

## Dhoni knows his phone etiquettes

If you were to enlist the numerous challenges of being India captain, you certainly wouldn't have included having to deal with a mobile phone (also being used as a voice recorder) going off in front of you during a press conference. That's exactly what happened during Mahendra Singh Dhoni's pre-match conference in Mohali when a phone went off with a Bollywood song as the ringtone. Dhoni answered the call, suggesting for a second that it could have been his own phone that was ringing. "Sir, thodi der baad phone kariyega [Please call in a bit]." Little would the caller have known that the India captain would be answering the call.



ACE shooter Asif Hossain Khan (R) leads the Bangladesh contingent in the march past during the opening ceremony of the XIX Commonwealth Games at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi yesterday.

## Sports get going today

### Bangladeshi archers in action on first day

ANISUR RAHMAN from New Delhi



After making an impressive debut in the Commonwealth Games 20 years ago with a gold and few bronze medals in New Zealand, Bangladesh have since performed inconsistently in the showpiece event. But Bangladesh are now expecting big in the seven disciplines they are taking part in the Commonwealth Games in Delhi.

After a colourful opening ceremony of the 19th edition of the Games that enthralled spectators at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in the Indian capital yesterday, the main battles in 17 disciplines get underway today with Bangladesh opening their campaign through archery and weightlifting.

Bangladesh have so far bagged only four medals -- two gold, one silver and one bronze with all of them coming from the discipline of shooting -- in the last five meetings they participated despite joining the Commonwealth in 1972.

Bangladesh's medal hopes lie mainly in shooting and archery, an event that has been included for the second time in the Games' history after it debuted in Brisbane Games in 1982 with 11 nations.

While Bangladeshi shooters start their campaign tomorrow, the archers lock horns today at the Yamuna Sports Complex with Emdadul Haque Milon in focus in the recurve bow event though Bangladesh started to play archery only few years ago.

Milon came into limelight after clinching gold medal in the qualifying meet in Indonesia last year that secured him a place in the first Youth Olympics in Singapore this year.

A student of class ten, Milon, pairing with a Spanish archer, finished fourth in the mixed event but he was unfortunately eliminated in the quarterfinals by Finland's Johny Hiutamaki in the individual event narrowly in the Youth Olympics.

Milon also narrowly missed the gold medal in the 5th Asian Archery Grand Prix on home soil in 2009.

Apart from Milon, Sheikh Sajib, a class nine student at the BKSP, and Ziaul Haq Zia, elder brother of Milon, will also compete in the individual event of recurve bow.

Archer Sajjad Hossain, the first Bangladeshi who won a gold medal to draw nationwide attention, has shifted his recurve event to an event of compound and the Bangladeshi officials expect standard result from him. Archer Mohammad Shamsuddin and Abul Kashem Mamun will also accompany Sajjad in the event.

Apart from archery, Bangladesh will also compete in weightlifting today with Mollah Sabira taking part in 48kg category.

Bangladesh also stand a slim hope of a medal in weightlifting though the Bangladeshi weightlifters had no good record in weightlifting except the eight-nation South Asian Games.

Before leaving the country, Mollah Sabira had been touted as a medal winner, but after arriving in Delhi, it seems the officials changed their mind following confirmation that two Indians would also fight for the 48kg medal.

"It will be tough for the third place as we initially thought India will field one competitor, but after arriving here we learnt India will field two weightlifters and that has actually reduced

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## Razzak upset at NZ advantage

SPORTS REPORTER



Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak was none too pleased at giving away the Tigers' home advantage to New Zealand.

The five-match one-day series begins tomorrow but the visitors from the southern hemisphere had both their practice matches at the BKSP cancelled due to the incessant rain over the last week.

That prompted the New Zealand management to request to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to let them have a full session in the center wicket of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, which they were allowed to do on Saturday.

But obviously that meant the Tigers would not have the advantage that almost every other country has in their own conditions and right-fully, the experienced Razzak voiced his concerns.

"It is good for us that they could not play any practice match and get accustomed with the conditions," he said while talking to reporters yesterday after training.

"But they practiced in the center wicket which is a slight bit of disadvantage for us," said Razzak.

It could well be the first time that a visiting cricket nation gets the privilege of center-wicket practice, as reflected in the left-armed's comments, but to his credit, Razzak took the existing circumstances into account.

"We did not avail this kind of opportunity in any tour. No country gets this kind of a privilege in an away tour.

"But it is all right as they could not get any practice match," he explained.

But Bangladesh still holds a card or two up their sleeves, one of which is the playing surface that offers slow spin.

"We always do well with the spin attack and as the series is in the sub-continent, and more so in our home ground we will definitely have an advantage," he said, adding that the team think-tank would put together a spin-heavy attack "to exploit the home conditions."

Razzak also confirmed that Salahuddin is working as the spin bowling coach. He reiterated that the team is more concerned about its own performance. "We are not concerned about them, rather we are trying to concentrate on executing our own skills," he said.

