

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson marked his 70th birthday on Saturday with a vow to stay at the club for at least three more years.

In an interview with United's official website, Ferguson said he envisaged remaining at Old Trafford until 2014 and possibly beyond provided his health and passion for the job remained.

"I think I've got three years at the club," Ferguson said. "As long as my health stays up, and as long as I'm still enjoying it and still getting the satisfaction."



DHAKA SUNDAY JANUARY 1, 2012, E-MAIL: [redacted]

CRICKET IN 2011

A year of moments

We take a look back on what has been a topsy-turvy last twelve months and evaluate the cricketing year that was

MOHAMMAD ISAM

The Tigers got three chances to turn around their Test fortunes, but failure to save all three meant that they had a 0-4 record in five games this year, prompting awkward questions rearing their ugly head.

Instead, teams that are on equal footing in world cricket gained at their cost; Zimbabwe returned to the game's highest format after six years with immediate success and gathered a lot of momentum to scare New Zealand in the subsequent series. West Indies too gathered enough confidence from Bangladesh ahead of their tour to India. But the Tigers seemed to have taken a few steps in the opposite direction when it could have been much different.

They played the first of the five Tests against Zimbabwe and straight away, they looked like a team reluctant to fight for a win. The home side ran off with a sufficient first innings lead and then had skipper Brendan Taylor play an excellent hand in the second. His century gave Bangladesh a stiff chase though it was always a safe choice to bat out the final day.

The Tigers threw away the remaining seven wickets as Zimbabwe wrapped up the game shortly after

lunch. It was a shock to the system for Stuart Law in his first game in charge as the head coach.

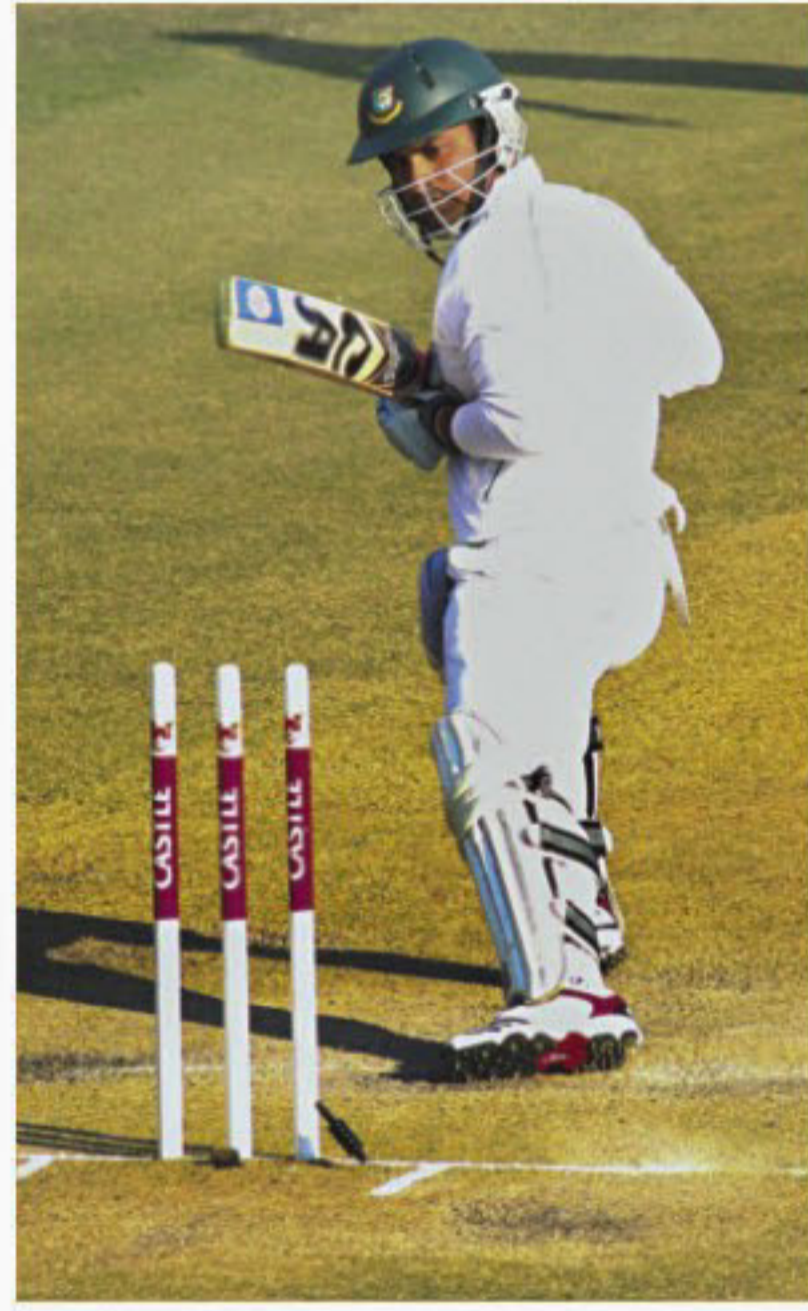
Their next game of the longer format came after an extended pre-season camp but none of it mattered.

The infamous draining facilities (or the lack of it) at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong meant that after the Tigers were well placed after the first day against West Indies, the rain was good enough to wash away Day Two and Three, the latter of which had brilliant sunshine from mid-morning.

But it was a Test of positives for the Tigers with Elias Sunny, the left-arm spinner, picking up a six-wicket haul on debut. The Chittagong Test ended in a stalemate, the only positive result for the Tigers this year.

In Dhaka however, it was disastrous from the word go. Sunny missed the game for reasons that have not been explained till now, the tourists then taking a big first innings lead despite not making a large score. But they batted much better in the second innings and with a 507-run lead, the Tigers had to bat out five sessions to save the game.

