



PHOTO: BPJA  
Bangladesh swimmer Shahjahan Ali (C) cheers while his countryman Niaz Ali (L) waves the national flag following their gold and bronze medal achievements respectively in the men's 50-metre breaststroke event of the 10th SA Games in Colombo on Wednesday.

## Swimmers save blushes



SPORTS REPORTER from Colombo

Bangladesh made an indifferent start to the final day's swimming competition at the 10th SA Games here yesterday, but Shahjahan Ali Rony's triumph in the 50m breaststroke turned the tide at the Sugathadasa Indoor Stadium Swimming Pool for the gold-starved nation.

Shahjahan won a gold and Niaz Ahmed a bronze, the duo inspiring the whole team as Dolly Akhter and Rubel Rana went on to win silver medals in the 50m women's breaststroke and men's backstroke events respectively later.

Dolly clocked 36.14s, behind Sri Lanka's 15-year-old Mayumi Raheem who won her third gold while Bangladesh's Mahfuza Khatun won the bronze.

Rubel took 28.40s, behind Indian Arjun Muralidharan who broke the Games record with timing of 28.28s.

Shahjahan was also part of the men's 4x100m medley relay team that finished second behind India in the final swimming event of the Games but the jury disqualified the Bangladesh and Pakistan teams as Sri Lanka and Nepal won silver and bronze.

Bangladesh women's team finished fourth in the 4x100m medley relay.

The results of the day's first three events were as depressing as it could have been as Rubel Rana finished last among six competitors in the men's 400m individual medley, Kamal Hossain fifth in the men's 200m freestyle and Sabura Khatun came eighth and last in the women's

200m freestyle. Bangladesh returned with a haul of 15 swimming medals (1-6-9). Following is the break-up of swimming medalists:

Men's: Shahjahan Ali Rony (gold 50m breaststroke, silver 100m breaststroke); Jewel Ahmed (silver 50 & 100m butterfly); Niaz Ali (bronze 50, 100 & 200m breaststroke); Nazrul Islam (bronze 50m freestyle); Rubel Rana (silver, bronze 200m IM); Rezaul Karim (bronze 100m freestyle); Rezaul Karim, Nazrul Islam, Kamal Hossain, Rafiqul Islam (silver 4x100m freestyle relay).

Women's: Dolly Akhter (silver 50m breaststroke, bronze 200m breaststroke); Mahfuza Akhter (bronze 50 and 100m breaststroke).

**KARATE**  
As losing finalists, Bangladesh won two bronze medals in karate, Jaw Prue in female individual kata and the men's team in male kata team event.

**BOXING**  
The boxing competition ended Tuesday night with Bangladesh

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### MEDAL TABLE

Country	G	S	B
India	68	38	16
Pakistan	20	24	29
Sri Lanka	15	31	44
Nepal	4	5	16
Bangladesh	1	10	20
Afghanistan	0	1	6
Bhutan	0	0	4
Maldives	0	0	0

## Hopes high for Mahfuz

### Track and field events start today



AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

The track at the Sugathadasa Stadium will come alive today when the athletics competition, the jewel in the crown of the 10th South Asian Games, gets underway.

The Games have seen some ordinary performances in the last few days in different disciplines but top Asian athletes will grace the four-day track and field events with spotlights on Sri Lanka's sprint queen Susanthika Jayasinghe and Indian long jumper Anju Bobby George.

As both the female athletes

attempt to recover their form after injuries, Bangladeshi competitors will keep their fingers crossed to win their first gold medal since 1995.

Mahub Alam won the last athletics gold for Bangladesh when he won the 200m sprint at Madras 1995 and followed it up with a silver after a painful photo finish at Kathmandu 1999. The male athletes find blank at the Islamabad Games two year ago but the team management is pinning hopes on 110m hurdler Mahfuza Rahman Mithu to break the jinx.

Coach Kitab Ali thinks that the squad will fare better than the one silver and two bronze medals in Pakistan.

"Our target is to win more medals than we did in Pakistan (one silver and one bronze).

