



The triumphant Bangladesh archers pose with their medals. The hosts won six gold medals out of the 10 up for grabs and finished first, ahead of powerhouses India, to win the 3rd South Asian Archery Championships at the BKSP yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Hosts flip the script in 12 years

ANISUR RAHMAN

Exactly 12 years ago, Bangladesh had to be content with only one silver and one bronze medal in the inaugural South Asian Archery Championships at the BKSP but yesterday, on the final day of the third edition of the regional archery extravaganza, the red and green brigade outshone the dominant Indian archers at the same venue to become champions.

All 10 gold medals were up for grabs on the final day, with Bangladesh bagging six. They also won five silver and one bronze medal to finish top of the table, leaving behind Asian powerhouses India, who finished with four gold, five silver and three bronze medals. Sri Lanka and Nepal won three and two bronze medals respectively.

It was the fast-improving Bangladesh archery team's first triumph over India, who had however sent a youthful squad in order to give them international exposure for future Olympic Games under the 'Khelo India' scheme, a national youth (U-17) development programme.

Amidst huge applause from BKSP students and teammates on the calm, green campus of the country's lone sports institution, the Bangladeshi archers made it their day when young archer Ibrahim Sheikh Rejwan stunned the country's number one archer, Roman Sana, by 7-1 set points in an all-Bangladeshi individual recurve

final event.

The brilliant performance from 17-year-old Ibrahim in the day's first final was only a glimpse of the surprising results awaiting the hosts, who fought against India in eight gold-medal-deciding matches, while the other two were all-Bangladeshi affairs.

India staged a creditable comeback to win two successive gold medals in the women's individual recurve and men's individual compound events before Roksana Akter equalled the gold medal tally at 2-2 by beating teammate Susmita Bonik in the women's individual compound event.

Before the lunch break, Bangladesh strengthened their stranglehold by winning three more gold medals in the recurve mixed, compound mixed and men's compound team events, while India grabbed just one in the women's recurve team event.

After the break, India beat Bangladesh 227-220 in the women's compound team event and looked poised to mount a challenge. However, the hosts confirmed the Championship by beating India by 6-2 set points in the men's recurve team event final despite a nervy start.

Bangladesh's best find of the Championships was none other than Ibrahim, who succeeded in his second international tournament after participating in the Qualifying tournament of the Youth Olympics held in Dhaka in November last year.

"I did not take any pressure because I know that the experienced Roman bhai is better than me. Besides, I was sure I would get a silver if I lost. From that perspective, I tried to play my own game and at the end won the gold medal," said Ibrahim, the son of a microbus driver.

Bangladesh's German coach Martin Fredrick, who has been with the team for the past month, was ecstatic with the hosts' successes.

"It is a nice representation of our team. I was sure we could win some gold medals but we really have a good number of gold medals at the end of the Championships. So I am happy with the achievement," said Fredrick.

"Like India, we have also young archers in the men's teams and one of cadets is under 16 [years of age], who is our future. India brought a junior team but our team is also a young one that has been gradually improving. However, we have to work on the qualification scores to ensure a better team in the future," said the experienced German coach.

Ashim Kumar Das, a member of the gold winning team in the mixed compound and team compound events, said: "The Indian archers may be young but they are of high quality as they have played a lot of competitions at the domestic and international levels," said 27-year-old Ashim.

Indian coach Kapil Kaushik informed that they had brought the top archers of the 'Khelo India' scheme, which was launched just one month ago by the Indian government.

Wheelchair cricket team off to India

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh wheelchair cricket team will leave for India tomorrow to take part in two different series - first a bilateral T20 series against India followed by a tri-nation series comprising hosts India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Bangladesh will take part in a three-match T20 series against India from April 1 to 4 in Mumbai and then travel to Delhi for the tri-nation series which is scheduled to start from April 7.

Previously the wheelchair team took part in a tri-nation series in Nepal in December last year.

The Bangladesh wheelchair was formed with the in 2016 with 26 players and the number has risen to 100 registered wheelchair cricketers since then.

