



HOPES DASHED: Sharmin Akhter (L) takes her eyes off the target to satisfy a photographer at the Welisara Navy Range while swimmer Jewel Ahmed (R) races towards the finish line during the 100m butterfly event at the Sugathadasa Indoor Stadium pool on Monday.

PHOTOS: FOCUSBANGLA

Sharmin dethroned



AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

Radhika Barale of India dethroned Bangladesh's Sharmin Akhter as the South Asian Games women's 10m air rifle champion yesterday at the Welisara Navy Range on the outskirts of Colombo.

India won both the individual and team gold medals as Bangladesh finished with two silver. Pakistan won the team bronze.

Sharmin, who won one of two shooting gold medals for Bangladesh at the Islamabad Games in 2004, had to settle for second place despite a superb shoot-off performance.

She was four points behind Radhika and Dhilon, who shot 394 points each out of maximum 400 after the team event.

In the shoot-off for the individuals 18-year-old Sharmin outgunned

Dhilon. But the BKSP student's impressive 103.4 points out of maximum 109 was not enough to beat Radhika, who finished with a total of 498.1 points to Sharmin's 493.4.

Sharmin shot 10.8 twice and only once fell below the 10.0 mark in ten efforts in the shoot-off. Radhika's shoot-off score was 104.1.

Suraiya finished sixth with 483.7 points after the shoot-off.

Sharmin, who also put on a good show in the finals after finishing the team event on the same score of 390 in Islamabad, told after the event that she was happy.

"I have been using a new weapon and new dress. I have been feeling uncomfortable. I am happy because it could have been worse. I did not shoot better than this during preparation," said Sharmin whose best-ever score was 394 in the Asian Shooting Championship last year.

Suraiya told that she had a fever before the competition but this was nothing new from the shooter who has always found some excuse at

international competitions.

Veteran Sabrina Sultana, the third member of the Bangladesh team, contributed 378 points in the aggregate team total of 1154 points, 31 behind eventual winners India and seven points ahead of Pakistan, who won the team bronze.

Coach Asbab Ali Foyaz said that he did not expect a better performance than this from the female shooters.

"We have failed to improve our scores while the Indians have gone miles ahead. This is our level and we have to admit that," said Foyaz.

WINNING START FOR HOCKEY

Bangladesh edged Sri Lanka 1-0 in the opening match of the 10th South Asian Games hockey competition at Matala yesterday.

Forward Maksud Alam Habul separated the two sides in the 32nd minute at the Nandimithra Ekanayaka Hockey Stadium in the hill-station near Kandy.

Bangladesh, who won the bronze when hockey was played for

the only occasion in the Games at Madras in 1995, dominated the first half but the hosts surged with a series of raids in the dying moments. However, goalkeeper Russel Khan Bappy and the defence led by captain Issa Mia thwarted the Lankan efforts to seal three points.

In today's match, Bangladesh take on title contenders Pakistan who suffered a 2-0 defeat to archrivals India later yesterday.

Defender Raghunath put India ahead from a penalty corner two minutes from halftime before centre-half Gurtaj Singh sealed the victory in the 64th minute.

WEIGHTLIFTING

Biddut Kumar Roy won the fourth bronze medal for Bangladesh in weightlifting when he lifted 255kg

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

All eyes on Asif

SPORTS REPORTER from Colombo

Star shooter Asif Hossain Khan will look forward to make up for the women team's failure in the 10m air rifle event at the 10th SA Games when he enters the Welisara Navy Range today.

Asif, a Commonwealth Games individual gold medalist at the age of 15 in this event at Manchester in 2002 and a team silver medalist four years later at the Melbourne Commonwealth Games, also holds the individual SA Games gold in his pet 10m air rifle event.

A winner in Pakistan two years earlier, Asif will team up with Anjan Kumar Singh -- his partner at Melbourne -- and Imam Hossain -- the weak link in today's competition.

But with the leading Indian shooters -- preparing for the Asiad after C'wealth success -- absent it would be a chance for Asif and the in-form Anjan to finally deliver the elusive gold medal at the Games.

