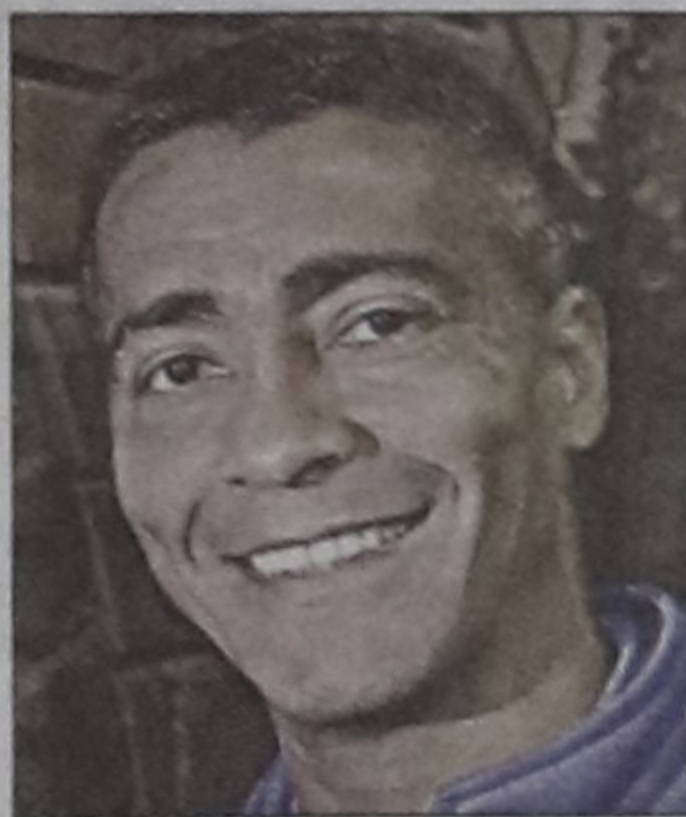




## Did U Know?

The only southpaw to win a world heavyweight title was Michael Moore who defeated Evander Holyfield in the 12th round in 1994.



**Romario**  
(Former Brazilian international striker)  
"I'm not playing any more. I no longer have the form. It's over for me."  
While announcing his retirement.



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

## Akhtar, Asif ignored

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan axed fast bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif from the team for the first two one-day matches against Bangladesh next month, the chief selector said Sunday.

Akhtar is facing a disciplinary committee for criticising the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) over contracts while Asif faces fitness problems.

"Akhtar is due to appear before a disciplinary committee so he was not considered while Asif has not been cleared on fitness by the team management," chief selector Salahuddin Ahmed said.

The 32-year-old Akhtar appears before a PCB disciplinary committee on Tuesday. He faces charges of violating the code of conduct by criticising the board.

Akhtar accused the PCB of "dual standards" in awarding the players' central contract from which he was left out. He was instead given a retainer's contract which he refused to accept.

The 25-year-old Asif has not played since featuring in the one-day series against South Africa in October last year. He suffered an elbow injury which was operated on in Australia in December.

Paceman Umar Gul was named to the squad after recovering from back trouble which forced him to leave the tour of India in November last year.

Ahmed said the 16-man squad  
SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

## Zia stays atop

SPORTS REPORTER

Ziaur Rahman remained atop the table but the Bangladesh Grandmaster was sharing lead with six other players at the end of the seventh round in the 3rd Kolkata Open Grandmaster Chess Tournament at Gorky Sadan, Kolkata yesterday.

Zia, on 5.5 points, drew with co-leaders IM Saptarshi Roy of India. Other players on 5.5 points are Indian GMs Krishnan Sasikiran, Koneru Humpy and Sandipan Chanda, GM Czech Republic's GM Viktor Laznicka and Vietnam's GM Nguyen Ahn Dung.

Among other Bangladeshi players, GM Abdullah Al Rakib was at second place with five points, followed by GM Niaz Murshed and IM Enamul Hossain Rajib (4.5 points), Mohammed Javed (3.5), FM Sheikh Nasir Ahmed, FM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar, Mohammad Ali (3), FMs Mehdi Hasan Parag and Taibur Rahman (2.5).

