

Afghanistan topple Bangladesh



AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

Bangladeshi sports authority and organisers might have felt content after winning three gold at the 10th South Asian Games which concluded here yesterday but the performance will go into the record books as the worst in the country's 22-year history in the regional sports.

Bangladesh finished with a haul of 52 medals, three gold, 15 silver and 34 bronze, after Shamim Osman and Mohammed Hossain Khan claimed bronze medals in 50kg male kata and 80kg male kumite out of three karate events on the final day.

Bangladesh won less gold medals on three occasions -- in the inaugural and the seventh editions in Kathmandu and had hit the low at Islamabad 1989 when they bagged just one gold.

However, the country's position in the medals table is worst after finishing sixth. What hurts most is their place behind Afghanistan, the war ravaged nation participating only for the second time.

Afghanistan won one gold

medal to Bangladesh's three in the previous version in Pakistan but the Afghans' skill in martial art and wrestling have put them above Bangladesh, whose best finish was back in 1985 at home when they toppled Sri Lanka in the table to end third, thanks to the heroics of five-gold swimmer Mosharraf Hossain.

Seven years later, Bangladesh hosted the Games for the second time and grabbed 11 gold medals, reaching the double figure for the only time so far.

In the first seven Games, Bangladesh finished five times ahead of Nepal but the introduction of taekwondo in 1999 has given edge to the men from the Himalayan Kingdom, who seemed to have cemented their place above of Bangladesh.

The surprise gold for Mizanur

Rahman in taekwondo middle-weight should be considered as a one-off incident as none of his teammates passed the test of the first round. It also gave Bangladesh their first gold outside athletics, boxing, swimming, shooting and football.

Although they recovered their honours in athletics -- once dominated by Bangladeshi sprinters -- after 11 years in the shape of hurdler Mahfuzur Rahman Mithu, the shooting team were on their lowest ebb, having failed to deliver a gold for the first time since the discipline's inception at the Games in 1991 here in Colombo.

With success in long distance swimming fading out gradually due to lack of the swimmers' endurance, caused by dearth of original equipment and other facilities, Bangladesh seemed

good only in the short distance events, Shahjahan Ali Rony winning the 50m breaststroke to deliver the nation its first gold medal in Colombo 2006.

India retained their supremacy, topping the medal table for the tenth time with the biggest gold rush, winning 118 out of 216 gold medals at stake. It was the fifth time they have got past the century mark, having set the standard for the first time at Madras 1995 with 103 gold medals.

With events increasing in total 20 disciplines, the top five -- India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Afghanistan -- bettered their gold hauls from the last Games. Bangladesh remained on three gold medals while Bhutan lost the one won in Islamabad. Maldives, for the sixth time, returned without a single medal.

ANGLADESH AT SAF/SA GAMES

Games	Venue	Year	Position	G	B	S	Total
1st SAF Games	Kathmandu	1984	5th	2	8	13	23
2nd SAF Games	Dhaka	1985	3rd	9	17	38	64
3rd SAF Games	Calcutta	1987	4th	3	20	31	54
4th SAF Games	Islamabad	1989	5th	1	12	24	37
5th SAF Games	Colombo	1991	4th	4	8	28	40
6th SAF Games	Dhaka	1993	4th	11	19	32	62
7th SAF Games	Madras	1995	4th	7	17	34	58
8th SAF Games	Kathmandu	1999	5th	2	10	35	47
9th SA Games	Islamabad	2004	5th	3	13	24	40
10th SA Games	Colombo	2006	6th	3	15	34	52

GENERAL STANDING

Country	G	S	B	Total
India	118	69	47	234
Pakistan	43	44	71	158
Sri Lanka	37	63	78	178
Nepal	9	15	31	55
Afghanistan	6	7	16	29
Bangladesh	3	15	34	52
Bhutan	0	3	10	13
Maldives	0	0	0	0



PHOTO: FOCUSBANGLA

BRONZE PAIR: Karatekas Mohamad Hossain Khan (L) and Shamim Osman pose with the national flag at the St. Joseph's College Indoor Complex in Colombo on Monday.



The Formula 1 World Drivers' Championship, inaugurated in 1950, has been won a record five times by Juan Manuel Fangio (1911-95) from Argentina, in 1951 and 1954-57.



