

# Star SPORT

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## Sania too bats for Indo-Pak cricket

Sania Mirza Thursday advocated resumption of bilateral cricketing ties between India and Pakistan, saying such a move can help in improving relations between the two countries. "The very fact is obviously people love it. You say that in the [World Cup] semifinal [in Mohali between the two teams]. I think it can make the relations between the two countries better. It's obvious, you have the two prime ministers watching [together], so it's good stuff," Sania said. "I don't know why not. I am telling there is hardly any difference whether I am married to an Indian or a Pakistani person."

-- PH



## Big partnership gives NCA lead

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

A 139-run sixth wicket partnership between Asif Ahmed and Soumya Sarker guided GP-BCB National Cricket Academy to a four-wicket victory over the visiting South Africa Academy team in the first one-day game of the three-match series at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

The home side got a jolt when they began their chase of 214, losing five early wickets for 25 runs. Hardus Viljeon caused the early damage by taking three wickets. The home team made a disastrous start with openers Rony Talukdar and Mohammad Mithun returning to the pavilion with the scoreboard reading 3 runs. Anamul Haque (1), Myshukur Rahman (14) and Mominul Haque were then dismissed very cheaply.

The GP-BCB National Cricket Academy however staged a brilliant comeback through a 139-run partnership between Asif and Soumya.

Asif was unbeaten on 76 off 124 balls with six boundaries while Soumya contributed 81 off 91 deliveries with the help of seven fours and three sixes as GP-BCB National Cricket Academy eclipsed the South Africa Academy's total, finishing on 216 for six in 46.4 overs.

Alauddin Babu was the other notable scorer with unbeaten run-a-ball 21 that saw one four and a six.

Earlier pacer Alauddin Babu claimed four wickets for 33 runs and left-arm spinner Sanjamul Islam picked up three wickets conceding 42 runs to restrict the visitors to 213 for eight in stipulated 50 overs.

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PHOTOS: STAR

National Academy batsmen Asif Ahmed (R) and Soumya Sarker cross over for a run during their match-winning 139-run sixth wicket partnership against South Africa Academy at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. *Inset:* The new chief of selectors and local legend Akram Khan keeps an eye on proceedings.



## Duncan gets a taste of what waits in India

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

India's newly-appointed coach Duncan Fletcher on Thursday got a taste of the challenges he faces when two senior former players said a fellow countryman should have got the job instead.

Fletcher, a former Zimbabwean all-rounder who rose to prominence during his eight-year stint as England coach, was awarded a two-year contract Wednesday by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Kapil Dev and Sunil Gavaskar, former Indian captains and influential voices in the cricket establishment, expressed displeasure over Fletcher's appointment.

"Who is Duncan Fletcher?" Dev told the Hindustan Times newspaper.

"I would like to see Venkatesh Prasad and Robin Singh [former India players] as coaches of the Indian team. Not because they are Indians but because they did a great job at the T20 World Cup in 2007."

Gavaskar said former India all-rounder Mohinder Amarnath, who played a key role in guiding the team to their first World Cup win in 1983, should have been picked.

"Someone like Amarnath would have been a better choice for the simple reason that the core of the Indian team today is from the Hindi-speaking belt," he told the NDTV news channel.

"He would have got on brilliantly with this group as well as the seniors. It would have

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## BD A's last chance

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh A team will play their last match today when they take on South Africa A in the fifth one-day at the Sahara Willowmoore Benoni.

Mohammad Ashraful's men will desperately try to finish the tour on a high note as they are trailing 2-1 the five-match series.

The second string Bangladesh side won the first match but South Africa A strongly bounced back in the second and fourth games while the third match was washed out.

South Africa A earlier won the unofficial two-match Test series 1-0.

## Beximco to fund Argentina game

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Beximco, one of the country's top business houses, is set to be the financial partner of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) in their quest to organize the marquee Argentina and Nigeria friendly in the country.

"We had meetings with different houses and they had various conditions but Beximco has come forward to provide whole money," said BFF president Kazi Salahuddin adding that Beximco has been associated with sports in general and football specifically for long.

It has emerged that Beximco will basically

invest the full cost necessary to hold the FIFA international friendly match in Dhaka in September and any profit that they might make from this venture will be ploughed back into the BFF.

"I am hoping everything will be finalised by today (Thursday) and you will know everything by Saturday," said the BFF boss after having met with the members of the BFF executive committee.

It has been learnt that the BFF will have to provide 600,000 dollars initially out of a total of 3,800,000 dollars as signing money and then they would have to provide the rest of the amount in four instalments.

Asked whether Beximco would find the possible market for sponsorship, the BFF boss said that BFF and Beximco would work together to find out everything.

## MSC outplay Ctg Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Visitors Mohammedan SC started the second-leg of the Grameenphone Bangladesh League with a winning start after beating hosts Chittagong Abahani 2-0 at the Cox's Bazar Stadium yesterday.

Striker Anwar Hossain put Mohammedan ahead four minutes from the break while Nigerian striker Sunday doubled the margin in the 45th minute but they did not widen the margin in the second half despite the fact that Abahani were reduced to 10 men in the 71st minute after their foreign recruit Anthony picked up the second booking.

It was their first win after three successive defeats and the overall fifth victory in 12 matches that took them to the fifth position along with Rahmatganj who have played one match less than the Black and Whites.

On the other hand, Chittagong Abahani stuck glued to the bottom place in the 12-team table with four points.

## 5 move into 2nd round

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi, Comilla, Barisal, Narayanganj and Rajbari moved into the second round of the 31st Inter-District Cricket Championship by beating their respective rivals at different venues across the country yesterday.

Rajshahi crushed Pabna by 187 runs, Comilla beat Cox's Bazar by 76 runs, Barisal defeated Pirojpur by 134 runs and Narayanganj beat Narsingdi by 53 runs while Rajbari won against Manikganj and Faridpur won against Mymensingh by virtue of toss.

In the day's other match, Gaibandha posted a seven-wicket victory over Dinajpur.



PHOTO: CRICINFO

Deccan Chargers fast bowler Ishant Sharma celebrates one of his five wickets against Kochi Tuskers Kerala during their IPL encounter in Kochi on Wednesday. (Story on Page 17)

## BFF bans journalist

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday took the unprecedented step of banning sports journalist Mozammel Huq Chanchal from covering all football events organized by BFF in the future.

Chanchal, who is a senior reporter for the Dainik Jugantor was declared persona non grata by the BFF in a press release which stated that the ban has been imposed due to continual attacking, malicious and concocted stories against the federation and personal attacks on the BFF high-ups. The BFF specifically drew reference to a story published in the daily by the said reporter on April 28, 2011 which highlighted a number of failures of the BFF committee in their three year tenure.

A quick scan of the report showcased that many of the facts represented in the story was true and when contacted for comment the BFF president Kazi Salahuddin said that while they have referred to the story, Chanchal's reporting had generally been motivated, and agenda-driven for a number of years.

"I can show you 40 articles which are full of malicious rumours and untruthful

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