

## Pilot goes, in pain though

Cricket

MOHAMMAD ISAM

Khaled Mashud had a few regrets after he announced his retirement from international cricket yesterday.

The long-serving wicketkeeper, who played 44 Tests and 126 one-day matches, informed Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) of his intentions through a letter at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium headquarters in Mirpur.

"I have considered this long and hard and only came to a decision after the 24-man (preliminary) squad was announced last week," said the former national captain.

"I decided to retire after I had a talk with my father and mother, and although it is a very sad day for me, I will remain part of this country's cricket," added the man popularly known by his nickname Pilot.

Mashud regretted the communication gap between him and the selectors and said that having such distance is never healthy.

"I am a senior player and I think there should be an understanding with the selection committee. They could have talked with me," said Mashud.

"I was never in their [selectors] plans and when I saw their pick for the New Zealand series, I kind of had the idea that I would not be in their plans in the near future."

"I do have a few regrets and one of them is definitely this lack of communication from the selectors. Ian Healy once told me that the Australian board informed him a month in hand that he would not be around."

"I think if that practice was undertaken by our board, it would be a little painless for senior cricketers like me," said Mashud, the man who rescued Bangladesh from numerous batting debacles during his time.

FACT BOX										
Full name: Khaled Mashud (right-hand bat, wicketkeeper)										
Born: February 8, 1976, Rajshahi										
Major teams: Bangladesh, Rajshahi										
Mat	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50	Ct	St		
Tests	44	10	1409	103*	19.1	1	3	78	9	
ODIs	126	27	1818	71*	21.9	0	7	91	35	



### Five of his best

Long considered a back-to-the-wall specialist, Khaled Mashud's first significant contribution for Bangladesh was an innings that consisted of two sixes. As the years went on, his contributions became crucial for Bangladesh's survival in those early days of top-order wobbles. Here's a look at some of his best performances.

**15<sup>th</sup> v Kenya in ICC Trophy final, Kuala Lumpur, 1997**  
Perhaps the most important and much-celebrated six in the history of Bangladesh cricket came in this seven-ball knock. He smashed Martin Suji straight over his head, sparking mass hysteria in the country where people followed the game from Kuala Lumpur through radio commentary.

**51 v England in Dhaka, 2003**  
As it happened in those early years of Test cricket, the Tigers were up

He captained Bangladesh in 12 Tests and 30 ODIs between 2001 and 2004 and although he regards it an honour to lead the national cricket team, his favourite memory dates back to April 13, 1997.

"Whoever I am is because of that ICC Trophy final (in Kuala Lumpur). There would be no Khaled Mashud or Mohammad Ashraful if we didn't win that match."

"It was the turning point and we united Bangladesh with that win," said the man who took the last-ball leg-bye with Hasibul Hossain.

Mashud however denied reports that he initiated talks with the board of a possible final appearance for the Tigers.

"I read in a few papers that I asked the board for a game. I cannot do that since I am a professional cricketer," clarified Mashud. "I know that only the best performers play for the country and I would never tell the board to bring me in just for a farewell match. I did not play cricket for so long to beg for a match," said Mashud.

"People in the street ask me when I will be back for Bangladesh and I had no answer for them. In such a difficult time for our cricket, I thought it would have been quite a challenge to play again."

Mashud's trouble started when he was left out of the World Cup squad in 2007 and only played a single Test match since then.

"It was a hard time for me since then and I tried my best to make a comeback. They told me that my batting was failing me, so I concentrated on that."

"Then they told me that I didn't keep regularly in the National Cricket League. Is it a crime to not keep for 3-4 matches in an entire season?" asked Mashud.

For all his regrets, Mashud had been an integral part of the national setup for almost thirteen years and understands that he has a lot to give to the next generation.

"I have toured continuously for so



Spanish driver Fernando Alonso (C) of Renault takes the lead on the first corner of the Singapore Grand Prix on Sunday. The Spaniard won Formula One's first ever night race.

## Shakib's twin targets

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

"We can even win a match in the series," he hoped.

Shakib, who has a rare 30-plus average as a batsman and 50 ODI wickets in 51 appearances, how-

ever, stated a pre-condition: "We must bat up to our potential to put behind a series of bad performances."

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### Did U Know?

The English Premier League was recently promoted to the top of the UEFA rankings of European leagues based on their performances in European competitions over a five-year period. This broke the eight-year dominance of the Spanish League, La Liga.



**Kaka**  
(AC Milan's Brazilian superstar)  
"He's a player for the future and the present. If he stays fit, I think he'll play all season long."  
On fellow Brazilian club-mate Pató.

### BFF preparing disciplinary code

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is drafting a disciplinary code for its affiliated bodies, informed B. League manager Abu Nayeem Sohag yesterday.

"The code is titled 'BFF Disciplinary Code' for the federation's approved clubs, players, officials and all persons related to football in line with the FIFA Standard Disciplinary Code," said Sohag, who is also involved in preparing the code.

BFF's all disciplinary actions in the future will base on the code once it is approved by the BFF

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## 'Brendon to bat at No. 5'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

New Zealand's captain Daniel Vettori wants wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum to bat at number 5 to bolster an inexperienced top-order in the upcoming Tests against Bangladesh and Australia.

McCullum, who was usually used at No. 7 or No. 8 positions, was pushed up the order during the Tests against England earlier this year.

"Without Brendon in there, all of the top six apart from Jamie How, have played fewer than 10 Tests. And Jamie's only played a handful more," Vettori told the Sunday Star Times.

