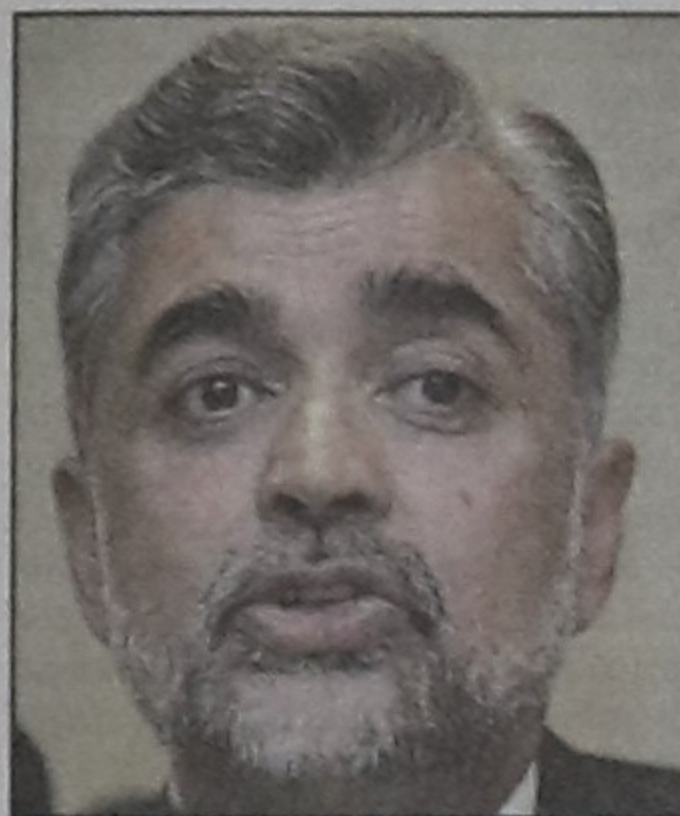




## Did U Know?

Football was introduced as a demonstration sport at the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens, and became an official Olympic sport at the London Games in 1908.



**Nasim Ashraf**  
(PCB chairman)  
"Bob (Woolmer) will be remembered in Pakistan cricket and hopefully his legacy will continue. His memory is still fresh because his contribution to Pakistan cricket was immense."



**BTV**  
Bangladesh v Ireland  
Second ODI  
Live from 9:30am

**ESPN**  
Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm



## Tri-series in June

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) was reformed by their Indian and Pakistani counterparts to hold the much-desired one-day triangular tournament in June this year.

BCB's cricket operations committee chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu informed it after returning home yesterday after attending the International Cricket Council (ICC) board meeting in Dubai.

"Everything is okay about the triangular tournament as I have had a discussion with Indian officials during the meeting. It is all but confirmed that the tournament will take place in June," said Lipu.

The meet was originally scheduled for May, but the Board of Control for Cricket in India deferred it by a month as it is clashing with the Indian Premier League (IPL) which kicks off on April 18.

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## BFF, clubs to make joint announcement

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is expected to make a joint declaration today with the professional clubs about the transfers for the new season.

After a short meeting of the executive committee yesterday, the BFF high-ups announced that they will sit with the clubs before giving a fresh transfer date.

BFF president SA Sultan said they have received positive

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# Now it's a team rule!

**SPORTS REPORTER**



Ireland cricket team stayed away from any practice yesterday despite going into the second game of the three-match series on the back of a huge eight-wicket defeat at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today.

The visitors already expressed their concern over the immense heat after their first match defeat at the same venue and as a result, avoided training in the morning to regain some energy.

Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful also admitted that the sultry weather was a big issue behind Ireland's meek surrender in the opening match and they have to brave the heat first if they want to be competitive in the remaining games.

"I must say that they were very disciplined in all departments in the first match but the weather was terrible for them. But on their day they can be dangerous so there is no scope to be complacent

only after one comfortable victory," observed Ashraful.

The Tigers presence in the practice at the Mirpur indoors yesterday also reflected the feeling of their skipper. Coach Jamie Siddons conducted a short training with his batsmen only even though his top-order showed some character in the first game.

Was this seriousness for next month's tour to Pakistan? "No. Our main focus is to win the series first. We are not thinking of Pakistan right now but the win against Ireland will definitely help us get back some confidence before another tough tour," responded Ashraful.

Bangladesh came up with a new term in their book, which is 'team rule'. And what they believe was that they failed to apply it during the last series against formidable South Africa but made use of it in the first game against Ireland on Tuesday.

"As per the team rule, only the first three batsmen can play shots freely, in other words, they can play over the top. But for the remaining batsmen, it is considered a crime, as they have to avoid

any kind of risk.

"I followed it in the first game against Ireland and got the result. I believe we would be competitive against the top-ranked sides if we maintained this rule," Ashraful explained.

And that was the reason left-handed opener Tamim Iqbal and number three Aftab Ahmed were not blamed for their rushed shots in the first game.

"You can say we gave Tamim free license to play his natural game because of the rule," he said.

Chief selector Rafiqul Alam was also excited by the new method and he believed they will get some results if the players followed it religiously.

