



After three days of bitter disappointment, Brazilian Rafaela Silva's (R) triumph in the women's under 57kg judo event finally gave the hosts their first Olympic gold, much to the delight of the home crowd.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Silva's golden respite for Brazil

ATIQUÉ ANAM from Rio de Janeiro

Brazil has been going through a difficult time of late. A bitter political crisis and continued recession has left deep scars on the psyche of its people. The Brazilians were looking for a tonic; something to keep that gloom away from their collective conscience, and nothing could have been more uplifting than Olympic success in these hard times.

With a 465-member contingent in Rio, second only in size to the USA, the Brazilians were hoping that their home Olympics would help the country to a record medal tally. But the first three days of the games yielded only failure and disappointment, except for one silver medal which came in shooting. Brazilian men's football have been flirting with elimination while their men's beach volleyball team suffered a close defeat against Cuba. Even judo, which has earned the most medals for Brazil in its Olympic history, failed to provide any hope.

That is until Monday however, as the sorry sequence ended thanks to Rafaela Silva -- a woman who rose from the depths of slum life to the height of gold medallist Olympian. Competing in the under-57kg category, the 24-year-old beat top seed Sumiya Dorjsuren of

Mongolia for the gold medal to add to the world championship title she won three years ago.

In a sense, Silva epitomizes the hardship and passion of the Brazilian public. Born into the notorious Didade de Deus (City of God) favela, she had a difficult upbringing. She has seen people get killed in front of her eyes in violent gang fights on her way to school. She herself had got

Olympic medal was still missing from her cabinet. Going into the 2012 London Olympics, she was one of the favourites to win a medal. But disaster struck as she was disqualified due to an illegal move in a preliminary round match.

To make matters worse, she was rounded up on the internet by trolls who mocked and derided her, calling her names. Things got so depressing that she even contemplated abandoning the sport altogether. But with the help of a psychologist, she got her peace of mind back and became more resolute.

On Monday, all that struggle and hard work paid off, all the humiliation washed away as she raised her arms to the deafening cheers at the Carioca Arena 2 after beating the Mongolian opponent. She struggled to hold herself together, never mind the tears that came out gushing. Later, a little composed, she told reporters how she felt: "God

knows how much I've suffered and what I've done to get here.

"I believe some of my family and friends did not have the money to buy tickets to see me. The kids would love it and I want to create a dream for them, because nobody there [in the favela] has a dream," she said, further hoping that this medal would open the doors for more medals for Brazil this week.



into fights with kids on many occasions. To ensure that she could take responsibility for herself, one day her father admitted her to a judo school, which proved to be a defining moment for her life.

There she practised from morning till night for days on end to become a top-level judoka. In 2011 she won a silver medal at the world championships. Two years later, she won gold. But an

History denied

ANISUR RAHMAN from Mymensingh



Kolkata's IFA Shield and Shimla's Durand Cup -- both have already celebrated their centenaries -- are the two oldest surviving prestigious football tournaments of the Indian sub-continent. But if you are in Mymensingh, the northern district headquarters in Bangladesh with a rich football culture, the locals will tell you they have their own century-old football tournaments and those were as popular as any prestigious events in this part of the world.

It may sound like something never heard before for someone who has little knowledge of Mymensingh, one of the 18 oldest districts of the country. But as far as its rich sporting culture is concerned the Surya Kanta Shield and the Lila Devi Shield -- the two annual football tournaments with the first one for the men and the second one for the boys -- were introduced simultaneously way back in 1914, 21 years after the IFA Shield and 26 years after the Durand Cup were launched.

Unfortunately however, both tournaments, introduced by Surya Kanta Aacherjee, a Zaminder of Muktaghacha dynasty during the British rule, have now turned into things of the past due to negligence by local authorities.

Lila Devi Shield, named after the wife of Surya Kanta and involving all the schools of the district, was more popular than the Surya Kanta Shield, which had an international flavour following the participation of teams from Kolkata, Karachi, Lahore and Dhaka. And as far as records are concerned, Kolkata Mohun Bagan won the seventh edition of the Shield in 1920.

Although the Muktaghacha dynasty initially sponsored both tournaments and made those silver-embedded Shields from England, it changed hands in a transformed scenario. Mymensingh Sports Association and Mymensingh Zilla School took the responsibility to

carry on. But the continuity has long since ceased and those glittering Shields have gathered a lot of dust inside those worn-out trophy cabinets. The Lila Devi Shield, famously known as a 4-feet 8-inch (maximum height for someone to be eligible to compete) event so popular among the school-goers, was last played in 2007. It's a shame that the tournament was only seven years away from completing a magnificent century. The local organisers could not even recall when the last edition of the Surya Kanta Shield was held. Conflicting statements suggest that it was last held 'before or after 2000'.

