



Unheralded 21-year-old shooter Shakil Ahmed won the fourth gold for Bangladesh in the South Asian Games' 50m pistol event at the Kahilipara Shooting Range in Guwahati yesterday, much to the disbelief of everyone -- including his mother.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Shakil's shot from the blue

ANISUR RAHMAN from Guwahati

Unheralded Shakil Ahmed broke a two-decade-long gold drought in the pistol event of the South Asian (SA) Games when the 21-year-old boy clinched gold in the 50m pistol event on the opening day of shooting at the Kahilipara Shooting Range in Guwahati yesterday.

The lad from Dumuria, which falls under the Khulna district, is the country's third athlete to win gold in the ongoing regional multi-sport carnival after weightlifter Mabia Akter Simanta and Mahfuza Khatun Shila bagged their gold medals.

Shakil entered the eight-man final round as the seventh shooter along with two teammates, Mahendra Singh (fifth) and Awar Hossain (eighth), but the shooter from Bangladesh Army not only surprised

his teammates and officials but also stunned Indian Om Prakash, who went ahead with the first three shots of the finals but since then failed to catch up to Shakil who finally stopped after confirming the gold medal. Shakil scored 187.6 points to go ahead of Prakash, who had to be content with 187.3 points. The bronze medal went to Pakistan's Kalimullah.

Emerging from nowhere, Shakil entered history of the country's shooting as the second shooter to win gold in the pistol event 23 years after Atiqur Rahman bagged his second gold medal in the pistol event in the 1993 Dhaka SA Games.

Shakil has been shooting for the past two years after enrolling in the Bangladesh Army as a soldier. He participated in the national meet last year where he won a bronze medal. He maintained his streak in the Asian Air Gun Championship in India last year by winning a silver medal in the youth category.

MEDALS TABLE				
Country	G	S	B	Total
INDIA	117	61	16	194
SRI LANKA	24	46	63	133
PAKISTAN	7	20	32	59
BANGLADESH	4	10	40	54
NEPAL	1	12	19	32
AFGHANISTAN	1	3	11	15
BHUTAN	0	1	4	5
MALDIVES	0	1	1	2

"I am really happy and I can't explain my joy with even a hundred sentences. It is a good feeling that Bangladesh started the first event of shooting with a gold medal and I brought that gold in my first appearance in the SA Games," was Shakil's immediate reaction.

Shakil, like many others, never thought that he would win the gold medal. However, he aimed to put his best forward.

"I did not think that I would win

gold but there was no shortage of effort from me. I had to concentrate a lot before the event and just tried to shoot naturally and success came my way," he said, adding that Bangladesh Army had helped him a lot in coming this far.

Shakil also had a conversation with his mother over phone soon after winning gold and he learnt from his mother that she initially did not believe the news until she saw a picture of Shakil with her own eyes on the TV screen.

Shakil will also take part in his pet event of 10m pistol on Saturday, with expectations suddenly at an all-time high.

Although a gold came unexpectedly from a pistol event, Bangladesh failed to defend their gold medals in either the women's 10m air rifle individual or team events. The women's team had to be content with a bronze medal yesterday, while the men's pistol team won bronze in the 50m pistol event.

Track woes continue

SPORTS REPORTER from Guwahati



Bangladesh had another frustrating day on the track and field events of the South Asian (SA) Games as the athletes only produced a silver medal from eight events

at the Indira Gandhi Athletics Stadium in Sarusajai in Guwahati yesterday. Expectations were that Al Amin would produce a surprise result, but he frustrated everyone as he finished fifth in the long jump, clearing 7.24 meters. Even Al Amin's best of 7.61m would not be enough to overcome Ankit Sharma of India, as the latter broke a 27-year-old SA Games record after clearing 7.89m, while his compatriot Prem Kumar won silver with 7.62m.

However, Bangladesh earned their first medal from the track when the women's team finished third in the 4X100 relay. Hurdler Jesim Akter failed to defend her bronze medal after finishing fifth with a time of 14.78 seconds, while Masud Khan and Mojibur Rahman finished fifth and sixth in 110m hurdles.