## Youngsters rescue MSC

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Rokibul Hasan and Suhrawardi Shuvo showed rare brand of patience and temperament as Mohammad Sporting Club regained the top spot in the Premier Cricket League with a well-merited four-wicket victory against Biman at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Leading paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza looked all set to bail Biman out like the previous match, when he outgunned another popular outfit Abahani at the same venue, but Rokibul and Shuvo took away his early initiatives during a 110-run seventh wicket stand to removed Biman from the top of the table.

Out-of-favour paceman Tapash Baisya set the tone for Mohammedan when his four-wicket haul helped them to restrict the big-spending Biman for 174-8 in the allotted 50 overs despite Tamim Iqbal's 113-ball 65.

Mashrafe, who had to leave the

field after an opening burst as he was feeling uncomfortable and failed to complete his ten-over quota, however, demolished the Mohammedan top order by taking four wickets to revive the hope.

The national vice-captain struck twice in an over to remove national and Mohammedan skipper Mohammad Ashraf and Pakistani Aqeel Arshad to see the Motiheel outfit tottering at 65 for six.

It seemed that the match was over for Mohammedan but an unexpected resistance came from Shuvo and rookie national cricketer Rokibul who avoided risks to concentrate on rotating the strike and keep the scoreboard moving.

Left-handed Shuvo, the under-19 skipper, played some rash shots during his 90-ball 54 that featured two boundaries but he was ultimately adjudged man of the match for his match-winning knock after taking two wickets with his left-arm spin.

On the other hand, Rokibul looked solid and batted as the situation demanded to remain not out on 55 off 88 deliveries that

contained only one boundary.

While the young batter showed application in his batting, it was disappointing to see the way his senior national team colleagues being dismissed in reply to a moderate total.

The most frustrating was the dismissal of Ashraf who lifted the bat only to see the stumps dismantled for seven while Aftab Ahmed offered a simple return catch to Mashrafe after reaching 19 off 26 balls.

Imtiaz Hossain was the first victim of Mashrafe when Mosharrif caught him at point while another new ball bowler Mahbubul Alam got an edge of Zunaed Siddiqui to wicketkeeper Sajjad Kadir.

Anwar Hossain looked well as he smashed four boundaries but was bowled by left-arm spinner Mosharrif.

Earlier, Biman won a good toss to bat first on a pitch where batting second is always challenging but they failed to take the advantage. Except Tamim and captain Sanwar

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



Mohammedan all-rounder Suhrawardi Shuvo takes off for a single during his 110-run match-winning stand with Rokibul Hasan (not in picture) against Bangladesh Biman in the Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

## Big hitting day

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Mushfiqur Rahim and Rashed Hanif scored centuries on an otherwise high-scoring day in the Premier League yesterday.

Bangladesh's Test wicketkeeper Rahim, who has been dropped from the one-day side due to his poor show with the bat, followed up his previous game's match-winning 81 with 145 off 134 balls -- the biggest hundred of the season -- during BKSP's comfortable 96-run win over Kalabagan.

Pakistani all-rounder Hanif, despite scoring 114 off 130 balls, ended up in the losing side as Partex went down to City Club by two wickets in a last-ball thriller.

Like BKSP and City, Surjo Torun kept their Super League hopes alive with a 36-run run over Young Pegasus in their ninth round match.

Abahani, meanwhile, returned to winning ways with a bang when the defending champions thrashed second-from-bottom Sonargaon

Cricketers by 105 runs after defeats to Victoria and Biman in the last two rounds.

Abahani broke their own record of the ongoing league's highest total when they amassed 325-5

run-a-ball 77 and Jahurul Islam's equally combative 84 off 82 balls set a launching pad for Ziaur Rahman to come in at number seven and settle for an explosive knock.

The pace bowler struck seven sixes and two fours in a cameo 19-ball unbeaten 60 as Abahani took the match away from their rivals, who were skittled out for 220 in 46.2 overs despite a good start.

Mustafiz (55) and Anru (42) added 98 runs for the opening wicket and Zia, not given the new ball, was called as the fifth bowler.

The man-of-the-match got immediate success by removing Mustafiz in the 18th over and broke yet another promising partnership between Anru and Pakistani batsman Fahadullah (42).

Zia scalped the two openers for 30 runs while Arafat Sunny (3-43) and Tushar Imran (2-34) mopped up the tail.