"The method (team's rule) was desperately needed against South Africa but it didn't happen. I am happy they at least followed it in the first game against Ireland. As much as we follow the rules, we will be more successful in the international cricket," said the former national player.

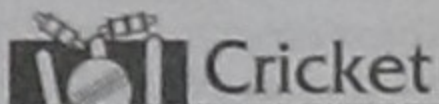
"I will be really happy if they maintain it in the remaining two games against Ireland," he added.



EYEING A SERIES WIN? Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful (C), coach Jamie Siddons (L) and fielding coach Mohammad Salahuddin look at something during a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

# MSC, Biman on top

## Ton-up Mithun steers BKSP



**SPORTS REPORTER**

Mohammedan Sporting Club and Bangladesh Biman shared joint lead in the Premier Cricket League table with hundred percent record after the fifth round ended yesterday.

Mohammedan thrashed Sonargaon Cricket Stadium by eight wickets in a one-sided match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium with captain Manjurul Islam and Pakistani leg-spinner Aqeel Arshad setting the tone for yet another big victory for the local giants, who had lost all their five group matches in the Twenty20 competition before the tournament proper.

Biman survived a scare to record a last-over victory against Surjo Torun while Mohammed Mithun's sparkling century throttled BKSP to upset Victoria Sporting Club by 80 runs in other matches.

### MOHAMMEDAN-SONARGAON

Left-arm seamer Manju bowled an incredible spell of 7-3-5-4 with the new ball after he had elected to bowl first while Aqeel also grabbed four wickets as Mohammedan booked Sonargaon for 139 inside 44 overs.

Elias Sunny defied the rival attack with a 103-ball half-century that featured four hits to the fence.

Imrul Kayes (4) and Rashedul Haque (22) were the only Mohammedan casualties on way to 142-2, shaped by opener Imtiaz Hossain's 80 runs.

Imtiaz, who played undefeated 92 balls, hit a dozen boundaries as Mohammedan stormed to the

target in 29.4 overs to give both the teams the chance to take a welcome shelter on a scorching summer afternoon.

Former national star Manju was adjudged the man-of-the-match.

### BIMAN-SURJO TORUN

Recent national one-day discard Mosharraf Hossain starred in Biman's three-wicket victory at BKSP as Surjo Torun once again struggled to score fast.

After slow batting cost them a match in the previous round, the inserted Torun crawled to 179-9 in 50 overs with Habibul Bashar making 42. The former national captain played 80 deliveries and struck three fours before being trapped in front by Mosharraf's left-arm spin.

Mosharraf, having taken 2-35 from ten overs, scored an invaluable run-a-ball 33 not out as Biman reached 183-7 with three balls to spare.

Nafis Iqbal, however, anchored the Biman innings after the early loss of his opening partner Javed Omar. Nafis made the only fifty of

the match (55 off 101 balls) while Mahbubul Alam contributed unbeaten 21 during a match-winning eighth wicket stand of 43 with man-of-the-match Mosharraf.

### BKSP-VICTORIA

At Fatullah Stadium, opener Mithun cracked 11 fours and two sixes in his 125-ball 116 while No. 5 Nasir Hossain made a quickfire 85 off 88 deliveries with six fours and two sixes as BKSP amassed 267 for six after electing to bat on way to their third victory.

Victoria looked comfortable at 113-2 but the pressure of scoring nearly eight runs per over (155 from 20 overs) told on the batting as they were spun out for 187 in 45.1 overs.

Left-arm spinner Tapash Ghosh ran havoc taking four for 36 from ten overs but Mithun was adjudged man-of-the-match for scoring the fourth hundred of the league.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

SONARGAON: 139 all out in 43.3 overs (Mostafizur 11, Sharifullah 19, Elias 50, Ezzaz 26, extras 18).

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STANDINGS						
Teams	Played	Won	Lost	Drawn/Tied/NR	Points	
Biman	5	5	0	0	10	
Mohammedan	5	5	0	0	10	
Abahani	5	4	0	1	9	
BKSP	5	3	1	1	7	
City Club	5	3	2	0	6	
Old DOHS	5	3	2	0	6	
Surjo Torun	5	2	3	0	4	
Young Pegasus	5	1	4	0	2	
Victoria SC	5	1	4	0	2	
Partex	5	1	4	0	2	
Kalabagan	5	1	4	0	2	
Sonargaon	5	0	5	0	0	

## Hassan denies comments against clubs

**SPORTS REPORTER**

National football captain Hassan Al Mamun yesterday accused a national daily of damaging his image by misquoting him earlier this week.

The newspaper quoted Hassan saying: "Our football is a hostage to the clubs. The government doesn't care much about sports. The people who are responsible for football's demise should be jailed."

Hassan's words published by the newspaper led the eight professional clubs of Dhaka sign a joint statement announcing that none of these clubs will sign the Muktiyoddha Sangsad fullback for the coming season because Hassan's remarks are humiliating for the clubs.

Talking to the Daily Star last night, Hassan said he was surprised for being misquoted.

"I never said such things because I still believe that the clubs are our real guardians," Hassan told.

