



Jubilant Bangladesh women's cricket team members celebrate after reaching the Asian Games final following their 25-run win over Sri Lanka yesterday at Incheon.

PHOTO: BPJA

Women ease past SL

Take on Pakistan for gold medal today

ANISUR RAHMAN from Incheon



A five-wicket haul from pacer Panna Ghosh powered Bangladesh into the final of women's cricket event of the Asian Games in this city in South Korea yesterday.

They recorded an emphatic 25-run win over Sri Lanka in the second semifinal at the Yeonhui Cricket Ground to progress to the gold medal match against Pakistan.

The triumph made sure that the Bangladeshi women would retain the silver medal they won in the Guangzhou Asian Games four years ago. And today's final against the defending champions at this venue offers Bangladesh an opportunity to avenge their defeat in 2010.

Bangladesh bundled out Sri Lanka for 70 runs in 18.2 overs after putting up 95 for four in their stipulated 20 overs as the right-arm pacer claimed the second five-for in her career to take her side closer to the dream of winning the gold.

"I was asked to bowl wicket to wicket and I just tried to follow the instruction though I never thought that I would get five wickets. Now I am happy because we have fulfilled our target after winning the match," said Panna after the match.

Not only were the players happy, BCB directors, chief executive officer, chief selector and ICC president AHM Mostafa Kamal also looked happy after the match although they were a little tensed when the batters could manage only 95.

"Though we could manage 95 runs, we took it as if we scored only 70 and fielded tightly in an effort to

bowl them out within that mark and it was possible only because of team spirit," said Panna, who claimed her first five-wicket haul against the UAE in Malaysia.

Panna made the early breakthroughs when she removed two batswomen with her first and third deliveries of the day after Jahanara Alam gave away six runs in the opening over.

In the face of tight bowling, Sri Lanka could manage only 16 runs in the first five overs and Rumana Ahmed struck in the sixth over to reduce them to 16 for 3. The Lankan batters stuck to the pitch to steady the innings till the 12th over before Panna came back for her second spell to take two more wickets in his third over to halt the progress of the Sri Lankans, who once looked set to chase down the target.

Panna finally completed her five-wicket haul after removing SS Weerakkody at the cost of only 10 runs with one maiden over.

After being put in to bat, Bangladesh's start was not a good one as they lost both openers including last match's half-centurion Ayesha Rahman cheaply. Lata Mondol (34 not out) and Farjana Hoque (22) and Salma Khatun (14) however steered the team to the eventual winning total, some 12 runs less than the total they scored against Nepal in the quarterfinals. Ayesha however tried to compensate with three nice catches.

Bangladesh's Sri Lankan coach Chamika Gamage was upbeat about the final and hopes to beat Pakistan this time around.

"It is a memorable moment for me as we are close to the gold medal and if we can put such total on the board against Pakistan, we can beat them in the final," said Gamage.

Caesar performs well but not well enough

SPORTS REPORTER from Incheon



Just after the completion of the women's cricket semifinal, the journalists from Bangladesh left the Yeonhui Cricket Ground hurriedly and

took a one-hour ride to watch the performance of Quazi Syque Caesar in the finals of Parallel Bars and Horizontal Bar as the US-based Bangladeshi gymnast was expected to bring laurel for the nation from the event of gymnastic for the first time.

However, the 24-year-old failed to stage any upset against gymnasts from Japan, China, South Korea and Uzbekistan, the dominating Asian nations, to produce anything special for the nation. He even failed to carry his qualifying scores in both the events to finish seventh in both finals among eight competitors due to faulty landing in both events at the Namdong Gymnasium.

Caesar was especially expected to win at least a bronze medal in his favourite event of Parallel Bars, but the gymnast looked a bit nervous before the start and he stood less than one minute on the Bars before landing imperfectly to score 14.866 while his qualifying score was 15.150.

Japan's Olympic gold medalist

Kamoto Yuya grabbed the gold with a score of 15.800, followed by Uzbekistan's Fokin Anton (15.475) and Vietnam's Thanh Phuong Dinh (15.416), who won the silver and bronze medal respectively.

Caesar carried his Parallel Bars' bad performance into the Horizontal Bar to score 14.133 after another imbalanced landing. His qualifying score was 14.200.

