

Games close today

Sports Reporter

The eight-day long multi-discipline fifth Bangladesh Games awards ceremonial closure at 3.45 this afternoon with Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Sheikh Ruzak Ali announcing the official end.

More than three thousand sportsmen and women from all over the country took part in this quadrennial 'deshi Olympics'. Although a couple of disciplines like basketball, cycling and one event of the shooting competition remain to be rounded off, Bangladesh Ansars have cemented their position at the top of the medals table with a haul of 134 medals including 50 golds, 48 silvers and 36 bronzes.

Army look settled in the second position with 80 medals including 33 golds. Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) with 70 medals are also in an unassailable third position.

Sabina Yasmin, the leading female singer of the country who rendered a chorus in harness with Andrew Kishore on the opening day of the meet last Friday, is expected to do it again this afternoon to give a musical finishing touch.

Sweet revenge for Navy spikers

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Navy rallied from two sets down against defending national champions Bangladesh Army to win the men's volleyball gold in the fifth Bangladesh Games at the Outer Stadium volleyball court yesterday.

The final scoreline read 8-15, 7-15, 15-13, 17-16 and 15-8.

The Army spikers, who only last week denied Navy the national title, started confidently, winning the first two sets emphatically but seemed to lose their way towards the end, letting their opponents take the next three sets.

It was sweet revenge for the Navy players who lost the national title to Army four years in a row — always finishing second best.

In the third place decider on Wednesday Bangladesh Rifles beat Bangladesh Ansars for the bronze.

In the women's event, Khulna DSA bagged the gold while defending two-time national champions BJMC and Bangladesh Ansars pocketed the silver and bronze respectively.

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury graced the men's final yesterday as chief guest and gave away the medals.

Eight teams participated in the men's event while six fought for the women's medals.

Triple crown for Biman's Mahbub

Sports Reporter

Mahbubur Rab of Bangladesh Biman won triple crowns in the badminton championships of the fifth Bangladesh Games which concluded at the wooden-floor gymnasium yesterday.

The young shuttler came back from behind to beat Sumon of Ansars by the odd set in three. Sumon won the first set 15-9 but Rab won the next two sets at 15-8 and 18-17.

Earlier Mahbub won the men's pair and the mixed doubles titles in association with his Biman peers.

Mahbubur Rab paired with Sarwar to beat the veteran Hashem and Rana of Ansars by the odd set in three.

Suman and Amir of Ansars bagged the bronze medal of this event.

Mahbub had won the mixed doubles title in tandem with teammate Juhai to brush aside the dual challenge of Dana and Rana of Ansars in straight sets.

Elna and Sarwar of Biman took the bronze medal.

Elna of Biman was a double crown winner, bagging the women's singles and doubles.

State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman gave away the prizes as chief guest.

BDR matmen top

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Rifles grapplers topped the medals table of the fifth Bangladesh Games wrestling competition which concluded at the National Coaching Centre gym yesterday.

A haul of five golds, three silvers and a bronze gave the Rifles matmen pole position ahead of close challengers Bangladesh Ansars who bagged four golds, as many silvers and a bronze. Bangladesh Police trailed home a distant third with a collection of one gold, one silver and five bronze medals.

FINAL MEDALS TABLE

Table with 5 columns: G (Gold), S (Silver), B (Bronze), T (Total), and Team Name. Rows include BDR, B Ansars, B Police, Dhaka DSA, BTMC, and COMILLA DSA.



Dhaka DSA clinched the fifth Bangladesh Games hockey gold by edging Bangladesh Army 6-4 in the tie-breaker at the Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Dhaka prove true champs

Sports Reporter

Star-studded Dhaka DSA retained their reputation as the best outfit at the national level beating Bangladesh Army 6-4 in the tie-breaker in the final of the fifth Bangladesh Games hockey championship at the Hockey Stadium yesterday.

In a lively contest fancied Dhaka DSA led the first half 1-0 but their robust opponents drew level at the flag end of the match only to concede defeat in the spot-hit contest.

Dhaka DSA pitched in right from the word go with their frontline quintet of Kismat, Fazal, Jamil Parvez Lulu, Malak Chhunu and Barkatullah Chapal combining well within themselves.

Chapal, the experienced outside left, weaved his way past the tough Army defence on number of occasions but his peers were either too zealous or too lethargic to finish off those scurrying crosses from left to right.

Abdul Malak Chhunu, the veteran forward who had earlier made his intentions clear to hang up his stick after having served the national team for a decade, had reasons to be

in an expansive mood, showing a Leaguesque disdain — not caring who was in or who was out. However, the wiry Chapal sounded the board in the 29th minute of the match off a fine Abdullah Piru cross to give Dhaka an inevitable lead (1-0). Chapal, who plays for Mohammedan Sporting Club in the First Division league missed a chance of consolidating the lead two minutes later when Army defender Ramiz dismissed him just in the nick of time.