As the country's highest wicket-taker in one-day cricket, Razzak definitely has a lot of expectations on him. It would also be increased as he has not had a great 2010 so far. The man with 144 ODI wickets (ahead of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza who has 142 scalps) has only taken 11 wickets from 14 outings this year.

"We must be able to put the pressure sometimes by giving breakthroughs.

"At times we also need to slow down the run rate, but most importantly we should be able to do the job rather than just saying we will have to do it," he explained.

## DELHI DIARY

SPORTS REPORTER from New Delhi

Surprisingly the Bangladeshi athletes have been practising all day after checking in at the Games Village of the Commonwealth Games, according to the team officials.

Whenever the Bangladeshi journalists approached team officials either physically or over mobile phones to talk to the athletes, they informed that the athletes had been practising and they (officials) would call them back after the athletes returned to their apartments. The wait of the journalists never ended.

The reporters even failed to take the views of archers and weightlifters on the eve of their events that start today.

An archery official, Kazi Razibuddin Ahmed Chapal, even said that they had been instructed by the Bangladesh Olympic Association not to allow any athlete to talk to the press before the event and that's why they could not appear before the media.

### TRULY HOLIDAY

Although it was Sunday, New Delhi experienced an unusual weekend yesterday as all shops and commercial establishments remained shut on the eve of the opening ceremony of the 19th Commonwealth Games at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

Following instructions from the Delhi government, the city embraced an unusual holiday as traffic was thin on the roads following the closure of markets, which usually draw large crowds on weekends.

Besides, all federal government offices including Public Sector Undertakings as well as the Delhi government offices in the national capital will also remain closed on October 14, the closing day of the Games.

### TIGHT SECURITY

Tight security was in place at the entrance of the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium for the opening ceremony of the XIX Commonwealth Games that left the media personnel, especially the photographers and TV crew, waiting for long outside for security check.

Some 75,000 security personnel were deployed around the venue and over 3,000 CCTV cameras have been set up in and around the stadium to make the 60,000-capacity venue safe. Even the security guards with heavy weapons were seen outside

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## Twenty-four registered by Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

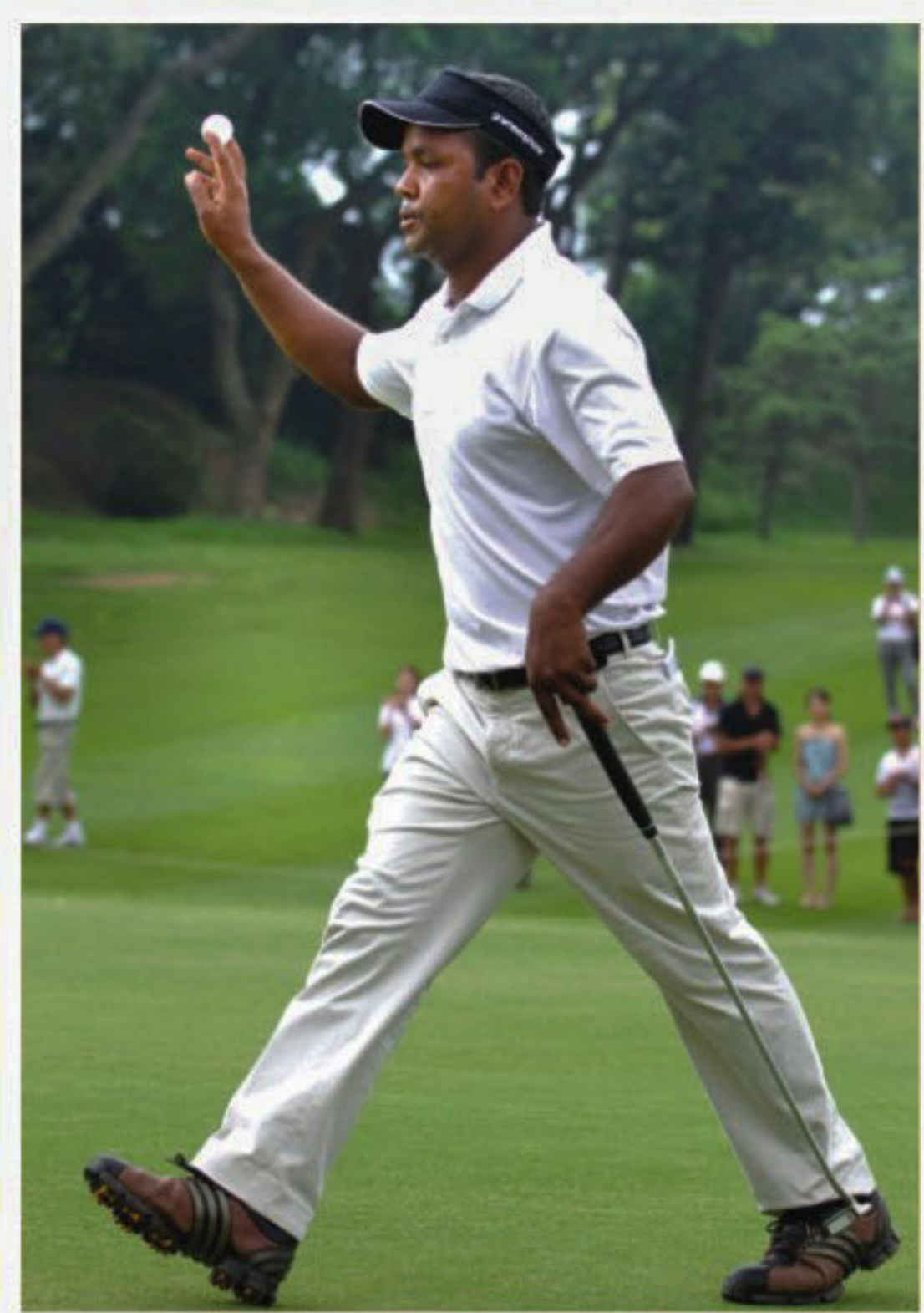
Hattrick champions of the Bangladesh League Abahani completed the registration process of their 24-member squad at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) Bhaban yesterday.