Dickie Bird
(Former Test umpire)
"It is a very, very sad time for cricket and there is no doubt our great game has been badly hurt. But as in the past, I am sure it will eventually get over it."

Zia finishes third

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Ziaur Rahman became third in the IGM 3rd Dato Arthur Tan Malaysian Open Chess Championship, held in Kuala Lumpur, despite finishing on equal points with eventual winner GM Dao Thein Hai of Vietnam.

Zia and four other players earned 8 points each after the end of the 11th and last round of games and they had to be separated by a tie-breaker, which saw Zia finish third.

GM Niaz Murshed earned 6½ points and became 23rd, FM Mehdi Hasan Parag earned 5½ points and finished 46th while IWM Rani Hamid of Biman became 55th with 5 points.

Ponting wants the best umps

AFP, Sydney

Australian captain Ricky Ponting says he wants the best umpires to officiate in Test cricket, irrespective of nationality.

Ponting and Australian cricket officials believe this year's Ashes series here with England should be controlled by the top umpires on the ICC's elite panel, even if they are Australian or English.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

BCB gears up for TV deal



SPORTS REPORTER

With only two months remaining before the first home series under the new Future Tour Programme (FTP), the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) have yet to start their course of action to negotiate a new broadcasting deal.

Bangladesh are all set to start the new international calendar at home in November with a five-match one-day series against Zimbabwe. It is a situation that leaves BCB with very little time to settle the TV rights -- which is the source of maximum revenue for the governing body.

The Board had formed a committee headed by its president Ali Asghar four months back to complete the formalities of signing a new deal after the previous five-year contract with ESPN-STARSPORT expired last April following the home series against world champions Australia.

But after the no show of the previous body for the last couple of months the board in Monday's executive committee meeting formed a fresh committee with media chief Reazuddin Al Mamun and joint-secretary Rafiqul Islam Babu becoming the scapegoats for its failure.

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Asghar will now lead a team that comprises marketing committee chairman Aziz Al Kaiser Titoo, BCB treasurer Azalur Rahman Sinha, Qayum Chowdhury, Khondokar Jamiluddin, Mirza Salman Isphani, general secretary Mahbubul Anam and CEO Mahmudur Rahman.

"There was a long discussion about the TV deal in the EC meeting. The previous committee actually was not formalised that's why we formed a new one and we are hopeful that it will work hard to settle the issue as soon as possible, as we have only two months time," said Mahbubul Anam at a press conference yesterday.

"We can assure everybody that the new deal will be a transparent one because we will award the right in open tender. The committee will first appoint a law consultancy firm to negotiate the deal and it will also be appointed in open tender. We don't want to disclose anything about the deal at the moment," he informed.

While Mahbub said that they were yet to find a consultancy firm, a close source however disclosed that the board has already nominated an internationally recognised audit firm (KPMG) to broker the TV deal for the board.

"We have already signed a deal two months back with KPMG to help us about the matter and it was approved in the EC meeting today. The new committee will meet with them within a couple of days," said a BCB high official without disclosing his name.

Regarding the absence of Reazuddin Al Mamun in the new committee, Mahbub said that he was not in a position to provide exact reasons.

"I can only say that it was a decision of the EC meeting".

It may be mentioned that Mamun had developed a bitter relationship with president Asghar after he had resigned from the board following a disclosure in the media in November last year that Asghar had struck a secret deal with a little known consultancy firm (Aston Moore) to negotiate the TV deal.

Now everybody is looking forward to see whether the present board under the leadership of Asghar will be able to sign a transparent deal or make a shabby one like the previous one.

Board AGM on Oct 3



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to hold its next annual general meeting (AGM) on October 3.

The decision was taken in the board's seventh executive committee meeting held yesterday at the Dhaka Club.

BCB general secretary Mahbubul Anam along with chief executive officer Mahmudur Rahman appeared at a press conference at the National Sports Council (NSC) conference room after the marathon six-hour meeting. The BCB also decided many other things at the meeting which are as follows:

AWARD NIGHT

The board has decided to hold the much-talked about Cricket Award Night on September 20 and the

country's two most experienced cricketers Khaled Mashud and Mohammad Rafique will be honoured in the programme for their hundredth one-day international appearances.