Chinese Kai Zou won the gold medal with a score of 15.800 while Japanese Yusuke Saito and Masayoshi Yamamoto bagged silver and bronze medals scoring 15.533 and 15.491 respectively.

Though Caesar could not produce anything better, he was happy to put Bangladesh on the globe of gymnastics through the Asian Games.

"Though I could not score more than my qualifying round, overall I am very happy with my performance," said Caesar.

"The competition in Parallel Bars was tough because every gymnast had scored more than their qualifying round and there were gymnasts from China and Japan who are the best in the world," said Caesar.

Replying to what would have happened had he landed smoothly in the Parallel Bars, Caesar said, "I think then the total score would have been 15.3 or 15.4 or something like that and you all know what would have happened with this score."

KOOL-BSJA MEDIA CUP

Daily Star in quarters

SPORTS REPORTER

The Daily Star fired blanks against Daily Shokaler Khabor in their final group league match of the Kool-BSJA Media Cup at the artificial turf ground of the Bangladesh Football Federation in Motijheel yesterday.

The good news is that despite the goalless draw, the wasteful English language daily made it to the quarterfinals, thanks to their 1-0 win in the opening game against Daily Sangram in the six-a-side football festival featuring 25 electronic and print media houses of the capital.

However, Fahd Mannan, the towering goalkeeper of the Daily Star, warned his goal-blind strikers that he might not take any further part in the meet if they fail to find their scoring boots in the do-or-die match against bdnews24.com today.

Tigers leave for Incheon today

SPORTS REPORTER



Led by Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, the Bangladesh national cricket team will leave here for the Asian Games with hopes of winning the gold medal at the Twenty20 tournament. Both the captain and coach

Chandika Hathurusingha have marked Sri Lanka, who they are likely to face in the semifinals, as their main threat in the competition.

The paceman, who will be leading the side after Mushfiqur Rahim was excused for his wedding, yesterday said that he hoped the tournament could help regain the players' confidence.

"The target is obviously to win the gold medal. It will be a good opportunity for our players to gain some confidence back and maybe come out of the bad patch," said Mashrafe.

He was also glad about Shakib Al Hasan's return -- from a two-and-a-half month disciplinary ban -- to international cricket.

"His return not only has made us happy, but the entire cricket fraternity was looking forward to it. We will miss Mushfiqur. But hopefully we can do well," said the 30-year-old.

Former curator of the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium Badiul Alam Khokon is now in

charge of the wickets at the Yeonhui Cricket Ground, where the matches will take place.

Mashrafe, on a lighter note, was asked if that would give them an advantage in Incheon; to which he jokingly replied, "These things never happen in international cricket. But if he [Badiul] wants to give us the advantage... that depends on him."

The Tigers will begin the competition in the quarterfinals stage and will face the team that finishes second in Group B, which comprises Nepal, Kuwait and the Maldives. They are likely to face Sri Lanka in the next round.

Apart from the Tigers, the Lankans are the only other Test nation participating in the competition. Unlike the Tigers however, their line-up won't include a majority of their frontline players. They will be led by Lahiru Thirimanne and will also include national players Dinesh Chandimal, Upul Tharanga, Kithuruwan Vithanage and Jeewan Mendis.

Coach Hathurusingha reckoned that the match against Sri Lanka would be their main challenge.

"I think with India and Pakistan not here, our main threat on paper will be Sri Lanka. But we have not heard much about the other teams. There are good teams like Nepal and Afghanistan. It's a good chance for us to win a medal," he said.



Captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (L) and Shakib Al Hasan (C) show their newly-designed Asian Games cricket jersey as they stand alongside BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon at Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Split-captaincy in Zim series?

SPORTS REPORTER



An interaction between the media and the Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan Papon at Mirpur yesterday has spread doubts over Mushfiqur

Rahim's chances of captaining Bangladesh in all three formats during the Zimbabwe series next month.

Speaking to reporters yesterday Papon said that the board will take a 'final decision' regarding the introduction of split-captaincy in a board meeting this Tuesday.

When asked who the contenders would be, if the board eventually did agree to name different captains for different formats, Papon said, "There are many options. Mashrafe [Bin Mortaza], Tamim[Iqbal], Shakib [Al Hasan], anyone can be there. We don't have a special choice, but we will decide at the board meeting after a series of discussions."

Papon further said that if a new captain is indeed named, he expects it to be just for the Zimbabwe series.