The reigning champions of the professional league, who have lost a host of stars to the new powerhouse Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, have tried to make up that loss confirming the services of star players such as Ujjal, Nazrul, Abul, Robin, Pranotosh, Zia, Alfaz, Shuvro, Arup and Jitu.

However, the registration process for the Dhanmondi-based team has not been without some controversy. Their new signing Mamun Mia, formerly of Mohammedan Sporting Club, has allegedly taken transfer money from another club but appears in the registered players' list for Abahani.

Abdus Salam Murshedi, senior vice president of BFF, said that the players' status committee will examine the papers of all the players and if there is any case of ill motive,

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## Siddikur continues meteoric ascent



SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman was just one shot away from his second Asian Tour conquest but Pariya Junhasavasdikul had his say in the play-off of the Mercuries Taiwan Masters at the demanding Taiwan Golf and Country Club yesterday.

The only professional golfer of the country has gone from strength to strength after he won the title in the Brunei Open back in early August. But while it was from a tie-breaker that Siddikur won that tournament, the one in Taiwan put him in second place and earned him a resounding \$60,000 (42 lakh taka) in the process.

Siddikur mounted a strong challenge for his second victory but was blown off course by buffeting winds as he closed with four bogeys against one birdie for a 75.

"It is disappointing not to win but second position is a good finish for me. The best man always wins and I guess this week isn't my week," he said.

Siddikur, who is originally from Madaripur but lives in the capital's Manikdi area, has emerged as a genuine performer in the country's sporting arena. Through his twin achievements, he has put golf firmly in the country's sports-mad people, especially the media.

After the Taiwan event, Siddikur has reached No 11 in the Asian Order of Merit with earnings of \$127,350.

The man who beat him -- Pariya -- had closed with a two-over-par 74 to tie with Siddikur in regulation play on a four-day total of two-under-par 286. The duo returned to the par four 18th hole in extra time and it was Pariya, a licensed pilot, who sealed the victory with a par at the US\$500,000 Asian Tour event.

Local hope Lu Wei-chih, a former Mercuries Taiwan Masters champion, missed out on the play-off after making bogey on the last hole for a 71 while South Africa's Peter Karmis and Chan Yih-shin of Chinese Taipei finished a stroke back in tied fourth position on a 288 total.

Asian legend Hsieh Min-nan of Chinese Taipei, who at the age of 70 years and 53 days old is the oldest player on the Asian Tour to make the halfway cut, signed off with an 80 for a 306 total.

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## Tendulkar misses ton

Cricket

AFP, Mohali

Mitchell Johnson grabbed three quick wickets to help Australia gain a slender advantage in the opening Test after India's Sachin Tendulkar missed out on his 49th century on Sunday.

India were comfortably placed at 354-4 in their first innings before collapsing to 405 all out at stumps on the third day in reply to Australia's 428.

Fast bowler Johnson finished with 5-64, his sixth haul of five or more wickets in a Test innings.

Tendulkar, the world's leading scorer in Tests and one-day internationals, made a solid 98 before falling to part-time spinner Marcus North in the final session, trapped leg-before while attempting to play across the line.

He cracked 13 fours in his impressive 189-ball knock. Suresh Raina scored 86 with 14 fours and Rahul Dravid made a solid 77, but India still failed to gain the lead.

Johnson, who dismissed openers Gautam Gambhir and Virender Sehwag on Saturday, again struck in the final session when he removed skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni for 14 and Harbhajan Singh for a duck off successive balls.

His fifth victim was Raina, who was trapped leg-before.

Tendulkar had played a key role in bolstering India, adding 79 for the fourth wicket with Dravid and 124 for the next with Raina. Australia struggled for wickets in the first two sessions on an unhelpful track and failed to keep pressure on the batsmen.

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Sachin Tendulkar executes a copybook cover drive on the third day of the opening Test against Australia in Mohali yesterday. The master batsman missed what could have been his 49th century by just two runs.

PHOTO: AFP