

## Rokibul quits cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Rokibul Hasan, the Bangladesh batsman, has taken the shocking decision of retiring from all forms of cricket.

Rokibul's snap decision was so unexpected, that even his own family members were shocked, along with the cricketing fraternity. His father and brother tried to persuade him to change his decision but he remained adamant.

Till the filing of this report, it was known that Rokibul was on his way back to Dhaka. The Daily Star made several attempts to contact Rokibul but it proved futile as the batsman was unreachable.

But BCB director Jalal Yunus confirmed that Rokibul submitted his resignation letter to team operations manager Shafiqul Haque Heera, who faxed it to the board office in Mirpur. The drama took its first

turn yesterday morning when the 22-year-old Rokibul stunned the entire team in the bus where he suddenly announced that he will retire from all forms of cricket and will 'never play again'.



ROKIBUL HASAN

According to team sources, it shocked the entire squad who tried to talk reason into him. But Rokibul maintained his stance and also refused to elaborate. He also informed

chief selector Rafiqul Alam of his retirement. Rafiqul asked him the reasons of his decision but Rokibul said it was 'personal'.

After informing the Tigers, Rokibul called his Jamalpur home where he talked to his elder brother Shafiqul Islam.

"He (Rokibul) called me and said that he has quit the national team and was going to Dhaka," said Shafiqul when contacted over the phone.

"He told us that he has told the captain and the coach of his but I told him not to take such a reckless decision.

"We know that he is someone who always makes the right call but this (retirement) has shocked us all at home," said Shafiqul, a service-holder in Jamalpur.

According to Shafiqul, his brother had recently expressed dissatisfaction with the way he was treated by the team management in the last two months. "After returning from New Zealand, he told me that he was just taken there

but made to sit out the Test matches," said Shafiqul.

"He told me that he was in form but wasn't scoring enough runs. 'Maybe that was my only fault' he said," added Shafiqul.

The team sources confirmed a similar pattern of behaviour. Rokibul implied that he was willing to 'teach the selectors a lesson' after he was unceremoniously axed from the national team for the England ODIs. The team management including the selectors were culprits in his eyes.

The board did not accept a team with Rokibul in it when the selectors named him in the 14-man squad for the England ODIs. That had him cut out of the Tigers side and he was forced to play a practice game against England. He slammed an unbeaten 107 and a fifty to force his way back into the Test series and according to some close to him, he was positive in his talk.



PHOTO: STAR

SWEETER THAN MANY-THING ELSE: Rajshahi skipper Khaled Mashud kisses the National Cricket League trophy after they drew the final with Chittagong on the fifth and last day of the match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

## Tigers, England hard at work

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Ctg

The Tigers and England started practicing yesterday, readying to face each other in the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium here from tomorrow. The Tigers landed in the port city on Tuesday night and practiced at the venue for two hours in the morning while the English side had a session in the afternoon.

Tigers coach Jamie Siddons sees the recent performances of his team as improving and said that the performances are much more important than the results.

"Now we will play till the last days of the Test which is a good start for us and it is not just costing games but we also putting up a fight now," he said adding that each game and challenge is different.

Siddons hinted that Bangladesh would go into the game with three spinners. Abdur Razzak and Shakib al Hasan will be the first choice bowlers with Mahmudullah Riyad offering some variation with his off-spin. The three have troubled England considerably in the ODI series and will look to continue the same in the Test matches. Shafiqul Islam and Rubel Hossain are expected to fill out the two pacer slots.

Siddons also spoke about

the omission of Mohammad Ashraful from the Test squad, stating that experience counted for nothing if a player was not performing.

"Most of us want Ashraful in the team and unfortunately he could not find his form," said the Australian.

On the other hand, England batsman Ian Bell said that the workout against

Bangladesh A in the practice game would be very useful in the Test match.

"It was nice to get out on these conditions and score a few runs on the venue where we will play the Test match," he said.