After notching up a 2-0 win over Sri Lanka, Bangladesh hockey team returned to the circle of defeats as they suffered a massive 6-0 loss at the hands of leaders Pakistan. Bangladesh will now fight against Sri Lanka for bronze.

The swimmers ended their campaign after winning four bronze medals on the concluding day as Mahfizur Rahman raised his individual medal tally to seven after winning bronze medals from 100m freestyle and 4X100 medley relay, while Jewel Ahmed won a bronze in 200m individual medley.

Bangladesh also won two bronze from men and women's 4x100 medley relay as swimmers won a total of two golds and 15 bronze.

In handball, Bangladesh women's team posted a massive 62-5 win over Afghanistan while Bangladesh football team will take on leaders Nepal today in a bid to confirm their semifinal berths. Bangladesh just need a draw to advance to the semifinal. Even a defeat by less than a five-goal margin will put them into the last four courtesy conceding less goals.

Bangladesh are in fourth position of the medals table with four gold, 10 silver and 40 bronze medals. India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan have 117, 24 and seven gold respectively.

Agree or get axed: WICB

REUTERS, Kingston

West Indies players will be thrown off the squad for the World Twenty20 if they do not agree to financial terms by Sunday's deadline, the head of the region's cricket board said on Tuesday.

The hard-line stance comes in the wake of reports that the 15-man squad, upset at a huge pay cut, has rejected the contract offered by West Indies Cricket Board (WICB).

Cricinfo on Tuesday published a letter from Darren Sammy to the WICB in which the West Indies captain said the financial terms for the World Twenty20, which starts in India on March 8, were unacceptable.

"We want to represent the West Indies but the financials on offer we can't accept," Sammy wrote.

WICB chief executive Michael Muirhead did not sound in a negotiating mood, however, when he spoke on Jamaican radio. "The WICB is committed to play in the tournament, let me say that first," Muirhead said on Hitz 92fm. "No one will leave the shores of the West Indies without signing a contract and if these players in particular choose not to sign, then I guess we'll be left with no option but to substitute other players for them."

Muirhead added that the board was not in a position to improve the remuneration package, negotiated with the players association nine months ago.

"They have had lots of time to digest and argue and do everything," he said. "Five of the players were instrumental and were there at the onset, so at this point, I'm hoping that the players will sign and take advantage of the other benefits that are there."

He said that players would receive half of any shirt sponsorship the board negotiates in addition to a portion of prize money.

Although West Indies cricket has fallen on hard times in the Test format, it remains a major player in the shortest form of the game. West Indies won the 2012 World Twenty20 in Sri Lanka and are currently ranked second in the world.

This year's squad includes dashing batsmen Chris Gayle and Kieron Pollard.

Sammy, who requested an urgent meeting before Sunday's deadline, has proposed the players participate in the World Twenty20 under the same conditions as at previous tournaments.

He said players were facing a pay cut of nearly 80 percent and stood to earn only 21,000 dollars apiece this year, compared to 135,000 dollars at the last tournament.

Australia's no 'no-ball' weapon

AGENCIES, Melbourne

After a number of dismissals were ruled out due to overstepping, the Australians have begun to work with a secret weapon -- a prototype device which will supposedly ensure that no-balls become a thing of the past.

Cricketer Australia's Executive General Manager of Team Performance Pat Howard trialled a prototype of a device during yesterday's training session at Wellington's Basin Reserve that is designed to make bowlers more aware of where their front foot is landing.

In conjunction with a designer who was working on similar technology to assist long jumpers at training, the equipment comprises two lengths of timber that can be placed either side of the pitch and are fitted with sensors that align with the return and popping creases.

The beam that is passed between the two planks is relayed to a remote signal box stationed nearby, which emits a loud 'beep' when a bowler's foot comes down wholly beyond the front crease as well as a digital reading of how far over the line the offender has stepped.