Lila Devi Shield, if continued, could have been regarded as one of the oldest surviving school football tournaments in the world with Scotland's Airdrie Schools Cup, introduced in 1886, being the trail-blazer.

During the visit to Mymensingh Zilla School yesterday, this reporter saw the replica of the Lila Devi Shield literally wasting away in a wooden safe while the school ground, which staged the tournament, wore a deserted look with those steel posts carrying the legacy of Mymensingh's football glory.

"Lila Devi Shield was held regularly and it was very popular. But now it is not being held due to the head teacher [Mymensingh Zilla School], who is not interested to hold the tournament," said former Mymensingh Zilla School's games teacher Abdul Kashem over the phone.

Asked how popular the tournament was, sports analyst and commentator Golam Rahman Badal said: "We missed a lot of league games but we never missed a single match of Lila Devi Shield which was competitive and, more importantly, turned Mymensingh into a festive city."

"They can't realise the importance of the Lila Devi Shield, which was a good platform for the mental growth of students. I had requested them to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the tournament but they did not pay heed to my request," said Badal, also a former student of the school.



Replica of Surya Kanta and Lila Devi shields.

Siddikur elated with response

SPORTS REPORTER from Rio de Janeiro

Bangladesh's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman said he was thrilled to be at the Olympics and surprised to see the response he has been getting from people. The two-time Asian Tour winner became the first Bangladeshi athlete to qualify for the Rio 2016 on merit, an achievement which drove him to carry the national flag at the Games' opening ceremony at the hallowed Maracana Stadium on August 5.

"It's been awesome, the feedback from this (qualifying for the Games) has been way bigger than when I won two titles (on the Asian Tour). It is so inspiring," Siddikur said during an official press conference on Monday, ahead of the golf event, which starts on Thursday.

The 31-year-old golfer will be part of an elite 60-man field, despite four of the top-ranked golfers skipping the event due to fears of the Zika virus, as golf makes its return to the Games after a 112-year hiatus.

Having failed to make the cut in Thailand's King's Cup a little more than a week ago, the Bangladeshi golfer has been practising eight hours a day at the Olympic Golf Course for the last four days. He is relishing the atmosphere of training alongside stars like Bubba Watson, Martin Kaymer, Rickie Fowler, Danny Willet.

While Siddikur's event still has a day to go, Bangladesh's lone archer Shyamoly Roy will be playing her 1/32 round match against Gabriella Ballardó of Mexico. The 22-year-old from Narail finished 53rd out of 64 competitors in the ranking round of the recurve bow event after scoring a total of 600 points on Friday.

22 called up for Tigresses' camp

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) called up 22 players for the Bangladesh women's cricket team's preliminary camp for the tour of Ireland. The camp kicks off today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Bangladesh Women's Team will play three T20Is and as many ODI matches during the tour in September. **PRELIMINARY SQUAD** Sanjida Islam, Jahanara Alam, Ayasha Rahman Suktara, Nahida Akter, Fargana Hoque Pinky, Panna Ghosh, Lata Mondol, Khadija Tul Kobra, Rumana Ahmed, Suraiya Azmin, Nigar Sultana, Shamima Sultana, Sharmin Akter Supta, Jannatul Ferdous, Shaila Sharmin, Happy Alam, Salma Khatun, Sultana Khatun, Ritu Moni, Muntahana Hasnat, Fahima Khatun and Sumana Akhter.

Brothers hold Arambagh

SPORTS REPORTER from Mymensingh

Promoted Arambagh KS and Brothers Union shared honours in their JB Bangladesh Premier League encounter as they played out a 2-2 draw at the Rafiq Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium here yesterday.

With a second draw from four matches, Arambagh remain in seventh position with five points, while Brothers are second from bottom with a third draw from four outings.

Arambagh came into the match on the back of a 2-1 win over Uttar Baridhara but they faced huge pressure from the All Orange outfit, who were smarting from a 2-0 defeat to Muktijoddha Sangsad.

And just six minutes into the game, Arambagh conceded the lead. Mohammad Rony's header from a corner found Najmul Islam Russel inside the box and the midfielder slotted a side-volley past a flailing keeper. However, Arambagh immediately staged a comeback as Kester Akon headed in the equaliser in the 25th minute.

