

# BOA in total disarray

## Who'll receive Dhaka Games flag?



AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

As the curtains on the 10th South Asian Games fall today, the strong contingent of Bangladesh officials will gather at the Sugathadasa Stadium to do one last ritual correctly after their innumerable questionable activities throughout the 11-day show of the biggest sports jamboree of the region.

The issue is pretty serious because someone has to receive the Games baton since Dhaka will be hosting the next edition of the meet. But until now it was not confirmed who would take over the Games flag on behalf of Bangladesh. The host city mayor is the first choice and then a Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) official. However, it was learnt that BOA acting secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed was on his way to catch the concluding ceremony bus.

Not only that, the local organising committee was sweating to know even on Sunday when the Bangladeshi cultural troupe would arrive. As Bangladesh host the next Games in two years, they are to perform in the closing ceremony as the tradition goes.

Besides, the BOA has yet to design and approve a logo for the 11th edition of the Games and present it at the closing ceremony, leading only to establish a total mismanagement that was embarrassingly evident in managerial skills both on and off the field.

It was a shame that when Mahfuzur Rahman won the 100m hurdles gold there was hardly any official present to cheer him on Friday. Rather, most of the officials failed to resist the temptation of a trip to the picturesque Kandy to see the hockey bronze medal play-off.

While the hierarchy watched Bangladesh being mauled by hosts Sri Lanka, a nation that had never won a hockey match against Bangladesh, Mahfuzur Rahman only received cheers from his colleagues. More interestingly there was no official to offer the hurdler hero a national flag for the victory lap. He had to content with a small flag brought by colleagues.

It also looked very odd when two senior officials including a BOA high-up -- both enjoying a sound trip in Colombo -- even did not bother to clap and inspire swimmer Shahjahan Ali Rony when his name was announced over the sound-system prior to his gold medal triumph.

Bangladesh contingent's general manager AK Sarker was without a cellphone for about a week after arrival, waiting for the 'company' (organising committee) to deliver him a free SIM card. Whenever he was approached for news about teams residing outside Colombo, like hockey or shooting, his repeated answers were: "I really do not know because I have yet to get a phone."

In a country ravaged by war, keeping contact with all the members of the team should have been his priority. Maybe, the cash-starved BOA had advised him not to waste 2,000 rupees (20 dollars) to buy a SIM card.

But even after his mobile phone

was activated, it was difficult to get a call through to him.

Even funnier was the women's general manager Quamrunnahar Dana. She was mostly seen accompanying her relative, the only female physician -- a family planning expert whose knowledge about sports medicine is also questionable -- to find a place in the squad. There have been complaints of free mixing among the sportsmen and women in the hotel but Dana was more eager to fax reports to Bangladeshi news agencies or go shopping rather than keep a watch. Thankfully, there was no scandal in the end.

The managerial skills or the lack of it definitely deteriorated in the absence of Zafar Imam, the former secretary general of Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) who died two years ago.

Love him or loath him, Imam, affectionately called Zafar bhai, was the father figure of sports in the country and his ability to deliver in any Games was unmatched.

He was a man with connections home and abroad. The addition of power and skill made him a renowned organiser the world over. His untimely departure has created a void, which was cruelly exposed in Colombo.

It was not only in the Games but also during preparations the present BOA set-up failed to combine things together within the limited resources on offer.

While bright prospects like swimming, athletics and shooting needed intensive training, the highest body of sports in the country not only failed to provide them

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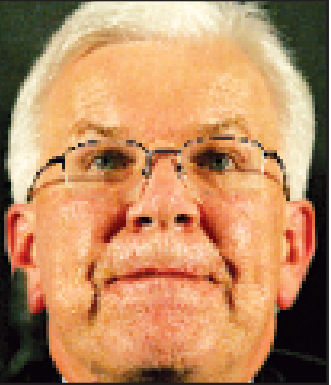


PHOTO: FOCUSBANGLA

SWEET GOLD: Mizanur Rahman of Bangladesh is delighted after receiving the gold medal that he won in taekwondo at the St. Joseph's College Indoor Complex in Colombo on Sunday.



British golfer Nick Faldo holds the record for the most Ryder Cup match wins. He's won 23 of his 46 matches.



### Malcolm Speed

(ICC chief executive)

"I was shocked. I thought it was a silly letter."

On his reaction to Darrell Hair's letter offering to quit for 500,000 dollars.

