

Former Nigerian international defender Uche Okafor, who featured at the 1994 and 1998 World Cups, killed himself at his Texas home, police said Friday.

The 43-year-old Okafor was found hanged in the upstairs of his Dallas-area home.

He was discovered Thursday by his former wife after a friend had tried to contact him, police spokesman Oscar Hinojosa said Friday.

Okafor played in the 1994 Super Eagles team that won the Africa Cup of Nations.

He played one game for Nigeria in the 1998 World Cup after making the squad for the 1994 tournament.



SPORT

DHAKA SUNDAY JANUARY 9, 2011, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Shakib now a Knight Rider

SPORTS REPORTER

In a matter of three minutes yesterday afternoon, the rampant Kolkata Knight Riders swooped on Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan in the auction of the India Premier League held in Bangalore.

There were high expectations last year with the young all-rounder but frustratingly Shakib remained unsold, but this time the Shahrukh Khan-owned franchise bought him for a bargain price of \$425,000 on the first day of the money-spinning auction.

than him.

"My job is to play cricket as much as possible. I'm happy with the ultimate bidding that is double my floor price. As far as I know, the Indian players' demand was high," said Shakib in an instant reaction during a break in the shooting for a commercial at the Botanical Garden in Mirpur.

"I am really delighted because last time I had high hopes but could not make it," he added.

Shakib's inclusion was however the only good news for Bangladesh as dashing opener Tamim Iqbal, who broke the good news to Shakib over phone,

remained unsold. For the thousands who watched the daylong auction, it was quite a shock as the new Tigers vice-captain was a bargain at \$100,000 base price.

"Tamim (Iqbal) called me first. I was a little nervous when I didn't receive any calls for a certain period, though I knew that this time it will happen as Dav (Whatmore) told me during his recent visit to Bangladesh that he will bid for me," revealed Shakib.

He was particularly happy that he can play for the Kolkata outfit. "It's really good for me that Knight Riders bought me. Not only

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SHAKIB COMES TO THE PARTY: The world's no.1 all-rounder and Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan cuts a cake in celebration of being bought by IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders for USD 425,000 yesterday.



Gazi Tank's Naem Islam drives the ball through the off side during his unbeaten half-century against Surjo Tarun in their Premier League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Naeem salvages Gazi

SPORTS REPORTER



Naeem Islam's unbeaten half-century steered Gazi Tank to a five-wicket win over Surjo Tarun while Old DOHS beat Prime

Doleshwar by 37 runs in yesterday's Premier League encounters.

A regular in the Tigers line-up, Naeem's current form would be greatly encouraging to the team management.

In the day's other game, BKSP picked up a crucial 54-run victory over Orient Sporting Club who suffered their sixth defeat in seven matches.

GAZITANK-SURJOTARUN
Having made a modest 191 all out from 46.4 overs, Surjo Tarun had a firm grip on the game when they removed Nasir Hossain in the 27th over, reducing Gazi Tank to five for 100.

But skipper Naeem was steadfast and it was his unbroken sixth wicket partnership of 95 runs with Sanjamul Islam that won Gazi the game. Naeem made his 68 off 110 balls with the help

of five boundaries while the left-handed Sanjamul played the perfect foil in the stand, scoring 56 off 70 balls with five fours and a six against his old club.

Earlier, three wickets each from Syed Rasel and Alok Kapali and a couple by Naeem ensured Surjo Tarun were restricted to a score below 200 runs.

For the Dhanmondi outfit, Rajin Saleh made 58 off 90 balls while their Indian import Devendra Singh scored 40 off 90 balls with the help of three boundaries.

DOHS-DOLESHWAR
Prime Doleshwar stumbled to their sixth defeat in seven outings after they failed to challenge Old DOHS at the BKSP.

They succumbed to 117 all out from 30.4 overs after their bowlers restricted DOHS to 154-8 from 34 overs after play started more than two hours late due to heavy fog.

Forhad Reza continued his fine form with the ball, taking three for 17 while Rashed Hanif also took three, giving away just nine runs.

When DOHS batted, their new Pakistani recruit Nasir Jamshed smashed 51 off 62 balls. Hanif too did well with the willow, hitting 39 off 52 balls.

For Doleshwar, Pakistani left-arm spinner Kamran Younis took three for 19.

BKSP-ORIENT
It was the Soumya Sarkar show at the Fatullah Stadium as the young all-rounder first slammed a quickfire half-century in BKSP's 247 all out in 49 overs, and then picked up three Orient wickets.

Soumya struck 53 off 34 balls with the help of four boundaries and two sixes in a late burst and as if that was not enough, he struck thrice in his first two overs with the new ball, reducing Orient to four for 3.

Thanks to a 109-run fifth wicket partnership between Asif Hossain and Khuram Shahzad, Orient avoided a huge embarrassment and after the latter's 85 off 71 balls, they were bowled out for 193 runs from 46.2 overs.

Earlier, BKSP opener Liton Das

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'Nafees threat for Imrul, Junaed'

SPORTS REPORTER

Jamie Siddons placed the onus on the competing batsmen ahead of the Tigers' World Cup training camp that begins today with 23 players.

The Tigers head coach arrived yesterday and spoke to the media at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, praising the man in red-hot form and observing that the more the national players play competitive games, the better it will be.

Siddons said the runs Shahriar Nafees is making would put pressure on the likes of Imrul Kayes and Junaed Siddiqui, regulars in the squad for the last two years.

