

## A cruel Friday afternoon



SPORTS REPORTER

Manzarul Islam Rana scored an unbeaten 89 and took two wickets for Boyra Tarun Club against Flying Pigeon Club to become man-of-the-match in the BCB Challenge Club Cup Cricket tournament at the Bir Shreshtha flight Lt Matur Rahman Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

It would have been better had the story finished here. But sorry to say, a new episode has to be written sooner than any one had thought on the ever-smiling cricketer who made the record books for all the wrong reasons—as the youngest Test cricketer to die.

While returning from the ground a tragic road accident took him and fellow cricketer Sajjadul Islam Setu from us on a cruel Friday afternoon, a day after Rana had completed his last first-class game in Dhaka where he captured four wickets on the final day and travelled in the night to attend another cricket match in his hometown.

Although the whole country was gripped by the Tigers' first World Cup match against India, nobody in the sports fraternity could even think of anyone but Rana and his demise when the news broke late in the afternoon.

The reaction prompted by his death has shown how respected

the left-arm spinner and a useful batter was as a cricketer, but more due to his demeanour as a human being. It is nobody's doubt that he was an exceptionally talented cricketer who had a whole life of magnificent cricket ahead of him. His effort to get back to the national side will serve as an example.

Everyone who have played cricket with this affable character from the south will tell you that he was the heart and soul of the team. Be it Bangladesh or a local club side, Manzar Rana has made sure every member of the side, young and old, was made to feel comfortable.

And it was understandable how distressed his teammates in the Caribbean were after hearing the tragic news early in the morning. For them, Rana was more than just a teammate. For the Tigers, he made life easy at the highest level of cricket, more so on tours where they all lived and ate together for months.

Camping at BKSP, he would make sure that the players understood the foreign coach's instructions properly if they struggled to comprehend the language.

Popularly known as 'bhabhi' because of his amiable attitude

towards others, he touched the hearts of everyone, regardless of age or status.

The people who knew him not just as a cricketer but also as a regular person, would miss his hearty and caring greetings and warm smile: 'Bhaijaan, kemon asen?' (Brother, how are you?).

Cricketers will come and go but his memory would stay fresh for generations to come. Leading a simple life, he was very loyal to his family and had a deep connection with local cricketers in Khulna and surrounding areas. Nobody would go back empty-handed or with an empty-stomach after they had returned from Rana bhai's house.

It would also be hard to believe that he would not return to play for his club Abahani, having seen them finish atop the Dhaka Premiership table at the end of the first leg. When the national cricketers would return from the World Cup to line up for the rest of that league, they will certainly miss the warmth he would have guaranteed.

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### Batting and fielding averages

	Mat	Inns	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50
Tests	6	11	1	257	69	25.70	0	1
ODIs	25	21	5	331	63	20.68	0	1
First-class	46	80	12	2466	151	36.26	4	8

### Bowling averages

	Mat	Balls	Runs	Wkts	BBI	BBM	Ave	Econ
Tests	6	749	401	5	3/84	3/84	80.20	3.21
ODIs	25	996	689	23	4/34	4/34	29.95	4.15
First-class	46	8164	3299	127	7/82	-	25.97	2.42



PHOTO: STAR FILE

**LAST BOW OF A TIGER:** After his brilliant all-round show that gave Bangladesh A their only victory against visiting England A on March 11, Manzarul Islam Rana (2nd L) leaves the ground in national colours for the last time at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.



### Dwayne Smith

(West Indies all-rounder)

"I'm always confident in myself and I don't worry too much about what people say. I just go out there and do my job, and do it to the best of my ability."

Replying to his detractors.

AFP, Basseterre



Australia at the 1999 World Cup.

Gibbs caught Steve Waugh in a Super Six match at Headingley when the Australian skipper had made 56 but the ball slipped out of his hands as he started to celebrate.

Waugh was off the hook and he went on to make a match-winning 120.

"People still ask me about that drop' to Steve Waugh in the 1999 World Cup. The truth is, it doesn't haunt me as I've been chirped about it for a long time," said Gibbs who is about to begin his third World Cup.

Australia won that match by five wickets and then went to become

champions after they tied their semifinal against South Africa but were declared the winners on count back.

"I still remember the Super Six match very well because I got a really good hundred. But losing that game set up the most exciting game of all, one of the most exciting games in any World Cup.

"Everybody remembers that semifinal and what a cracker of a game it was."

South Africa have endured a traumatic relationship with the World Cup.

In 1992, they lost a semifinal to England after the rain rules conspired to defeat them while the rain returned to condemn them to another defeat on home soil against Sri Lanka in 2003.

"Hopefully this World Cup is going to be third time lucky for me," Gibbs told www.bigstarcricicket.com.

"We've come here with a lot of confidence, a lot of belief and with a bit of luck I think we can maybe turn the corner this time. We'll keep our

fingers crossed."

Gibbs believes that South Africa will not buckle under the pressure of being the new world number one team having deposed world champions Australia from the top spot.

"It's nice to come to the World Cup as the world's top one-day team," said Gibbs who has amassed 6,356 one-day runs in 198 matches with 16 centuries.

"Reaching number one was something we have worked towards in the last two years and it's quite flattering and complimentary for all the hard work we have put in over the last couple of years.