BANGLADESH IN TODAY'S GAMES

HOCKEY: Bangladesh v Pakistan (at Matala)

SHOOTING: Sabrina Sultana (women's 50m prone), Asif Hossain, Anjan Kumar Singh, Imam Hossain (men's 10m air rifle).

SWIMMING (men's): Kamal Hossain (200m individual medley), Rezaul Karim, Nazrul Islam (100m freestyle), Jewel Ahmed (200m butterfly) and (women's): Mahfuz Khatun, Dolly Akhter (200m breaststroke), Sabura Khatun (400m freestyle).

KABADDI (women's): Bangladesh v Sri Lanka and (men's) Bangladesh v Sri Lanka.

WEIGHTLIFTING: Pradeep Kumar Das (105kg), Feroz Mahmud (above 105kg)

OTHERS: Boxing, Squash, Table tennis.

Lankans give Hair a piece of their mind

AFP, Colombo

Controversial Australian umpire Darrell Hair was on Monday subjected to ridicule and scorn by Sri Lankan cricket experts after accusing Pakistan of ball-tampering in The Oval Test.

Sri Lankans have not forgiven Hair for no-balling spin wizard Muttiah Muralidaran seven times for a suspect bowling action during a Test match against Australia in Melbourne in 1995.

Hair further enraged the Sri Lankans, and many cricket fans within the Indian sub-continent, by branding Muralidaran's action "diabolical" in his autobiography "The Decision Maker".

Arjuna Ranatunga, who was Muralidaran's captain in that Melbourne Test, said he was not surprised by Hair's ruling against the Pakistanis. The Oval Test against England was cancelled Sunday after the Pakistanis failed to take to the field after the tea interval in protest.

Ranatunga, Sri Lanka's celebrated World Cup-winning captain in 1996, accused Hair of deliberately targeting Asian teams.

"Can anyone explain to me why Asian teams suffer when Darrell Hair is the umpire?" Ranatunga told AFP.

"This man has concluded that someone is a cheat without providing proper evidence. The game's reputation is at stake and the International Cricket Council needs to step in and do something about it."

"Inzy (Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq) is one of the nicest guys I have come across. If I

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Oval Test called off

England declared 3-0 series winners



AFP, London

The fourth and final Test between England and Pakistan was sensationally abandoned on Sunday after an ugly row over ball-tampering.

England were declared the winners after Pakistan were adjudged to have forfeited the match when they refused to take the field after the tea interval.

The tourists were incensed that they had been accused of ball tampering and penalised five runs.

The decision that Pakistan should forfeit the game in these circumstances was unprecedented in the 129-year-history of Test cricket.

"It was concluded with regret that there will be no play on the fifth day of the fourth Test on Monday," said a joint-statement by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), world governing body, the International Cricket Council (ICC), and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) read out to reporters by ECB chief execu-

tive David Collier.

The statement made it clear that while the teams and boards were happy for the match to progress the umpires (Australia's Darrell Hair and Billy Doctrove of the West Indies) were not.

"After lengthy negotiations which resulted in agreement between the teams the ICC match referee (South Africa's Mike Procter) and both ECB and PCB to seek to resume the fourth Test match on Monday it was concluded with regret there will be no play.

"The fourth Test match has therefore been forfeited with the match being awarded to England."

"In accordance with the Laws of Cricket it was noted that the umpires had acted correctly, deemed that Pakistan had forfeited the match and awarded the Test to England."

"At a meeting between the captains, ECB, PCB and ICC match referee, the players, ICC match referee and boards indicated that they would offer to resume play if at all possible on Day Five."

"The umpires having awarded

the match to England and having consulted with the Pakistan captain (Inzamamul Haq) reconfirmed their decision to award the match to England."

"The Pakistan team was aggrieved by the award of five penalty runs to England. The award of those penalty runs for alleged interference with the ball is under review by the ICC match referee Mike Procter, whose report will be considered in due course."

"ICC will be issuing a separate report concerning action which may be taken in relation to the forfeiture of the match by Pakistan."

England, already 2-0 up in the four-match series, have now won it 3-0.

Pakistan were docked five runs at the end of the fourth day's 56th over which had been bowled by paceman Umar Gul.