**What to WATCH**

**ESPN**

English Premier Football League  
Middlesbrough v Portsmouth  
Live at 12:55 am (Tuesday)

**STAR Sports**

Primera Liga  
Celta Vigo v Barcelona  
Live at 12:55 am (Tuesday)

## F'ganj power past Victoria

UNB, Dhaka

Farashganj Sporting Club continued their winning run as they registered their second successive victory in the Green Delta Insurance First Division Hockey League when they beat Victoria Sporting Club 3-0 at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first-half by

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## CHAMPIONS TROPHY

# Mehrab enters the fray, Bashar still uncertain



SPORTS REPORTER

Mehrab Hossain was rewarded for his recent string of good form as the national selectors picked the young prospect in the 18-member preliminary squad for the ICC Champions Trophy to be held in India in October-November.

The left-handed top-order batsman and a very useful left-arm spinner was the only fresh inclusion in an otherwise unchanged squad from a list which was taken in the previous occasion.

His preparations will start on Wednesday.

The Faruque Ahmed-led selection panel trimmed the squad from the 30-member probables which was announced on August 9.

The 19-year-old Mehrab, who is currently captaining the BCB Academy team in Pakistan, caught the eye during the Bangladesh A

team's tour to Zimbabwe last June and had been considered as one of the best future prospects for longer-version cricket.

"Yes, we believe that he is a very good player for the longer-version game but that doesn't mean he is not good enough for the shorter-version. We have lot of hard-hitting batsmen in the squad but we felt that we need a player like Mehrab who has the ability to play the anchor role in the top order," explained Faruque.

"He is basically an opener who can also bat in the middle-order. But if he finally gets the nod he will definitely be consider as an opener. The last two years' performance of the young batsman in different levels gave us the impression that he can represent the senior side for long," he added.

"It is a part of our continuous process to bring young guys in the senior side and two boys' (Forhad Reza and Sakib Al Hasan) performances in the last series made us

courageous to do so," said an

excited Faruque.

Many might have thought that the inclusion of Mehrab was a message for veteran opener Javed Omar, who many believed is not suitable to open the innings in the one-day international when Bangladesh go for a win.

Faruque didn't say anything directly on this issue but said that they are looking for a proper combination before the World Cup.

"We don't want to write off anybody's career but the fact is that we are trying hard to get a right combination in the opening slot. You know that top-order is permanent headache for the team and we believe that once we get the right pair in the opening spot our maximum problem will be solved," he responded.

Faruque, however, was a little worried with the fitness of captain Habibul Bashar.

"This is really a worrying factor

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## Silly of Akber

SPORTS REPORTER from Colombo

Eyebrows were raised as Bangladesh contingent's 10th SA Games Chef de Mission Maj Gen Akber Akter did not visit an ailing member of his team in hospital.

Judoka Ekramul Haque spent a night in hospital following a neck injury on Saturday but surprisingly, Akber, who is also the Bangladesh Judo Federation president, did not even bother to go and comfort the athlete.

Ekramul was injured during competition on Saturday but he was cleared of any danger only after a CT Scan and MRI before being released yesterday afternoon.

The incident only adds more woes to the official mismanagement that has been evident throughout the Games.

## Mahalchhari on the right track

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Mahalchhari scored in both halves to secure a 2-0 win over Matiranga in the DC Gold Cup football tournament at the Khagrachhari Stadium yesterday.

Shahidul Islam scored the opening goal for the winners in the 35th

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# Scrappy win for Sylhet



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Hosts Sylhet edged past Comilla by a single goal to mark a good start in the final round of the Jubok Phone National Football Championship at the Sylhet Stadium yesterday.

Midfielder Robin scored the all-important goal in the 27th minute. The result ends the campaign for Comilla who drew their first match against Dhaka University 1-1. Sylhet, on the other hand, need only a draw in their match against Dhaka University to confirm their spot in the semifinals of the competition.

The hosts were playing in front of a capacity crowd but failed to light up the place as they were well below par in their performance. A lack of method in the middle was evident and even though the result was in favour of the hosts, it didn't satisfy anyone.

Led by national skipper and star midfielder Arif Khan Joy and with three other national players, Sylhet

were not up to the mark. Comilla played more attractive football, but just like Tangail on Saturday, lacked the finishing touch up front. Sylhet only had a couple of chances in the match. Robin missed a golden opportunity in the 23rd minute when he latched on to a long ball from midfield. But he slammed the ball on to Comilla goalkeeper Monir's body.

Four minutes later, Robin made no mistake as he grabbed an incisive pass from Monir and slotted home the winner.