At BKSP, Nazmul Hossain Milon played another swashbuckling knock of 54 off just 18 balls as Surjo Torun successfully defended their 238-8. Man-of-the-match Milon

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



MUSHFIQUR RAHIM...145 n.o.

after electing to bat in BKSP.

Shahriar Nafees was the only one who missed out on the run-feast when the national cricketer was dismissed for five.

Big-hitter Mahbubul Karim's

## GP Academy Cup from April 4

SPORTS REPORTER

The Grameenphone Academy Cup cricket will kick off with a four-day match between GP-BCB National Academy team and South Africa national academy team at Jessore from April 4.

Academy operations manager and former Bangladesh skipper Khaled Mahmud announced two different 14-member squads for the first two four-dayers against the visitors during a press conference at a local hotel yesterday.

Nasiruddin Faruque has been named captain of the National Academy inclusive of six national players in Mehrib Hossain, wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim, Talha Jubair, Nazmul Hossain, Enamul Haque and Sajidul Islam.

After the two-match series, the two teams will get involved in a triangular one-day series also involving Pakistan before the two sub-continent teams lock horns in a two-match four-day series.

During the five weeks, matches will be played at five different venues across the country -- Jessore, Khulna, Chittagong, Dhaka and Bogra.

Although the press conference was called for the tournament, the long-pending National Academy building and the existing problems about development got the special attentions during the briefing.

Grameenphone had struck a five-year deal with BCB worth Tk 5.25 crore one year earlier to build a two-storied Academy building at Mirpur but it remained in the drawing board for too long.

"We are eagerly waiting to see our dream come true about the Academy," said Rubaba Dowla, director, Marketing Division of

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

## McKenzie secures draw

Cricket

AFP, Chennai

Neil McKenzie continued his amazing comeback to the South African side with an unbeaten century as the high-scoring first Test against India ended in a draw here on Sunday.

The 32-year-old followed his 94 in the first innings with 155 not out as South Africa piled up 331-5 in their second knock before umpires called off the match at the Chidambaram Stadium.

A draw in the first game of the three-Test series was the result of a heartless pitch for the bowlers that produced 1,498 runs for just 25 wickets over the five days.

The run feast saw South Africa pile up 540 in the first innings and India replied with 627 on the back of a brilliant 319 from Virender Sehwag and 111 by Dravid.

McKenzie, who was recalled to the Test squad in January after being ignored by the selectors for four years, hit 13 boundaries and a six in his fourth Test century.

He had scored 226 during a world record opening partnership of 415 with captain Graeme Smith in the previous Test against Bangladesh in Chittagong earlier this month.

Smith said his team will take a lot of positives from the match ahead of the remaining two Tests in Ahmedabad from April 3 and Kanpur from April 11.

"We've got some really good cricket under our belt over the last five days," the South African captain said.

"Our batters had a good Test match. I was also pretty comfortable with the way we bowled even though Virender played a tremendous knock."

"Our bowlers have an immense amount of talent and they are learning to bowl in different conditions around the world."

"There are a lot of positives from this Test match and hopefully if we get into a good position in Ahmedabad, we can be a bit more ruthless."

Indian captain Anil Kumble paid warm tribute to Sehwag who smashed the fastest recorded triple-century in history.

"The way Viru batted, he not only batted sessions, he also did most of the scoring," said Kumble.

"The conditions were very tough for the bowlers with the flat wicket and the heat. We expected the wicket to deteriorate and

thought there would be a bit more pace but I think the rain in the last week hampered preparations."

Sehwag, who was named man-of-the-match, wished India had won the Test.

"It was a good Test for me but unfortunately we could not win the match," he said.

"I never planned to play like that. I just wanted to bat the full day and make best use of this track. I hope I can continue the same form for the rest of the series."

McKenzie and his overnight partner Hashim Amla, who resumed at 131-1, batted through most of the morning session to dent India's chances of forcing an unlikely win.

Amla, South Africa's first innings hero with 159, survived two dropped catches to make 81 before he was dismissed five minutes

before lunch.

McKenzie and Amla put on 157 for the second wicket, but the hosts have themselves to blame for allowing the long partnership.

Amla was on 55 when he topped a sweep off Harbhajan Singh but Shanthakumaran Sreesanth could not hold the ball when running in from deep square-leg.