The machine then automatically re-sets in preparation for the next delivery.

Decent start for locals

SPORTS REPORTER



Tour winner traded six birdies for three bogeys to finish the day with 68, alongside compatriots Jamal Hossain Mollah, Jibon Ali and Abdul Motin, at tied-14 position while Japan's Shunya Takeyasu and Korea's Soomin Lee took joint lead with seven-under-par (64).

Takeyasu, who won his first Asian Development Tour title last week, put in a flawless performance nailing seven birdies at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday.

"I played solid today, especially my putting. I sank a long putt on the first hole and that was kind of the highlight for me today. This is a challenging golf course. The fairways are tight so you got to drive the ball really well and put the ball in good positions," Takeyasu said after wrapping up a flawless day's work.

The leading duo hold a one-shot lead over Thitiphun Chuayprakong of Thailand who took third place on his own while Mithun Perera of Sri Lanka, Thailand's Pavit Tangkamolprasert and Shubhankar Sharma of India shared fourth following identical 66s.

Siddikur Rahman, the most celebrated Bangladeshi golfer, started the day on the wrong foot as he bogeyed on the very first hole. The 31-year-old failed to keep his approach shot on the green as it landed at the end of a slope, some fifteen yards from the hole. His chip shot landed about ten yards down the hole, and then he failed to make the putter, earning the first of the three bogeys for the day. But he went on to drive six birdies alongside two more bogeys to finish the day at tied-14th.

"I am quite happy with my performance. It's true I missed quite a few close putters, but that's okay considering the fact that I can't practice for long time on the short game due to my troublesome back. But the conditions here are perfect this time. The weather is excellent and the course is fantastic, so there is no reason for us to complain," the two-time Asian Tour winner said at the end of day's play.

Jamal, a one-time PGTI champion and winner of number of professional events at this course, felt the day could have been better had two of his shots not gone awry.

"I had started strongly with three bogeys inside the first five holes. But I missed an easy putter by two feet for a bogey and then dropped a tee-shot into the lake for another bogey. But I hope things will be better in the next few days," said Jamal.

While Siddikur and Jamal are two names who are almost



PHOTO: STAR

Jamal Hossain Mollah follows through on his drive during the opening round of the Bashundhara Bangladesh Open at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday.

always expected to do well at this course, there were a couple of surprise packages from the home country who put in commendable performances on the opening day. Motin and Jibon, both former ball-boys of the KGC and similar in age, played three-under-par to match their more illustrious compatriots. While Jibon rued late double bogey which denied him a top-five stay, Motin managed to overcome an indifferent start by chipping in five birdies after two bogeys inside the first three holes.

3 contenders name teams

AGENCIES, London

Pakistan picked five uncapped players as they announced their World T20 squad, while England left out Stuart Broad and denied in-form Kevin Pietersen a recall to the side.

England also named uncapped Hampshire all-rounder Liam Dawson. Meanwhile, Pakistan named uncapped bowlers Rumman Raees and Mohammad Nawaz in their squad while leaving out experienced pacesman Umar Gul.

South Africa also revealed their squad.

PAKISTAN: Shahid Afridi (capt), Mohammad Hafeez, Shoaib Malik, Umar Akmal, Sarfraz Ahmed, Babar Aзам, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Anwar Ali, Mohammad Irfan, Wahab Riaz, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Nawaz, Khuram Manzoor, Rumman Raees.

ENGLAND: Eoin Morgan (capt), Moeen Ali, Sam Billings, Jos Buttler, Liam Dawson, Steven Finn, Alex Hales, Chris Jordan, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Jason Roy, Ben Stokes, Reece Topley, James Vince, David Willey.

SOUTH AFRICA: Faf Du Plessis (capt), Kyle Abbott, Hashim Amla, Farhaan Behardien, Quinton de Kock (wk), AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Imran Tahir, David Miller, Chris Morris, Aaron Phangiso, Kagiso Rabada, Rilee Rossouw, Dale Steyn, David Wiese.