It was Gul's 14th over with

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Susanthika to run till 2008

SPORTS REPORTER from Colombo

Olympic bronze medalist Susanthika Jayasinghe has set her eyes on competing at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

The Sri Lankan sprint queen, who returned from an ankle injury to lead the athletics team at the 10th SA Games, told yesterday that the Games would be her first stage to return to form.

The athletics competition starts on August 24.

"I want to run faster. This is the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



Did U Know?

In 1985, the Soviet player Garry Kasparov became the youngest world chess champion ever at the age of 22 years and 210 days.



Percy Sonn

(ICC president)
"I am deeply disappointed at their decision to go home."
On South Africa's decision to abandon the tour of Sri Lanka.



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq looks over to the pitch from the balcony of the team dressing room at The Oval in London on Monday, what would have been the fifth and final day of the fourth Test.

Inzy gives his version



AFP, London

Pakistan cricket captain Inzamamul Haq said Monday he kept his team off the field against England in the fourth Test to defend his country's pride after allegations of cheating.

Inzamam also told private GEO television that the International Cricket Council should not let Australian umpire Darrell Hair take charge of any more matches involving Pakistan.

"The pride of the nation has been hurt, we have been unfairly labelled as cheats," Inzamam told GEO, explaining for the first time why he led the dressing room protest on Sunday.

"It's not a question of myself and my team, it's a question of my coun-

try. So we decided to protest and no player was ready to play. They were distraught."

The 36-year-old master batsman added: "We think what we did was justified, we did it for the sake of country. Why is only one umpire finding fault with us?"

Pakistan stayed off the pitch after the tea interval to register their anger at being penalised five runs by Hair and fellow umpire Billy Doctrove over allegations of ball-tampering.

The Pakistanis eventually came out but the umpires refused to let the match proceed. It was awarded to England.

Burly Inzamam, who has played 109 Tests scoring 8,266 runs since his debut at Edgbaston in 1992, said they had returned to the pitch at the request of the match referee and English cricket officials.

"We were consulting the match referee and he told me that for the sake of the game we should go to the ground and play. The England and Wales Cricket Board chief also came to me and said it is good for you to go to field and play," Inzamam said.

"So the players and myself decided to do that for the sake of the game and the sake of good relations between Pakistan and England."

"When we went to the ground the umpires refused to come."

Inzamam also complained about previous decisions by Hair, saying that a number of rulings on the first day of the third Test at Headingley had changed the course of the game.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Hair lives on controversy!



AFP, London

The shock decision to call off the fourth and final Test at The Oval here Sunday and award the match to England with a day to spare after Pakistan had been charged with ball tampering was not the first time Australia umpire Darrell Hair had found himself enmeshed in controversy.

Hair, whose refusal to rescind his decision taken alongside Billy Doctrove to penalise Pakistan five runs was cited by officials as the reason why the match could not continue, is a love-hate figure within the cricket world.

To his supporters the 53-year-old Australian is one of the last top-flight umpires confident enough to back his own judgment and uphold the game's laws in full, whatever the cost.

To his critics, he is a spotlight-seeking pedant.

In 1995-96 he was centre stage at the Melbourne Cricket Ground where he called Sri Lanka off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran, whose career has been dogged by questions over the legitimacy of his action, for throwing.

Hair then further enraged Sri Lanka supporters, and many cricket fans within the Indian sub-continent especially, by branding Muralidaran's action "diabolical" in his autobiography.

But as early as 1994 Peter Kirsten, the South Africa opening batsman, was fined 65 percent of his match fee for what Wisden Cricketers' Almanack, the sport's bible, called an "animated conversation" with Hair over lbw decisions.

And there was a hint of the dramatic events to come at The Oval when, after England's 167-run win in the third Test at Headingley earlier this month, Britain's Independent on Sunday newspaper reported that Pakistan had made an official complaint about Hair.

That said Pakistan had also objected to him standing in the series-finale with the tourists saying they found his manner towards them "dismissive" and "rude".



PHOTO: AFP

Umpire Darrell Hair takes off the bails after Pakistan players refused to take to the field during the fourth day of the fourth Test against England at The Oval on Sunday.