Amla moved to 72 when he drove seamer Rudra Pratap Singh uppishly but the bowler failed to latch on to a sharp return catch.

Jacques Kallis helped McKenzie add 54 for the third wicket on either side of lunch before Harbhajan cheered 15,000 home fans with the wickets of Kallis and Ashwell Prince in 11 balls midway through the afternoon session.

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard of the first Test  
SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



TOO GOOD FOR BATTING: South Africa opener Neil McKenzie off-drives the ball during his unbeaten knock of 155 against India on the fifth and final day of the first Test at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai yesterday. The match produced a staggering 1498 runs in three innings including a magnificent 319 by Indian opener Virender Sehwag.

## M United thrash Villa

Gunners stage a stunning comeback

AFP, London

Manchester United swept Aston Villa aside to move closer to retaining the Premier League trophy on a day when Arsenal had to produce an extraordinary fightback to prevent their fading title hopes from being extinguished.

The Gunners battled back from two goals down with ten men to end a five-match winless run with a last-gasp 3-2 victory at Bolton.

But their efforts did not reduce the six-point gap between them and a United side whose 4-0 defeat of Villa was brilliantly orchestrated by Cristiano Ronaldo.

The Portuguese winger started proceedings with his 35th goal of the season -- a cheeky backheel from ten yards out -- before providing the decisive passes that allowed Carlos Tevez and Wayne Rooney (twice) to net United's other goals.

"I thought the players reached a peak last week (in the 3-0 win over Liverpool) and that has continued today," United boss Sir Alex Ferguson said.

"They realise now it's a race to the line and we need consistency and real focus."

"We showed fantastic energy which is very pleasing considering most of them have been away on international duty and it was a heavy pitch."

In contrast to the ease with

which United demolished Villa, Arsenal needed a last-minute own goal by floyd Samuel to end their worst run of form in nine years.

In the day's other matches, Derby were condemned to relegation from the top flight by Birmingham's 3-1 win over Manchester City.

Derby could only draw 2-2 at home with Fulham, who look increasingly likely to join them in the Championship next season.

Arsenal's afternoon got off to a bad start when Matt Taylor headed Greter Steinsson's superb cross past Manuel Almunia.

Midfielder Abou Diaby was then shown a straight red card for a high challenge on Steinsson and Taylor doubled Bolton's lead just before

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

## Tendulkar unlikely for 2nd Test

AFP, Chennai

India's Sachin Tendulkar faces a race against time to be fit for the second Test against South Africa after aggravating a groin injury, captain Anil Kumble said on Sunday.

The star batsman, who needs 172 runs to take over West Indian Brian Lara as Test cricket's leading run-scorer, did not field for most of the final day's play in the first Test which ended in a draw here.

"Sachin aggravated a groin injury he picked up in Australia and also has an upset stomach, but hopefully he will be fit for the second Test," Kumble told reporters.

The second Test starts in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

Former Indian physiotherapist John Gloster had recommended a three-week rest for Tendulkar after the Australian tour ended on March 4.

The 34-year-old, however, declared himself fit for the South African series.

Tendulkar, who fell for zero in India's only innings here, has 11,782 runs from 147 Tests, second behind Lara's record tally of 11,953 runs.

The prolific Indian is already the top one-day batsman with 16,361 runs and holds the world record of 39 Test and 42 one-day centuries.



FOLLOW ME: Manchester United's Portuguese midfielder-turned-goalmachine Cristiano Ronaldo (L) celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal against Aston Vila during their Premiership match at Old Trafford on Saturday. It was Ronaldo's 35th goal of the season.

**Fm 89.6**

আজ দুপুর ২টা ১৫ মিনিটে  
উপস্থাপনা : RJ নুদরাত

এ সপ্তাহের বিষয়  
**প্রচার**

অতিথি  
**আলী যাকের**

radio  
**TODAY**  
Fm 89.6  
The Station of the Nation

আপনার প্রশ্ন অথবা অনুষ্ঠিত জানিয়ে  
SMS করুন ৮৯৬০ নম্বরে  
(knn question)  
ইমেইল করুন :  
knn@radiotodaydhaka.com  
পোস্ট বক্স : ৯০৩২ বনানী, ঢাকা  
ফোন করুন : ০১৮১৯২২৮৯৩০ (অনুষ্ঠান চলাকালীন)