

Mamun falls to the champion

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladeshi archer Abul Kashem Mamun's dream run in the 20th Asian Archery Championships came to an end at the hands of eventual gold-medal winner Abhishek Verma of India yesterday.

The 25-year-old from Narail went down by 141-148 points in the quarterfinals of the individual men's compound as the Indian archer marched on to claim the gold medal.

Amid strong wind in the morning session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, Mamun needed to display his best, but he failed to transfer previous day's performance from the beginning and trailed by five points after the first two sets. He never recovered from that position despite putting up a bold performance in the last three sets.

The Asian Games silver medallist Verma, who was not at his best on Tuesday, put up a tremendous show to score 148 out of 150 as the inexperienced Mamun had no to reply.

"It is our standard and I am happy with what I have done today [Wednesday]," Mamun said. "I could not cope with the strong wind in the morning. Besides, experience was also an issue."

"Psychology plays a big role in compound event and it is tough to come back if anyone falls behind in the beginning," the

25-year-old said. "I tried to come back in the latter stage but that was not enough to beat Verma, who I must admit played really well."

Mamun, however, believes the compound archers of Bangladesh have potential to grow but they need improved training either at home or aboard.

"We have scored 333 out of 360 in compound event without practice and it is possible to score 350 which world-class archers do at international level, but we need training under good coaches to fine-tune our shots," Mamun said.

Verma, meanwhile, went on to beat South Korea's Kim Jongho in an exciting final which rolled into shoot-off. The shoot-off also ended in a 10-10 tie, but Verma was more close to the blue-eyed point than Jongho and was adjudged the winner.

The other three gold medals of the day went to South Korea, who raised their gold tally to five after winning gold in men's recurve, women's recurve and women's compound events.

Lee Seungyun, the Olympic gold medalist in mixed recurve team, beat Japan's Kawata Yuki 6-0 to win gold. Lee Eun Gyeong followed her teammate to win gold in women's recurve event beating teammate Choi Minson 6-5 while in women's compound event, Song Yun Soo beat teammate Choi Bomin 141-140 to win gold.

Berizzo's cancer op 'successful'

AFP, Madrid

Sevilla coach Eduardo Berizzo underwent "successful" surgery for a malignant prostate cancer on Tuesday, the club said without putting a date on his return to work.

"The period of recuperation...will depend on the post-operative developments over the next few days," the club said in a statement, adding that his return to the bench "would be as rapid as possible."

Deputy coach Ernesto Marcucci has taken over the team until Berizzo returns and on Wednesday will be in charge as Sevilla attempt to reach the last 16 of the Copa del Rey.

Berizzo "left everything programmed for today, we spoke before training and the contact is permanent," Marcucci said on Tuesday.

United close gap Spurs' title bid in tatters

AFP, London

Premier League Manchester United cut Manchester City's lead at the top of the Premier League to five points as Ashley Young inspired a 4-2 win against Watford, while Tottenham's fading title hopes were extinguished by a 2-1 defeat at Leicester on Tuesday.

Young's first United goals since May 2016 were followed by an Anthony Martial strike as United produced a scintillating first half at Vicarage Road.

United's third consecutive league win was only secured after a late wobble as Troy Deeney and Abdoulaye Doucoure struck for Watford before Jesse Lingard settled the visitors' nerves with a fine solo effort.

Although United have closed the gap on City, Pep Guardiola's side, looking to make it 12 successive league victories, can reestablish their eight-point lead when they host Southampton on Wednesday.

At the King Power Stadium, Tottenham succumbed to a damaging defeat that leaves them with just one win in their last five league games.

England left-back Danny Rose was back in the Tottenham team after being dropped for their previous two league games.

But Rose's presence did little for Tottenham, who fell behind in the 13th minute when Jamie Vardy bagged his 100th career league goal.

The Leicester striker's milestone moment arrived with a superb volley finish from Marc Albrighton's pass.

Riyad Mahrez made it two majestic strikes for Leicester in first half stoppage-time when the Algeria winger drilled an unstoppable shot into the top corner.



PHOTO:
AFP



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QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

Mourinho wants new shooting boots for Lukaku

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho is confident Lukaku's

problems in front of goal will come to an end -- just as soon as he secures a new boot deal.