"We've basically had the same squad and although it's just a position it means that all our efforts have been rewarded with the number one ranking.

"However, although it's good for confidence, coming into a tournament like this it means nothing because it is such a wide-open World Cup this time and everybody's got a crack at it."

## Tigers mourn the death of Rana

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Port-of-Spain

Bangladesh have named 12 players for their Cricket World Cup opener against India today in Trinidad.

Opener Javed Omer, batsman Rajin Saleh and fast bowler Shahadat Hossain Rajib have been left out of the side.

The team trained yesterday afternoon at the Queen's Park Oval, the venue for the Group B match. It was the Tigers' first practice session here at the Oval.

The day, however, began on a sombre note for the Tigers with the news of Manzarul Islam Rana's death in a road accident back home.

"It is a terribly distressing news and we don't have words to express our shock and grief. The players are absolutely stunned. Our heart goes out to Rana's family and may the Almighty grant his soul eternal peace," said Bangladesh skipper Habibul Bashar.

"If we do something good in this

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## Hodge stays positive

AFP, Basseterre



team despite the imminent return of big-hitting Andrew Symonds.

"Sitting at the back of my mind, I am batting in Symonds' position, and he's just been named as one of Australia's all-time greatest players in one-day cricket," said Hodge.

"If I bowl well, I can keep my place."

Symonds is expected to be pushing for a recall to the world champions' starting line-up for the next Group A game against the Netherlands on Sunday after recovering from arm surgery.

But in Symonds's absence, Hodge impressed in the 203-run win over Scotland, hitting a breezy

## 'A tough game'

AFP, Kingston



match on Saturday at Sabina Park.

After losing the World Cup opener to hosts West Indies on Tuesday, Pakistan need to win this match and their final contest against Zimbabwe on Wednesday to guarantee a place in the Super Eights.

They may have considered the Irish pushovers, but the ICC Associate side showed great fighting qualities to tie their opening match with Zimbabwe on Thursday.

"Our game against Ireland will be a tough one as they have proved that they are one of the best equipped of the Associate sides and are very keen and well-organised," said Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer who has refused to panic over the opening loss to West Indies.

"The opening match of the World Cup was the type of game we can expect from all the sides here.

"It was a tough game. In the end, West Indies deserved to win. I had wondered, before the game, if the pressure of the occasion might get to them. I had also wondered if the occasion would spur them on to greater deeds. The wondering is now over."

Woolmer has admitted that

Pakistan's batting was disappointing against the West Indies.

"But it's too early to talk about being in tight corners," he said.

"Let's make sure we remain positive for the rest of the tournament."

Pakistan are considering opening the batting with Kamran Akmal allowing Mohammad Hafeez to drop down the order, and Mohammad Sami may also take the place of Navedul Hasan in the starting eleven.

Saturday is St. Patrick's Day, the perfect platform for Trent Johnston and his side cause an upset.

Johnston believes his side can compete and even upset Pakistan if they can improve on their performance against Zimbabwe.

"If we bowl well up front against Pakistan, and if we bat well, we could be competitive," he said.

"We will get out there and give it everything that we've got. If we're going to beat Pakistan we'll have to play out of our skins, and give it 120 per cent.

"We're going to get out there and fight hard. Who knows what is possible? We beat the West Indies a few years ago, so anything is possible in sports.

"We have to play for 100 overs if we're going to beat Pakistan and do the same against West Indies. We will have to bring our A-game to all three disciplines."

The last time Pakistan played an ICC Associate side in a World Cup

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**BTV & SET Max**

ICC World Cup 2007

India v Bangladesh

Live at 7:30 pm

Pakistan v Ireland

Live at 8:30 pm

**ESPN**

English Premier Football League

Man United v Bolton Wanderers

Live at 6:40 pm

Chelsea v Sheffield United

Live at 8:55 pm

**STAR Sports**

English Premier Football League

Reading v Portsmouth

Live at 8:55 pm

Blackburn Rovers v West Ham

Live at 11:10 pm

Primera Liga

De Huelva v Barcelona

Live at 1:30 am (Sunday)

**DAY'S EVENT**

B. League

Muktijoddha v Mohammedan (5:00 pm)

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium



PHOTO: AFP

New Zealand all-rounder Jacob Oram (2nd L) celebrates with teammates after snaring the wicket of England batsman Ian Bell during their Group C encounter at the Beausejour cricket ground in St. Lucia on Friday.

## Dhaka giants out to repair damage



SPORTS REPORTER

The spotlight of the B. League third round will be on today's mouth-watering Dhaka derby between Muktijoddha and Mohammedan at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Both the heavyweights have wounds to heal after dropping points and must lift their game to stay in the race.

Despite having a score of national players, Muktijoddha have had not justified their strength on paper, having drawn the opener. The next round was worse as the Reds are still smarting from a solitary goal loss away to Chittagong Mohammedan.

Abu Yusuf's boys will be looking forward to win their first game but

are expected be without Ghanain defender Ghansah, who has yet to recover from an injury. They however, will be boosted by the return of Arman Aziz, the national holding midfielder who will be available after passing a one-match ban due to a red card against Abahani.

Mohammedan began with full

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**TODAY'S MATCHES**

Team	Time	Venue
India v Bangladesh	7:30 pm	Trinidad & Tobago
Pakistan v Ireland	8:30 pm	Jamaica

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