"The decision, if approved by the board, will just be for the Zimbabwe series. We will take a permanent decision before the World Cup because we believe that we need time to observe the players," said Papon.

The president also said that he had separate meetings with Mashrafe, Shakib and Tamim.

When asked specifically about Mashrafe's chances, he said, "Mashrafe's chances are there if we decide to divide the

Test and one day captains. But he can also get injured at any time, so naturally we have to observe him for a while."

With regards to Shakib he said, "I am fully satisfied with Shakib and his behaviour, but we still need to see how he performs in the Zimbabwe series."

During his meetings with the senior players Papon asked them to 'encourage' the team so that they could get back to their winning ways. Bangladesh are yet to win an ODI or Test against a test playing nation in 2014.

"We have lost several close matches this year. I think it should be the senior players in the side who encourage the team and help regain their spirit."

Mashrafe, in the absence of Mushfiqur Rahim—who has been excused due to his wedding preparations—will lead the Tigers in the Asian Games in Incheon this month.

While speculations regarding a split captaincy-- with Mashrafe at the forefront of leading the ODI team—have been dominating the press ever since the return of the Bangladesh team from the West Indies, the pacer himself, refused to speak on the issue.

Prior to the press conference with the BCB president, Mashrafe was asked as to whether he was ready to captain the team if given the opportunity. He replied, "At this point of time I am only thinking about the Asian Games and ensuring that the team plays well there. The board has not spoken to me about this issue and it's best that I don't speak about the matter."

Sadar win DC Gold Cup

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Thakurgaon Sadar Upazila Krira Shagnstha (Green) clinched the DC Gold Cup football title with a 3-0 win over Pallibir Sports Centre in the final at Thakurgaon Government Boys' High School ground yesterday.

Rony netted two goals while Shuvo struck the other.

Ramesh Chandra Sen, a lawmaker of the district, witnessed the final and distributed prizes among the winners. Mukesh Chandra Biswas, the DC of the district, was also present.

Senanayake allowed to play

CRICINFO, Colombo

Sachithra Senanayake has been green-lighted to play in Sri Lanka's Mercantile Cricket tournament, after Sri Lanka Cricket analysed a report by the experts with whom the off-spinner reworked his action.

The board said "Sachithra has shown tremendous improvement" following the week-long remedial work he undertook alongside human movement specialist Daryl Foster at the University of Western Australia in Perth but was unwilling to indicate whether the flex in his elbow had been brought to within the 15-degree legal limit.

Senanayake had undergone several rounds of biomechanical testing aimed at providing a scientific indication on his progress, during and after the remedial work in Perth.

BD A whitewash Zim A

SPORTS REPORTER



Saqlain Sajib s p u n Bangladesh A to complete a 2-0 whitewash of Zimbabwe A as the home side posted a 118-run victory on the final day of the second and final four-dayer at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The 25-year old left-arm spinner once again played a key role behind the massive victory, akin to his performance in the

host's six-wicket win in the first unofficial Test, as he took five wickets for 75 runs to wreck the Zimbabweans second innings for 180 runs. Saqlain finished with a match haul of six wickets to complete a staggering figure of 21-scalps in the two-match series after he had recorded 15 wickets in the first match at Cox's Bazar. However 18-year old Jubair Likhon earned the man of the match award as the leg spinner took three second innings wickets to stretch his overall tally to seven wickets.

Resuming the day on 108 for

5, Bangladesh A declared their second innings an hour and 40 minutes before lunch at 172-6, setting a 299 runs target for the visitors with captain Naeem Islam remaining not out on 50.

Saqlain struck twice before the lunch break as Zimbabwe A were reduced to 18 for two. Captain Vusi Sibanda and Mark Vermeulen were the first two victims of the left-arm spinner. Resistance came in the form of number five batsman Brian Chari but the only support he got came from Joylord Gumbie during a 58-run sixth

wicket stand.

Chari scored 74 hitting two fours and three sixes.

The two teams will play a three-match ODI series next starting on September 28 in Fatullah

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH A: 258 and 172-6 dec (Marshall 53, Rakibul 21, Naeem 50 not out; Taurai 2-37)

ZIMBABWE A: 132 and 180 all out (Chari 74, Joylord 35; Saqlain 5-75, Likhon 3-71)

Result: Bangladesh A won by 118 runs.