Seven wickets were in hand on the final day, but it began with a poor shot



from Tamim Iqbal, who was playing his best knock of the year. The jolt was managed by Shikib and new skipper Mushfiqur Rahim but just as lunch approached, Shikib's ill-timed scoop was all that the West Indies needed to get seal Tigers' fate.

The same story panned out in the year's last Test match when the battered

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

	P	W	L	D/T
TESTS	5	0	4	1
ODIs	20	6	14	0
T20Is	2	1	1	0

Highest Test Score: **Shakib Al Hasan 144**

Best Test Bowling: **Shakib Al Hasan 6-82**

Most ODI Runs: **Shakib Al Hasan 564 runs**

Most ODI Wickets: **Shakib Al Hasan 22 wkts**

CAPTAINCY RECORD IN ALL FORMATS

	P	W	L	D/T
Shakib Al Hasan	15	5	10	0
Mushfiqur Rahim	12	2	9	1

Beating England was the only high in ODIs (top) while the five Tests (L) were full of missed chances.

PHOTOS: STAR FILE

Tigers took on Pakistan in what was to be an exercise of self-defence. It started off poorly and only Shikib's brilliance and Shahriar Nafees's 97 took them to some solidity. The visitors fought back manfully and it was expected that after two failed attempts to save Test matches, the Tigers would fight as well.

But they didn't, losing in the final

session after batting poorly in the second innings.

For the trend to take a different, more positive direction, the Tigers must get their priorities straight. At the top however, the eyes are on a different bowl of fish.

MORE BAD DAYS

If one takes 2009 and 2010 as the benchmark for Tigers' ODI success, then 2011 was quite poor. The trend here was similar to every World Cup year from the past where they have struggled after the overhaul that took place after the mega event.

But at the World Cup held at home, the see-saw performance was frustrating for the fans. After a hard-fought win over Ireland, they were hammered by West Indies. Immediately, they surprised England with a late winner (as they say in football) and crushed the Netherlands. But the end came quickly when South Africa crushed them by the biggest margin of the year, the Tigers bowing out from the first round.

Australia came to town and repeated the African's trick but Bangladesh were expected to win in Zimbabwe. That however didn't come to pass when Brian Vitori kept them nailed in the first two games while Mushfiqur's Bevan-

esque century in the crucial third game went in vain.

Against West Indies at home, the batting remained the trouble-maker with none of the top-order contributing when it mattered. Shikib however made the series look respectable when his 4-16 had the visitors bowled out for 61 in the third ODI. But in the next series, the Tigers were mauled from pillar to post in the first two games with the third one seemingly lost to a power failure midway through the Tigers' chase.

The batsmen's failure remained the recurring theme of the year.

DREAM START AND BUST

The new skipper Mushfiqur began his tenure in dramatic fashion when he smashed a six off the second last ball against West Indies. It was just reward for the man who had taken Bangladesh so close in the Harare game.

Mushfiqur's dramatic stroke over mid-wicket offered a lot of hope but in their only other Twenty20 encounter, Pakistan sunk them like a toy battleship after making a slow start.

The Tigers had all to play for when they chased 136 but Shahid Afridi & Co were too hot to handle on a turning track.

NAT'L BASKETBALL Army thrash Air Force

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army beat Bangladesh Air Force by 76-37 points in the opening match of the Citycell 25th National Basketball Championship match at the Dhanmondi Indoor Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

Army led the first half by 41-15 points. Amanat scored highest 17 points while Baten caged 6 points for Army.

Earleir, Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, MP inaugurated the event as the chief guest where members of the Basketball Federation and representatives of the sponsors were also present.

No conclusion yet on SAFF debacle

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Zahid Hasan Emily, Zahid Hossain and Mithun Chowdhury will have to sit out for at least the opening matches of their respective teams in the Grameenphone Federation Cup as the National team Management Committee decided not to waive their suspension due to indiscipline which had been imposed on them last year. Emily and Mithun's current club Muktiyoddha and Zahid Hossain's club Abahani appealed for a waiver of suspension of their players to the BFF as the Federation Cup starts tomorrow and these players are vital to their team's performance. But since the players have not yet paid the monetary fines imposed which expired in November, the NTMC meeting decided not to waive the suspension on the players.

However, the NTMC Chairman Badal Roy hinted that the suspension might still be waived if they pay the fine before the next meeting on January 4.

Meanwhile, the NTMC has yet to reach any conclusion whether it was to blame for the debacle in SAFF Championship after receiving the reports by the coach, manager, captain and team leader. Badal Roy said they would scrutinise the reports and see the video footages in the next meeting to come to a conclusion as to who was to blame and make suggestions accordingly.

Amol, Biplob in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Amol Roy and Biplob Ram moved into the boys' singles final of the Runner Group Victory Day Open Tennis Championship after they beat their respective opponents in the semifinals at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

Amol comfortably beat Munir Hossain 6-0, 6-1 while Biplob got rid of Anwar Hossain 7-6, 6-2 in the two semifinal matches. Meanwhile, Amol and Ranjan Ram pair booked their final berth in the men's doubles beating Biplob and Jamil Bhuiyan pair 6-4, 6-0. They will meet Anwar Hossain and Dipu Lal pair who beat Munir Hossain and Niranjana Ram pair 6-1, 6-2 in the semifinal.

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Sharmin Alam Sharda hits a backhand return against Bhabna (not in picture) during their semifinal clash of the Runner Group Victory Day Open Tennis Championship at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday. Sharda won the match 6-2, 6-0 to advance to the final which will be held today.

PHOTO: STAR

