pakistan tour a week after September 11, had to cut short their revised tour after a bomb outside their team hotel in Karachi left 14 people dead, including 11 French naval staff, in May 2002.

Since then South Africa and New Zealand refused to play at all in the southern port city. India agreed only to a one-day match last year on their first tour to Pakistan since 1989.

Pakistani cricket authorities hope the country's image will improve after hosting England, the first non-Asian team to play a full series in the country for five years.

Around 600 policemen were also deployed for the three-day tour match played at the Bagh-e-Jinnah ground earlier this week.



Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq bats in the nets during a practice session at Multan on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP



## Did U Know?

The only German player to have headed a goal in a World Cup final match is Rudi Voller.



### Roy Keane

(Manchester United captain)  
"Just because you are paid 120,000 pounds a week and play well for 20 minutes against Tottenham, you think you are a superstar."  
On Rio Ferdinand.

**DAY'S EVENT**

GP Corporate Cricket League  
Ispahani v Epyllion  
Venue: FCS  
Metro Real Estate v Orion Group  
Venue: JHG  
Biman v Acme  
Venue: BKSP

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

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