

## BANGLADESH-ENGLAND FIRST TEST FROM TODAY

# Shakib unruffled by drama

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

The first Test of the two-match series between Bangladesh and England gets underway at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium today under scorching heat. The big question is whether Bangladesh can pull off a big surprise against a new-look England in the five-day game? However, it was Bangladesh batsman Rokibul Hasan who hogged the spotlight yesterday. All the interest has centered on the surprise retirement decision of Rokibul as everybody was searching for the real reason behind the mysterious decision.

But Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan wanted to put behind all the emotional issues to shift the focus to the challenge they were going to face against Alastair Cook's men in the five-day contest.

Rokibul, who came back strongly among the runs with a hundred followed

by a half-century against the visitors in the three-day match, was very much in the team plan for the first Test and definitely his sudden withdrawal came as a setback for the home side but the young Bangladesh skipper was very much practical about the current situation.

"I want to put behind all these things and I think boys are focusing on the game. Nobody is indispensable and you know, it's natural that someone come to fulfill the vacuum because in this world you can not expect a place to be vacuumed for someone no matter how big he is or not," said a confident Shakib while talking at the pre-match press conference after a training session at the venue.

"I don't believe that the incident will effect our performance because we don't want it. We are fully focusing on the game. What happened has happened. There is no scope to be too much emotional in this professional world. Nobody is superman and one should think with his head and

not his heart when he takes any decision," he added.

The all-rounder informed that they were surprised when Rokibul disclosed his desire in the team bus on way to the hotel from the stadium and everybody in the team tried their best to change his mind but the young batsman was adamant in his decision, which apparently irritated the Bangladesh skipper.

"It's a very emotional decision. Everybody tried their best to convince him but he didn't change his mind. He didn't even disclose the reason behind his decision. The decision is simply silly because there are ups and downs in every cricketer's career and one should accept it," said Shakib.

"What can I say he made a big mistake. I think it's not Bangladesh cricket rather he (Rokibul) will be the sufferer for his decision," added Shakib.

Uncapped Zahurul Islam flew in to

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England cricketers Matt Prior (L) and Paul Collingwood lunge during their training session yesterday afternoon while (R) Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan (L) and newcomer Jahurul Islam stand arm-in-arm during their practice session at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong in the morning yesterday.



PHOTOS: ZOABER HOSSAIN SIKDER

## Muktis off the pit

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union leaptfrogged three places beating struggler Shuktara Jubo Sangsad by a solitary goal while Muktijoddha Sangsad beat Chittagong Mohammedan 2-1 to dump them to bottom position Bangladesh League yesterday.

In the bottom of the table clash, Muktijoddha came from behind to hand Chittagong Mohammedan a 2-1 defeat under lights at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. Linkon gave Mohammedan an early lead on the twenty-fifth minute but Muktijoddha bounced back three minutes later when Furad Ali scored the equaliser. After the first half ended 1-1, Muktijoddha pressed for a winner. It took only nine minutes of the second half for Mukti to snatch the winner through Rony Islam. This win takes Muktijoddha to seven points, equal second from last with Shuktara who were beaten 1-0 by Brothers Union in the earlier match of the day.

Didar's fiftieth minute goal was what made the difference in the match played at the Narayanganj Stadium.

## Rating chess

SPORTS REPORTER

FIDE Master Minhaz Uddin Ahmed Sagar maintained solo lead with 5.5 points at the end of the sixth round of Prime Bank 12th International Rating Chess at the Chess Federation Hall room yesterday.

Sagar drew with FIDE Master Khandaker Aminul Islam who shares second position on five points with four others. The others on second place are: Sharif Hossain, Abdullah Al Saif, Serajul Kabir and Oten. In the sixth round matches, Kabir beat Jamal, Oten beat Abdul Momin while Sharif drew with Saif. The matches of the seventh round will get underway at 4pm at the same venue.

## HOCKEY WORLD CUP

### Germany in final

AFP, Delhi

Two-time defending champions Germany stormed into the final of the men's field hockey World Cup with an emphatic 4-1 win over lacklustre England on Thursday.