"Our bowlers have also had enough overs to be acquainted with the pitch since we are staying here since the third ODI," he added.

## MSC demand Beanibazar's ejection

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammed Sporting Club have demanded to scrap Beanibazar SC from the ongoing Bangladesh League as the Sylhet outfit failed to provide security to the visiting Mohammedan team during their Bangladesh League encounter on Tuesday at the Sylhet Stadium.

The Motijheel-based outfit

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## NATIONAL CRICKET LEAGUE First-class Rajshahi

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi continued their dominance in the country's first-class arena after they became champions of the 11th National Cricket League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

The northern division drew with Chittagong in the final, picking up a third first-class trophy in the last five seasons making them the second most successful behind Dhaka, who have four trophies in the format.

The fifth day's business was a foregone conclusion as Rajshahi shut down any

hope for Chittagong as they grinded out 413 for five before making the declaration. But by then both captains had decided that no result was possible and ended the proceedings.

Khaled Mashud, the Rajshahi captain, rejoiced with his team said how proud he was of his 'professional' unit.

"They listen to me whenever I ask them to do something. They are all very professional and have a lot of discipline," said a beaming Mashud.

Mashud, who has long been considered the talisman of Rajshahi cricket,

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### ROLL OF HONOUR

SEASON	CHAMPIONS	RUNNERS-UP
2009-2010	Rajshahi	Chittagong
2008-2009	Rajshahi	Barisal
2007-2008	Khulna	Rajshahi
2006-2007	Dhaka	Rajshahi
2005-2006	Rajshahi	Chittagong
2004-2005	Dhaka	Rajshahi
2003-2004	Dhaka	Sylhet
2002-2003	Khulna	Dhaka
2001-2002	Dhaka	Rajshahi
2000-2001	Biman	Chittagong
1999-2000	Chittagong	Sylhet



PHOTOS: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

Bangladesh cricket players do catching practice during a training session at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday while the English (L) are engaged in a game of rugby during their session of practice at the same venue on the day.

## Pakistan in utter chaos

### Younus, Yousuf, Naved & Malik banned

Cricket

AFP, Islamabad

Former Pakistan captains Younus Khan and Mohammad Yousuf have been banned from the national cricket team after the recent catastrophic tour of Australia, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said Wednesday.

Two other players Navedul Hasan and Shoaib Malik were banned for a year by the six-man committee set up by the PCB to investigate the December-February tour, in which Pakistan lost the Test series 3-0, the one-day matches 5-0 and the only Twenty20 match.

The committee blamed infighting between Yousuf and Younus for the disastrous results, and recommended they "should not be part of

the national team in any format".

"Their attitude has a trickledown effect, which is a bad influence for the whole team," said a statement from the PCB, after its committee held intensive and lengthy hearings with several of those involved in the tour.

The PCB said in a statement that the "recommendations of the inquiry committee have been accepted by PCB in totality".

Other recommendations included a three-million-rupee (35,500-US-dollar) fine and six months' probation for Shahid Afridi, who was caught by TV cameras biting the ball during the Australian tour's final one-day match in Perth.

The International Cricket Council match referee handed Afridi a ban of two Twenty20 matches for ball tampering and the all-rounder later apologised.

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## School hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Pourashava High School of Dinajpur and Barguna Zilla School moved into the semifinals of the Ecstasy School Hockey Tournament after winning their second successive victories at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Pourashava defeated Latif Municipal High School of Patuakhali 2-0 with Bhotosh Roy and Nahid Hasan scoring one goal apiece while Barguna Zilla School beat Don Bose High School of Bandarban 2-0.

Dinajpur Pourashava High School will play against Armanitola High School in the first semifinal while Jessore Municipal Preparatory High School will face Don Barguna Zilla School in the second match on Friday.

