

Sajjad hits history

SPORTS REPORTER

 Sajjad Hossain created a small piece of history when he became the first Bangladeshi archer to win a gold medal at an international tournament yesterday.

The unheralded archer from Chandpur defeated T Rangpur of Iran to clinch the individual recurve 70m gold in the 4th Asian Archery Grand Prix Championship at Salt Lake City in Kolkata. Bangladesh also clinched the silver medal in the team event in a sport that started a quiet journey in 2006.

Sajjad was four points clear of his heavyweight Iranian counterpart after scoring 105 out of a maximum 120 points from 12 attempts.

"I feel really happy to see the national flag flying at an international tournament and hear the national anthem," Sajjad told the Daily Star Sport over phone in his immediate reaction.

Sajjad was hundred per cent perfect in seven of his 12 shots that eventually earned him the gold.

Sajjad's confidence was sky high after he beat world champion Rahul Rajib of India in the quarterfinal, although he admitted that he hadn't expected such a result against the world champion archer.

"After beating Rahul Rajib, I started to believe that I could do something in the tournament and crossed the semifinal hurdle defeating Biswas

and then the dream came true in the final," said Sajjad.

The champion archer, however, said that he was confident of doing well in the tournament even before he left for Kolkata as he had good preparation at home where he shot highest 112 points.

Sajjad is optimistic that he would be able to carry his form into next year's South Asian (SA) Games at home.

The Bangladesh team



PHOTO: STAR FILE

A file photo shows Sajjad Hossain in his stride at the outer stadium in Paltan during a national archery event.

Hopes for a whitewash

Seventh Aus-Eng ODI today

Cricket

AFP, Durham

Australia all-rounder James Hopes admits the chance to become the first team to win a one-day series 7-0 will provide all the motivation his side need to crush England one more time on Sunday.

Ricky Ponting's team extended their winning run to six matches at Trent Bridge on Thursday when a century from rookie wicket-keeper-batsman Tim Paine helped them to a crushing 111-run victory.

While piling further misery on England's one-day troops -- skipper Andrew Strauss was booted by sections of the crowd after the loss -- Australia's success lifted them back to the top of the ICC's one-day international rankings.

Ponting's side must win again at Durham this weekend if they are to retain that status into next week's Champions Trophy and Hopes admits completing a whitewash is a scenario they would relish.

"We heard after the game that 7-0 has never been done before so that's a bit more of a motivation," Hopes said.

"We don't want to go to the Champions Trophy losing the last game before that."



Did U Know?

French Open tennis was opened up to the best foreign players in 1925.



Here they go again

AFP, New Delhi

The Champions Trophy is set to hail the comeback kings as Shane Bond, Rahul Dravid, Mohammad Asif and Ashish Nehra return from the international wilderness.

The quartet will be playing their first major one-day tournament after spending more than a year on the sidelines.

New Zealand paceman Bond has already shown in a couple of recent one-dayers in Sri Lanka that he had been sorely missed, rattling the home side with three wickets in his comeback match.

Injuries and a stint with the unofficial Indian Cricket League (ICL) forced Bond out of action for more than two years before he returned for a tri-series in Sri Lanka -- only to prove he had not lost his sharpness.

"It's been a long time coming and it's something I never thought would happen again," Bond said ahead of the triangular series.

"It feels like I am starting all over again. I think I set myself pretty high standards and it's up to me to meet those."

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always strive to be the best bowler in the world, nothing's changed there."

Dravid, 36, was axed in favour of youngsters soon after Mahendra Singh Dhoni led a young side to the Twenty20 World Cup triumph in South Africa two years ago.

Nicknamed "The Wall" for his solid technique and sound temperament, Dravid has been the mainstay of India's batting for more than a decade, having scored more than 10,000 runs in one-day internationals.

The selectors felt the need of an experienced batsman in the middle order after some of the younger players looked vulnerable against short-pitched deliveries in the Twenty20 World Cup in England this year.

Dravid, who figured in a recent tri-series in Sri Lanka, said he had nothing to prove he had not lost his sharpness.

"I have never played my cricket that way, wanting to prove a point," Dravid said ahead of the upcoming domestic season.

"All I can say is that I will do my best for the team's cause. I have always believed in preparing well before a Test team," Pathan said.

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Pakistan want to play India offshore

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's cricket chief said Saturday he hopes his team will get to play arch-rivals India at a neutral venue in the future.

The International Cricket Council had to re-draft the Future Tour Programme (FTP) after the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) complained of being marginalised in the post-2012 programme, having no series with India.

"We have received a fresh draft of the FTP which is two blocks of four years each, from 2012 to 2016 and to 2020," said PCB chairman Ijaz Butt. "In it we have Tests, one-dayers and Twenty20 matches with India."

