

SPORT



Do you need a caption for this? With her one-year-old son Ali Umair in her arms, Rand Saad Al Mashhadani, an Iraqi archer, makes sure that she takes care of her passion and love during the 2nd ISSF International Solidarity Archery Championships at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. The 23-year-old, who has just returned to action after a two-year maternity leave, made her exit from the recurve quarterfinals. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Hosts rule second day

SPORTS REPORTER

As expected, the Bangladesh archers dominated the second day of the 2nd ISSF International Solidarity Archery Championships as eight bowmen confirmed their semifinal berths in four different events at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The country's top archers -- Roman Sana, Tamimul Islam and Nasrin Akter -- advanced to the men's recurve and women's recurve event semifinals but South Asian Archery Championship gold-medallist Ibrahim Sheikh was eliminated from the quarterfinals.

"I started well and won the first two games but I failed to maintain my form in the quarterfinal and could not hit the target perfectly. I don't have any regret for this loss because I am inexperienced at the international level," said 17-year-old Ibrahim.

In the men's compound event, Ashim Kumar Das, Abul Kashem Mamun and Milon Mollah, made it to the semifinals while Rokhsana Akter and Bonna Akter followed suit in the women's compound event.

Though the local archers failed to replicate their best results during the opening day's qualification rounds, Ashim Kumar Das surpassed his previous highest score to claim 690 out of 720 points in the men's compound qualification round yesterday. His previous best was the 679 points he scored during the South Asian Archery Championship in March at the BKSP.

Abul Kashem Mamun was second-placed with 680 points, two less than his best result which came in the Asian Archery Championship last November in Dhaka, while Ashikuzzaman Ayan and Milon Mollah scored 679 and 672 points finish third and fifth respectively in the men's compound qualification round.

"I was confident about making good scores because I have been shooting well in practice. I even made 696 in practice, so it was not an unexpected score for me. However it is my best score at the international level," said Ashim.

Ashim did face a stiff challenge from Ramesh Bhattachan in the quarterfinals though as he was tied with the Nepalese at one stage but 28-year-old Ashim came back strong to confirm his place in the men's compound semifinal with a 139-132 points win. He will now face teammate Milon Mollah, who handed a 139-137 points defeat to Saudi Arabia's Abdul Aziz Alrohdan.

Meanwhile Mamun, who was trailing by one point until the 12th shot, unbelievably outclassed Iraq's Eshaaq Ad Dagham by scoring 30 out of 30 in the last three shots while Eshaaq only scored 25 to lose 136-140.

The men's compound event's semifinal lineup could have been an all Bangladeshi one had Ashikuzzaman not been beaten by Iraq's Waleed Hameed in a shoot-off. The match was tied at 138-138 but Ashikuzzaman ultimately suffered defeat as he scored nine as opposed to Waleed's perfect 10 in the one-arrow shoot-off.

In the women's compound event, Rokhsana Akter beat Morocco's Souad El Fiaz 139-115 to set up a semifinal clash against teammate Bonna Akter, who overcame teammate Ritu Akter 132-130. Last edition's gold medallist Fatimah Almash Hadana defeated Bangladesh's Suma Biswas 142-135 and will now face Estonia's Hoiem Emily, who beat Nepal's Archarya Parsada 139-133.

Roman Sana easily toppled Saud Albooshi 6-0 in the men's recurve event while Saudi Arabia's Alotaibi Fares 6-5 in a shoot-off after the encounter was reached a 5-5 deadlock.

In the women's recurve event, Nasrin Akter beat Tajikistan's Fizuza Zubaydova 6-0 while Radia Akter Shapla lost to Tajikistan's Tagaeva Zulkhro 2-6 in the quarterfinals. Beauty Akter was defeated by Iraq's Rand Saad 1-7 in the first round.

The sweat behind the glamour

MAZHAR UDDIN

Bangladesh's elite cricketers are enjoying a much-needed break in the off season, but they will be back to the grind by May 13 when the training camp starts ahead of the upcoming away series against Afghanistan and West Indies.

