

# SPORT



Athletes and officials bound for the Asian Games pose for a group photo at the Bangladesh Olympic Association premises yesterday. Bangladesh will be represented by 117 athletes and 46 officials in the 18th edition of the quadrennial multi-sport event, scheduled to take place from August 18 to September 2 in Jakarta and Palembang.

PHOTO: STAR

## Hopes on kabaddi, shooting, archery

### Simanta to carry Bangladesh flag in marchpast

SPORTS REPORTER

Kabaddi, shooting and archery hold Bangladesh's medal hopes in the upcoming Asian Games, said Bangladesh Olympic Association's (BOA) general secretary Syed Shahed Reza yesterday. The BOA boss also hoped that the athletes would try to improve on their individual performances during the quadrennial event, to be staged in Jakarta and Palembang from August 18 to September 2. He was speaking at a press conference prior to a meet-up with Asian Games-

bound athletes at the BOA house. 117 athletes in 14 disciplines will represent Bangladesh in the two-week long sports meet. Archery, athletics, basketball (3-on-3), beach volleyball, bridge, football, golf, hockey, kabaddi, rowing, shooting, swimming, weightlifting and wrestling are the disciplines where Bangladesh will take part. "We have got a good opportunity to do well in shooting, kabaddi and archery," Shahed Reza said. "Our shoot-ers have been doing well on the international stage and now they are training under electronic system. The archers have also won international level medals in recent times while we always get

medals in women's kabaddi." "Even in the disciplines where we cannot expect medals, we would hope that the athletes will try to give their best performance, especially as we have the South Asian Games in March next year," he added. The Bangladesh contingent will move to Indonesia in various consignments, with the football team scheduled to reach there first as they will be flying from South Korea to Indonesia on August 11. The football event will get underway on August 10, eight days ahead of the opening ceremony. Meanwhile, South Asian Games gold medallist weightlifter Mabia

Akter Simanta has been nominated to carry the Bangladesh flag at the opening ceremony marchpast at the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium in Jakarta. "Mabia has come so far due to her sheer determination and dedication. She is full of confidence and spirit. She won a gold medal at the SA Games and also did very well at the Commonwealth Games. Hence she has been nominated for the honour," Reza said. The press conference was attended by the other high officials of BOA including Kazi Razibuddin Ahmed Chapal, Ashikur Rahman Miku, AK Sarkar and Asaduzzaman Kohinoor.

## Sherin dreams big

SPORTS REPORTER



Sherin Sultana is set to represent Bangladesh as the first female wrestler in the Asian Games, the 18th edition of which will be held in Jakarta and Palembang this month. Although she is not quite expected to win any medals in the multi-discipline sporting event, arguably considered the second most important of such events after the Olympics, she can be content with the fact that she has already made her mark in Bangladesh's sports history. The lady from Mymensingh will be Bangladesh's first female wrestler to be at these games after she had become Bangladesh's first female wrestler in the South Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. Her unique achievements do not end here. While Bangladesh did not participate in wrestling in the last Asian Games in Incheon four years ago, she did not miss out as she represented the green flag in wushu. She said she was equally good at both disciplines. "I used to wrestle from childhood. Then I moved to wushu and did well there too. So I got selected for the last Asian Games squad and did well in Incheon as a wushu player," Sherin said while talking to The Daily Star yesterday. However, wrestling is the sport where she has made the most impression. She won junior and national level gold medals consecutively from 2009 to 2016 while winning a gold medal in the Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games in 2012. As her performances on the wrestling mat started to get noticed, she stuck to the game and made her mark by winning a silver medal in the last South Asian Games in India in 2016. And it has been an upward curve for her since, despite taking part in increasingly bigger platforms. She went on to win a bronze medal in the Islamic Solidarity Games the following year before missing out on a bronze at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games earlier this year. Sherin admits the gulf in difference

between the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games is huge, but if provided long-term training under foreign coaches, there is no reason that gulf cannot be bridged to bring success in the Asian Games. "We should forget the theme that we are going only for participation," she said. "If we are provided long-term training under good foreign coaches, we can definitely win medals at these games." And that is what has been lacking for Sherin and her two male teammates who will represent the country in wrestling in Jakarta. "We started training on July 1 and will end it on August 15. The training period is too short. We need long-term training if we are to expect medals," she felt. Hence the best the 68-kg weight category wrestler can hope for, at the moment, is a good show in Jakarta -- winning a match or two -- which might change the mindset of the decision-makers. "We will try to do our best. Most teams are ahead of us. But if we can win the first round matches, that will definitely take us a long way," Sherin said.