Army went all out for the equaliser in the second half but the plucky Dhaka defenders, with a bit of luck, managed to keep the marauders at bay till the 68th minute of the match.

A lovely cross from Maksud was neatly trapped by Shahjahan and the forward unleashed a powerful angular shot that gave Dhaka goalkeeper Shimul no chance (1-1).

Shimul, the Dhaka DSA custodian filling in for the more accomplished Rahmatullah Asir was in fine form saving his side at least once from sure downfall when he rushed out in time to block a stinging hit from Army's Iltumayuz. Dhaka's hit men showed

fine nerve in the tie-breaker as all five of their 'chosen five' converted the penalty strokes. The five scorers in the dead-ball situation were Chapal, Sadek, Piru, Chhunu and Tapan.

Alfaz, Ramiz and Maksud converted three out of Army's share of five hits, and the Services team had no other choice but to accept defeat which they appeared to have staved off at one stage of the match.

The euphoria of the Dhaka players was a bit mellowed by Abdul Malak Chhunu's farewell to the field — a very timely and sensible decision by the veteran hockey player.

Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf gave away the prizes as chief guest.

Earlier, in the morning, Faridpur beat Dhaka University to line up behind Dhaka and Army for the bronze medal.

Isa Miah and Giasuddin scored the two goals for the winners in the 53rd and 63rd minutes of the match.

Eight teams divided into two groups took part in the final round of this year's 15th national championship, held as part of the quadrennial Bangladesh Games.

Ansars booters clinch gold

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Ansars became the new Bangladesh Games football champions edging past Bangladesh Customs by three goals to two in the final at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday.

Earlier on Wednesday Khulna Division secured the bronze beating Dhaka Division by two goals to one.

In yesterday's final, both teams were locked 2-2 at half time.

However, it was Bangladesh Customs who drew the first blood when Salahuddin nodded home a Manju lob from inside the box in the eighth minute.

Angur got the equaliser for Ansars in the 18th minute with a sudden shot.

Salahuddin once again put Customs ahead in the 25th minute with a powerful shot following a goalmouth melee.

But again Angur came to Ansars' rescue in the 38th minute with a rasping drive from outside the box (2-2).

Shah Alam sealed the fate of the match in favour of Ansars three minutes from time with a neatly-placed shot.

Customs defender Kamal was sent off by referee M R Mukul in the 54th minute when he made a cynical charge on Ansars' striker Munna. The incident caused a three-minute stoppage.

President of the Bangladesh Football Federation Siddiqur Rahman witnessed the final as chief guest and distributed the prizes.

FIFA role for Maj. Hafiz

Major (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, MP, has been made a member of the disciplinary committee of the International Football Federation (FIFA) at a meeting of its executive committee in Zurich recently, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

A vice president of Asian Football Confederation (AFC), Hafizuddin Ahmed is also chairman of the disciplinary committee of the AFC.

Ansars judokas top the table

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Ansars Judokas put their seal of superiority on the fifth Bangladesh Games judo championships by clinching two of the four gold medals at stake on the concluding day of the competition at the Dhanmondi gym yesterday.

The two golds, two silvers and a bronze they won on the last day took their medal tally to 17 — eight golds, six silvers and three bronzes.

Bangladesh Police — only their men taking part — picked up four golds, two silvers and four bronzes to finish second while Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) among the ten teams made the medals table with a count of three golds, six silvers and four bronzes.

In yesterday's events, Mina Akhtar of Ansars bagged the under 40kg gold while her teammate Mustafizur Rahman picked up the glittering medal in the men's under-45 kg class.

BTMC's Nayana Chowdhury won the women's open category gold and the men's open class gold went to Birendranath Ray of Bangladesh Police.

Navy, DU cagers in today's final

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Navy will take on Dhaka University in the final of the fifth Bangladesh Games basketball at ten this morning at the wooden-floor gymnasium.

In the first semi-final yesterday, Navy beat Bangladesh Army by 75-61 points after dominating the first half 43-37.

Dhaka University warded off Chandpur DSA by 45-41 points in the other semifinal.

Bhola champion

Bhola Lal Chauhan won the squash gold medal beating Sohail Hamid 9-7, 4-9, 9-6, 9-3 in the final at the Dhaka Club court yesterday, reports BSS.

Ram Jagdish got the bronze. President of the Bangladesh Squash Rackets Federation Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury distributed medals among the winners.

Zimbabwe to tour India first

NEW DELHI, Dec 24: Zimbabwe will go to India for their first Test tour, it was announced on Wednesday, reports Reuter.



The proud booters of Bangladesh Ansars who won the fifth Bangladesh Games gold medal yesterday at the Mirpur Stadium beating Bangladesh Customs 3-2.

