

Rooney set to leave MU

The future of Wayne Rooney dominated media reports here Monday as speculation mounted that the Manchester United superstar was set to leave Old Trafford following a rift with Sir Alex Ferguson. The Daily Mail said Rooney now wanted to leave as soon as possible, saying the England star felt aggrieved by a perceived lack of support from Ferguson over reports alleging he cheated on his wife with prostitutes. The Times meanwhile identified Real Madrid and Manchester City as the likeliest suitors in any race to sign Rooney, noting that Real manager Jose Mourinho was a



Hard work pays dividends

MOHAMMAD ISAM

The Micromax Cup, apparently the largest trophy for a bilateral series, will soon have a permanent place at the heart of the museum at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

The foot-long adornment will set the entrance of the Mirpur venue alight due to its eye-catching design and sheer size, plus the importance of the trophy will give it the centre stage.

And much like that long aisle at the home of cricket, cricket folklore of this country will have to be reconstituted, stretched from one side to make room for the memories of the epic series against New Zealand that concluded on Sunday.

Maybe Rubel Hossain's yorker that ended New Zealand's innings in the fifth and final one-dayer would be the freshest in our mind, but a look back at the two last two weeks would bring back some great moments.

It all started with rain playing a major role in New Zealand's adjustment to Bangladeshi conditions. It washed out their two practice matches with such finality that the players didn't even have to turn up in BKSP on October 1 and 3.

Two days later, Bangladesh brilliantly latched on to those uncertainties among the Kiwis by bowling intelligently and making sure the loss of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (in the third over of the Kiwi chase) did not affect them. Shakib Al Hasan's four-wicket haul included the McCullum brothers dismissed in crucial moments, the thruster Jesse Ryder and Grant Elliott but what would later become an enduring part of the series was how brilliantly Nazmul Hossain, Shafiqul Islam and Rubel would mix up the slower balls and the fast yorkers. Nazmul was unlucky to have hurt a finger in the match to put him out of the rest of the series but the Kiwi batsmen had not much of an answer to the younger duo.

The teams had a five-day unscheduled break as rain again washed out a match, this time the second ODI of the series. It gave New Zealand chance to prepare a little more but on October 11, their wheels came off in the morning. Shafiqul removed McCullum early to set the tone for the spinners to take

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MOST RUNS

Player	M	Runs	HS	Ave	SR	100	50
Shakib Al Hasan	4	213	106	71.00	97.70	1	1
Imrul Kayes	4	137	50	34.25	63.13	0	1
Shahriar Nafees	4	119	73	29.75	95.20	0	1
Ross Taylor	4	110	62*	36.66	78.57	0	1
Kane Williamson	2	108	108	54.00	78.26	1	0

MOST WICKETS

Player	M	W	BBI	Ave	Econ	SR	4wkts
Shakib Al Hasan	4	11	4/41	15.90	4.72	20.1	1
Kyle Mills	4	8	3/36	19.50	5.22	22.3	0
Daniel Vettori	4	7	3/32	18.85	3.30	34.2	0
Rubel Hossain	3	6	4/25	17.66	3.85	27.5	1
Sohrawardi Shuvo	3	5	3/14	18.00	3.21	33.6	0



(Clockwise from top) Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan (2nd from L) and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president AHM Mostafa Kamal cut a cake in celebration of the Tigers' 4-0 whitewash of New Zealand at the BCB office in Mirpur yesterday. Bangladesh's English bowling coach Ian Pont (L), who made an instant impact in the just concluded five-match series, is seen involved in a happy conversation with captain fantastic Shakib. Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons (R) walks up the stairs with his smart pace bowlers Shafiqul Islam and hero of Sunday's fifth one-dayer Rubel Hossain to attend the function.

PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

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Knives out for Kiwis

STAR SPORT DESK



Before embarking on the recently concluded five match one-day series against Bangladesh, the New Zealand team sounded reasonably assured of winning the series comfortably.

After all they had beaten Bangladesh 3-0 at home earlier in the year, there was no reason to not be confident.

Probably one or two hiccups might have been on their mind, but a 4-0 series defeat was beyond the realm of even their worst nightmare. But following their poorest ever performance in recent times, the relationship with the fans back home is at an all time low. Understandably the media have been unforgiving in a defeat that was completely unexpected.

Speaking on an online sport radio talk show, former fast bowler Simon Doull labelled the 4-0 series loss as simply 'embarrassing'.