SHERIN SULTANA

## Afzalur Rahman Sinha no more

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board's director, chairman of the Bangladesh Premier League governing council and director of Abahani Limited, Afzalur Rahman Sinha breathed his last at a hospital in Chennai yesterday, Abahani informed through a press release. Freedom fighter Sinha left behind his wife, a son, a daughter and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death. He was 68.



1950 - 2018

Sinha was suffering from kidney and lung diseases and had undergone treatment for quite some time in Singapore and Thailand previously. Sinha was a well known sports administrator and was involved with various clubs. The executive committee, officials and players of Abahani expressed their deepest condolence at the death of the sports administrator. The flag of the club will remain at half-mast to pay respect to the departed soul.

## Mehedi, Fizz buck the trend

SPORTS REPORTER



During a largely successful tour of West Indies, where a sordid Test series defeat led to wins in the ODI and T20I series, a frequent talking point has been the lack of contributions from the junior members of the Bangladesh cricket team. Once again it was the Tigers' fantastic five of Shakib Al Hasan, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad who were the stand-out performers. After repeated disappointments, even the seniors at one point stated that junior players need to step up and contribute. While most of the juniors were unable to respond, there were two who bucked the trend. Off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz and left-arm seamer Mustafizur Rahman showed glimpses of what they are capable of and played vital roles. In the disastrous Test series -- which started in Antigua with them being bundled out for their lowest score of 43 -- it was the 20-year-old Mehedi who showed the appetite to learn and he was the only bright spot for Bangladesh.

In the first Test where nothing seemed to be going right for the Tigers, it was Mehedi who managed to disturb the West Indies batters with his tight line and variations. He bowled the most overs among the Bangladesh bowlers and was able to pick three wickets from his 34 overs and, as importantly, con-

ceded runs at just 2.97 an over. Mehedi went on to impress in the second Test in Jamaica where the 20-year-old picked two wickets in an over in consecutive deliveries on way to figures of five for 93 from his 29 overs -- his fourth five-wicket haul. He followed it up by picking another two in the second innings, this time with the new ball. In the ODI series Mehedi was impressive, opening the innings and kept things tight against big hitters like Chris Gayle and Even Lewis. Despite picking up just three wickets the youngster played his role pretty

well with an economy rate of just over four through the series. He was however dropped after the first T20I mostly because of the team combination but the youngster is on the path to establishing himself in all three formats for the Tigers. It was also a comeback series for Mustafizur, having missed out on the Test series due to injury, who had a lot to prove and when it mattered, the 22-year-old was able to deliver. Although he was on the expensive side, Mustafizur looked in rhythm in the ODI series and picked up five wickets. The team management must have breathed a sigh of relief because a fit and firing Mustafizur makes the team stronger. Perhaps his best came in the shortest format. Mustafizur finished as the top wicket-taker with eight scalps in the three-match T20I series. His economy rate remains a concern but the left-arm seamer was able to pick wickets at crucial junctures. It was the 'Fizz' who dismissed the dangerous Andre Russell, who was single-handedly taking his side towards the win during the third and series-deciding T20I at Lauderhill. But Mustafizur removed Russell and ensured a memorable series win for the Tigers with figures of three for 31. Mehedi and Mustafizur's performances were some of the most important positives from the tour as it not only contributed to much-needed wins, but also showed their misfiring peers that juniors too can perform.



MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN



MEHEDI HASAN

## Tigers return today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket team will return home this morning after more than a month's tour of West Indies and the United States, where they bounced back from a dismal 2-0 Test series defeat with 2-1 series wins in ODIs and T20Is against the hosts. A number of cricketers including Shakib Al Hasan, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mushfiqur Rahim and Sabbir Rahman will not return today though but head coach Steve Rhodes departed from Florida with the team. "Some players have other international engagements and a few of them got permission from the board to enjoy holiday abroad. We have asked our head coach [Steve Rhodes] to come with the team as we will discuss with him about the next preparation camp and planning. There is a good chance that Rhodes will visit Ireland to watch the performance of the A team but the decision will be taken after a discussion," BCB's cricket operations committee chairman Akram Khan informed yesterday.