After the lull before the storm of a busy season, one of the most important aspects is the lifting of fitness levels -- an aspect that, while having immense benefits, does not have the same crowd-pleasing effect of fours, sixes, centuries or five-wicket hauls. But those glamorous events would not be possible if the players were not at a high level of fitness, which is why the training camp starts with a conditioning programme where the trainers begin by looking at the fitness levels after the break and work accordingly before moving on to skills training.

It may surprise many that even during the off season the sight of cricketers working on their fitness is a regular feature at the home of cricket in Mirpur.

"Normally, whenever there is a break the first thing that changes is the food habits of players," Iftekhairul Islam, the local trainer of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), told The Daily Star at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. "But nowadays everyone is more aware and work on their fitness and food habits at home as well. So, during the

conditioning camp we expect that a few may have become unstable in the movement competency test after the break. So we plan the camp to start with the foundation programme for a week, clearing which we plan for further fitness training.

"Everyone does not have same type of fitness training so we tailor the areas individually by taking tests before starting the conditioning camp. We have separate training programmes for batsmen, bowlers and wicketkeepers."

According to Iftekhairul, who played for Bangladesh Under-19 before becoming a fitness trainer, Sabbir Rahman is the fittest among the cricketers in the national team along with Mushfiqur Rahim and Mehedi Hasan Miraz.

"Obviously the fitness levels of a bowler and a batsman will vary while among the bowlers there are also two categories -- pacers and spinners. Anyone scoring more than 12 in the beep test is deemed fit. From 12 to 14 is excellent, under 11 is good but below 10 is poor. Sabbir is the best among the lot... he hits over 13 in the beep test while Mushfiqur and Miraz are also very good. Recently, Tamim [Iqbal] has improved a lot and he is very fit now and I would say that Shakib's [Al Hasan's] fitness is also good. His skill-related fitness is top-class as he plays a lot of high intensity games."

Many of the national cricketers have suffered various types of injuries recently, with Nasir Hossain and Mushfiqur suffering theirs

while playing football. Iftekhairul informed that they would introduce Thai foot volleyball -- which does not have physical contact -- for warm-ups as a replacement for football.

"There is a span during which it's important to notice how much a player will play and take rest. When a player plays continuously without recovering properly for a long time, there is a high chance of injury. So it's important to give a player rest after two-three series and refill his fitness and energy levels, but he has to follow our instructions," Iftekhairul said.

He also informed that the BCB has a fitness monitoring software called 'Edge Ten' that updates trainers, physios and even selectors about the latest fitness information and availability of players.

"We have a computerised software called 'Edge Ten' where we upload all sorts of information about the players. For example, we know how many balls Taskin bowled over the past month and even over a year. Players' statuses are colour-coded red, green and blue... if Taskin overbowls then there will be a red button beside his name, which means he is in danger," he added.



Fitness of the national team players has improved a lot due to round-the-year monitoring by the BCB technical experts as well as the increased awareness of the players. PHOTO: STAR FILE

SCHOOL CRICKET Dhaka champs see other side of the coin

SPORTS REPORTER

Manikganj Model High School put in outstanding performances on way to qualifying for the national round of the Prime Bank National School Cricket Championship as champions of Dhaka Division. But the elements prevented them from continuing their dominance in the final round as rain played foul and sent them home while their opponents Govt. Jubilee High School of Sunamganj qualified for the semifinals riding on the luck of the coin at the Moulvibazar District Stadium yesterday.

A coin toss decided the quarterfinal as it was not possible to for the match to start because of persistent rain.

Despite rain interruptions, it was possible to stage a 35-over-a-side match in yesterday's other quarterfinal at the Tangail District Stadium. Police Line High School and College, Bogra, reached the semifinals with a seven-wicket victory against Narail Govt. High School. The winners rode on the performances of Khaled Mahmud Shifat -- who claimed four wickets -- and Rakibul Islam Sojib, who scored 69 off 62 balls with six fours and three sixes.