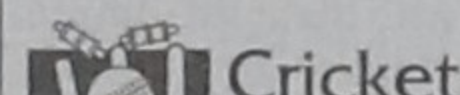
"What I actually said was that the last time most of the footballers received payment was in 2005 for the B. League. For the past three years, we have been living miserably. This is like violation of human rights. Who will give a solution to this type of crime?"

"I was also surprised to see that not a single club official even bothered to call me and check the news."

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## 'Shocked & disgusted'

### Hair reinstated in elite panel of umpires



**AFP, Karachi**

Former Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq said he was "shocked and disgusted" by controversial umpire Darrell Hair's reinstatement, as a former top official described the move as an insult.

Inzamam clashed with Hair in the forfeited Oval Test between Pakistan and England in August 2006, which led to the Australian umpire's ban from standing in top-level matches.

"I am terribly shocked and disgusted at the news," Inzamam said from India, where he is featuring in the Indian Cricket League.

Hair was recalled to the elite panel of umpires on Tuesday after the International Cricket Council (ICC) decided to reinstate him in its board meeting held in Dubai.

"I would blame the Pakistan Cricket Board for bowing down in Hair's case and no player will now stand against injustices at international level," Inzamam said.

"Hair was at fault but he is reinstated like a hero."

Hair and his West Indian colleague Billy Doctrove penalised

Inzamam's Pakistan five runs for alleged ball-tampering, enraging the captain who refused to take field after tea on day four.

As a result the match was awarded to England on a forfeit, the first such result in the history of the game. Inzamam was later cleared of ball-tampering but received a four-match ban for bringing the

"After the Oval Test it was the ICC which blamed Hair and now the same ICC has reinstated him," said Inzamam.

"ICC botched up the matter in 2006 and it has botched up the matter now. I think Malcolm Speed has given a gift to an Australian colleague before he retires from the post of chief executive of the ICC."

After his demotion, Hair was restricted to officiating matches involving minor nations. He began a racial discrimination claim against the ICC but dropped the case and was on a rehabilitation programme organised by the body. Inzamam said Hair's honesty was in doubt after he offered to resign in return for payment of 500,000 pounds (one million dollars).

"How honest Hair is can be gauged by the fact that he asked for money to retire," said Inzamam.

Shahryar Khan, PCB chairman at the time of the Oval forfeit, said Hair's reinstatement was "a slap on the face of Pakistan cricket."

"I am angry and absolutely shocked. ICC has taken the decision at once and it is an insult to Pakistan cricket," said Khan, who was removed two months after the incident.



INZAMAMUL HAQ

game into disrepute.

He said Hair's reinstatement reflected double standards in the ICC, saying the world governing body, led by outgoing chief executive Malcolm Speed, had "botched" its handling of the situation.

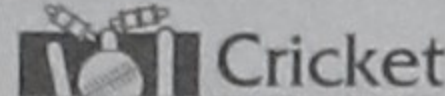
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LOOKING FOR HEAVIER BATS? Two Irish cricketers examine bats at a sports gear shop in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Flemo wants final ton



**AFP, Wellington**

New Zealand batsman Stephen Fleming is aiming to end his illustrious 111-Test career with a big score against England in the third and deciding Test starting on Saturday.

The former New Zealand skipper, who made his debut in 1984, knows he can lift his career Test batting average to 40 if he hits 113 runs in two innings on what is expected to be a placid Napier pitch.

But he says he is more motivated by trying to secure New Zealand's first home series win against England in 24 years than his personal statistics.

"It's not about me getting a badge of honour with 40 on my chest to wear for the rest of my life, I'm not that fazed," he told reporters in Napier Wednesday.

"But if I can get it up over 40 it means I've scored another hundred and we've got a score that enables us to put pressure on England."

The elegant left-hander will be remembered more for his astute captaincy in 80 Tests than his batting feats, considerable though they were.

He has often expressed frustra-

tion -- shared by New Zealand fans -- that he has not been able to convert more good starts into centuries.

Fleming's 7,047 Test runs have included 44 half-centuries but he has passed 100 only nine times, and he admits he has not achieved as much with the bat as he desired.

"I often care too much. If I can play free and release the shackles... sometimes when looking

achieves statistically great things," he added, speaking on the 14th anniversary of his Test debut against India.

The 34-year-old lost the captaincy to Daniel Vettori last year after announcing he was retiring from one-day internationals.

Fleming won't be completely disappearing from the game after signing a lucrative Indian Premier League contract. But he plans to avoid looking back when he walks away from the Test arena for the last time in Napier.

"I'm looking forward to getting into life after cricket and setting a new set of goals that become more important," he said.

He is also attempting to keep the emotions at bay until the match is over.

"What I've tried to do this series is try and be very deadpan about it and treat it for what it is," he said.

Fleming was always an adventurous captain and he is hoping the deciding Test will be played in the same spirit.

"It's going to be hard toil for the bowlers but a lot can happen in five days. I'd love to finish with a result either way," he said.

"A draw wouldn't be a tame finish, but it wouldn't be quite right."



STEPHEN FLEMING

back, that's how I'm played my best innings," he said.

"But through captaincy and the responsibility, it's not always that easy to do."

"I've never been able to gear myself up to be the player that