"The board has decided to recognise their achievement in this programme. It is great that both the players so far played hundred ODI matches for Bangladesh," said Mahbub.

COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE TEAM PERFORMANCE

A five-member committee has been formed to evaluate the team performance after every series or tournament.

The committee comprises BCB vice-president Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen, general secretary Mahbubul Anam, Shamim Kabir, ASM Faruque and Khondokar Jamiluddin.

CONFIRMATION OF ZIMBABWE TOUR

It was confirmed that Zimbabwe would tour Bangladesh in November for a five-match one-day series.

"We expressed our desire to play a seven-match series and a Twenty20 match during the tour but the Zimbabwean board declined to play two more matches and agreed on only five one-day internationals," informed Mahbub.

"We have also prepared a proposed itinerary but it will only be confirmed after Zimbabwe Cricket agree with it," he added.

SELECTORS' ISSUE

Although some influential members informed that the selectors' recent controversy over the under-hand sponsorship deal with the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

Gaibandha custodian Salam foils an attack from Noakhali during their Jubok Phone National Football Championship match at the Sylhet Stadium on Monday.

Noakhali move into semis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet.

Championship aspirants Noakhali District secured their semifinal spot in the Jubok Phone National Football Championship by defeating Gaibandha district XI by a 3-0 scoreline yesterday afternoon at the Sylhet Stadium.

Noakhali will now face Dhaka district XI on 31st August to decide who plays the final.

Noakhali needed to win this match to advance while only a draw would have been enough to see the men from Gaibandha through. But it never materialized for the latter as the Noakhali team came out all guns blazing right from the start.

Aided by a plethora of national stars on display, Nokhali dominated from the outset as their midfield stalwarts Masuda Rana and Arman dictated play. They took the lead on the 22nd minute after a corner from Arman was fumbled onto Emily to stab the ball home from close range. Noakhali created plenty more chances in the first half but a string of amazing misses saw them somehow fail to add to the total in the first half.

However, the game was sown up as a contest in the 54th minute as Alfaz converted from inside the area to put Noakhali two-up. And Didar added insult to injury by adding a third in the 76th to send Noakhali into the last four.

TEAMS

Noakhali: Aminul, Jewel Rana, Monu, Emily, Masud Rana, Ashraf, Mofazzel, Arman miah, Titu, Jalaluddin, Alfaz (captain) and Didar.

Gaibandha: Rashedul, Nazrul, Rakib, Russel, Tarek, Md. Sujon, Abdul Aziz, Ataur, Parvez, Zahid, Ratan and Khorshed.

BALL-TAMPERING ISSUE India 'inclined to support' Pakistan

PTI, Chandigarh

The joint secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India MP Pandove on Sunday said that the BCCI was "inclined to support" Pakistan in the ball-tampering controversy, but stressed final decision will be taken on merit of things.

"BCCI is inclined to support the neighbouring country, but subject to facts coming to our knowledge the final decision will be taken on merit," Pandove, also secretary of the Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) told reporters here.

Pandove said that IS Bindra, PCA president and a former BCCI president, will represent the board at the ICC Executive Committee meeting in Dubai on September 2 when the issue will come up for discussion.

"We have sympathies for Pakistan," he said.

Shahriar surprise



SPORTS REPORTER

In a surprise move the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Monday named Shahriar Nafees as vice-captain of the national team for the ICC Champions Trophy to be held in India in October-November.

The board's decision to award the young left-handed opener the demanding job at its executive committee meeting yesterday, was a bolt from the blue for long-serving wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud, who had successfully led the team in the recently concluded Africa trip during the absence of injured skipper Habibul Bashar.

BCB general secretary Mahbubul Anam however told reporters that they have considered Shahriar in an effort to groom a future Bangladesh captain.

"It was unanimously agreed in the meeting that Shahriar will act as the deputy of Bashar for the tourney. It would be nothing new for him since he had led Bangladesh Under-19s and Bangladesh A team previously," said Mahbub while defending the board's decision.

"Most importantly Nafees attended a captaincy training programme under the supervision

of Asian Cricket Council (ACC) and honestly speaking he has the ability to go all the way," he added.

When asked whether the board was taking unnecessary risk by naming Shahriar as vice-captain ahead of a proven Mashud with Bashar yet to get back to full fitness, the bearded BCB general secretary said that they were adamant to gamble with the young southpaw.