In the dying embers of the first half, Arambagh took a deserved lead as Jafar Iqbal headed a Mohammed Abdulah corner back past the keeper into the far post.

After resumption, Barua made two fine saves before Brothers snatched a win as Nkowcha Kingsley and Mannaf Rabbi played a one-two in midfield before the latter drove a low shot into the net in the 69th minute.

'We'll give Eng a good fight'

Taskin and Sunny to undergo test in late Aug or early Sept



Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathursingha exuded confidence in his first presser since returning to the country from a break.

PHOTO: STAR

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathursingha has said that he is confident that the Tigers can give England a good fight in the upcoming series set to begin in October.

The Sri Lankan, who returned to Dhaka on Sunday following a short break, spoke to reporters for the first time since his arrival at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur earlier today.

While he admitted that the absence of international matches in the last few months could prove to be a disadvantage for the Tigers during the initial stages of the upcoming series, he was content about the fact that the Tigers have so much time to prepare.

"It's not ideal when you don't have matches. But we are trying to practise according to our plans, like making them play as per certain match conditions and playing a few practice matches after the camp. We are taking it as a positive. Because we have time in our hands, we can prepare very well."

"But it's not like playing international matches. Ideally, the players would like to play games and keep their confidence going. When you start a new series, it's a little bit tensed at the start, unless you get into the series. That's the disadvantage we might have because we are playing after a long time. But we can't control that," explained Hathursingha.

After the camp, the players will be playing practice matches and then take part in the Bangladesh Cricket League, the country's premier first-class competition before going into the series against England in October.

The terrorist attack in Gulshan on July 1 spread a bit of uncertainty with regards to England's arrival.

On July 4, England's Eoin Morgan admitted that there were big concerns with regards to security issues in Bangladesh. It's an aspect that the Bangladesh Cricket Board is working on.

The board has already sent a security plan to the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). Members from the ECB are expected to visit Dhaka in the middle of August in order to assess the situation.

Hathursingha though has asked his players not to be concerned with regards to the uncertainty of the tour and instead wants them to focus completely on their game.

"The situation is not ideal, but we can't do anything about it. That's what I told the boys. All we can do is try to be prepared to the best of our ability and take the time that we have in our hands as an advantage and not as a disadvantage," said Hathursingha.

Furthermore, he also said that both Taskin Ahmed and Arafat Sunny would retest their respective bowling actions in an ICC accredited lab either towards the end of this month or early September.

The head coach also said that he was happy with the way players outside the national team had performed in the Dhaka Premier League recently. According to him, their performances have put pressure on the national members.

"They have put up their hands and have done good service to Bangladesh cricket. But we had a good run in the last one and half years so it's difficult for anyone to find places. However, that competition is healthy," he said.

QUOTES OF THE DAY

It's great for kids who are watching judo now. Seeing someone like me who left the City of God, who started judo at five years of age as a joke.

Judoka Rafaela Silva wins Brazil's first gold of the Games

It's clear that if you do not play at 150 percent against these women they will win by 40 points. And if you play at your 150 percent perhaps they will win by 40 too.

Spain captain Laia Palau is at a loss to know how to deal with the all-conquering USA women's basketball team

It's unbelievable. If I could play in 12 Olympics, I'd play in 12 Olympics. Is there senior Olympics for tennis? There should be.

American tennis player Madison Keys is enjoying the Olympic experience



MEDALS TALLY

Country			
United States	5	7	7
China	5	3	5
Australia	4	0	3
Italy	3	4	2
Japan	3	0	7
Hungary	3	0	0
Russian Federation	2	5	3
Republic of Korea	2	2	1
Thailand	2	1	1
Great Britain	1	1	2
Brazil	1	1	0
Sweden	1	1	0
Taipei (Cn Taipei)	1	0	2
Belgium	1	0	1
Argentina	1	0	0
Colombia	1	0	0
Croatia	1	0	0
Kosovo	1	0	0
Netherlands	1	0	0
Vietnam	1	0	0
Indonesia	0	2	0
New Zealand	0	2	0
South Africa	0	2	0
Canada	0	1	3
Kazakhstan	0	1	2
Ukraine	0	1	1
Azerbaijan	0	1	0
Denmark	0	1	0
France	0	1	0
Mongolia	0	1	0
Philippines	0	1	0

(The medals tally was updated at 10:00pm Bangladesh time)