BALL-TAMPERING SCANDAL

Smith to be sent home

Lehmann to remain as coach; Warner, Bancroft also out of SA tour

AFP, Johannesburg



Australia captain Steve Smith will be sent home in disgrace from the tour of South Africa for his role in the ball-tampering scandal, but coach Darren Lehmann will remain in charge, team management said Tuesday.

Smith and opening batsman Cameron Bancroft, the player caught on camera attempting to doctor the ball with a piece of tape, will return home for their role after an incident which has dragged Australian cricket's reputation through the mud.

Vice-captain David Warner, who was previously fined 75 percent of his match fee after an altercation with South Africa's Quinton de Kock during an earlier match in the bad-tempered Test series, will also leave the tour.

"On behalf of Cricket Australia, I want to apologise to all

Australians that these events have taken place, especially to all the kids." Cricket Australia chief James Sutherland said at a press conference in Johannesburg. "I want to also apologise to Cricket South Africa and South African fans that this issue has overshadowed what should have been a great series."

Further sanctions are expected to be announced shortly after preliminary findings of the investigation into the ball-tampering incident in the third Test in Cape Town are completed, Sutherland said.

Smith has already been suspended for one Test and docked his entire match fee by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Sutherland indicated that the three players could expect tough penalties over the incident last Saturday.

"Sanctions are expected to be announced within the next 24 hours," he said, declining to state categorically whether they had been cheating.

Bancroft was filmed not only rubbing the ball with the dirtied tape but also concealing the evidence down the front of his trousers.

Smith said after the Test that the Australians' "leadership group" had been aware of the plan to alter the condition of the ball. However, Sutherland insisted Lehmann had had no knowledge of the plot.

"Prior knowledge of the ball tampering incident was limited to three players... No other players or support staff had prior knowledge and this includes Darren Lehmann, who despite inaccurate media reports, has not resigned from his position," said Sutherland. "He will continue to coach the Australia men's team under his current contract."



STEVE SMITH DARREN LEHMANN

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:

Australia incredibly stupid: Bacher

Ali Bacher, the last South Africa skipper to win a series against Australia in the republic, says disgraced captain Steve Smith and his ball-tampering team are "incredibly stupid". Bacher led South Africa to a 4-0 whitewash over Bobby Simpson-skipped Australia in the 1969-1970 season.

Faked death goes viral after failed cricket bet

Bangladesh police have detained a man who faked his murder on social media - using red fruit juice as imitation blood - to avoid paying out \$1,800 on a cricket bet, a senior officer said. A video of Adel Shikder's purported murder was shared some 10,000 times within days, prompting a hunt for his body.

Argentina have a debt to settle at World Cup: Messi

Argentina captain Lionel Messi admitted that his generation has a score to settle at the World Cup in Russia after a series of agonising near misses in major tournaments. "The debt we owe is to ourselves, not to the people. We always give our all, we reached three finals. We haven't been far off," Messi said in an interview with Fox Sports.

Neuer back in training

Manuel Neuer received a pre-World Cup boost on Germany's captain and goalkeeper returned to light training after six months sidelined by a fractured foot.

Major changes approved

STAR SPORT DESK



With UEFA's club competitions entering a new three-year-cycle starting next season, European football's governing body announced several key changes to the Champions League and Europa League, including a fourth substitute if matches go to extra time and the registration of three new players without any restrictions following the winter transfer window.

The latter change means that players will no longer be cup-tied if they have played a match for another team in the Champions League, avoiding a situation such as the one Barcelona currently find themselves in with regard to Philippe Coutinho, who they bought in winter but have been unable to play in Europe's elite competition as he is cup-tied.

If the transfer had happened in the upcoming season, then they would have been able to register Coutinho as one of the three players who are not subject to any restrictions and could have played him

without any problems in the tournament's latter stages.

Another interesting change, which was trialled in age-level UEFA competitions, is the introduction of a fourth substitute exclusively in extra time. This will not affect the other three substitutions.

The squad sizes for the final of UEFA's tournaments have also been expanded from 18 to 23 players, allowing 12 substitutes on the bench and giving managers more flexibility. There will also be changes made to the kick-off time for matches.