"I agree that we might have made a mistake in the previous occasion but we are very much confident this time about Shahriar. Besides, we have confirmation that Bashar will be fit for the ICC Champions Trophy," he said.

Mahbub was batting against a volley of questions after the Rajin Saleh fallout in the last ICC Champions Trophy in England in 2004.

"Bashar will start the training with the team tomorrow and he can bat within two weeks, so we can't think right at the moment that Bashar will miss the tourney," he added.

Bangladesh start their training for the second biggest tournament after World Cup today in the absence of coach Dav Whatmore who will return from Sri Lanka on August 31.

'First world hypocrisy'



AFP, New Delhi

Legendary West Indian fast bowler Michael Holding wants Pakistan absolved of ball tampering charges, saying "first world hypocrisy" was to blame for cricket's present crisis.

"I have absolute and all sympathy with (Pakistan captain) Inzamamul Haq. If you label someone a cheat, please arrive with the evidence," Holding wrote in the latest issue of the respected 'India Today' weekly magazine.

Inzamam stands accused of bringing the game into disrepute after his team refused to take the field in the recent Oval Test match against England in protest at umpires Darrell Hair and Billy Doctrove reporting them for ball tampering.

The umpires later awarded the match to England, the first instance in the 129-year history of Test cricket that a game was forfeited, triggering the biggest upheaval in the sport since the match-fixing row in 2000.

Holding, now a popular and respected television pundit, wrote it was "insensitive" of the umpires, Hair in particular, to penalise Pakistan for ball tampering.

"Most other umpires would have said something to the captain, given the offending team a warning of some kind. Then if the tampering continued, they would have been totally justified in taking action," Holding wrote.

"There is a double standard at work in cricket and this episode has only highlighted it.

"When England used reverse swing to beat the Australians in the 2005 Ashes, everyone said it was

great skill. When Pakistan does it, the opposite happens, no one thinks it is great skill. Everyone associates it with skulduggery.

"When bombs go off in Karachi and Colombo everyone wants to go home. When bombs go off in London, no one says anything.

"That is first world hypocrisy and



MICHAEL HOLDING

we have to live with it."

Holding said he was astonished that both teams and match referee Mike Procter were willing to resume play on the final day, but the umpires cited rules and insisted the game was already over.

"Being the senior umpire, Hair was probably leading the way in that decision," wrote Holding.

"Today, Hair is being defended in Australia but that is just a matter of friends sticking together, the Aussies defending an Australian umpire.

"Everyone now citing the cricketing law as the absolute and final truth is talking absolute rubbish. Every law has room for flexibility.

"I read a prime example recently

DC CUP FOOTBALL Panchhari rout Laximchhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Panchhari Upazila XI striker, Siddikur Rahman scored four goals including the first hattrick of the Deputy Commissioner Football tournament in Khagrachhari yesterday as they routed Laxmichhari by a 8-0 scoreline to advance to the semifinals.

The on-fire Siddikur propelled Panchhari to 4-0 lead in the first half of the match.

The match kicked off at 4pm and there was a very short wait for the first goal as Siddikur headed home after four minutes. He (Siddikur) doubled his tally only four minutes later to put his team two up against the shell shocked Laxmichhari Upazila team.

The third goal arrived on the half-hour mark as Saluk Zoty Chakma scored for Panchhari.

Siddikur completed his hattrick and put his team four up just before the half time whistle as he slotted home a penalty kick.

The second half very much followed the pattern of the first and Panchhari increased their lead further.

Salok Joty Chakma got a brace by converting just past the hour

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

PCB pushes for Hair removal

REUTERS, Karachi

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is pushing for Darrell Hair's removal from the International Cricket Council's (ICC) list of elite umpires before the Champions Trophy in India in October.

"Pakistan have held discussions with some other (ICC) member boards on this issue and are confident that after the Hair demand for money issue, they would be able to move a motion asking for the Australian's removal from the elite panel," a PCB official told this news agency on Monday.

The PCB official said that Pakistan wanted the charges of alleged ball-tampering and bringing the game into disrepute against captain Inzamamul Haq withdrawn after the announcement about Hair's one-off payment request.