

# SPORT

TIME FOR THE  
FUTURE  
STARS



Weightlifter Mabia Akter Shimanta (L) and swimmer Mahfuza Khatun Shila were overwhelmed with emotion after they won the first two gold medals for Bangladesh in the 12th South Asian Games in Guwahati yesterday. PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Mabia, Mahfuza make it Bangladesh's day

ANISUR RAHMAN from Guwahati



Ahead of the South Asian Games, the focus of the swimming events rested on Shahjahan Ali Rony, Mahfuzur Rahman Sagar and Mahfuza Khatun Shil. However, Mahfuza did not appear before media as the Chittagong University graduate was not satisfied with the attitude of the swimming federation. She was only waiting to payback the negligence.

"The federation thought I had lost it and can't do anything. They also did not send me to a few international competitions. I also accepted their attitude and kept it in my mind. I worked hard and followed the practice schedule strictly. I have

finally proved that I am not lost yet," said Mahfuza after receiving the gold medal.

"The 100m and 50m are my main events and I have achieved my first target today [Sunday], and the second one is still left so please pray for me for tomorrow's [Monday] event," requested Shila.

Mahfuza brought the second gold medal from the games for Bangladesh after Mabia Akter Shimanta had won the first from weightlifting earlier in the morning. The young weightlifter became the first female from Bangladesh to win a gold medal in the games and burst into tears as she received her medal.

"I couldn't hold myself after hearing the national

anthem as well as seeing the national flag being hoisted. Besides, I am the first girl to make my country proud in this SA Games," said Mabia in her reaction.

### MEDALS TABLE

Country	G	S	B	Total
INDIA	28	12	3	43
SRI LANKA	8	17	13	38
PAKISTAN	2	4	7	13
BANGLADESH	2	3	13	18
NEPAL	0	3	5	8
AFGHANISTAN	0	1	3	4

So far the games have been a tale of triumph for the Bangladesh women.

Mollah Sabira won silver for Bangladesh on

Saturday and two more came through another pair of weightlifters yesterday.

Fullapati Chakma, won the first silver medal but with the regret that weightlifting officials and coaches did not introduce her to media like other medal-hopefuls were introduced back home. Nevertheless the 21-year-old weightlifter from Rangamati was very happy with her achievement.

"Before the games, there have been talks about the other girls but I was never present in the talks. Even the coaches had introduced those players to the journalists before the games and those things hurt me a lot and drove me to be stubborn enough to win at least one medal from the SA Games," said Fullapati, adding that she was inspired from when Sabira won the bronze medal.

## Siddikur 38th in Yangon

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman warmed up for this week's Bashundhara Bangladesh Open (BBO) with a decent finish at the Leoplace21 Myanmar Open. The two-time Asian Tour winner ended tied for 38th yesterday with an aggregate score of eight-under-par (280).

Siddikur fired five birdies alongside two bogeys at the Royal Mingalardon Golf and Country Club in Yangon in the fourth round to lift himself from the overnight 54th position. Things could have been better had he not bogeyed the last hole of the day. However, the 31-year-old golfer will be happy with the fact that he went under-par all throughout the event, racking up 69, 71, 71 and 69 in the four rounds.

The decent performance here will hopefully stand him in good stead when Siddikur takes on a stellar field in the BBO starting at the Kurmitola Golf Club on Wednesday.

Siddikur be among 31 Bangladeshi golfers alongside 107 internationals including defending champion Mardan Mamat, reigning Asian Development Tour Order of Merit champion Casey O'Toole and veteran Thaworn Wiratchant.

## Rubel feeling the pain

SPORTS REPORTER

The two scorching yorkers that took the Tigers into the quarterfinal of the ICC World Cup 2015 remain as vivid as ever for Bangladesh fans.

Steaming in at the Adelaide Oval against England on March 9, Rubel Hossain fired in two full-length deliveries with so much at stake, deliveries that moved ever so slightly to hit the timber twice. Many consider this little period to be Bangladesh's best moment from the World Cup last year.

11 months on, the tides seemed to have changed. The Tigers are heading into another world event, this time with five pacers, but there isn't any room for the hero of 2015.

Over the last few months, Rubel hurt his calf twice and it took a toll on his performance. After his latest injury, during the Bangladesh Premier League, the board decided to make the pacer go through a long rehabilitation programme, counting him out of the World Cup.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Rubel admitted that it was hard for him to accept the fact that he was not going to be able to represent Bangladesh in two major events -- the Asia Cup and the ICC World Twenty20 -- in the next few months.