## Mominul's record 182 powers BD A

SPORTS REPORTER



Skipper Mominul Haque's record 133-ball 182 guided Bangladesh A to a 85-run victory and a 2-1 lead in the five-match one day series 2-1 against Ireland Wolves in the fourth game at the Hills Cricket Club in Dublin yesterday. Mominul, who is regarded as Tigers' Test Specialist, displayed his hitting abilities as he smacked three sixes and 27 fours in his rampaging knock on way to registering the highest score by a Bangladeshi batsman abroad in list-A cricket. He was run out just eight runs shy of Raqibul Hasan's highest list-A score by a Bangladeshi, with the latter scoring 190 runs for Mohammedan in the last season of the Dhaka Premier League against Abahani. Tamim Iqbal's 154 run knock against Zimbabwe in 2009 was the previous highest score by a Bangladeshi batsman away from home in List A cricket. Opener Zakir Hasan added 79 while wicket-keeper batsman Mohammad Mithun remained not out after a quick-fire 51 ball 87, with 14 fours and two sixes. Ireland failed to keep up with the asking rate right from the word go despite an impressive 111-ball 106 from skipper Andrew Balbirnie and a 32-ball 53 from Simi Singh. James McCollum added 43 while Stuart Thompson scored 42 as Ireland looked to get close to the target, but Fazle Mahmud's three for 47 and Khaled Ahmed's three for 73 helped skittle the hosts with 23 balls remaining. Bangladesh will take on the hosts in the fifth and final match of the series tomorrow.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**Bangladesh A:** 386 for 4 in 50 overs (Mominul 182, Mithun 87, Zakir 79; McBrine 1-45)  
**Ireland A:** 301 all out in 46.1 overs (Balbirnie 106, Simi 53; fazle 3-47, Fazle 3-73)  
**Result:** Bangladesh A won by 85 runs

## Shakib explains outburst

STAR SPORT DESK



In a message posted on his verified Facebook page, Bangladesh Test and T20I captain Shakib Al Hasan explained the reason behind his outburst against a fan on Monday. In a video that went viral, Shakib was seen speaking angrily to a fan in the team's Florida hotel lobby after Bangladesh sealed the T20I series against West Indies. The following is his message in full: Dear fans and followers, it has come to my notice that a video clip has been uploaded of me and a so called "fan" arguing in our hotel lobby after grueling match against the West Indies. The clip does not convey the entire sequence of events and is shown out of context. I, like my teammates, were

exhausted after back-to-back matches and just wanted to go back to our rooms. We were carrying our own equipment and bags and my hands were full so I wasn't in a position to give out autographs at the time. I, along with my teammates, usually try to spend our times with our fans and also share moments by taking selfies and giving out autographs. But fans also need to understand that we are human beings and give our all on the field fighting for our national colors. Are we not allowed to be busy or tired? We understand and appreciate your support for the team and us and we will always give it our all to ensure that we honor it on and off the field. However, times like this, sometimes makes the entire struggle and hard work unbearable and difficult to cope with. My humble request to you is that

you don't take it personally when one of us can't meet your requests, as the situation we are in might be different from what you are seeing. Please do not rush to make judgment or form opinions about us without trying to understand whether we are in a good mood or bad mood. I love my fans and I play for them whether its for the national team or any other league team, but at the same time I expect respect, love and most importantly understanding from you all. I know some people (who follow me or not) will try to make an issue out of nothing, but this petty mentality needs to change if you expect us to do better. The matches are difficult as it is and we don't need this added pressure. From one human being to another, thanks for understanding. Love, Shakib.

## Tigresses' Mirpur stay to continue

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's cricket team have continued their training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur instead of going to Chittagong to start an eight-week training camp as was originally scheduled. Initially, the plan was to depart for Chittagong on August 6, but since the boys' Under-19 team will have a camp in BKSP instead of in Mirpur, the women's wing decided to continue the training at the country's premier cricket venue due to its availability. The Tigresses are gearing up for the ICC Women's World Twenty20 in the West Indies in November. "We are not worried about the batting or bowling, but it's their fitness. Fitness helps in running between the wickets and also gives you confidence. We need to improve on converting singles to doubles," said assistant coach Devika Palshikar.