Sailors rule the pool

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Navy's male swimmers emerged the runaway champions in the fifth Bangladesh Games.

On the concluding day of the four-day competition at their own pool in Banani, Navy finished with a flattering haul of eleven gold medals, eight silvers and five bronzes for a total of 24 medals — half of the 48 medals at stake in 16 different events.

Bangladesh Army came home in second place, bagging 18 medals, five of them gold, half a dozen silver and seven bronzes.

Only two other teams managed to make it to the medals list with Bangladesh Krira Shikhiya Protisthan (BKSP) managing two silver and bronze medals each while Bangladesh Air Force managed just two bronzes.

Navy celebrated their overwhelming domination of the pool yesterday in style when Elias Hossain set a new national record — the only one of the nine marks that were rewritten in this meet. He bettered his own 1500m freestyle time yesterday, clocking 18 min 22.15 seconds for the distance, a good 16.60 seconds faster than his previous best.

Asaduzzaman of Army picked up the silver in a slow 19:03.95 secs while the bronze went to Navy's Md Golam Kibria who timed 19:31.99 secs.

As many as five swimmers — Mukhlesur Rahman, Kawsar Ahmed and Md Deen Amin of

Navy, and Shamsul Islam and Yasin Ali of Army bagged three gold medals each. But the pride of gold medalist Mukhlesur

gold, two silver and two bronzes.

RESULTS

Following are the results of the four events decided yesterday:

1,500-metre freestyle: Gold — M Elias Hossain (Bangladesh Navy, 18:22.15 sec, new record); Silver — Asaduzzaman (Bangladesh Army, 19:03.95 sec); bronze — M Golam Kibria (Bangladesh Navy 19:31.99 sec).

100-metre butterfly: Gold — Mohammed Deen Amin (Bangladesh Navy, 01:02.03 sec); Silver — Mohammed Muniruzzaman (BKSP, 01:02.69 sec); bronze — M Abdus Salam (Bangladesh Army, 01:02.97 sec).

100-metre freestyle: Gold — Harunur Rashid (Bangladesh Army, 00:57.39 sec); silver — M Shamsul Islam (Bangladesh Army, 00:57.49 sec); bronze — M Mizanur Rahman (Bangladesh Navy, 00:58.10 sec).

4x100-metre medley relay: Gold — Bangladesh Navy (M Kater Ahmed, Mukhlesur Rahman, Mohammed Deen Amin and M Mahbubur Rahman, 04:19.40 sec); silver — Bangladesh Army (Shamsul Islam, Abdus Salam, Nurul Islam, Abdul Majid Dewan, 04:28.80 sec); bronze — BKSP (M Shahadat Hossain, Mizanur Rahman, Muniruzzaman, Samaruddin, 04:38.41 sec).

FINAL MEDALS TABLE table with columns G, S, B, T and rows for B Navy, B Army, BKSP, and Air Force.

Logie fit for Melbourne Test

MELBOURNE, Dec 24: Veteran middle order batsman Gus Logie cleared himself to play in Saturday's second cricket Test, but on form is no certainty to take his place against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, reports AFP.

The 32-year-old Trinidadian right-hander, with a Test average of 35.80, was passed over for Keith Arthurton in the first Brisbane Test earlier this month and has subsequently done his cause little encouragement in the World Series Cup one-day competition.

Logie, the tour vice-captain, has reached double figures only once.

Logie was hit on the calf during Wednesday's fielding practice and suffered some internal bleeding, but was able to join in training today.

The West Indies will likely stay with the Brisbane batting lineup. Arthurton is expected to keep his place despite an unconvincing form in the one-dayers since his determined 157 Test debut innings against Australia.

Patrick Patterson, who only took one wicket in the drawn Brisbane Test for a combined 127 runs off 26 overs looks under threat from Anderson Cummins or Kenneth Benjamin.

The Australians trained on Christmas eve, but are still no closer to deciding who will be 12th man, with the choice set

to come down to either off-spinner Greg Matthews or leg-spinner Shane Warne.

Australian captain Border said he was reluctant to go into the Test with only two fast bowlers but he would wait until he had another look at the pitch on Christmas Day.

Australia made two changes from their Brisbane Test 12, Mike Whitney replacing injured paceman Bruce Reid and 23-year-old Warne, who has the ability to turn the ball away from the West Indies batsmen, displaced Dean

the MCG Test.

AP adds: Australian captain Allan Border and batsman Steve Waugh both have points to prove when they face the West Indies in the second cricket Test starting Saturday at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Border returns after missing a series of one-day internationals in which Australia was successful under the captaincy of Mark Taylor.

The 134-Test veteran was recovering from a hamstring injury and before that had a public row with team manager Bobby Simpson during the first Test in Brisbane.

Border was fined for dissent after that match. Border said Thursday that he was looking forward to putting both the injury and the disagreement with Simpson behind him.