"Honestly speaking, I feel as though my career has gone backwards in the last few months. It does feel bad," said Rubel.

"I went through a very good phase during the World Cup and even after that. In fact, that period was so good that it even surpassed my own expectations. I never even imagined I could perform like that.

"So to come down from there and not be able to play in the Asia Cup and the World Cup, especially after doing so well in the previous tournaments, it does feel



bad," he added.

A year ago, Bangladesh's pace attack was not as stable as it is today. For starters, there was no Mustafizur Rahman, Al-Amin Hossain was sent back from the World Cup and Taskin Ahmed did not hit his lines and lengths consistently enough.

It was a period when the pace department depended a lot more on Rubel. His performance levels did not recede after the World Cup either. In fact, he was so consistent that it compelled the team management to change its strategy of using three spinners in the last two crunch ODIs against South Africa in July. Having been dropped for the first ODI, he returned with two two-wicket hauls in the second and third.

Today however, all Rubel does is watch his national colleagues from afar, either on television or from the gymnasium of the stadium where he does most of his rehabilitation work.

"I have been injured before and I know that I can get back from here. So I am fine... that's not an issue. But sometimes it feels bad when others feel disappointed. For instance, my parents - they are crazy cricket lovers and they felt bad when they came to know," Rubel said with a rueful smile.

Despite the tough times, Rubel remains strong and tries to stay focused on his target: hitting the ground

running as soon as possible.

"Every morning I go to the stadium for rehab. Then I comeback home and keep myself busy. There's a lot of cricket going on... the PSL, MCL, the World Cup, I enjoy watching these. Watching the legends play in the MCL is actually a lot of fun.

"I am a lot better than before. I have begun bowling with minimal effort and I know if I can continue this I can bowl with full intensity soon. I just want to get back to the field at any cost because I know I have a lot more in me," said the 26-year-old.

## Caught in Mamba's lair

AFP, Johannesburg

When one of the world's most feared fast bowlers came face to face with one of the planet's deadliest snakes, there was only one winner and South Africa's Dale Steyn was happy to concede defeat.

Steyn, the spearhead of the South African bowling attack, posted a video on his Instagram account showing him and a friend thinking they were coming to the aid of a stricken, harmless Brown House snake on an isolated road in the Kruger National Park.

On closer inspection, the 32-year-old Steyn then realised he was just inches away from a deadly Black Mamba.

"So this poor guy was hit by a car, we stopped to move him out the road thinking it was a brown house snake," Steyn wrote in a message alongside the brief footage.

"Got a little too close and then realized what we were actually dealing with! Mr Black Mamba!

"This post is not to show how brave we were, it's to show that if you don't know what you're dealing with then best you leave it alone! Lesson learnt! #wildouthere #blackmamba."

## 'I just don't like to get out'

SPORTS REPORTER



The manner in which Zakir Hasan anchored Bangladesh out of a storm during the ICC Under-19 World Cup quarterfinal against Nepal showed plenty of courage.

Bangladesh were four down for 98 and were in troubled waters. That is when Zakir entered the picture and with his delightful cuts through point and third-man brought the hosts to back a steady position.

Following Bangladesh's training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, Zakir spoke to reporters about how he planned that innings and the way he approaches the game.

And almost immediately one could notice the similarities between his batting approach and the way he spoke. For an 18-year-old, Zakir displayed quite a cool head.

"I just don't like to get out. Whenever I am there sitting on the bench, I tell myself, I will have to stay at the wicket till the end if I get a chance. And I have always played this way. I can't play shots immediately after going to the crease. I need to get set first," said Zakir.

"When I got to the crease [versus Nepal], I first told myself that we needed to reach 150 first and then do whatever the situation required. The field was really big. One could easily pick up four to five runs in every over. We didn't need to go for big hits. And there wasn't any risk with this because their [Nepal's] throwing arms weren't that strong. So we managed to pick up two runs quite easily," said Zakir.

But with lucrative T20 tournaments taking place throughout the world, would a



Bangladesh Under-19s two left handers, Pinak Ghosh and Zakir Hasan, try to take inspiration from each other at training at the BCB Academy Ground yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

patient approach hold value? Zakir seemed not to care about the issue.