"It's embarrassing, 4-0 to Bangladesh, yes they're improving, they're a better side and not easy at home but they're a side we should beat nine times out of ten. I can't see any answers," Doull said.

The big paceman cited lack of proper coaching and Daniel Vettori's dual role as coach-cum-selector as the main problems behind the Black Caps' form slump.

Doull's feelings were seconded by top website 3news.co.nz.

"Knives out for Black Caps top brass" read their lead headline.

The proverbial knives had been sharpening ever since the series loss. Following their slump in the fourth ODI, another former Black Cap, paceman John Morrison had predicted that this might go down as the worst series defeat in Black Caps' history.

"It's shaping up as one of the worst ever because Bangladesh is so lowly rated," Morrison told the New Zealand Herald.

Morrison found out to his chagrin that he couldn't have been any more spot on.

The Kiwis made a low-key return in the early hours of Monday. A report on the website stuff.co.nz summarised the ignominy of the Black Caps.

"Casey Williams [netball gold medallist at the Commonwealth Games] returned from the subcontinent with a golden glow, cricket counterpart Daniel Vettori probably grimaced until travel arrangements revealed a midnight touch down at Auckland airport.

"Even so, the cover of darkness might not be sufficient to convince the New Zealand captain and his humiliated teammates not to try and exit the back way instead of traipsing through the arrivals hall.

"Vettori could originally rely on the Delhi Commonwealth Games for deflecting attention from New Zealand's disastrous one-day tour of Bangladesh, but there will be no avoiding the ignominy associated with an unprecedented 0-4 series loss."

If the media were unforgiving, the general public themselves showed no lack of vitriol.

Graham from Auckland spoke his mind on the players on the

Sk Jamal, Abahani share the spoils

SPORTS REPORTER



Abahani's bid to break a nine-year jinx of Federation Cup, got off to a poor start when the Bangladesh League champions were held a 1-1 draw by star-studded Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club in Group A encounter of the season's curtain-raising tournament at Birsreshtha Shahed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Ghanaian striker Ntim Twum Prank converted a penalty to level the margin 10 minutes from time for the Sky Blues after former Abahani striker Enamul Haq had given Sheikh Jamal the lead 13 minutes into the second half.

In the day's first match of the same group, Sheikh Russel KC also shared points with Rahmatganj MFS after playing a goalless draw at the same venue. It was the forty-sixth birthday of Sheikh Russel and the club officials marked the day by distributing 46 footballs among the spectators.

After two successive wins against comparatively unfancied teams in the qualifying round, all focus was on how Sheikh Jamal, with 10 national players in their starting eleven, would play against three-time Bangladesh League champions Abahani. They appeared disorganised in the midfield throughout the first half as vital playmaker Mamunul Islam missed the high-voltage game for his bookings.

Rather it were Abahani who despite losing some strength in the transfer

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PHOTO: STAR

Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi midfielder Zahid Hossain (C) is being chased by a host of Abahani players during their Grameenphone 23rd Federation Cup football match at the Birsreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday. The match ended in a 1-1 draw.

Sharif to lead MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

Midfielder Enamul Haq Sharif has been named captain of Mohammedan Sporting Club yesterday, a day before their Grameenphone Federation Cup opener against Muktiyoddha Sangsad.

Sharif, who was supposed to join a rejuvenated Muktiyoddha Sangsad this season, finally opted to stay at the old outfit after apparently getting assurance of leading the Black and Whites.

MA Salam, chairman of Mohammedan football committee, disclosed this at the

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BCB boss thanks cricketers

SPORTS REPORTER

AHM Mostafa Kamal, president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), said yesterday that they would extend every possible assistance to the players so that they can achieve more success like against New Zealand. Kamal, speaking at a thanksgiving lunch to the Bangladesh cricket team at the BCB office in Sher-e-Bangla Stadium team organised to celebrate the team's 4-0 one-day series win also advised the players not to get carried away with this victory, saying that they have still a long way to go.

Thanking BCB for their efforts, captain courageous Shakib Al Hasan said;

"The board has surely taken steps to encourage us. And I think the award night that used to be held before, should be in place again, which will encourage us more to do well."

Captain incumbent, Mashrafe Mortaza who limped out in the first one-dayer and was ruled out of this historic series, said he was ecstatic with the result even though he could not be part of it.

"We have been practicing hard for the last two months, and we reaped the results. We did not expect to win 4-0, that's why this victory tastes sweeter.

The paceman hoped he would be able to start bowling within three to four weeks and expected to be fully fit before the Zimbabwe series in December.

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