"We need Brendon there for his capability but also for his experience. Brendon's the sort of guy



Shakib Al Hasan pulls one over mid-wicket during a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

who'd like to bat as high up the order as possible. He's probably not happy about languishing at No. 5. But it's important he's in the mix because we've got such an inexperienced top-order."



BRENDON McCULLUM

Vettori said the other benefits of McCullum at No. 5 were that it will ease the pressure on all-rounder Jacob Oram and allow Daniel Flynn to settle in at No. 6.

Vettori also suggested that Jesse Ryder, who had an impressive start to his international career before injuring himself in an incident at a Christchurch bar, was likely to make his Test debut.

"I think there's good reason to be optimistic when you think about a middle-order that might include [Ross] Taylor, Ryder, Baz [McCullum] and [Jacob] Oram," he said.

"But it's also important to have strength in the supporting areas, and especially at the top of the innings. It would be good if Jamie [How] and Aaron Redmond can make the most of their chances."

New Zealand leave for Bangladesh on Tuesday for two Tests and three one-day internationals.

## Fitting farewell awaits Mashud

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) operations committee chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain called the career of Khaled Mashud 'a remarkable achievement'.

Mashud met Ashraf yesterday morning at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium headquarters in Mirpur and informed BCB of his retirement in a letter that was accepted by the board.

"His dedication will become symbolic for future generations. His achievements were outstanding," said the former national captain.

Ashraf quashed reports that Mashud was not in any negotiations with BCB for a possible last game for the Tigers.

"He met me and clearly told me that he wanted no favours from us. As a captain he would have demanded the best team for Bangladesh and he still does," said Ashraf.

Ashraf also informed that efforts are underway to give him a fitting farewell.

"We are thinking of giving him an appropriate farewell, most probably during the upcoming New Zealand series," said Ashraf.

The board will also hold a press conference for Mashud at the Mirpur venue today.

## 'Be professional'

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has urged the footballers to show professionalism in the coming days.

The National Team Management Committee (NTMC) officials yesterday conveyed this message to the booters of the national camp at BKSP.

All the six members of the NTMC including chairman Badal Roy visited the Savar sports institute to watch the preliminary squad's training as part of preparation for next month's Merdeka Cup in Malaysia.

Badal Roy, also the vice-president of BFF, told BKSP that their visit was to inspire the national team.

"Although they know about our plans to improve their facilities, we have clearly stated what we are going to do for them," Badal told over phone.

## Alonso ends drought

AFP, Singapore



Spain's Fernando Alonso snapped a year-long win drought to take the Singapore Grand Prix Sunday, winning a drama-filled first ever night race as a comical error cost Felipe Massa dearly.

It was the Renault driver's first victory since the Italian Grand Prix last year and capped a remarkable weekend that saw him top two of the free practice sessions but start 15th on the grid after a mechanical problem in qualifying.

He claimed his 20th career triumph by 2.95 seconds over Germany's Nico Rosberg in a Williams and Britain's world championship leader Lewis Hamilton in third.

Toyota driver Timo Glock was fourth with Toro Rosso's Sebastian Vettel following up his win in Italy this month with fifth. BMW Sauber's Nick Heidfeld took sixth.

The race was a new experience for every driver on a street circuit under powerful spotlights and it turned out to be one of the most exciting of the season.

Despite dark clouds lurking, Singapore's notorious tropical downpours stayed away and the whole race was run in dry, hot and humid conditions.

Ferrari's Massa started from pole but a disastrous mistake cost him the race and valuable points in

his push for the world title.

His 13th place finish means he is now seven points behind Hamilton in the championship hunt with just three Grand Prix left at Japan, China and Brazil.

The Brazilian was in the pits on lap 15 when he was given the green light and drove off with the fuel hose still attached to his car, leaving one of the pit crew floored and subsequently carted off in a neck brace.

Massa ended up sitting in his Ferrari at the end of the pit lane as the crew ran after him and managed to pull the hose free, but it ruined his chances. He was given a drive through penalty and rejoined in 18th place.

It was a miserable night for Ferrari with defending world champion Kimi Raikkonen ramming his car into the barriers with just four laps to go, ending his race.

The Massa drama occurred after the cars came in when Nelson Piquet careered into the wall on the exit from turn 17, bouncing into the barriers on the other side of the track, causing massive damage to his Renault.

He climbed out unscathed but the safety car was deployed.

Massa was leading at the time with Hamilton second but at the restart, Rosberg was in front followed by Jarno Trulli and Giancarlo Fisichella, with Robert Kubica fourth and Alonso fifth.

Hamilton was ninth, but

Rosberg and Kubica were subsequently slapped with a 10-second stop penalty for coming into the pits after the Piquet crash before it had opened.

The complicated scenario saw Toyota's Trulli in the lead on lap 28 but without having pitted with Alonso second, Rosberg third and Hamilton charging in sixth.

With Trulli taking his first pit stop soon after Alonso, who started from 15th on the grid, amazingly found himself in front just after the halfway mark with a 4.9 second lead over Rosberg.

Alonso came in for his second pit stop on lap 41 and came out still in the lead, marginally ahead of David Coulthard and Hamilton.

Remarkably, when Coulthard pitted soon after he too drove off with the fuel pipe attached, knocking over a mechanic who was stretched over with an injured ankle, dropping the Scotsman to ninth.

There was more action to come. Alonso was cruising with a 23 second lead when Adrian Sutil shunted his Force India into the wall, bringing the safety car out again and wiping out the Spaniard's advantage.

When they restarted with seven laps left it was a sprint to the finish and two-time world champion Alonso made no mistake, writing his name in the record books as the first winner of a Formula One night race.

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