"There is little chance for us in the men's sprints but the 4x100m relay team are better prepared," the coach added during yesterday training session at the main venue.

However, he was hopeful that the 'young and talented' Mahfuz is motivated to go for top honours in the 110m hurdles. The Bangladesh Air Force hurdler has a best timing of 14.10s (manual).

"If we add 0.25s to this and compare it with electronic timing, Mahfuz still looks good as the last Games gold was won in 14.34s. I wish the others have not done better than this," the coach hoped about the hurdler, who will be in action tomorrow.

Bangladesh compete in three events today, rookie Ali Amin in

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PHOTO: BPJA  
Bangladesh swimmer Dolly Akhter flashes a smile after winning the silver medal in the 50-metre breaststroke event of the 10th SA Games in Colombo on Wednesday.



### Did U Know?

The world's first football club - Sheffield Football Club - was founded in 1857 by Colonel Nathaniel Cresswick and Major William Priest, two British Army officers.



**Imran Khan**  
(Former Pakistan cricket captain)  
"Darrell Hair is one of those characters, when he wears the white umpire's coat, he metamorphoses into a mini Hitler."

### BCB Academy start brightly

SPORTS REPORTER

The BCB National Academy team thrived on two half centuries by Nazmus Sadat and Zahirul Islam to make a bright start on the first day of the second and final four-day match against a Pakistan Academy side at Multan yesterday.

At stumps, the visiting side scored 241 for five wickets in 92 overs with Nadif Chowdhury (42) and Shuvo (0) batting.

Despite skipper Mehrab

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### Wari beat Uttara

UNB, Dhaka

Wari Club beat Uttara Hockey Club by 2-1 goals in the opening match of the Green Delta Insurance First Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Taufur Rahman and Raju Sarkar scored in the 4th and 56th minutes respectively for the winners while Bappi in the 47th minute for the losers.

Today's matches: Dhaka Wanderers Club vs Police AC (2:30 pm) and Farashganj SC vs Combined SC (4:15 pm) at the same venue.

## BCB investigation on



SPORTS REPORTER

The fact-finding committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday quizzed Bangladesh cricket team coach Dav Whatmore, manager Shafiqul Haq Hira and stand-in captain Khaled Mashud in an effort to unearth true events that transpired in the recently concluded Africa trip.

Board general secretary Mahbul Anam led the fact-finding team that included member Khondokar Jamiluddin and CEO Mahmudur Rahman, and after the marathon meeting at the board's management office in Gulshan, Rahman said that the discussion helped a lot to clear some burning issues.

"Definitely there were some problems in the Zimbabwe and Kenya tours and that's why we met with the concerned parties to point out where the problems lie. But at the moment I can't say anything. Our job is to get all the information and then prepare a report for the next board meeting," said the BCB CEO.

He however said that coach Whatmore, who is under scrutiny for a reported religious slur and has been branded for maintaining an unhealthy relationship with his charges in the newspapers during the recent African trip, has admitted that 'he could have handled some issues differently than the way he did' in the recent past tours and on other occasions.

But Rahman did not elaborate. "We had a very open discussion with Dav and also with the others.

Anybody can make mistakes and of course he (Whatmore) is also not out of it. But after this warm exchange of views he has realised that he could have handled some issues in different ways," Rahman added.

"What we realised after the meeting with them was that training and other facilities for the team is not up to the standard," he informed.

It was learnt that the committee will submit a recommendation for a specialist batting and bowling coach for the team.

Rahman declined to comment on the alleged remark of Whatmore in Zimbabwe that hurt the religious sentiment of the national cricketers. But a source in the board however said that a decision has been

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## Cruciani might coach Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER from Colombo

Argentine coach Diego Cruciani accepted the fact calmly that Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will not renew his contract further.

After hearing the BFF decision from this correspondent on Tuesday night at the Trans Asia hotel lobby, the 42-year-old who coached Bangladesh for 13 months, said he would feel sorry to go out with the jobless than half done.

"I have always said a new coach needs at least three years to give result. I feel sorry that I have not received more time. But I accept it because officials need results and that is what I have failed to give," Cruciani told The Daily Star.