Narail Govt. High School scored 118 for nine in 35 overs and Police Line surpassed the target, reaching 119 for three in 27.1 overs.



Instead of determining which team bats or bowls first, this toss of the coin during the rain-ruined National School Cricket Championship quarterfinal between Dhaka Division winners Manikganj Model High School and Govt. Jubilee High School actually decided the winner. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Shakib shines as SRH take top spot

AGENCIES, Hyderabad

Table toppers Sunrisers Hyderabad produced yet another spirited bowling effort after skipper Kane Williamson's crucial half-century to beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by five runs and virtually assure themselves a place in the play-offs of the Indian Premier League yesterday.

Sent into bat, Hyderabad managed a modest 146 but came back strongly after the break riding on yet another gutsy bowling display to restrict Bangalore to 141 for six.

Hyderabad's Shakib Al Hasan had a good outing with the bat, posting the second-highest innings score with a 32-ball 35 with the help of five boundaries before being caught at backward square leg off Tim Southee in the 18th over. He was also instrumental in fishing Hyderabad out of trouble as, coming in at 48 for three, he built a 64-run fourth-wicket partnership with skipper Kane Williamson (56 off 39) that proved crucial.

Although expensive with the ball as his four overs were taken for 36 runs, Shakib's two wickets included the prized scalp of Bangalore captain Virat Kohli, who got a leading edge off the left-arm spinner and was caught at short third man for 39 in the 10th over.

By virtue of this win, Hyderabad have consolidated their position at the top of the table with 16 points from 10 games.

Bangalore, on the other hand, are standing on the verge of elimination with just six points from 10 matches. Besides needing to win their remaining four games, Bangalore's fortune will also depend on the outcome of other matches.

Chasing the modest target, Parthiv Patel got RCB off to a brisk start scoring 20 off 13 balls before Shakib Al Hasan caught him plumb in front of the wicket.

Bangalore needed 19 runs off the last two overs but Siddharth Kaul and Bhuvneshwar Kumar came up with superb death bowling display to concede just 14 runs and seal yet another win for their side.

SCORES IN BRIEF
Sunrisers Hyderabad: 146 all out in 20 overs (Williamson 56, Shakib 35; Siraj 3-25)
Royal Challengers Bangalore: 141 for six in 20 overs (Kohli 39, Grandhomme 33; Shakib 2-36)
Result: Sunrisers Hyderabad won by 5 runs.

Abahani demolish haphazard Ajax

SPORTS REPORTER

Title aspirants Abahani shrugged off a challenge from Ajax SC to hand them an emphatic 5-1 loss in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League at Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium last night.

This victory, their fourth consecutive win in as many matches, put the Club Cup champions on top of the 12-team table with 12 points, three points ahead of holders Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club and Mohammedan SC, who have played one match less.

Abahani came into the encounter on the back of three massive wins over Bangladesh Police (10-0), Victoria SC (8-0) and Bangladesh SC (10-0) but found the going tough against Ajax SC, who fielded four Indian players in an attempt to give their superior opponents a run for their money.

Abahani had to wait for 21 minutes before penalty corner specialist Ashraf Islam opened their account by converting their first penalty. He then doubled the lead from the spot two minutes later when the referee whistled for a 'controversial stroke' after originally signalling for an out.

Krishna Kumar made it 3-0 in the 31st minute but Ajax pulled one goal back in the 45th minute. Krishna scored again to make it 4-1 in the 57th minute before Ashraf Islam completed his hat-trick in the 67th minute by converting their second penalty.

"The players were probably a bit down with the inclusion of four foreign players and that's why they played haphazardly in the initial moments but they controlled the



Abahani's Musa Mia (R) dribbles past an Ajax opponent during their Premier Division Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

game when with crisp passing. I am happy to secure the full three points," said Abahani coach Mahbub Harun.

"The second goal was the turning point in the game as the penalty stroke was a wrong decision. After going two goals down, the players could not concentrate fully. Besides, there was a bit of a misunderstanding between the local and foreign players," said Ajax SC coach Hedayetullah Razib. This was Ajax's second defeat in three matches.