"I am impressed with Shahriar Nafees, he has got two hundreds and a couple of not outs and he is certainly putting pressure on Imrul (Kayes) and (Junaed Siddiqui) Imrose, that's for sure," said Siddons.

"Rokibul (Hasan) got an 80-odd, (Mohammad) Ashraf got 90-odd and Imrul Kayes got 50 in very competitive matches.

"The game in Futullah was very close and the players were under pressure. We can't buy that and it is the best practice they can have, so we should let them play," he added.

Siddons was however of the opinion that the final fifteen would more likely be made up of the same players who were part of the last two home series against New Zealand and Zimbabwe.

"Among the 23, most of them are obvious choices. I think we have got the best fifteen plus another eight, so I'm happy with them. But I am obviously happy with the 15 that won us the last two series.

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School football

SPORTS REPORTER

Saint Joseph's High School pounded AK International School 7-0 in their Ashiyon City Dhaka Metropolitan School Football tie at the Abahani Club Ground yesterday. Pias and Ishrat scored braces while Shakib, Taufik, and Farhan scored one each for the winners.

In the other match, A Latif Charitable School defeated Residential Model School 2-0.

Jr gymnastics

SPORTS REPORTER

The 30th National Senior and the 20th National Junior gymnastics competition began yesterday.

Bangladesh Gymnastics Federation vice-president Enamul Haque Khasru inaugurated the events.

On the opening day of the junior competition, eight events took place with 33 boys and 28 girls taking part from 16 districts across the country.

The senior events will take place today and tomorrow respectively.

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP TALK

'The unluckiest man of 1999'

'Shabash Moni bhai' was Khaled Mashud's famous line everytime Enamul Haque Moni came to bowl. A member of the 1999 World Cup squad, the left-arm spinner spoke of his experience to The Daily Star.



Daily Star Sport (DSS): How did it feel when you heard that you would play the 1999 World Cup?

Enamul Haque Moni (EHM): I am not a poet or a litterateur that I can express my feelings in the appropriate way. But I can say that it was the biggest achievement of my life by being part of the World Cup.

The players these days play international matches day in, day out. So they wouldn't understand the feeling we had then. In those days, playing against a county was also like a dream to us, so you can imagine how it was at the World Cup.

DSS: How excited were you to play in your country's first World Cup?

EHM: The dressing room and team atmosphere was tremendous. Even though I was the 12th man in the Pakistan game, it was still exciting to be in the team, though it was a sad day for me.

DSS: How sad were you after being dropped for that famous game?

EHM: I was a performer but I wasn't a star like Bulbul, Akram or Nannu. Before the game against Pakistan, I heard an official saying that everyone should get a chance to play, since it is the World Cup. You don't hear such stuff these days. Personally, that was a very big miss.

If you see the scorecard, you'll see I have performed in every game. But I was hardly rewarded for my contribution; I was the unluckiest player at that time.

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India, England matches sold out: LOC

SPORTS REPORTER

The local organising committee (LOC) of the World Cup confirmed yesterday that the tickets of Bangladesh's matches against India and England have already been sold out at all the branches of the designated bank outlets.

The press release also said that some Grandstand tickets of the Bangladesh-Netherlands encounter, along with some international hospitality gallery tickets of other matches will be available in City Bank and Agrani Bank in Dhaka, Chittagong and Narayanganj from January 9 to 11.

Tickets of the practice matches will also be available at the same time. On February 12, Bangladesh take on Canada in a day-night game at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong. Then the Tigers play Pakistan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on February 15 and on the next day, Canada are up against England at the Fatullah Stadium.

The February 18 Pakistan-England practice game will also be held at the Fatullah venue.



(Above) Gautam Gambhir and Yousuf Pathan were the biggest buys in the IPL auction, and Indian actress and co-owner of Kings XI Punjab Preity Zinta (R) arrives at the players' auction in Bangalore yesterday.



Gambhir: 2.4 million man

AFP, Bangalore



Indian batsman Gautam Gambhir was snapped up for a record \$2.4 million on Saturday's first day of bidding at the Indian Premier League (IPL) auction for players.

The left-handed opener was among four Indians to join the \$2 million club at the auction for the fourth edition of the scandal-plagued tournament, along with Yusuf Pathan, Robin Uthappa and Rohit Sharma.

Gambhir was the first to go under the hammer at the two-day auction in Bangalore, and was bought by Kolkata Knight Riders for an amount far exceeding his base price of \$200,000.

He was soon joined in the exclusive bracket by all-rounder Pathan, who was bought by the same franchise for \$2.1 million. Pathan's reserve price was \$300,000.

Batsman Uthappa went to new franchise Pune Warriors for \$2.1 million, while Sharma was bought by Mumbai Indians for \$2 million as Indians emerged as the most-sought-after players on the opening day of the auction.

The prices paid to the Indian four-some easily eclipsed the previous record of England duo Kevin Pietersen and Andrew Flintoff, who went for 1.55 million dollars each in 2009.

Pietersen, with a base price of \$400,000, was bought by Deccan Chargers for \$650,000 this time.

Among the \$1 million men were New Zealander Ross Taylor, Sri Lankan Mahela Jayawardene, South Africans AB de Villiers and Jacques Kallis, India's Yuvraj Singh, Irfan Pathan and Sourabh Tiwary, and Australians Cameron White and David Hussey.

Only two players -- India's Mahendra Singh Dhoni and

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SPORTS POLL
WEEKLY QUESTION
Does Chelsea have enough time to win the Premiership title?
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