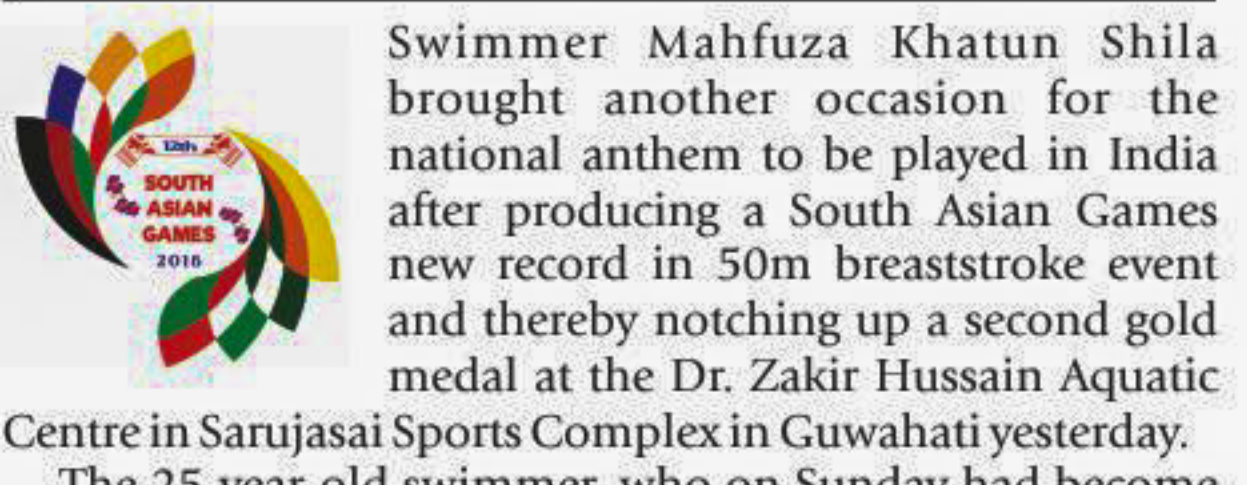


SPORT



MAHFUZA'S record splash

ANISUR RAHMAN from Guwahati



Swimmer Mahfuza Khatun Shila brought another occasion for the national anthem to be played in India after producing a South Asian Games new record in 50m breaststroke event and thereby notching up a second gold medal at the Dr. Zakir Hussain Aquatic Centre in Sarujasai Sports Complex in Guwahati yesterday.

The 25-year-old swimmer, who on Sunday had become the first Bangladeshi female swimmer to win a gold medal from the games, kept her dominance in the breaststroke event to clock 34.88 seconds to eclipse the previous record of 34.97sec, set by Sri Lankan swimmer Raheem Mayumi in the 2006 SA Games in Colombo.

Mahfuza, who had produced better timing (34.66 seconds) in heat, fought neck and neck with two Sri Lankan swimmers before accelerating her pace over the last 15 meters to put both silver medallist Hasanthi Nugawela (35.69) and bronze medallist Ramudi Samarakoon (35.99 seconds) to become the second swimmer from Bangladesh to win two gold medals from the same edition after Mokleshur Rahman achieved the feat in the 1993 edition. Mosharraf Hossain is the highest individual gold getter for Bangladesh with three gold medals in the 1985 Dhaka SA Games.

"I can't express my feeling after winning the second gold medal in the games because I am the first female swimmer in Bangladesh to win two gold medals from the SA Games. I am really very excited to win with a new record," said a smiling Mahfuza after receiving the medal. "I can't make you understand my feeling when the national anthem was played during the prize-giving ceremony."

The girl from Nawapara in Jessore said that she had once opted to quit swimming following negligence from the federation, but Korean coach Park Tea Gun inspired her to come back for the interest of the country and she made her Korean coach as well as her childhood coach Abdul Mannan happy by bringing the laurel for the nation.

"I wanted to retire from swimming due to the negligence of the federation but Park Tae Gun inspired me to come back in swimming again because he had faith that I could do something. I kept everything out of my mind and swam for myself and the country," said Mahfuza, who completed her masters' degree from Chittagong University last month.

"My father and mother are very happy. I can't say how happy they are," said Mahfuza after speaking with her family members over phone.

"I am really angry with the federation because they did not send me to international meets despite the fact that I set national records. I think winning two gold medals was the right reply to them. I will request the federation not to put female swimmers behind by citing a lame reason that they are getting older."

Mahfuza also hoped that the federation will help her make her dream true by allowing her to take part in the Olympic Games this year.



