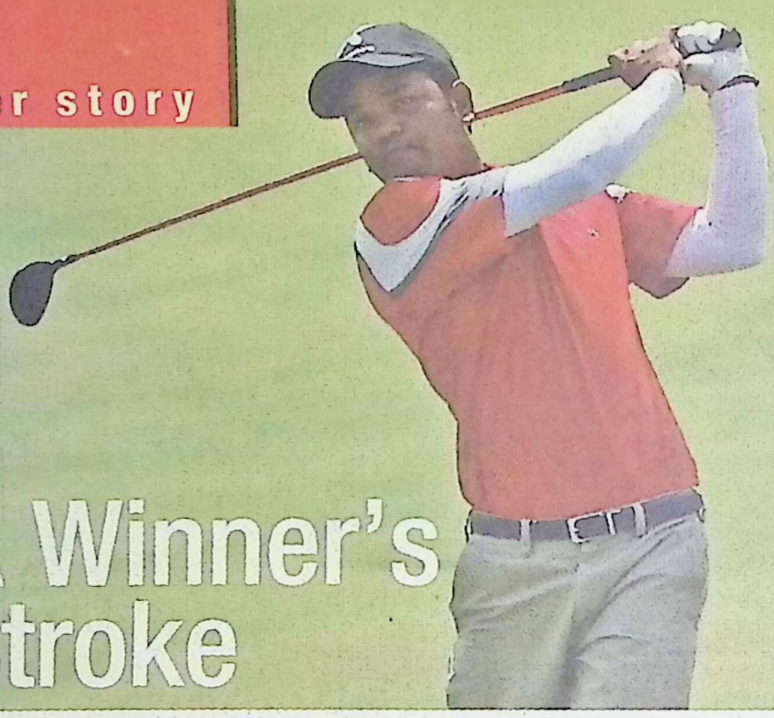


A Winner's Stroke

Siddikur Rahman
PHOTO: STAR FILE

Siddikur Rahman, known as the 'Tiger Woods of Bangladesh golf' claimed his second Asian Tour Title when he beat SSP Chowrasia and Anirban Lahiri of India by a single stroke in a tense final day of the Hero Indian Open at the Delhi Golf Club in November. The 29-year-old, 5'5" Siddikur, who had become the first Bangladeshi golfer to win on the Asian Tour when he clinched the Brunei Open in 2010, carded three-over-par (75) on the last day for an aggregate of 14-under (274), just enough to give him one shot victory.

He kept $225,000 of the prize money, taking his season's earnings to $449,167. From an impoverished family Siddikur was forced to leave school at an early age and started working as a ball boy at Kurmitola Golf Club before being promoted to a caddie. There he learned the game with a makeshift seven iron head stuck onto a piece of metal rod. He turned pro in 2007 and won four titles in the Professional Golfer's Tour of India in the next three years before landing the biggest prize–the Brunei Open in 2010. The ace golfer has inspired players to excel in a sport that is considered "a rich man's game' by many in the country. ■

A Fallen Hero



Mohammad Ashraful PHOTO: STAR FILE

When Mohammad Ashraful admitted to match-fixing during the 2013 Bangladesh Premier League, Mushfiqur Rahim called it a "loss of pride" for the Bangladesh cricket team. Here is a batsman who scored the fastest fifty in Test among any batsman in the world and scored the fastest fifty in the ODI and T-20 international among any Bangladeshi batsman and till date holds the record of the youngest player to score a hundred in a Test match. He provided the entertainment quotient that turned heads towards Bangladesh, be it the unbeaten 158 against India in 2004, the magnificent 100 against Australia in 2005 triggering a huge upset, or the innovative 87 against South Africa in the 2007 World Cup. When he made a comeback in 2013 after being dropped due to poor form, he made 190 against Sri Lanka. Ashraful, who has been in the eye of the storm ever since his confessional statement to the Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) about his involvement not only in this year's BPL but allegedly also in international games for the country, admitted that he was one of seven people who had been charged with match-fixing in the BPL. Fans felt that he let the entire country and the sport down. How history will evaluate Ashraful remains to be seen.