

Kutumb leaves a lasting impression

ATIQUÉ ANAM

The 11th South Asian Games came to a grandeur end with another delectable display of light, sound, fire and water. It was a spectacle of a magnitude that has never been staged before in South Asia. It had ingredients similar to that present in the opening ceremony, but this time it concentrated totally on our own culture, heritage and the diversity of it. The technology might have needed expertise from abroad, but the spirit was truly a reflection of 'Amar Sonar Bangla'.

This dazzling display will no doubt set a benchmark for the upcoming events in the region.

The ceremony started with march past by the athletes. Unfortunately, the Pakistan and Afghanistan teams, who left earlier on the day, missed a spectacle they would have loved to enjoy. Noted singers Rafiqul Alam, SI Tutul and Kanak Chapa rendered the farewell song of the event riding on a mobile caravan.

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) president and Chief of Army Staff General Abdul Mubeen handed over the torch of the South Asian Games to Suresh Kalmadi, his counterpart from India where the twelfth edition of the Games will be held in 2013.

Mubeen in his speech said: "We have congregated here today to bid bye to 12 days of sporting extravaganza. It was not only a mega event of sports, but it turned out to be a big gathering of South Asian people. I thank all the participants, members of Army, Ansar and VDP, performers, media sponsors, and others who worked diligently to make this event a grand success."

Kalmadi, president of Indian Olympic Association and Raja Randhir Singh, secretary general of Olympic Council of Asia, received the South Asian Olympic Council flag and games torch, extinguished after the closing speech.

UK-based Bangla jazz-fusion band 'Lokkhi Tera' performed folk songs while local models attired in the traditional clothes of the eight South Asian nations staged a brief catwalk.

Murong, Monipuri, Chakma, Tripura, Garo performers showcased their cultural heritage, one after another, as the gallery display read "Unity in diversity".

Children, attired in bright and colourful costumes, danced to

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

KUTUMB FLIES AWAY! Colourful performers gather in a circle to bid farewell to Kutumb (up in the air), the mascot for the 11th South Asian Games, during the closing ceremony at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

FINAL MEDALS TABLE

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
India	90	55	29	174
Pakistan	19	25	36	80
Bangladesh	18	23	56	97
Sri Lanka	16	35	54	105
Nepal	8	9	19	36
Afghanistan	7	9	16	32
Bhutan	0	2	3	5
Maldives	0	0	2	2



PHOTO: STAR

Army chief and Bangladesh Olympic Association president General Abdul Mubeen (R) hands over the South Asian Games torch to Suresh Kalmadi, president of India Olympic Association during the closing ceremony of the 11th SA Games at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Hosts hold heads high

ANISUR RAHMAN

In the end 'Mission 100 Medals' may not be complete. But after 12 days of drama, suspense, tears, joy and spectacular turn of events in the 11th South Asian Games, Bangladesh athletes have done so much that their successors would certainly take inspiration from to venture for 'Mission 100 Medals Part 2'.

It was almost a dream come true for Bangladesh after they finished with 97 medals, three short of what many felt as an ambitious target before the start of the Games. It also included a record 18 gold, one better than the target. The gold rush also confirmed they claimed the third position behind India and Pakistan for the second time since the second edition in 1985 which was also held on home soil. Then their collection of gold was nine.

Despite gold drought in swimming and athletics, the hosts achieved a feat they had never done before. The previous best success in the regional gala came in 1993 on home soil when they finished with 11 gold, 19 silver and 32 bronze.

After a vibrant opening ceremony on

January 29, the obvious question was whether there would be any reflection of it on the field. But in the end, the athletes did not disappoint the organisers and the female athletes in specific did a magnificent job by claiming eight out of 18 gold, though being less than a third in number of the total contingent.

The journey of gold started on February 1, the fourth day of the competition with weightlifter Hamidul Islam winning the 77kg category.

Shooters Sharmin Akhter Ratna, Syeda Sadiya Sultana and Tripti Datta might have been encouraged by the success of Hamidul and they provided the second gold to the nation in women's 10m air rifle. Later on the day Ratna claimed the individual 10m air rifle gold too.

Out-of-form Asif Hossain Khan teamed up with Abdulla-Hel-Baki and Shovon Chowdhury to defy the Indian challenge and grabbed the 10m air rifle team gold. Asif, Commonwealth and SA Games gold medalist, though shot a wayward one in the penultimate shoot-off to relinquish the gold.