Swimmer Mahfuza Khatun Shila takes a selfie showing the two gold medals she has won so far from the 12th South Asian Games in Guwahati yesterday. The 25-year-old from Jessore won the second gold yesterday in the 50m breaststroke event in record time at the Dr. Zakir Hussain Aquatic Centre.

PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh still in fourth

SPORTS REPORTER from Guwahati



Swimmer Mahfuza Khatun Shila has been the centre of attention on the third day of the SA Games after winning her second and country's third gold medal, but there has been some other good performances in other disciplines as well in Shillong and Guwahati.

Bangladesh won two silver medals and as many bronze medals from archery yesterday. The mixed team, comprising Susmita Banik and Anwarul Kader, had to

be content with a silver medal after suffering a 138-156 defeat to India in the final while the women's compound team comprising, Susmita, Tamanna Parvin and Roksana Akter, bagged a silver medal after losing 217-228 against their Indian counterparts.

Men's compound team beat Nepal 208-197 to win bronze medal while Tamanna Parvin beat her compatriot Susmita to win bronze medal.

Bangladesh also won two silver medals from wrestling as Shirin Sultana and Farjana finished second in their respective 69kg and 63kg categories while Mina Akter and Billah Hossain won bronze medals. There was hope on swimmer

MEDALS TABLE				
Country	G	S	B	Total
INDIA	48	18	6	72
SRI LANKA	11	27	23	61
PAKISTAN	4	11	14	29
BANGLADESH	3	5	19	27
NEPAL	1	4	7	12
AFGHANISTAN	0	2	5	7
MALDIVES	0	0	1	1

Sejwal produced a new record of 28.79 seconds. Swimmer Jewel Ahmed also bagged a bronze medal in 400m medley.

Apart from archery, wrestling and swimming, Bangladesh won five more bronze medals -- four from wushu and one from weightlifting.

Bangladesh national hockey team yesterday handed a 2-0 defeat to Sri Lanka after suffering a 4-1 defeat to India on Sunday.

India have been on top of the table with 48 gold, 18 silver and 6 bronze medals, followed by Sri Lanka (11-27-23) and Pakistan (4-11-14) while Bangladesh are on fourth position with three gold, seven silver and 19 bronze medals so far.

Shahjahan Ali Rony from his pet 50m breaststroke event, but the 2006 SA Games gold medallist had to be content with a bronze medal after clocking 30.41 seconds in the event where India's Sandeep

U-19s meet disadvantaged children

SPORTS REPORTER

An awareness-raising session between the Under-19 cricket team of Bangladesh and a group of differently-abled children from Dhaka took place in Mirpur yesterday.

The session focussed on 'code of conduct' not only in cricket, but in day-to-day lives to encourage positive and respectful behaviour.

The interaction with the children, followed by a practice session with the cricketers, was organised as part of the ICC Cricket for Good partnership with UNICEF, in collaboration with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

During October 2015, the ICC and UNICEF announced a five-year partnership to advocate on behalf of the world's most disadvantaged children.

Eng look to seal series

AGENCIES, Centurion

With an aim to clinch the series, England will take on South Africa in the third ODI of the five-match one-day international series in Centurion on Tuesday.

England opener Alex Hales fell one short of a second ODI century but his team completed a comfortable five-wicket victory over the hosts in the second match in Port Elizabeth on Saturday and took a 2-0 lead.



The ultra-aggressive New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum bowled out of ODI cricket with a series victory over Trans-Tansman rivals Australia at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

Baz bows out with series win

REUTERS, Hamilton

New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum ended his one-day international career with a series victory over Australia on Monday with his side sealing a 55-run win in the deciding third match at Seddon Park in Hamilton.

New Zealand, who were all out for 246 in 45.3 overs, managed to dismiss Australia for 191 in 43.4 overs to give them a 2-1 series win that helped them retain the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy, which is played for between the two countries in one-dayers.

McCullum, one of the biggest hitters in the game, reeled off 47 in 27 deliveries to give New Zealand a flying start. His innings included three sixes to give him 200 sixes in his 260-match ODI career which leaves him fourth on the overall list headed by Pakistan's Shahid Afridi with 351.

The 34-year-old McCullum is retiring from all international cricket at the conclusion of the two-Test series against the same opponents.

"I feel incredibly lucky to play for 14 years, meet some great blokes and make some great friends," McCullum said in a televised interview. "I want to thank everyone for supporting me and making it possible."

The win, however, was marred by a surreal period of play when the crowd appeared to influence a decision on the field.