The Germans, seeking a hat-trick of titles to add to the Beijing Olympic gold medal, avenged the 5-3 defeat by England in the European Championships final last year.

Germany await the winners of Thursday's other semi-final between Australia and the Netherlands in the title clash scheduled for Saturday at the Dhyana Chand National Stadium.

Jan-Marco Montag put the world champions ahead in the sixth minute by converting his

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### SuperSport5

Bangladesh v England  
First Test, Day One  
Live from 9:30am  
West Indies v Zimbabwe  
Fourth ODI  
Live from 7:30pm

### SuperSport 1

Indian Premier League  
Opening Ceremony  
Live from 7:00pm  
Indian Premier League  
Deccan Chargers v Kolkata Knight Riders  
Live from 8:30pm

### ESPN

Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live from 8:30pm



Bangladesh v England  
First Test, Day One  
Time: 9:30am  
Venue: Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, Chittagong

## 'BCB didn't pay me any attention'

Cricket

MOHAMMAD ISAM

A day after shocking the country with his sudden retirement, batsman Rokibul Hasan confirmed that his grievances against the cricket authorities drove him to this end. But he denied that his emotions got the better of him.

Rokibul, who walked out on the team hotel in Chittagong Wednesday afternoon having announced his decision in front of the Bangladesh team, said that he had taken enough time to come to this conclusion.

He was dropped from the team for the only Test in New Zealand earlier this year after failing in the first one-day. Since then, he says, he felt largely deprived.

"I was taken to New Zealand but was not picked for the Test match. Then I was not picked in the one-day side [that played England at home] and I am not in the World Twenty20 probables," said Rokibul outside his Mirpur residence yesterday evening. He delayed his return by a few hours after learning of the media's presence.

The 22-year-old right-handed batsman scored an unbeaten 107 and a half-century in the practice match against England only last week that hastened his return to the Test fold. But he claimed that this was a part of his plan that can only be called a sort of revenge on the cricket board.

"I felt that I wasn't getting enough attention from the cricket board and so I decided to make

voluntary retirement once I was back in the team on my merit," said Rokibul in his initial monologue.

"I couldn't secure my position and was always on the fringe of the squad.

"It was my wish to retire at this time," he said before refusing to comment on whether it was emotions that played a major part in his early

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Retired Bangladesh batsman Rokibul Hasan speaks to the media at his Mirpur residence yesterday after he made the shock announcement on Wednesday.

## Beanibazar fined Tk one lakh

SPORTS REPORTER

Beanibazar SC were handed a TK one lakh for the lapse in organization and discipline that led to unsavoury incidents during a match against Mohammedan SC in the Bangladesh League on Tuesday at the Sylhet Stadium.

The decision came at a meeting of the Bangladesh league committee at the Bangladesh Football Federation Conference Hall chaired by Bangladesh League Committee Chairman Abdus Salam Murshedi yesterday. The meeting also warned the Sylhet outfit a complete ban of their home venue if any similar mishaps occur in future.

The other team involved in the incident Mohammedan were also verbally reprimanded for their part in attacking the referees and organizers. The meeting, having expressed condolences for the injured Mohammedan players, assured them of their treatment. And it was decided in further no matches will take place without having ambulances and doctors in place.

Earlier on Wednesday,

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## Rocky times for BCB

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

After the episode with the selection of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza only a small intervening period has passed for another incident to rock the Bangladesh cricket team in Rokibul Hasan's sudden retirement, which has left many questions unanswered.

The issue with selections has taken an alarming precedence especially as the young team is taking shape ahead of the 2011 World Cup on home soil as Bangladesh are co-hosts. Many believe that the time has come to delve into the roots of the problem to avoid such scenarios in the future, with particular focus directed towards the lack of professionalism in the activities of the board, which has given rise to one crisis after another.

A lot of questions have already been raised about the efficiency of the current selection committee under the leadership of Rafiqul Islam while the cricket operations committee, who are looking after the vital team affairs, have already come under scrutiny. Finally the recent alleged interference of the board about Rokibul Hasan's selection in the one-day side has also been heavily criticized.

Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan understandably was not ready to accept what Rokibul did but still he raised his fingers towards the board for what has been happening over the last couple of months. Rokibul's decision of retiring from cricket was totally unacceptable to the young Bangladesh skipper but he believes that it might not have happened if Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) took a strong stance against some players on disciplinary

grounds in the recent past.

"If the board had been more strict in the cases of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shahriar Nafees I don't think this would have happened. This is my personal opinion," said Shakib.

Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons was however sympathetic towards Rokibul but still there has been some observations over the activities of the authorities.

"He wasn't in form until the other day, he wasn't in the side. He's obviously a bit confused. He's decided to call it quits for the moment and hopefully in the near future he will have a change of heart and everyone will accept him back, which is what I hope will happen," observed Siddons.

When asked whether they would welcome Rokibul if he changed his mind, the Bangladesh skipper came up with a diplomatic answer; "don't know."

It seems that the Australian was sympathetic towards Rokibul's decision following disappointment with his selection in the team.

"He didn't like being dropped in the way he was dropped, then missing out on the 30 for the T20 squad, which was probably a bad selection, and he's really disappointed. He thought he'd proved his point that he was good enough to be in that 30, which I think he is, and then he walked away. I don't know who he was trying to hurt, or what point he was trying to prove, but I hope the BCB welcome him back because he's a kid who's a bit confused," said Siddons.

"It hasn't rocked our camp. It's rocked the BCB and the media, our boys are still training beautifully. I hope everyone accepts it's a poor decision on his behalf, one that's not that detrimental to Bangladesh cricket, and that they

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## Reminiscing Manu as a cricketer

ISHTIAQUE AHMAD

He was fondly known as Manu Singh to those of us who played alongside him at Azad Boys Club. A gregarious and very cheerful personality, Monawar Hossain Manu was a cricketer par excellence. I remember the matches in which Azad Boys were either playing Abahani or Mohammedan as it was Manu who more often than not either got us crucial breakthroughs or was even instrumental in winning us so many crucial matches with his fastish off breaks. A bowling action that was so reminiscent of a cowboy ready to slap leather as he gave a little hop on one leg before crossing the umpire to hurl those innocuous looking deliveries that so often deceived the batsmen into submission. A quintessential figure was Manu for whom Azad Boys club meant a lot and be in triumph or in defeat Manu was one who always had a good laugh and was always the first one along with his beautiful wife Gajju bhabhi to be present at

Ashrafai bhai's house for some good lively moments during the evenings of the match.

For those of us who played the game at Azad Boys, it was Manu who always managed to keep the dressing room in good humour and his determination and focus was switched on as soon as he crossed the ropes. Stalwarts such Babu bhai, Ashrafai bhai, Salahuddin bhai, Saber bhai, Tanna bhai, Badshah bhai and many more including yours truly indeed made Azad Boys a side that other teams loved to hate as we played it tough yet full of zeal and fervour. Manu was conspicuous not because of his good looks and tall and lanky frame but his effervescent yet boisterous nature had always touched the heart of all those who knew him. His appeals to the umpire for an lbw or caught behind would sound more like an Indian war cry than a mere appeal and he would immediately wink at the fielder closest to him suggesting that it was a close call for the batsman. That was how involved he

always was with the cherry in his hand while having fun at the same time.

Characters like Manu are hard to come by and who would know better than his mates in Ramblers, Dhaka Club as well as BCCI (Bank of Credit and Commerce International) where almost invariably Manu would play a key role both on and off the field. It was during his days of ill health that I had very little contact with him and now that he is no more with us I regret for not having shared many of the interesting moments and events.

A big socialite, Manu had that uncanny ability to add fun and fervour on any occasion or event he was part of, be it a serious cricket match or even those important and widely attended conferences organised by BCCI as many of his old colleagues would certainly vouch for. An almost uninhibited character, Manu was also a compassionate human being with that soft streak in his personality that showed his good human nature. There

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A Muktijoddha forward (L) raids the Chittagong Mohammedan goal during their Bangladesh League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLARCHOKH.COM