



After Abdullahahi Bak failed to fire Bangladesh to a medal, flagbearer Siddikur Rahman will now bear the hopes of the nation when the golfing event tees off at the Olympic Golf Course in Rio de Janeiro today.

PHOTO: ATIQUÉ ANAM

Bangladesh flagbearers make their bow today

ATIQUÉ ANAM from Rio de Janeiro

Siddikur Rahman and Mahfizur Rahman – two of the flag bearers for Bangladesh in the Olympic Games – will carry the nation's hopes at two different venues of Rio de Janeiro today.

Siddikur, the country's first Olympic qualifier and the carrier of the national flag at the 2016 games, will tee off at the Olympic Golf Course at 10:14 today (7:14pm Bangladesh time) while Mahfizur, who had carried the red and green in London four years ago, will take to the 100m freestyle heat three hours later at the Olympic Aquatics Stadium.

"It has been a great honour for me to have carried the national flag in the marchpast, with more than three billion people watching worldwide," Siddikur told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

"It was an experience of a lifetime and I am really grateful to everyone. Now I want to concentrate on my

game," Siddikur said. "The Olympics has been a different kind of experience for me. If I hadn't qualified for Olympics, I wouldn't have known how big and how great this thing is."

The 31-year-old has been practising for six to seven hours every day at the Olympic Golf Course since he arrived here on August 3. He will compete against 59 top golfers from around the world including stars like Rickie Fowler, Martin Kaymer, Bubba Watson and Danny Willett.

Siddikur however said that he will not be feeling any extra pressure since he has played with most of these golfers, including Asian Tour regular Adilson da Silva of Brazil, who will tee off in the proceedings. "I'm not setting any target for this event. There will be no cuts, and everyone will play all four rounds. I will just try to play my natural game."

Mahfizur, on the other hand, knows well what the Olympic Games are all about. The 23-year-old swimmer from

Pabna finished 39th among 58 swimmers in his pet event of 50m freestyle, clocking 24.64 seconds in London. With the Olympic record more than three seconds less and the world record a little short of four seconds less it is needless to say that Mahfizur's target would be to eclipse his previous best timing of 23.99 seconds.

Mahfizur has undertaken a one-year course in Thailand and his best timing was achieved at one of the events in Thailand. He has also taken part in the last three world championships.

"I have been practising for two sessions a day here. Everything has been really good. I even met Michael Phelps the other day and took a selfie with him. I watched his events at the pool and it was really incredible to see him swim like that at this age," Bangladesh's fastest swimmer told The Daily Star yesterday. "My target will be to improve on the previous best time. If I can do that I will be satisfied."

QUOTES OF THE DAY

There will certainly be guys regretting not showing up.

Matt Kuchar wonders if the Olympics' band of want-away golfers may be having second thoughts

No risk whatsoever to athletes' health.

A spokesman plays down the diving pool's mysterious green water

Hopefully we don't have any encounters.

Rickie Fowler is hoping not to meet any of the golf course's larger fauna – which includes alligators

It didn't work out the way I wanted it to, but at least I was able to make it to Rio.

Serena Williams is happy to just have come

Liberated Rafa shows off footy skills

ATIQUÉ ANAM from Rio de Janeiro

Rafael Nadal has always been a man who likes to show his emotions. At tense moments, his jaws tighten; upon relief, such as winning a difficult point, his right fist punches the air with an exaggerated follow through.

At the best of times, the Spaniard has a cheeky smile on his face; at the worst of times he is found seething at the chair umpire or a phantom opponent. Emotions are always on show whenever Nadal is on court, and there was no shortage of it at the centre court of the Olympic Shooting Centre in Rio de Janeiro on Tuesday, as he breezed through to the third round after a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Italian Andreas Seppi.

The 14-time Grand Slam winner has been going through a lean patch over the last two years; with his last major title coming at the French Open in 2014. He has had a number of lengthy injury lay-offs and his age seemed to have caught up with his form. But on Tuesday there were shades of the old Nadal. He was motivated, he was mean and he was fun.

The left-handed Spaniard broke Seppi in his first service game, and then exhausted the Italian with an array of powerful ground strokes. Seppi got a break back, but Nadal breezed through to a 6-3 win



in the first set in 48 minutes. The second set started in almost similar fashion with Nadal breaking Seppi early, but the

31-year-old Italian soon got his act together and made Nadal sweat for his points. This passage of play brought out the real Nadal. Every difficult rally that he won was followed by a clench of the fist and every unforced error followed by a look of disgust. There was a specific point during a game when Seppi had just taken the advantage, and let out a loud shriek. But Nadal was never going to hold back. He won the following two points and won the game before letting out an even louder shriek and a stare at his opponent.

Soon Nadal was out of his opponents' reach and the set was wrapped up 6-3. The 2008 Olympic champion, relieved at this rather comfortable win, indulged himself in an elaborate show of football skills. This being the spiritual home of football, and Nadal being Nadal, that was always on the cards though.

Later, the 30-year-old confessed that despite the emotions involved, he was enjoying it out there since he is no longer considered a sure bet for the title. "This is an event that we only play once in every four years. So that makes emotions even higher," Nadal told reporters at the mixed zone. "I'm enjoying on the court, but at the same time not too much pressure for me. I don't expect much. I just want to win the Olympic experience again and that's what I'm doing."