All-rounder Mitchell Marsh, who took 3-34 in New Zealand's innings, appeared well-set on 41 with his side 164-5 in the 34th over and back in control of the match before he hit a delivery back to bowler Matt Henry.

Henry half-heartedly appealed for a caught and bowled but it was turned down.

The giant television screen at the ground then showed a replay that created a huge uproar from the crowd

who thought it had cannoned into Marsh's boot before popping back to the bowler.

Umpires Ian Gould and Derek Walker then asked third umpire Sundaram Ravi for a review after they also saw the replay and heard the crowd reaction.

Slow-motion cameras showed the ball had not hit the ground before Henry took the catch and Ravi told Gould to give the Australian out, which caused an angry outburst from Marsh and his batting partner Matthew Wade.

SCORES IN BRIEF
NEW ZEALAND: 246 all out in 45.3 overs (Guptill 59, McCullum 47, Elliott 50, Anderson 27; Hazlewood 2-45, Hastings 2-42, Boland 2-59, Marsh 3-34)

AUSTRALIA: 191 all out in 43.4 overs (Khawaja 44, Bailey 33, Marsh 41; Henry 3-60, Anderson 2-16, Sodhi 2-31)

Result: New Zealand won by 55 runs and clinched 3-match series 2-1.

Player-of-the-match: Ish Sodhi.

Upbeat India take on SL today

PTI, Pune

Boosted by their 3-0 clean sweep of Australia down under, a confident India would seek to continue their winning momentum when they take on a depleted and new-look Sri Lanka in the first of three T20 Internationals on Tuesday.

After the comprehensive series triumph in Australia, these three matches would certainly act as the springboard for the hosts to begin their preparations for the Asia Cup T20 Championship which is beginning in Bangladesh later this month and the World T20 in March-April in India.

India will also look to win the T20 series to retain their number one position in the ICC T20I Championship table, which they achieved after sweeping aside Australia last week.

The hosts will definitely miss their Test captain Virat Kohli who was in glorious form in the T20 series in Australia, as well as in the preceding ODI series down under which India lost 1-4.

Even in the absence of a top shot like Kohli, who has been rested by the selectors before the more important Asia Cup and the World T20 events, the home team's batting strength looks pretty formidable for the new-look attack of Sri Lanka, the defending World T20 champions.

Booters look for fresh start

Take on Nepal today

SPORTS REPORTER from Guwahati



"One, two, three, four, five...twenty, hurray. Let's do it again," exclaimed Spanish coach Gantzalo Sanchez Moreno to his charges during Bangladesh's practice session at the Maligaon Railway Station ground yesterday, ahead of the defending champions' first football match of the 12th South Asian Games against Bhutan today.

Moreno congratulated his charges after the players, having made a circle on the centre of the ground, completed 20 successful single-touch passes. It is quite understandable that there is no alternative but to have better ball possession if the Spanish coach is to get the desired results against Bhutan at the SAI Sports Complex ground when the match will get underway at 2:30pm BST.

There were a lot of missed passes in the recent performance of the footballers, which kept them on the back foot. Moreno therefore wants his charges to play all SA Games matches with maximum ball possession and with precise passing.

"Play natural football and control the match with maximum possession. No need to hurry, no need to play the long ball and don't lose the ball within two to three seconds. Instead, hold the ball and penetrate the opponents in the planned way," Moreno told reporters after conducting a one-and-a-half hour training which also saw the Spanish coach place much importance on set-pieces with some variations to master the shots around the danger zone.

Having put in the hard yards under the coach's guidance, the onus is now on the players to put on a performance that will help them forget their dismal showings in the recently concluded SAFF Suzuki Cup and Bangabandhu Gold Cup. The players appeared cheerful in training and had a meeting among themselves without the coaches and officials afterwards.

Moreno is likely to choose the 4-4-2 or 4-2-3-1 formation with the backbone to be marshalled by captain Rezaul Karim, Yeasin Khan, Raihan Hasan and either Tapu Barman or Shakil Ahmed while Jamal Bhuiyan and Atiqur Rahman Fahad are likely to play the key role in the midfield keeping Sohel Rana and one of Masuk Mia Jony or Rubel Mia in two flanks. Nabib Newaj Jibon and Hemanta Vincent Biswas will be up front.

Nepal, the Bangabandhu Gold Cup champions, made the task easy for Bangladesh after handing Bhutan a massive 5-0 defeat in the Group B opener, which means that Bangladesh just need one win out of two matches to ensure a semifinal berth.