The FTP, introduced in 2006, aims to provide a structured schedule of cricket for the 10 member countries.

And Butt said India have shown interest in playing at neutral venues.

"It is natural that governments of both countries will have to approve any cricket series but there have been efforts to revive Indo-Pak cricket and India has shown interest in playing on neutral venues," said Butt.

India refused to tour Pakistan amid heightened tension between Islamabad and New Delhi after the Mumbai attacks last year. India were supposed to tour Pakistan earlier this year.

"We need a busy FTP in order to survive and playing against India is the top priority, and that's why we demanded changes in the FTP," said Butt, adding that the FTP would be discussed at the ICC before being finalised.

Pakistan was stripped of its World Cup matches after a deadly attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore in March. The International Cricket Council relocated the matches to three other co-hosts -- India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Even before the attacks that killed eight people and left seven Sri Lankan players and

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Shakib attends school reunion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Bangladesh national cricket team's vice captain Shakib Al Hasan joined a reunion of his 2003 SSC batch followed by an Iftar Mahfil at the Magura press club yesterday.

Shakib, who is in absence of injured captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, set an unprecedented record of leading the Tigers in the West Indies in both Test and ODI series whitewash and later won the ODI series against Zimbabwe, returned to his home town of Magura yesterday to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr after having medical treatment on his groin in Australia.

Shakib was greeted with a garland of flowers by his friends, fans, relatives, parents, journalists and cultural leaders as he arrived at the venue.

A discussion was also held at the occasion. Shahin Mahmud, Nayan Khan, Subrata Biswas and Sudip Biswas, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Sourav Irfan's role model

INTERNET, undated

Irfan Pathan is determined to make a comeback to the Indian team and he wants to take a leaf out of Sourav Ganguly's book to rise from the ashes.

"Sourav is my role model in terms making comebacks to the Indian team. I am confident that I will return to the Indian team soon," the left-arm seamer, who paid a visit to Siliguri on Friday, said. Pathan was there as one of the guests of Baghajatin Club organised a marathon on the day.

The cricketer was dropped from the Indian team after the World Twenty20 in England. He is now practicing extra hard for the upcoming domestic season.

"My aim should be to get back to the team and cement my place, not just in the Twenty20 or ODI side but also in the Test team," Pathan said.



PHOTO: CRICINFO

Pakistan captain Younus Khan is all smiles during a press conference in Johannesburg yesterday.

ODIs under microscope

The ICC gala starts in SA on Tuesday

AFP, Johannesburg

The one-day ICC Champion

Trophy starts Tuesday in

South Africa with the future of

the 50-over format under the

microscope.

World stars past and present

and officials have joined a

fierce debate as the over-

whelming success of the Indian

Premier League-led Twenty20

version has left many querying

the role of the ODI in an over-

crowded schedule.

Indian batting superstar

Sachin Tendulkar favours a

four-innings format of 25 overs

each to minimise the advan-

tage of winning the toss and

former star Anil Kumble sup-

ports a reduction to 40 overs.

Others like Australian

bowling legend Shane Warne

want the ODI format

scrapped, believing it has

been rendered extinct by the

spectator-friendly glitz and

glamour of Twenty20 cricket.

But ICC chief executive

Haroon Lorgat says reports of

the death of ODI have been

greatly exaggerated and the

Champions Trophy tourna-

ment will trigger a rebirth of

50-over cricket.

"It reminds me of a year ago

when people were talking

about the death of Test cricket,

with no crowds being there

and so on," Lorgat told the

South African media.

"I think we are running

ahead of ourselves. We will see

the Champions Trophy in

South Africa that there is a

place for the ODI format in

international cricket."

Lorgat warned against

obsessive tinkering, saying a

glut of ODI fixtures rather than

the format may be the biggest

problem, a view backed by

South Africa skipper Graeme

Smith.

"From an innovations

point of view, we are always

looking for new, exciting

things. The batting powerplay

is a good example, but we do

not want to do too many

things too quickly."

After an 11-year identity

crisis, Lorgat believes the ICC

have discovered the right

formula for the often-

criticised Champions Trophy,

which Warne has labelled a

"joke".

Short and sharp are the

buzzwords for a 14-day, 15-

match ODI feast featuring the

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Niaz runner-up in Ravana chess

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Niaz Morshed became runner-up in the Ravana Challenge International Chess tournament in Colombo after beating IM Zozula Anna of Belgium in the final and tenth round on Friday.

Niaz finished with seven points, half a point behind the eventual champion, Georgian GM Mchedlishvili Mikheil, said a press release from the chess federation yesterday.