Comilla had only one chance five minutes after the lemon break but Sylhet goalie Sohel was brilliant as he saved a low drive from Jamal.

The hosts went on the defensive in the final quarter as they look to take on Dhaka University in their next match.

"We didn't play in the preliminary stages. This is why we looked so unsettled in the middle. I'm sure my boys will be back to their best against Dhaka University," said Sylhet coach Samir Day.

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## BCB calls up 7 for sixes

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a seven-member squad for the Asian Super Sixes Challenge to be held in Karachi from September 13 to 18.

Only opener Nazmus Sadat, who is now currently visiting with the BCB Academy side in Pakistan, was the new face in an otherwise star-studded squad.

The selectors considered the all-round ability of the players for the tourney except the newcomer.

"You know that it is a competition for the all-rounders and that's why we considered the all-round ability before selecting the team. On the other hand, we believe that national players will be benefited by the tourney before the ICC Champions Trophy," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed.

Hosts Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka are the other teams in the competition.

### SQUAD

Mohammad Rafique, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Aftab Ahmed, Manjarul Islam, Sakib Al Hasan, Forhad Reza and Nazmus Sadat.

# Speed fears Hair loss



AFP, London

International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive Malcolm Speed believes that umpire Darrell Hair's Test career could be over after the controversy of the past week.

Hair offered to quit top-level cricket in return for 500,000 dollars after the ball-tampering furore which lead to Pakistan forfeiting their final Test against England.

Speed said he wanted Hair to continue but did not know whether the Australian could shake off this latest controversy.

"There have been other issues in his umpiring career where people have said 'this is the end for Darrell Hair' -- after he called Mutiah Muralidaran for throwing in 1996, and he then wrote a book, and people said 'this is the end for Darrell Hair'," Speed told BBC Radio Five Live's Sportsworld programme.

"Darrell survived that and has become a better umpire, he is one of the world's best umpires, so I hope we can find a way for him to continue but I'm not sure that that will happen.

"Why? Because there's a lot of speculation from people like

Nasser Hussain and others where they say that they believe that Darrell's career is finished, that he's compromised.

"That's not my wish, I hope we can find a way for him to continue. I would like Darrell Hair to continue umpiring in cricket matches at the top level."

Speed said it was up to the ICC adjudicator to decide whether Hair's actions affected the charges against Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq of ball-tampering and bringing the game into disrepute, brought following the team's sit-in at the fourth Test.

Inzamam refused to bring his team out to play after a break after Hair and his colleague Billy Doctrove's decision to penalise them five runs for ball-tampering. Speed said: "The ball-tampering issue and the subsequent charge are very simple cricketing issues about what happened on the field.

"Whether it impacts on Darrell Hair's credit I don't know, that's a matter for Pakistan's lawyers whether to raise that and then for the adjudicator to decide whether he takes that into account."

Speed also admitted that ICC umpires manager Doug Cowie now regretted replying to Hair's emailed claim for cash, saying that

the suggestion "may have merit".

Speed added: "That was Doug Cowie's response and I think if he could play it again he would play it differently. When it came to me I saw that not for one second could we contemplate it.

"At no time did I ever consider paying Darrell any amount."

Meanwhile, Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Shahryar Khan insisted the Hair affair gave weight to their claims that the umpires had mishandled the situation.

Shahryar said: "Yes I think it does. The rules do allow for a protest or a delay at what was an absolutely preposterous allegation."

He added that Pakistan were insistent Hair should never umpire a match involving them again. Speed, however, insisted nothing could be ruled out.

He said: "It was said he could never umpire Sri Lanka again after 1996 but he has.

"Time will tell water needs to flow under the bridge. I don't what his future is but I hope we can find a way for him to continue."

Speed also confirmed the ball-tampering charge had been made by both Hair and Doctrove, and that he was not aware the England players had made any complaint.

## Walcott no more

AFP, London

West Indies cricket legend Sir Clyde Leopold Walcott died in a Barbados hospital on Saturday at the age of 80.

Walcott was one of the three Ws along with Sir Frank Worrell and Everton Weekes who shot to fame in the 1950s.

But he first made his mark in



SIR CLYDE LEOPOLD WALCOTT

1945-46 when, just 20 years old, he added an unbroken 574 for the fourth wicket with his schoolmate, Worrell, for Barbados against Trinidad at Port of Spain.

In 44 Tests Walcott hit 15 hundreds, and made 3,798 runs at an average of 56.68. His highest Test score was 220 against England in Bridgetown in 1954.

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