Border scored an unbeaten 116 against Pakistan in the four-day match in Brisbane earlier in the week.

"It was good to hit the ball well and get a century," Border said.

"Hopefully, I can carry that into some good Test match form,"

Waugh, meanwhile, has been angered by reports in the media that his Test place is under threat.

"I try not to let it get to me, but it is starting to grate," Waugh said.

"When you are written-off after one Test it is disappointing."



GUS LOGIE

One player under the spotlight is Steve Waugh, trying to make a success of his uncustomed No 3 in the batting order after scores of just 10 and 20 in the Brisbane Test.

Border said he would preserve with Waugh at three for

Pakistan to play benefit series in Sharjah

KARACHI, Dec 24: Pakistan has agreed to participate in the triangular cricket tournament early next year in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates involving Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe, officials said here Wednesday, reports AFP.

"Since the tournament organised by the Cricketers Benefit Fund Series (CBFS) is aimed at the welfare of the players we have agreed in principle to play in Sharjah," said Shahid Rafi, Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in Pakistan (BCCP).

No dates have been finalised yet but Pakistan would like the tournament scheduled ahead of their South African tour from February 8 when they will participate in a triangular series with the West Indies and the hosts, Rafi said.

The series could be arranged between January 25 and February 4, he indicated.

Some observers feel the tournament might put too much pressure on the team before its first-ever visit to South Africa.

Miandad's men confident

WELLINGTON, Dec 24: Pakistan were confident of getting good results on their brief four match cricket tour of New Zealand, captain Javed Miandad said Thursday, reports AP.

The Pakistani squad has halted their World Series tour of Australia to play three one-day internationals and one Test in New Zealand.

The one-day internationals will be played at Wellington on Saturday, Napier on Dec 28 and Auckland on Dec 30.

The only Test of the series will be at Hamilton from Jan. 2-6.

Miandad said the matches in New Zealand would be of great benefit to his players.

"At least we're getting some cricket," he said. "If we had stayed back in Australia we might not have been playing, we might have had 10-15 days off."

"We're better off playing cricket and I'm sure the players will adjust themselves easily."

New Zealand coach Warren Lees, meanwhile, is confident his squad can bounce back after its recent troubled tour of Sri Lanka.

The tour party was split when five of the 15 players, along with Lees, returned home when a bomb exploded near their hotel in Colombo before they had played a match.

All five — batsmen Mark Greatbatch and Rod Latham, seamer Willie Watson, off-spinner Dipak Patel and all-rounder Gavin Larsen — are in the 13-man squad for the three one-dayers.

Lees said he was optimistic New Zealand could test the World Cup holders.

"But Pakistan have just come from an international series and will have a bit of an edge on us," he said.

"Their pacemen can change a whole game in the first few overs and their batting is so strong the way they play they can get away on you so quickly."

"We respect all their players, but we know if we play well enough we can play anyone in the world and beat them."

NEW DELHI, Dec 24: Indian cricket captain Mohammad Azharuddin hit back at criticism from home over his leadership on the tour of South Africa today and hinted at giving up his post, reports Reuter.

He told the pioneer newspaper, following trenchant comments from former captains Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi and Sunil Gavaskar, that it had become "fashionable" for former Test players to criticise the current team.

"It is very easy to criticise from the outside. It costs little," he said.

Azharuddin, who has won only one of 15 Tests as Indian captain, said he would review his position after the last Test against South Africa in Cape Town.

The captain can only be as good as his players make him to be, but he is always held responsible when things go wrong. There is moral accountability and I will have to take a decision about this in Cape Town," he was quoted as saying.

Pataudi, in an interview with Indian television on Tuesday, said Azharuddin might have to go to the side which lost to the Indians in South Africa.

When he played outside, in the US or elsewhere, it is always for money," he added. "And don't many of these former players make money commenting on us?"

"That appeared to be a sally at Gavaskar, who is in South Africa as a television commentator.

Gavaskar, in his regular column published in the Times of India on Monday, lambasted what he saw as a lack of commitment from the senior players in the tour party.

"Unfortunately, in Indian cricket, the feeling of complacency and self-preservation is very strong, so when a player does well in one game then he will take other games lightly or fake injury so he does not play other games and fall and become known as a flash in the pan," Gavaskar wrote.

"There are players who are crying off for so-called muscular injuries which cannot be verified," he added.

"What the Indian team needs are no-nonsense players and not players who are just happy to be tourists."

M AZHARUDDIN Africa 5-2 and drew the first two Tests, did not improve before the end of the tour.

He also criticised contemporary players for putting money earned from promotional matches in places such as the United States, Canada and Hong Kong, ahead of tour preparations.

"During his day there was hardly any money. I know. But if today players are making too much for his liking, then the

team would be prepared to play a benefit game in his honour. All the proceeds can go to him," said Azharuddin.

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