



India opener Virender Sehwag square drives during his blistering 83 against England on the fourth day of the first Test at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

## Chennai Test on a knife-edge

Cricket

AFP, Chennai

Virender Sehwag smashed a quickfire 83 off 68 balls as India made a spirited start in their chase of a history-defying target in the first Test against England here on Sunday.

The hosts ended the fourth day's play at 131 for one in their second innings after being set 387 to win by England captain Kevin Pietersen, a target never achieved before on Indian soil.

England declared their second innings at 311-9 soon after tea, the total revolving around Andrew Strauss' second century in the match and 108 from Paul Collingwood.

The aggressive Sehwag plundered 11 boundaries and four sixes in a whirlwind opening stand of 117 with Gautam Gambhir, whose own contribution in the partnership was 29.

England broke through six overs before close when Sehwag was given leg-before by umpire Daryl Harper while trying to sweep off-spinner Graeme Swann.

Gambhir was unbeaten at stumps on 41 and Rahul Dravid was on two, with India needing a further 256 runs from 90 overs on the final day to take the lead in the two-Test series.

The highest fourth innings total to win a match on Indian soil is 276-5 by the West Indies at New Delhi's Ferozeshah Kotla ground during the 1987-88 season.

"I think we are in a good position to go for a win," said Sehwag. "But we must bat the full 90 overs tomorrow. We must not try to finish it off early. If we get three runs an over we will do it."

Sehwag, who scored India's highest individual score of 319 against South Africa at this ground in March, said he was disappointed not to be there

till stumps. "I felt bad that I did not get my hundred," he said. "The ball hit a spot and turned. I thought I would be lucky and the umpire would rule in my favour."

Sehwag responded to the stiff target with a spectacular blitz, smashing Steve Harmison over third man for six and then lofting left-arm spinner Monty Panesar twice over the boundary.

Sehwag reached his 18th Test fifty off 32 balls, and when the century stand with Gambhir came in the 18th over, he was himself on 73.

Left-handed Strauss, who made 123 in the first innings, scored 108 to become only the second Englishman after Graham Gooch to score two centuries in a Test against India.

Strauss emulated West Indian Everton Weekes, Duleep Mendis of Sri Lanka and Gary Kirsten of South Africa.

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## SAG camp from Jan 3

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) is going to introduce biomechanics tests for athletes ahead of the preparation camp for the 11th South Asian Games (SAG).

The camps will begin on January 3 at ten venues in Dhaka, confirmed a BOA source yesterday.

At the preliminary stage, athletes of 13 disciplines will attend residential camps. The other four disciplines -- table tennis, golf, wrestling and football -- will be added at latter stages for the Games, which is due to be held in Dhaka late next year or in early 2010. Among these four, football is not likely to start camp before February next year as the booters will be busy in domestic competitions.

The BOA source added that the biomechanics tests would be done to assess strength of the athletes and confirm whether they are able to reach the optimum level in six months.

Those who are potential will be included in the preparation camps immediately but the less potential ones would also be given chance. Upcoming and promising athletes, if failed to impress and book places for the SAG, would be sorted out for the 2012 Olympic Games.

The different federations have already sent the lists of athletes for the camp with karate surprisingly providing highest 72 names.

Karate is a discipline where Bangladesh have never won gold in any regional competition.

The archery, football, hockey and squash federations have yet to send their lists.

The BOA, meanwhile, has already asked judo, basketball, volleyball, badminton and cycling federations to begin campaigns to win votes from other participating countries for inclusion in the SAG. Each discipline will need at least three votes to be included in the 11th edition of the regional sports extravaganza.

The BOA has chosen ten venues for training: BKSP, Bangabandhu National Stadium, Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium, Mirpur Indoors and Swimming Complex, kabaddi and handball courts at the Outer Stadium, NSC Gymnasium, Woodenfloor Gymnasium and Dhanmondi Women's Complex.

Following are the disciplines to have sent number of athletes: athletics (55), boxing (33), handball (30), kabaddi (30), karate (72), shooting (48), swimming (35), taekwondo (48), weightlifting (16), ushu (40), golf (4) and wrestling (14).

## Stars miss out on big runs

SPORTS REPORTER



Imrul Kayes and Shakib Al Hasan missed out on big scores as Khulna dominated Dhaka on the first day of their ninth round National Cricket League match at the Khulna Divisional Stadium yesterday.

The hosts' innings could have gone into the second day had any of their top-order batsmen hung around for more time. Rather, they played pretty knocs and got their team to 355 all out in just 76.2 overs. In reply, Dhaka reached 38 for two at stumps with national captain Mohammad Ashraful unbeaten on 20 with Anamul Haq.

Barisal could have been in bigger trouble but ended on 244 all out in their first innings against hosts Chittagong, who ended the day on 51 for one. Away in Rajshahi, the match between the hosts and Sylhet was severely hampered by fog but play ended after Rajshahi were reeling on 56 for five after 30.3 overs.

**KHULNA-DHAKA**

An 82-run second wicket stand between Imrul Kayes and Sahagir Hossain put Khulna in control at lunch as they moved the score to 105 for one.

But Kayes played one shot too many and fell to Tigers teammate Mahbul Alam for

58 off 75 balls. Sahagir followed soon after and it was left to captain Tushar Imran and legspinner Marshall Ayub pegged the home side with four wickets each. Marshall took the bulk of the middle-order wickets with his canny leg-breaks but it was Mahbul who

of Tushar, the Khulna innings lost momentum as Mahbul and legspinner Marshall Ayub pegged the home side with four wickets each. Marshall took the bulk of the middle-order wickets with his canny leg-breaks but it was Mahbul who

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## BFF to honour war heroes

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will accord a reception to the Swadhin Bangla Football Dal on December 22 to mark the Victory Day.

The reception will take place at the ground adjacent to the BFF Bhaban.

The 33-member team which played exhibition matches across India in 1971 to create public opinion for Bangladesh's Liberation War, have been dubbed war heroes but football's governing body had never taken any steps to honour them.

Ironically, the BFF has finally decided to show respect at a time when the federation president is Kazi Salahuddin, a character of that glorious chapter in country's football.

Although the government published gazette showed 31 names, the BFF has included names of late coach Nani Basak and manager Tanvir Mazhar Tanna in the list.

Already five members of the team -- Ali Imam, Sheikh Monsur Ali Lal, Moniruzzaman Pearsa, Mahmudur Rashid and Basak -- have passed away while six players including Enayetur Rahman Khan are living abroad.

**TEAM**

Zakaria Pintoo (captain), Pratap Shankar Hazra, Ali Imam, Mohammed Kaikobad, Amalesh Sen, Ainul Haque, Sheikh Ashraf Ali, Bimal Kar, Shahjahan Alam, Monsur Ali Lal, Kazi Salahuddin, Enayetur Rahman Khan.

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## Victory Day cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Surjashikha Club registered a 40-run victory over Mohamadpur Cricket Academy in the opening match of the 3rd Parbatya Cricket Champions tournament at the government high school ground yesterday.

Surjashikha made 134 for seven and then bowled out Mohamadpur Cricket Academy for 94 runs.

Niko Chakma claimed three wickets for 28 runs to be adjudged man-of-the-match.

A total of 13 teams are taking part in the Twenty20 competition that has been organised by Victoria Sporting Club to mark the Victory Day.



Barisal's Bangladesh batsman Rokibul Hasan slams one through the covers during a fighting 43 against Chittagong on the first day of the National Cricket League ninth round match at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

## Sehwag leaves the Test open, says Gambhir

Cricket

PTI, Chennai

Virender Sehwag's belligerent knock has set the game for India and knocking down the required 256 runs should not be a problem on Monday, according to opener Gautam Gambhir.

Chasing 387 on the wearing track at the MA Chidambaram Stadium was not exactly a cakewalk, especially considering how India folded up for 241 in the first essay. Sehwag, however, threw the game wide open with a 68-ball 83 and Gambhir insists his teammates can score the required runs and take a 1-0 lead in the series.

"A lot of credit goes to Virender Sehwag, the way he started the innings. He set the game for us and I think 256 tomorrow is a very chaseable

total," said Gambhir, who would return tomorrow to do his bit to knock down the total.

"It's a pleasure watching him from the non-striker's end. When he plays like this, my job becomes very easy, because the bowlers become defensive," Gambhir said of his senior partner.

The Delhi player admitted that the England spin twin Graeme Swann and Monty Panesar have done well so far in the match but insisted it might not be enough to avoid an Indian win.

"They have been bowling well and there is a lot (in the pitch) for the spinners too. I think all three results are possible tomorrow but we are optimistic of chasing down the total," said the left-hander.

"We won the one day series 5-0, we were high on confidence and we want to take that confidence in the Test series as well. We didn't play well in the first innings but it's a very chaseable total here," Gambhir added.



### Did U Know?

Brazilian striker Ronaldo is the highest scorer in World Cup football history with 15 goals.



**David Lloyd**  
(Cricket commentator)  
"If Paul Collingwood was playing outside your house, you'd shut the curtains."



**What to WATCH**  
**Neo Cricket**  
India v England  
First Test, Day 5  
Live from 10:00am  
**ESPN**  
Sportscenter India  
Sports News  
Live from 8:30pm

**DAY'S EVENT**  
National Cricket League  
(Four-Dayer, Day 2)  
Khulna v Dhaka  
Venue: Khulna Divisional Stadium  
Rajshahi v Sylhet  
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium  
Chittagong v Barisal  
Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium



Barcelona sensation Lionel Messi (L) steadies himself to send a chipped strike beyond the despairing jump of Real Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas during their Primera Liga match at the Nou Camp on Saturday. Barcelona dominated the history-laden encounter between the two traditional rivals and came away with a 2-0 win to go eight points clear at the top of the division. PHOTO: AFP

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