"Under my tenure, the national team have showed glimpses of attractive football and I hope they improve. But they need a good coach. Most importantly, they need a trainer to keep the footballers fit.

"My first destination will be home but there is possibility I would return to Bangladesh," he said. "(Ashrafuddin Ahmed) Chunu talked with me a week before we came to Colombo, showing his club, Abahani's, interest in me in case the BFF parts with me.

"I'll consider it because in this small period of time, Bangladesh has become like a second home."

Cruciani informed that he has offers from Europe, Argentina and Mexican clubs.

"But I will join Abahani on one condition. I will bring two Argentine players, one quality striker because there is not a good striker in Bangladesh who could score many goals, and an attacking midfielder. I would settle for nothing less because big spending clubs need success," he added.

The Bangladesh football and table tennis teams were due to fly out of Colombo after Wednesday midnight for home. They are expected to land in Dhaka this afternoon. The badminton squad were the first to leave Colombo on Monday after ending their campaign in the 10th SA Games.

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## Zia & Niaz doing well

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi Grand Masters Niaz Mursheed and Ziaur Rahman secured three points after the end of the fourth round in the IGB 3rd Dato Arthur Tan Malaysian Open Chess Championship in Kuala Lumpur.

Niaz won 2 games and drew as many while Zia won 3 games and lost one game. IWM Rani Hamid earned 2.5 points while FM Mehdi Hasan Parag earned 2 points after 4th round.

Six players were sharing the lead in the points table with 3.5 points each.

A total of 85 players including 10 Grandmasters from different countries are participating in the event.



PHOTO: AFP  
Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq arrives at the Lord's cricket ground for a training session with a police escort on Wednesday.

## BCB backs Pakistan

REUTERS, Dhaka

Bangladesh became the latest Asian nation on Tuesday to pledge their support to the Pakistan cricket team following a ball-tampering row which led to the fourth Test against England to be forfeited.

Bangladesh Cricket Board president Ali Asghar said he had contacted his Pakistani counterpart Shaharyar Khan to express his backing on the issue.

"I told him (Shaharyar) that we are with Pakistan as they had supported us on many occasions," Asghar told the reporters.

"I have gone through the whole incident and found nothing wrong in Pakistan's reaction."

On Sunday, umpires Darrell Hair of Australia and Billy Doctrove from West Indies decided that Pakistan had forfeited the match when they failed to take the field after the tea interval.

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## Khulna qualify for last four



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet.

Defending champions Narayanganj became the first team to confirm their semifinal berth in the Jubok Phone National Football Cham-pionship when they registered a solitary goal victory against Khulna at the Sylhet Stadium yesterday.

Abul Hossain struck the all-important goal in the 26th minute to help the holders record their second consecutive win after 7-1 thrashing of Joypurhat in the first match of the Group B.

In the keenly contested match Abul headed a Jumratul Hossain Mithu cross home to separate the teams as well as confirm his team's last four berth.

Abul was very close to scoring his second goal after five minutes but opponent goalkeeper Iran Sheikh salvaged his team at the cost of a

corner. The striker also missed a golden opportunity in the 54th minute when he was unsuccessful from the penalty shot.

After the breather Khulna made one attack after another but failed to break the packed Narayanganj defense.

Mithu of Narayanganj was adjudged man of the match.

**TEAMS**

**Narayanganj:** Mohammad Ali, Shahidul Islam Dulal, Quazi Nazrul Islam, Omar Faruque, Pradip Kumar Shaha Mantu, Abul Hossain, Zumratul Hossain Mithu, Hanif Prodhon, Sujon, Zakir, Rajon and Mithun Chowdhury.  
**Khulna:** Iran Sheikh, Mashlul Kabir Bappi, Ranjit Kumar Paul Liton, SM Shahinur Rahman Shahin, Ashraf Hossain, Luthfur Rahman Nayan, Prantosh Kumar Dass, Aminul, Quazi Mansurul Alam Ripon, GM Sumon, Kabir Hossain and Khalid Saifullah.  
**Referee:** Azad Rahman.