Bangladesh then had two lean days before golfers Jamal Hossain Mollah, Dulal Hossain, Shakhwat Hossain Sohel and

Zakiruzzaman made the nation proud again bringing the fifth gold in the golf's team event, followed by another two days of gold drought. Then three gold came on February 6 with Dulal, Eti Islam and Sharmin Farjana Rumi bringing gold in golf, wushu and taekwondo respectively.

Bangladesh carried the momentum into the next day and it was a unique feat for the hosts when four gold medals came from a single discipline of karate as Jaw U Pru won individual gold and then teamed up with Munni Khanom and U Chinu Marma to win team kata event. Then, karatekas Moreom Khatun won Under-45kg gold medal before Syed Nuruzzaman, Hasan Khan Sun, Hossain Khan Moon won the men's kata team gold. The hosts also cheered on the success of Shammil Akhter at the Under-49kg category in taekwondo while cricketers overcame Sri Lanka to lift gold at Mirpur.

On the penultimate day of the Games, Bangladesh grabbed four more gold in wushu and boxing and last but not the least the ever-so-sweet gold in football. Abdur Rahim and Jewel Ahmed won gold in boxing's 60kg and 64kg categories respectively while Masbah Uddin grabbed the Under-52kg gold medal.

Booters rejoice triumph

SPORTS REPORTER



The national booters once again passed another sleepless night on Monday but it was due to their celebration of the much-awaited triumph in the regional sports extravaganza after handing a comprehensive 4-0 defeat to Afghanistan in the 11th South Asian Games football final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"We had a lot of fun last night at the hotel after our triumph as we have been waiting for a long period for such results and it is a totally different feeling to me," said Bangladesh captain and goalkeeper Aminul Haque.

On Tuesday morning, the footballers were given a three-hour break to meet their relatives and some booters living in Dhaka took this opportunity to meet their family and later joined the contingent for the closing ceremony.

"We had a firm believe that we would be champions even though we always told you that we wanted to take it match by match," said Aminul, who played the SA Games football for the first time and was included as one of three senior players.

Country's number one goalkeeper also believes that this triumph will bring a new era in Bangladesh football and the young generation will be inspired to take football as a profession.

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Dhaka bounce back strongly

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

New ball bowlers Talha Jubair and Mohammad Sharif helped Dhaka to bounce back strongly against Sylhet on the second day of the fifth round National Cricket League match at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

Dhaka were only 53 runs away from victory as they finished the day's play on 127 for five in their second innings chasing a target of 180. Opener Nadimuddin was batting on 47 and Nadif Chowdhury accompanied him with 18 before stumps were drawn for the day.

Earlier Talha claimed four wickets and Sharif captured three wickets to revive Dhaka's hope after wrapping up Sylhet for 98 runs in their second innings.

At the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium, Khulna tightened their grip on Chittagong by inflicting the follow-on. Resuming the day on 323 for 5, Khulna declared their first innings on 446 for nine with Sahagir Hossain making 62 off 116 balls after Habibul Bashar and Tushar Imran scored hundreds on the first day.

Chittagong made a poor start and lost wickets at regular intervals before being bundled out for 199 runs in their first innings, 247-runs short from Khulna's first essay.

Number eight batsman Elias Sunny salvaged the blushes by making team highest 51 off 80 balls that contained eight boundaries.

Syed Rassel was the most successful bowler with three for 42 runs while Dollar Mahmud and Nazmus Sadat took two wickets each.

In the other match, Rajshahi took an overall 128-runs lead against Barisal at the Khulna Divisional Stadium.

Kamrul Islam hit 93 off 127 balls that featured 13 fours but his effort was not good enough for Barisal to surpass Rajshahi's total of 336 as they were all out for 244 runs in 57.3 overs.

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PHOTO: STAR

Monipuri dancers enthrall the audience with a well choreographed routine during the closing ceremony of the South Asian Games at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Madhurika the best athlete

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian's Madhurika Suhas Patkar defeated her compatriot Shamini Kumaresan 7-11, 8-11, 11-10, 11-9, 11-9 and 11-6 in women's singles final of table tennis at the newly-build Wooden Floor Stadium yesterday to become the best athlete of the Games with four gold to her name.

Madhurika's compatriot Soumyadeep Roy defeated India's Amalraj Anthony Arupthar 11-6, 6-11, 8-11, 11-4, 11-5 and 11-9 in men's singles final to make it a clean sweep in table tennis for India.

India had earlier won all the gold in archery and badminton as well.

A marathon fiasco

SPORTS REPORTER

The last day of the 11th SA Games produced a fiasco and controversy when it was found out that

Nepalese Rajendra Bahadur Bhandara had won the gold in marathon at a world record time. But later it came to notice that the distance covered by the athletes was seven kilometers short of

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