## A bolt from the Blues

SPORTS REPORTER



A freak goal from Shahedul Alam kept holders Abahani's winning streak alive as the Sky Blues handed a lone-goal defeat to Farashganj SC in their Bangladesh League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The victory meant Abahani extended their unbeaten run to 22 matches in the professional football league of which 11 came in the second edition and consolidated their lead at the top with 33 points, seven more than rivals Mohammedan, who have played a match less.

The 11 consecutive victories also made sure that Abahani would complete the first-leg ahead of Mohammedan, who have still two first leg matches against Chittagong Mohammedan and Dhaka Abahani.

On the back of a 2-0 win over Sheikh Russel KC in the previous match, Abahani took to the field as clear favourites and they started as expected through two wings and the first real scoring chances came in the very ninth minute but Sheriff Din Mohammad headed Zahed Parvez Chowdhury corner wide from close range.

But, Abahani looked unimpressed as the game progressed and they appeared

more reluctant against a side, who won only two playing 10 matches and the Dhanmondi-based outfit were a bit lucky to go ahead two minutes from the breather.

Abahani Ghanaian striker Awudu Ibrahim played a through ball to Shahedul Alam outside the danger zone but the Farashganj national defender

Rezaul Karim received the ball and attempt-ed to clear only to see his shot rebound off the net from the foot of the unsuspecting Shahedul.

After the resumption, Awudu almost doubled the margin nine minutes into the second half, capitalising on a fumble from a Farashganj

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PHOTO: STAR

Enamul Haque (R) of Abahani and Farashganj's Rezaul Karim are in pursuit of the ball during their Bangladesh League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## See you on the other side, Mano

SHAKIL KASEM

At the crease, this great and immensely lovable friend of mine, was a total antithesis of what he was in his daily life. He was a dogged, determined no nonsense batsman who batted as if life depended on it. He practically patented the art of the forward defensive stroke, never ran more than a crafty single, even when a confirmed three was there for the taking. Many moons ago, in a match against Shantinagar, Mano (Monavar Hossain) ran all singles for a score of 29, chanting "Hoei na, dosto, ei run hoie na". And each and every time he responded to my call for a single. He was uncompromising, and always there when needed. He and I

enjoyed a partnership that shaped my cricket existence in more ways than one. The times spent on and off the field back in the seventies and eighties, were stuff that one could pen volumes on; they were to use one of Mano's pet phrases, Toooo muuuuuchhhhh!

In real life, Mano to put it, straight off the bat, fun, fun and more fun. Back in those days when both of us played for Wari Club, Mano would come straight to my house in Purana Paltan all the way from Dhanmondi on matchdays. We would then get on a rickshaw and make our way to the Stadium. Did I mention that we used to sing Seals and Crofts all the way? I would open the batting, Mano would join me sometime in the middle of

the innings, and we were together again. It was cricket, lovely cricket, and made for a perfect world because this cricketer par excellence and friend extraordinaire was so much my existential cricket crutch.

He would bunk his MBA classes to come and watch me play, when for a while we switched clubs, and he had moved on to Azad Boys, where I joined him in later years. There Mano flourished with his high arm action sending down fastish off breaks. If there has been a better purveyor of such bowling in the Dhaka league, I would really like to get introduced.

Mano never made it to the big league of international matches, primarily because his health did not permit him to

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**What to WATCH**

**SuperSport2**  
New Zealand v Australia  
Fourth ODI  
Live from 7:00am

**ESPN**  
Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live from 8:30pm

**SuperSport3**  
Europa League  
Lille v Liverpool  
Live from 11:30pm  
Juventus v Fulham  
Live from 2:00am (Friday)

**SuperSport7**  
Europa League  
Atletico v Sporting  
Live from 11:30pm  
Valencia v Werder Bremen  
Live from 2:00am (Friday)

**DAY'S EVENT**

Bangladesh League  
Shuktara v Brothers Union  
Time: 3:30pm  
Venue: Narayanganj Stadium  
Muktijodha v Ctg Mohammedan  
Time: 5:00pm  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium