



PHOTO: STAR

Jesmin Akhter (R) crosses the final hurdle on way to beat Sumita Rani (2nd from R) in the women's 100m hurdles at the National Athletics Championships at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Masud eyes 50th gold medal

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace sprinter Masudul Karim will aim to win his 50th national gold medal at the 34th National Athletics Championships.

The Bangladesh Army sprinter, who missed the last national meet due to illness, regained the men's 200m crown yesterday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, finishing in 21.40s ahead of Hafiz of Bangladesh Air Force and his teammate Mizanur Rahman.

The 31-year-old has been in the national circuit for 10 years and it was the hurdler

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## Did U Know?

The only heavyweight champion who won title on his birthday - George Foreman (in 1973).



## What to WATCH

### NEO Cricket

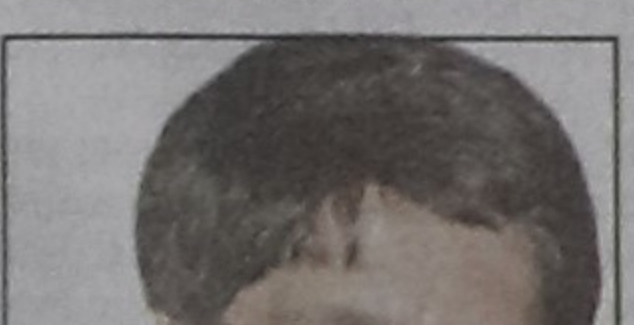
New Zealand v India  
Third Test, Day Three  
Live from 4:00am (Sunday)

### STAR Sports

English Premier League  
Blackburn v Tottenham  
Live from 5:40pm  
Arsenal v Man City  
Live from 7:55pm  
Primera Liga  
Malaga v Real Madrid  
Live from 2:00am (Sunday)

### ESPN

English Premier League  
Newcastle v Chelsea  
Live from 7:55pm  
Fulham v Liverpool  
Live from 10:25pm



## Kris Srikkanth

(India cricket chief selector)  
"Gautam Gambhir has come of age. He has now become a complete batsman. For the last couple of years he has been pretty consistent."

## 34TH NATIONAL ATHLETICS BEGIN Asad, Jesmin sparkle

Athletics

SPORTS REPORTER

Asadul Islam and Jesmin Akhter will carry hopes of the nation to retain Bangladesh's superiority in the coming South Asian Games (SAG) hurdles events after the two clinched the honours in the 34th UCB National Athletics Championships yesterday.

Both the hurdlers retained their national title and though it was rather easier for ex-Bangladesh Rifles hurdler Asad, Bangladesh Ansar's Jesmin raced to a great victory by edging SAG silver medalist Sumita Rani Das of Bangladesh Jail in the women's 100m hurdles at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on the opening day of the meet.

Jesmin, an 18-year-old from Noakhali, took 14.10s to beat Sumita and also set a new national record. Sumita finished the race in 14.20s, which was also better than the previous national record of 14.28s by Kaniz Fatema Shammi in 2002. Nasima Akhter of Ansar took bronze in 14.30s.

"Last year, Sumita missed the national championships and I also won the gold in the Indo-Bangla Games in her absence. Many doubted that whether I was good enough to beat her but I was confident about my success," said Jesmin after the race.

A student of Rafiqul Akhter Milon, a famous athletics coach from Noakhali, Jesmin said she gained advantage over the favourite while crossing the last hurdles.

Sumita looked to be ahead before the final leap but a desperate Jesmin's last lunge took her to the finishing line just ahead of the pack.

"I have not joined the SAG camp but I have been training personally under my coach in Noakhali due to some family problems," told Jesmin, who broke into tears of joy after the race.

The competition between Sumita and

Jesmin, however, could only better their performances as well as bringing good news during next year's SAG.

Asadul Islam, who equalled Abdul Khaleq's 11-year-old national mark, dominated the men's 110m hurdles -- the event where Bangladesh won the gold in the Colombo SAG three years back -- and comfortably beat Bangladesh Army's Abdul Hafiz (14.50s) and Shahidul Islam (14.60s) of Bangladesh Navy.

In 2006, Mahfuzur Rahman Mithun was the country's first ever hurdles gold at the SAG but the top hurdler defected during a trip to Italy last year.

Asad, who took 14.10s, said he was confident to retain Bangladesh's success in the gold in the next SAG.

"We have lost Mithun but it is 100 percent possible to win the gold again if I can hold on to my current form," the 28-year-old, who is now under the wings of the athletics federation after the carnage at the BDR headquarters last month.

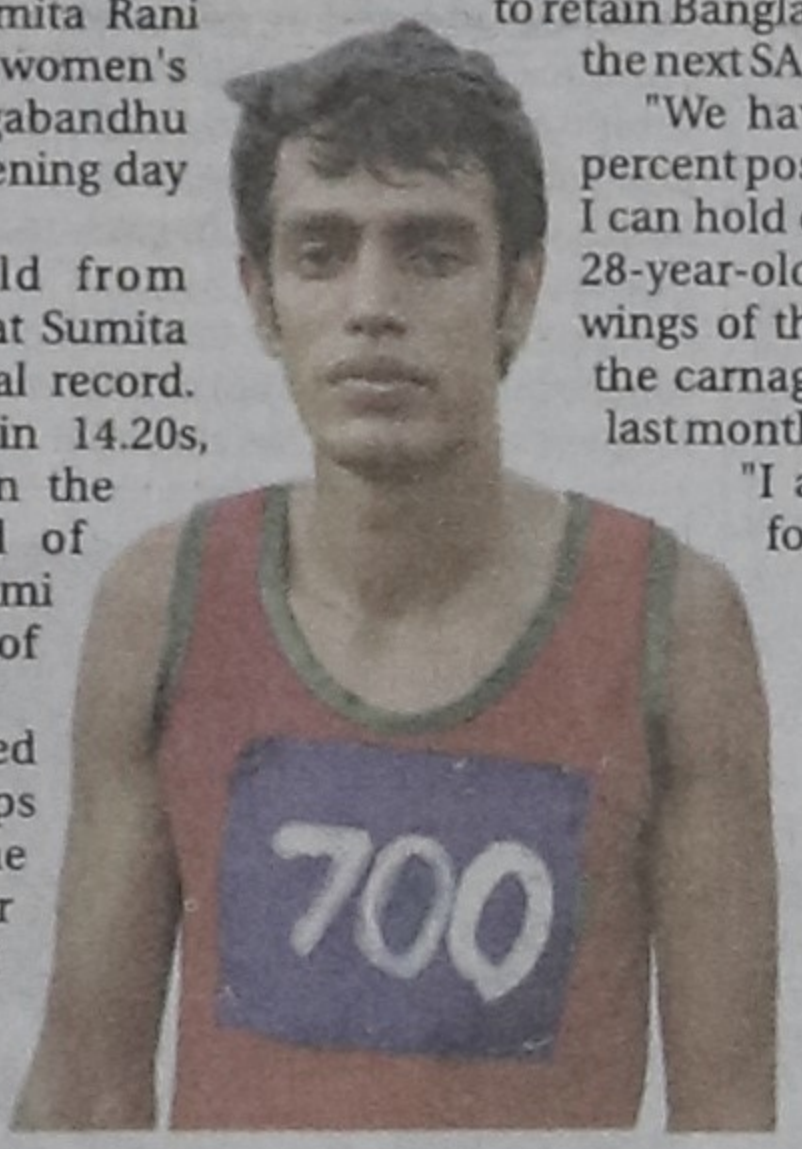
"I am now at the peak of my form after winning the Indo-Bangla Games gold and another domestic competition. We have eight to nine months (for the SAG) and if the preparation is not hampered, I would be ready," said Asad, who hails from Chuadanga.

He still felt the lack of electronic timing devices. "I have won this championship but I really don't know where do I stand in international standard. It is important that we get the facilities and the right equipment to prepare for international events."

Two more national records were set by Bangladesh Navy's Al Amin, who leaped 7.61m in men's long jump, and Rawshan Ara Putul of Ansar, who took 4:50.30s to finish the women's 1500m.

Putul added a second gold to her name when the Ansar athlete bagged the 400m gold.

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ASADUL ISLAM... 110m hurdles champ

## Hussey fires Australia

Cricket

AFP, Durban

Mike Hussey ended a run of poor form when he led a late Australian onslaught in the first one-day international against South Africa at Kingsmead on Friday.

Hussey hit 83 not out in an Australian total of 286 for seven.

The left-hander's 79-ball innings enabled Australia to recover from two chaotic run-outs which cost the wickets of two of the team's top four batsmen.

David Hussey and Brad Haddin were run out in the space of nine balls, on both occasions after mix-ups which saw the dismissed player stranded at the wrong end of the pitch.

Wicketkeeper Haddin, who opened the batting, hit an aggressive 53 off 60 balls after Australian captain Ricky Ponting won the toss and made first use of a good pitch, on a ground where batting second under floodlights has often been a disadvantage.

Haddin and Ponting put on 77 off 81 balls for the second

wicket. Then Haddin and David Hussey put on a quick 28 for the third wicket before first Hussey, then Haddin were run out.

But Mike Hussey, who scored only 132 runs at an average of 22 in the Test series and was out for a duck in a Twenty20 international, showed his best form for the first time on the tour. His innings included two sixes and six fours.

He put on 53 for the fifth wicket with Callum Ferguson (25) and 67 for the sixth wicket with James Hopes, who made an impressive 38 off 35 overs. He and Nathan Hauritz (20 not out) finished the innings in style with an unbeaten 43 off 22 balls for the eighth wicket.

The last 15 overs yielded 112 runs.

South African captain Graeme Smith, who suffered a broken bone in his right hand at the same ground against the same opponents on March 7, returned to lead his side in a clash of the two top-ranked teams in world one-day cricket. South Africa took top spot away from Australia when the two sides met in Australia in January.

South Africa were without all-rounder Jacques Kallis because of a groin strain. Australia awarded a first one-day international cap to fast bowler Ben Laughlin.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of Australia innings in the first one-day international against South Africa at Kingsmead in Durban on Friday:

AUSTRALIA				
Haddin run out	53			
Clarke c Duminy b Ntini	1			
Ponting c A Morkel b M Morkel	37			
D Hussey run out	18			
M Hussey not out	83			
Ferguson c Botha b Steyn	25			
Hopes c Steyn b M Morkel	38			
Johnson c Boucher b Steyn	1			
Hauritz not out	20			
Extras: (lb-2, w-7, nb-1)	10			
Total: (For 7 wks in 50 overs)	286			
To bat: Bracken, Laughlin.				
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-79, 3-107, 4-115, 5-168, 6-235, 7-243.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Steyn	9	0	45	2
Ntini	9	1	67	1
Morkel	10	0	61	2
A Morkel	8	0	51	0
Botha	10	0	38	0
Duminy	4	0	22	0

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Smith, Gibbs, Amla, De Villiers, Duminy, Boucher, A Morkel, Botha, M Morkel, Steyn, Ntini.

## Abahani leave no doubts

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Even without their inspirational captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Abahani showed yet another rare brand of team effort to confirm a hat-trick of titles after beating Bangladesh Biman by three wickets in the Premier Division Cricket Super League yesterday.

Stand-in skipper Imran Ahmed led from the front with a well-composed half-century as Abahani posted 229-7 in reply to Biman's 228 for nine at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur to maintain their remarkable winning run. The champions have so far lost only one game to Mohammad Ashraful-led Gazi Tank in the league.

Although there was a mathematical chance for the Dhanmondi outfit not to win the title, Abahani made early celebrations on Tuesday after taking an unassailable lead in the table following a win over Partex. But with 28 points and one match in hand, they have opened up a six-point gap with nearest rivals Surjo Torun, who lost to Gazi Tank, their fourth Super League loss.

Abahani play their last match tomorrow against Surjo Torun who have achieved their best success by ensuring the runners-up spot.

It was for the third time the popular sky blues accomplished the rare feat of hat-tricks after their achievements in the 80s and 90s.

It was not only that Abahani missed the vital service of Mashrafe, who left the country on Thursday to join his IPL team Kolkata Knight Riders, but also some key performers like Nasir Hossain, Nazmul Hossain and Rony Talukdar who were unavailable due to injury.

"It was not an easy task to win against Biman without Mashrafe and just think we also missed some other key players. I think it's an amazing team effort and must thank the young guys who showed real character this season," said an excited Imran.

"I have been playing Premier Cricket for last twelve years and it's a great experience to be a part of a champion team," he added.

Back to the match, new ball bowlers Talha Jubair and Shahadat Hossain gave Abahani a perfect start after Biman decided to bat first after winning the toss as both openers, inform Nazmus Sadat and Zahurul Islam, returned to the pavilion with the scoreboard reading two runs.

Captain Sanwar Hossain (52) and Pakistani Zahid Newaz (30), however, repaired the damage by associating in a 63-run third wicket stand but it was number eight batsman Mahbul Alam who

smashed 52 off 43 balls with five fours and three sixes to ensure a decent total on board.

Veteran Hasanuzzaman was the other notable scorer with 43 off 68 balls that saw two fifties and as many sixes.

In reply, Abahani lost their dashing opener Tamim Iqbal quickly with the scoreboard reading 22 when the left-hander became a victim of run out for 15. The champions then rode on Imran's 84-ball 56 that contained four boundaries and Sahagir Hossain's 53-ball 40 to take-over the total.

In the end, young Manosh Kundu took the charge during his unbeaten 17 off nine balls with two fours and a six to finish the job in style.

Left-arm spinner Nabil Samad claimed four wickets for 49 runs.

### BRIEF SCORES

**BIMAN:** 228-9 in 50 overs (Sadat 2, Zahurul 2, Sanwar 52, Zahid 30, Mushfiqur 0, Hasanuzzaman 43, Shahajada 25, Mahbulul 52, Alamgir 10, extras 12; Talha 2-59, Shahadat 2-60, Sunny 2-41, Imran 2-34)

**ABAHANI:** 229-7 in 48.5 overs (Tamim 15, Imran 56, Kamrul 24, Parida 28, Sahagir 40, Nadif 8, Sunny 21, Talha 13 not out, Manosh 17 not out, extras 7; Sadat 2-33, Nabil 4-49)

**RESULT:** Abahani won by three wickets.

## DAVIS CUP 2nd win for Jordan

SPORTS REPORTER

Jordan triumphed for the second consecutive time, after losing their first game to hosts Bangladesh on the opening day, in the Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group IV competition beating Qatar 3-0 yesterday.

In the singles round Jordan's Fabio Badra and Ahmad Al-Haddid beat Qatar's Abdullah Al-Haji (7-6, 6-4) and Sultan Khalaf Al-Alawi (2-6, 6-2, 6-3) respectively. The players also constituted the doubles team for their nations and the Jordanians prevailed in the meet 6-3, 6-0.

In other matches, Turkmenistan beat Myanmar 3-0 after losing to Bangladesh yesterday, Bahrain beat Yemen 2-1 and UAE got walkover against Iraq.

In today's matches, Bangladesh take on Qatar, Iraq meet Bahrain, Yemen face Vietnam and Turkmenistan play Jordan.

## Manzurul, Mamun reelected

UNB, Dhaka

Senior reporter of BSS Syed Mamun was reelected general secretary of Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA) for the next two years in its biennial general meeting held at its office yesterday.

Earlier, Manzurul Haque (Independent) was reelected BSJA president unopposed. Arifur Rahman Babu (Janakantha) and Mohammad Sayeeduzzaman (Amar Desh) were elected vice-presidents and Raihan Al Mughni (New Age) treasurer. They were also elected uncontested.

Five elected executive committee members are Anisur Rahman (BD News), Ranjan Sen (Desh TV), Mosharraf Hossain (Purbakon), Tareq Mahmud (Prothom Alo) and Ajoy Barua (Sangbad).

Renowned journalist and former president of Dhaka Reporters Unity M Shafiqul Karim Sabu was the election commissioner. Forty-one voters, out of 45, cast their rights in the election.

## Sachin greatest ever: Hadlee

PTI, Wellington

Sachin Tendulkar may not boast a Bradmanesque average but his ability to adjust to all formats of the game makes him the greatest batsman ever, legendary New Zealand all-rounder Richard Hadlee said here today.

Hadlee, who was inducted into the International Cricket Council's Hall of Fame yesterday, was in absolute awe of the Indian run-machine and said he had no doubt that he was the greatest batsman ever to grace the game.

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## Rokibul piles season's best Surjo Torun's best success

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Rokibul Hasan returned to form with a massive hundred as Mohammedan handed a 54-run defeat to Partex in the Premier Division Cricket Super League at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The national middle-order batsman slammed an unbeaten 171 in 148 balls, the highest individual score of the league after Mohammad Mithun's 169 against the same opposition as Mohammedan piled up 289-6. Partex were bundled out for 235 runs.

Away at the tranquil settings of BKSP, Bangladesh and Gazi Tank captain Mohammad Ashraful showed a rare brand of consistency by hitting his fourth consecutive half-century as the newcomers secured a five-wicket victory over Surjo Torun.

Despite the defeat Surjo

Torun became runners-up for the first time in the history of the club and it was confirmed after nearest rivals Biman lost to champions Abahani.

Surjo Torun's earlier best success was third position during their formative years.

**MOHAMMEDAN-PARTEX** Rokibul opened the innings along with keeper Nadimuddin Mintu and went for a leather

hunt from the word go after Mohammedan won the toss and elected to bat first. Although opener Mintu perished for only six with the scoreboard reading 33-1, a 97-run stand between Rokibul and Shamsur Rahman for the second wicket took the black and whites to a decent position of 130 in 29.3 overs.

Shamsur finally wilted in the same over as Shafiqul Islam got him caught in the infield by Pakistani Fahad-ul-Haque.

Wickets then kept falling but Rokibul kept his magic with the bat going at the other end reaching his 100 in the 40th over. He then stepped up on the gas pedal to add 71 more runs to his personal tally in the last ten overs. Man-of-the-match Rokibul's innings comprised of 16 boundaries and two sixes.

Partex got off to a shaky start as Mohammedan opening bowlers made early inroads.

Former national pacer

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## India fight back

Cricket

AFP, Wellington

India's tail wagged on the first day of the third and deciding Test against New Zealand in Wellington on Friday to ensure the tourists reached a respectable 375 for nine at stumps.

Half-centuries from captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Harbhajan Singh in the bottom half of the order added to Sachin Tendulkar's 95th score over 50 as India recovered from 204 for six soon after tea.

The stakes are high for both teams with India desperate not to squander their 1-0 lead in the three-match series and miss out on their first series win in New Zealand since 1968.

India picked up the pace in the final session, adding 185 runs for the loss of four wickets, with the tailenders riding their luck in an aggressive show of defiance during the final hour.

Harbhajan finished with the second top score of 60 from 78 balls and importantly put on 79 runs with Dhoni (52), who was returning from a back injury that kept him sidelined in the drawn second Test.

"It was crucial to contribute lower down the order and if you look at the scoreboard we have got some decent runs," Harbhajan said of the "fantastic" rearguard action.

New Zealand all-rounder James Franklin admitted the Kiwis had probably allowed India 50 or 60 runs too many on the day.

"They got away with a few lucky shots and the ball didn't quite go to hand so sometimes that's the way it can be with the tail," he told reporters.

But he added he thought the game remained evenly

balanced. "As long as we can get that (last Indian) wicket quickly tomorrow and set about batting for a day and a half to two days and that sets the game up well for us."

In a day of fluctuating fortunes, New Zealand's bowlers toiled hard on a batting-friendly pitch as captain Daniel Vettori gambled the best chance for a series-tying victory was to bowl first.

When the sixth wicket fell shortly after tea with barely 200 runs on the board, it appeared the gamble had paid off.

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PHOTO: AFP

India cricketer Harbhajan Singh plays a shot through the covers on the first day of the third and final Test against New Zealand at the Basin Reserve in Wellington yesterday.