Fizz's shoulder surgery today

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh pace sensation Mustafizur Rahman is scheduled to go under the knife today in order to fix his shoulder problem which has been a recurring issue for him for almost a year.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has left no stone unturned with regards to the surgery. The fact that BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon has travelled all the way to London in order to provide the pacer with confidence ahead of the surgery goes to show how seriously the BCB is taking this surgery. BCB sports physician Debashish Chowdhury has also been sent to London in order to stay as close to Mustafizur as possible.

"The BCB president has gone to London to give Mustafizur confidence. He is a young lad and the more support he gets the better. After his operation, he may have to stay in the hospital overnight. The surgeon will observe him and then tell us when Mustafizur can come back home. He will also give us guidelines for the rehab procedure," BCB director Jalal Yunsus told The Daily Star yesterday.

Andrew Wallace, a reputed surgeon who has earlier conducted operations on the likes of Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag, will carry out the surgery which is expected to last for 30 minutes. According to BCB officials, the surgery will take place at the BUPA Cromwell Hospital, which is a private hospital located in the South Kensington area of London.



MEDALS TALLY

Country	Gold	Silver	Brass
United States	10	8	9
China	8	3	6
Hungary	4	1	1
Australia	4	0	5
Russian Federation	3	7	3
Italy	3	4	2
Republic of Korea	3	2	1
Japan	3	1	10
France	2	3	1
Thailand	2	1	1
Great Britain	1	3	2
Germany	1	2	0
Sweden	1	2	0
Brazil	1	1	0
Netherlands	1	0	2
Taipei (Cn Taipei)	1	0	2
Belgium	1	0	1
Greece	1	0	1
Argentina	0	2	0
Colombia	1	0	0
Croatia	1	0	0
Kosovo	1	0	0
Slovenia	1	0	0
Vietnam	1	0	0
Indonesia	0	2	0
New Zealand	0	2	0
OPN Korea	0	2	0
South Africa	0	2	0
Canada	0	1	4
Kazakhstan	0	1	3
Ukraine	0	1	1

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

The sole remnant of a glorious past

ANISUR RAHMAN from Mymensingh



It may now be a football outpost, but Mymensingh was the cradle of the sport in Bangladesh; not only were the first tournaments formed

here, but the central region is also home to arguably the country's oldest club. The Mymensingh Mohammedan Sporting Club was established in 1898, 17 years after the formation of Kolkata Mohammedan SC (1881) and 38 years before the launch of the popular Dhaka Mohammedan SC (1936).

Mymensingh Mohammedan, which is situated in the city's Town Hall Mor, once dominated all sporting events and produced many famous players for district teams. However, the two-story white building of the Black and Whites is now the only remaining legacy of its glorious history, with the club – like Dhaka Mohammedan – now struggling in local football, cricket and hockey competitions.

"Having studied Mymensingh sports, I can say that Mohammedan SC is the first indigenous club and the second one – Friends Eleven Club – was also formed here. Mohammedan was established by Khan Bahadur Ismail Hossain and the father of Dhanbari zamindar Hasan Ali Chowdhury in 1989," said Amir Ahmed Chowdhury Raton, the former general secretary of Mymensingh District Sports Association (DSA).

"The district of Mymensingh has a rich heritage in sports and Mohammedan SC made a great contribution in the flourishing

all disciplines, but the club is presently not in a good position," said Chowdhury.

There is also a conventional notion among clubs that Mymensingh Mohammedan had a great contribution in taking Dhaka Mohammedan to the First Division from Second Division Football before separation.

"I have heard from my predecessors that most of our players went to Dhaka to play for Dhaka Mohammedan and helped them qualify for the First Division Football League," said general secretary AKM Shariful Islam, who had played for the club in the early 1960s before joining his beloved club as an organiser in 1972.

Mymensingh Mohammedan have a record number of trophies in both football and cricket but they have no records; even organisers had to struggle to find out the last trophy Mohammedan won in local leagues.

"We last became champions in football in 2010 and hockey in 2009 but I can't say the exact championship year in cricket, which Mohammedan won in local leagues."

"We did not play better today [Wednesday] but we secured all three points. We don't feel like giants after sharing the top position but I can say we will be fighting for the title," said Rahmatganji coach Kamal Babu, who takes inspiration from Leicester City FC's success.

"Some of key players including the forwards have been suffering from injuries which is why we can't get the results," said Uttar Baridhara club coach Rashid Hossain Pappu.

Rahmatganji fairytale continues

SPORTS REPORTER from Mymensingh

Minnows Rahmatganji MFS's dream run continued in the JB Ramleh Premier League as they climbed to the top with a 2-0 win over Uttar Baridhara Club at the Rafiq Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium in Mymensingh yesterday.

Congolese hitman Siyo Zunaputo put the Old Dhaka outfit ahead by converting a spot-kick in stoppage time of the first half and Gambian marksman Dawda Cessay wrapped up victory on his season debut in the 90th minute to lift Rahmatganji to the top of the table with eight points from four matches, equal with Chittagong Abahani, Mukti Juddha Sangsadda and Abahani at the close of the fourth round.

In heavy rain, neither Rahmatganji nor Uttar Baridhara could come up with a natural show. For Uttar Baridhara it continued a miserable run – their third consecutive defeat.

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PHOTO: REUTERS

Dubbing themselves as the 'Final Five', gymnasts Simone Biles, Gabby Douglas, Aly Raisman, Laurie Hernandez (pictured) and Madison Kocian from team USA dominated the competition and captured the Olympic women's team title as they soared to victory with a total of 184.97 points on Tuesday. Their winning margin of 8.209 points was a record in the Games and sent retiring head coach Martha Karolyi into tears.