THE ALTERATIONS

Fourth substitute in extra time

Unrestricted registration of three players in January

Seven players on the bench in finals

New kick-off times

France beat Russia 3-1

AFP, Saint Petersburg

Kylian Mbappe scored twice and Paul Pogba netted a brilliant free-kick as France beat World Cup hosts Russia 3-1 in a friendly at Saint Petersburg on Tuesday.

Mbappe's impressive double and Pogba's strike helped the 1998 world champions bounce back from Friday's 3-2 home defeat by Colombia, while Fedor Smolov's goal for Russia proved to be only a consolation.

Russia created the first clear chance of the match in the 15th minute when Alan Dzagoev found Smolov in the area, but Hugo Lloris kept out the Russian skipper's low shot from 12 yards out.



France forward Kylian Mbappe (R) scored twice on either side of a sublime Paul Pogba free-kick as France defeated Russia 3-1 in a friendly in St Petersburg yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Gobinathan stresses on match temperment

SPORTS REPORTER



Gobinathan Krishnamurthy arrived on Monday night to take charge of the Bangladesh national hockey team ahead of the Youth Olympic Qualifiers and Asian Games.

The former Malaysian international coached the men in red and green for a two-month stint back in 2014-15, but this time he is expected to guide the Bangladesh team for a longer reign as he is expected to work with both the youth and senior teams while training coaches.

"The only way forward is playing a lot of matches and earning game temperment. They have to break the fear barrier when playing under pressure. I want to make a structure at the team," the 40-year-old said during his introductory press conference at the BOA



auditorium yesterday.

Bangladesh recently finished runners-up in the Asian Games qualifiers in Oman under the guidance of Mahbub Harun, losing the final 2-0 against the hosts. Gobinathan said he watched the matches and realised that the only thing the players need is game temperment.

"We played well in Oman, but didn't score enough goals in the semi-final and final. We need to play more games to overcome that," said the coach, who was most recently in

charge of Malaysia's women's team.

Bangladesh Hockey Federation general secretary Abdus Sadeque informed that Gobinathan would train the under-17 team for next month's Youth Olympics Qualifiers in Bangkok, which will conclude on April 29. After returning, the coach will work with the national team for August's Asian Games.

"He [Gobinathan] arrived last night. He will go to BKSP today. We have not talked about the length of his contract as yet. We will evaluate performances and extend the contract accordingly. He is interested to work with coaches and train them," said the organiser.

Meanwhile Jalal Yunus, director of the Bangladesh Cricket Board which will bear the expenses of the coach, assured that they would try to help the hockey federation with technical assistance such as providing physiotherapists and video analysts.

BANGABANDHU GOLD CUP, BANGAMATA GOLD CUP Finals today at BNS

SPORTS REPORTER



North Ujantia Govt. Primary School of Cox's Bazar will take on Bhulbaria Govt. Primary School of Pabna in the final of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup while Panchrukhi Govt. Primary School of Mymensingh will face off against Doharo Govt. Primary School in the final of the Bangamata Fazilatunnesa Mujib Gold Cup today.

Both finals will take place at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Arguably the largest football competition in the world, the eighth edition of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup started with more than a million male students from 64,688 government primary schools across the country while the seventh edition of the Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Gold Cup started with more than a million female students from 64,683 schools across the country last year.

The four finalists teams have hence come a long way from scratch and today two of the

teams will go home with the titles in front of a houseful crowd and the presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Bangladesh Football Federation president Kazi Salahuddin acknowledged the importance of this competition in the development of overall football.

"We must admit that together with the Primary and Mass Education Ministry and the federation have contributed to the vast improvement of women's football in our country," the BFF boss said during an official press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

Minister for Primary and Mass Education, Mostafizur Rahman, said, "We are bringing these players from the bottom. BFF is looking for talent and they have the insight. They will take these players forward."

The captains and coaches of the participating teams spoke of their journey so far and their determination to win the title at the press conference, which was also attended by the BFF high-ups and officials of the ministry.