"I am really not thinking about T20, IPL or BPL. At the moment I have reached this far and I am sure the longer I play the more shots I will learn. I have to practise and develop my skills a lot more," said Zakir.

With such a clear thought process, it's not a surprise that he has got two very skilled tacticians as his idols.

"My keeping hero is Kumar Sangakkara and my favourite batsman is Shourab bhai (Mominul Haque). I love his attitude and the way he plays," he remarked.

Bangladesh's semifinal opponents will be finalised today after the quarterfinal match between West Indies and Pakistan. The hosts will take on the winners on February 11.

When asked as to who he preferred to meet, Zakir provided a straightforward reply: "Obviously I'll be happy if we meet the West Indies. We have beaten them thrice before the World Cup."

## Yasir banned for 3 months

AFP, Dubai

Pakistan leg-spinner Yasir Shah has been banned for three months after pleading guilty for a failed dope test last

year, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said Sunday. "Shah has been suspended from all cricket-related activities for three months after pleading guilty to breaching Article 2.1 of the ICC Anti-Doping Code," said the ICC in a release.

"Shah had provided a urine sample as part of the ICC's random in-competition testing programme after the conclusion of the one-day international between England and Pakistan in Abu



Dhabi, UAE on 13 November 2015.

"His sample was subsequently tested and found to contain chlortalidone. This is classified as a 'Specified Substance' under World Anti-Doping Agency's Prohibited List and is prohibited both in-competition and out-of-competition."

Shah has emerged as a match-winner for Pakistan in Tests after ace spinner Saeed Ajmal lost form due to having to remodel an illegal bowling action.

"Shah admitted the violation and a three-month suspension has been imposed, backdated to 27

December 2015, the day when he was provisionally suspended. Shah will, therefore, be eligible to return to cricket on 27 March 2016."

## Lankans spin through to last four

SPORTS REPORTER



The possibility of an all-Asian semifinal line-up in the ICC Under-19 World Cup increased substantially yesterday after Sri Lanka posted a comfortable six-wicket win over England in the third quarterfinal at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Sri Lanka, having achieved only their third entry to the last four, joined India and Bangladesh in the semifinals. The only spot remaining will be filled up today after Pakistan take on the West Indies in Fatullah.

Sri Lanka will face India in the first semifinal on February 9, while the winners of the game between Pakistan and the West Indies will face hosts Bangladesh on February 11.

As expected, the islanders cornered the English with their spin attack. Batting first, England were bundled out for just 184 and eight of those 10 wickets

### SCORES IN BRIEF

<b>ENGLAND:</b> 184 all out in 49.2 overs (Taylor 42; Hasaranga 3-34, Fernando 2-16)	<b>Player-of-the-match:</b> Avishka Fernando.
<b>SRI LANKA:</b> 139 all out in 48.2 overs (Arslan 47; Anders 4-21)	<b>CANADA:</b> 139 all out in 48.2 overs (Arslan 47; Anders 4-21)
<b>IRELAND:</b> 142 for 4 in 34.3 overs (Tector 33, Doherty 33)	<b>Result:</b> Sri Lanka won by six wickets.
<b>Result:</b> Sri Lanka won by six wickets.	<b>Result:</b> Ireland won by six wickets.

were grabbed by their spinners. The only pacer who featured in the wickets column, Asitha Fernando, was impressive as well, finishing with figures of two for 16. It was a brilliant performance from the Lankans considering that they were up against one of the strongest batting units of the tournament.

England's top-order batsmen Dan Lawrence and Jack Burnham are currently the highest run-getters of the competition and the battle between England's batsmen and Sri Lanka's bowlers was always going to be the key contest.

Sri Lanka backed up a brilliant bowling performance with a stable batting show during the chase. Avishka Fernando hit 95 off 96 balls and helped his side surpass the target in the 36th over.

The Lankans made a breezy start to their reply, racing to 51 for no loss in eight overs before the lunch break, with Fernando contributing 35 of those runs. Fernando hit 11 boundaries and a six to steer Sri Lanka towards an emphatic win.

Asalanka said he was delighted to see his team bounce back after losing to Pakistan in the last league match. England skipper Brad Taylor said that he was disappointed to lose and that his team had gone through an off-day.

In the Plate Championship play-off in Cox's Bazar, Ireland defeated Canada by six wickets to ensure it does not finish in the bottom two in the 16-nation tournament.

Rory Anders took four for 21 as Canada were bowled out for 139 and then Ireland coasted