

Hamidul ends a long wait

SPORTS REPORTER

Hamidul Islam became the first Bangladeshi to win a weightlifting gold in an international meet. He also made sure the hosts' national anthem played for the first time in the 11th SA Games when the weightlifter clinched the men's 77kg gold at the National Sports Council (NSC) Gymnasium yesterday.

All eyes were set in the event on Monday as an experienced Hamidul hogged the spotlight in the absence any rivalry from India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, whose weightlifter didn't take part in the category eventually turning it into an all Bangladesh affair save a token participation from Afghanistan.

The man from Meherpur however didn't spoil the party in front of a cheering home crowd although his challenger and compatriot Monoronjon Roy felt that he was denied of showing his best.

Monoronjon secured the silver to confirm a unique piece of history for Bangladesh claiming both the gold and silver in an event for the second time after shooting.

Mihammad Mustafa from Afghanistan was the other participant in the event and got the bronze.

"I'm really delighted as it's a great honour for any athlete to win a gold medal

and nothing could have been sweeter than that when it's a first one in any competition," said Hamidul in his instant reaction after the achievement.

"A dream came true after a long battle. And it's special because I am the first Bangladeshi weightlifter who clinched gold medal in any international competition.

"I want to give special thank to our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as her cash reward announcement has inspired every Bangladeshi athletes. Like many other sports, weightlifting is also neglected in the country

but I hope the authority will give their attentions from now on after my success," he continued.

"We are not living respectful life. Hope things will change from now on," he hoped.

Hamidul, who clinched the silver in Islamabad Games and took the bronze in the last Games in Colombo but in 62kg, started his career as weightlifter in 1992 and inspired his two younger brother Akramul Huq, who bagged the silver medal in the 56kg category on Sunday, and Ashraful Islam to involve in sport.

Hamidul's long endeavour at last saw the light as he lifted a total of 257 Kg's to mark his superiority that was two kg more than Monoronjon Roy.

Monoronjon stunned everybody by pulling out 120kg in the snatch, three kg more than the gold medalist but Hamidul strongly bounced back in his favourite clean and jerk by lifting 140 kg, five kg more than Monoronjon. But the vivacious battle had not finished before a drama as Monoronjon lifted 148kg in third attempt while Hamidul countered with 149kg but both of their second and third attempts were faulty due to elbow problem.

Hamidul who has been training hard for the last 13 months

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Gold tastes sweet for Hamidul



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

FLYING HIGH: A Bangladeshi handball player is about score a goal during their match against Nepal in SA Games at the newly-built Handball Stadium yesterday.

Hosts ease into semis

Bangladesh-4; Bhutan-0

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh eased into the semifinals of men's football event of the 11th SA Games as they handed a 4-0 defeat to Bhutan in their second group match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Enamul Haque opened the scoring in the first half before Nasirul Islam, Mohammad Yousuf and Imtiaz Sultan scored one apiece in the second half to script the comfortable victory.

Bangladesh started the match in an attacking mode and kept it up till the very end. It was an one way traffic as far as attacking and scoring chances were concerned and Bangladesh could have

got even more on the score sheet had they not wasted a few chances early.

The first real scoring opportunity came in the thirtieth minute when Nasir went solo with the ball down the right flank and provided an inch-perfect cross for Zahid Hasan. But the nippy striker couldn't get on the end of it.

Zahid was denied by the woodwork a few minutes later. His powerful header on a swerving cross from Atiqur Rahman beat the keeper but thudded off the upright. Then Bangladesh's prolific striker Enamul found the goal at his mercy at an arm's length, but he blasted wide. However, he made amends a minute later from a similar goalmouth melee when he was fed with a wonderful flick from Wali Faisal and the lanky striker made no mistake on that occasion.

That opened the goal-gates for the hosts and they found the back of the opposition's net three more times after

the break.

It took them only six minutes into the second half to double the lead. Nasir came darting into the penalty box as he danced past two defenders from the right end and unleashed a fierce shot above the goalkeeper on the near corner.

Bangladesh got their third in the sixty-ninth minute when Yousuf broke the offside trap on an inviting pass from Mamunul Islam and placed the ball past the Bhutan keeper into the net.

Bangladesh were awarded a penalty six minutes later when a Bhutanese defender handled an attempted bicycle kick from Mithun Chowdhury inside their own penalty area. Substitute defender Imtiaz, who had come on to the field hardly a minute ago, chipped the spotkick over the keeper. The ball hit the bar before touching the goalline to make it 4-0. Despite taking their two best strikers

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PHOTO: STAR

Striker Enamul Haque celebrates after scoring the first goal in Bangladesh's 4-0 thrashing of Bhutan in the 11th SA Games at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Stoll for big guns

SPORTS REPORTER

Favourites Sri Lanka and Pakistan pulled off easy wins in their respective matches of the 11th South Asian (SA) Games cricket competition at two different venues yesterday.

Opener Dilshan Munaweera produced fireworks at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi as Sri Lanka posted facile 64-run victory over Nepal, who suffered their second defeat after their eight-wicket loss to Bangladesh in the opening match at the same venue.

Dilshan clobbered seven fours and four sixes during his 28-ball 63 as Sri Lanka scored 166 for eight in their share of 20 overs. Captain Ashan Priyanjana made team's second highest 43 that came from

32 deliveries with two fours and three sixes. Rupesh Srivastav was the most successful Nepali bowler with four for 29 runs.