Bale shines on Real return

Gareth Bale provided a brilliant assist on his return from two months out with injury as Real Madrid advanced to the last 16 of the Copa del Rey.

Sri Lanka make Perera one-day captain

The move comes after a series of defeats while

Tharanga and senior Sri Lankan

players refused to play a T20I against Pakistan in Lahore.

Dembele unlikely to be fit

for Clasico

Barcelona's record signing Ousmane Dembele is unlikely

to return from a long injury lay off in time to face champions Real Madrid in the Clasico' at the Santiago Bernabeu on Dec. 23, coach Ernesto Valverde said on Tuesday.

FANS WARNED ABOUT HAND-HOLDING

Gay football fans at the 2018 World Cup will be warned about holding hands in public as part of advice on keeping safe in Russia. London-based anti-discrimination group Fare is producing a guide for supporters ethnic and LGBT communities. Fare director Piara Powar said the guide would advise gay people to be cautious anywhere "not seen to be welcoming to the LGBT community". Homosexuality was decriminalised in Russia in 1993 but prejudice is common and human rights activists allege widespread abuse. "The same message is there for black and ethnic minority fans -- do go to the World Cup but be cautious," said Powar. "If you have gay fans walking down the street holding hands, will they face danger in doing so? That depends on which city they are in and the time of day." A FIFA spokesman said football's world governing body could not comment "on this planned guide on such short notice" but it "has a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination".

—AFP



South Korean archers pose with their medals and crests after bagging top three positions in women's recurve event at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO:
STAR

Bhutan's passion for archery

SPORTS REPORTER



For Bhutan who offer very little in terms of competition at the international stage, archery is more than just a sport. It is a tradition, a culture and a history -- practised by '85 per cent' men out of nearly seven-lakh population.

Declared as the national sport of the country in 1971, archery has been described by the Bhutan Olympic Committee as a "celebration of the Bhutanese way of life."

No festival in Bhutan is complete without archery and the traditional archery tournaments between villages are battles for honour and include feasts and prizes.

"Archery in Bhutan is something more than a sport because our ancestors used to play this traditional game. I can't make you understand how archery is associated with our life," Nima Wangdi, a Bhutanese archer participating in the ongoing 20th Asian Archery Championships, told the Daily

Star during yesterday.

"There are many sports being played in Bhutan but football and archery are on top and archery is obviously ahead of football in terms of popularity and participation. I think 85 per cent of men play archery in Bhutan," added Nima, who progressed to the second round of recurve bow event before losing to a Chinese Taipei player.

Nima said that traditional cane-made archery is practised at school level with a set of rules and regulations formulated by the Bhutan Indigenous Federation and numerous compound archery tournaments with 145-meter targets are being held in Bhutan round the year.

However, those do not help them compete at the international level, which requires hitting 50-meter targets in compound events.

The Bhutanese compound archers are able to hit the targets (145 meter) with notable accuracy and frequency but despite such skills, they are not getting international success as they are used to finger release arrows instead of interna-

tional standard trigger release.

"We don't have many compound archers who can compete at international level, and those that we have are part-timers who play the game after managing their own business," said Nima, who is a contractual recurve archer of Bhutan Archery Federation.

However, Nima said that they have the dream of qualifying for the 2020 Olympic Games directly.

The Bhutanese players usually take part in Olympics with wild card.

"We have started recurve bow event four to five years ago and we have set three targets for future: The first one is to qualify for 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games directly. The second one is to win any medal from the Asian Archery Championships and the third one is to win gold medal in the next South Asian Games," said Nima adding that they have won five bronze medals in the 2016 South Asian Games in India and four medals, including two silver medals, in the ISSF Islamic Solidarity Archery Championships held in Dhaka in January this year.

Titas share v'ball title with PDB

SPORTS REPORTER

Titas Club and Power Development Board (PDB) became joint championship in the Croni Group Dhaka Metropolitan Premier Division Volleyball League after the two teams finished on equal points at the end of the final day at the Bangladesh Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

In the group final match of the 10-team league, PDB beat holders Titas Club in 3-2 sets to go level on points with Titas Club on 25 points. National player Horoshit Biswas of PDB was adjudged the best attacker while Sujan Ali of Titas Club was named the best defender of the league.

Bangladesh Water Development Board finished runners-up while Boarder Guard Bangladesh finished third.

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