In the Nepal innings there was lack of hard-hitting display as they were restricted to 102 for three in 20 overs with Anil Mandal making 28 off 43 balls.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Pakistan crushed Maldives by ten wickets in the one-sided affair.

Umar Amin smashed six boundaries to make 38 off 26 balls and Ali Waqas hit 43 off 32 balls that included five boundaries and a six as Pakistan reached 89 without loss in 9.3 overs in reply to Maldives' 88 for seven. Earlier Maldives lost wickets at regular intervals before finishing their 20-over quota for 88 for the loss of seven.

Opener Husham Ibrahim was the top scorer with 27 off 41 balls.

Kamran Hussain picked up three

wickets conceding 25 runs in 4 overs.

Bangladesh play their second match against Sri Lanka today at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi.

BRIEF SCORES

SRI LANKA v NEPAL

SRI LANKA: 166-8 in 20 overs (Dilshan 63, Lahiru 18, Ashan 43, Angelo 22 not out; Rupesh 4-29, Gyanendra 2-22)

NEPAL: 102-3 in 20 overs (Subash 22, Anil 28, Pradip 24 not out, Binod 11; Thisara 1-25)

Result: Sri Lanka won by 64 runs.

PAKISTAN v MALDIVES

MALDIVES: 88-7 in 20 overs (Husham 27, Jilwaz 13, Hamid 13, Ibrahim 15 not out; Kamran 3-25)

PAKISTAN: 89-0 in 9.4 overs (Umar 38 not out, Ali 43 not out)

Result: Pakistan won by ten wickets.

Big win in handball

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh got off to a promising start in handball of the 11th South Asian (SA) Games when they handed a 40-18 defeat to Nepal in one of the two matches on the opening day at the newly-built Handball Stadium adjacent to Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Mirza Saiduzzaman led the way scoring eight goals, with another six coming from Karmul Islam and five from Mahabubul Alam. Waliur Rahman and Imdadul Haq netted four goals each for Bangladesh, who were quick in counter-attack though the Nepali goalkeeper foiled numerous efforts including three penalty shots.

Bangladesh were too good for Nepal as they took a 20-9 lead in the first half. The hosts were equally sharp in both attack and defence and never looked under any pressure.

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India assert authority

SPORTS REPORTER

India started to assert their dominance in badminton in the sub continent when they lifted both gold medals in men and women's team events of the 11th South Asian (SA) Games at the newly-built Wooden Floor Gymnasium near Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Both the men and women's teams defeated their Sri Lankan counterparts to retain gold medals with identical straight 3-0 victory.

India, who had won all seven badminton gold in the Colombo SA Games in 2006, brought the top-class shuttlers though a couple of world-ranked players like Saina Nehwal and Neha Pandit did not come here due to their busy international schedules.

Though the Indian women's team comprising Sayali Gokhale, Trupti Murgunde and Thulasi PC won their respective sets convincingly, the men's team consisting of Chetan Anand, Gurusaidutta and Avita Raviprakash struggled a bit in their second set following emphatic victories in the first set.

Sayali Gokhale beat Thilini S Jayasinghe 21-4, 21-11, Trupti Murgunde defeated Remu Hettiarachchi 21-9 before facing a tough challenge in the second set where she won the game 21-19.

Thulasi PC also won the first game easily 21-13 against Achini N Rathnasir, who began promisingly in the second set, but finally went 21-17 down in the set.

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Mashrafe not going to NZ

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's return to international cricket has been put on a hold as the pace spearhead will not be going to New Zealand.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday confirmed that the "Narail Express" needed time to recover from flu. The board has also decided not to send any replacement for him.

There are four pacers in the team in Shahadat Hossain, Nazmul Hossain, Rubel Hossain and Shafiqul Islam.

Mashrafe, who has been out of international cricket since injuring his knees during the first Test in West Indies last July, was declared fit only to play the T20 and three one-day internationals in New Zealand, but he couldn't fly to join the team because of a sudden fever.

The Tigers will start their campaign against the Black Caps with the T20 match at the

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MEDALS TABLE				
Country	G	S	B	Ttl
India	11	1	5	17
Pakistan	6	8	2	16
Sri Lanka	2	8	3	13
Bangladesh	1	3	8	12
Nepal	0	0	6	6
Afghanistan	0	0	5	5

Maldives in semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Maldives confirmed their semifinals berth in the football competition of the South Asian

(SA) Games with a solitary goal win over Nepal in their Group A encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Captain Umair Mohammad's 12-minute penalty was enough to ensure Maldives their second win in as many games while Nepal bowed out of the race with two defeats in two matches.

The match was truly a forgettable one in terms of entertainment and it was marred by controversies and ugly brawls during and after the game. It all started when Maldives got a lucky break in the 12th minute after a Nepalese defender handled the ball inside their own box while the ball was being grasped by the goalkeeper Malla.

Though the incident escaped Bahraini referee Ali

Hasan's attention, the linesman was there to spot it. The referee, having consulted with the linesman, awarded Maldives with the spot kick to the anger of the Nepali players. Skipper Umair stepped up and coolly slotted the ball in the right hand corner of the net. There wasn't much in terms of football from

both teams. Going one down Nepal went for broke but lacked the quality in finishing while Maldives were happy defending their lead.

Early in the second half, Bikas Malla brought down Abdul Ghani Akram inside the penalty area and the referee

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PHOTO: STAR

India's Mahitha Mohan shows her 50-km road race mass start gold on the winner's podium in Khulna yesterday.