

Bangladesh scrape past Thailand

All but set for fifth-sixth place decider

ATIQUE ANAM from Jakarta

The Bangladesh hockey team were made to sweat for a 3-1 win over Thailand yesterday which all but ensured their bid for a place in the fifth-sixth place decider.

Defender Ashraful Islam scored twice from penalty corners while Milon Hossain scored the other for the men in red and green, who were made to work hard for their victory.

The win almost ensures Bangladesh will finish no lower than third in Pool B, which will set up a fifth-sixth place decider against the third-placed side from Pool A.

However, a win against eight-time champions Pakistan will see them through to the last four while a massive-margin defeat against Pakistan and a shock win for Oman against Malaysia might see them miss out on the third spot from the pool.

A fifth- or sixth-place finish will exempt Bangladesh from having to take part in the qualifiers of the next Asian Games and next Asia Cup while a fifth-place finish will enable them to take part in the next Asian Champions Trophy for the first time.

While Bangladesh achieved their target of beating Thailand, the manner of the victory hardly pleased coach Gobinath Krishnamurthy. The coach also credited the Thailand players for making it tough for his side.

"We played at a much lower level than normal today, but Thailand also made it hard for us. They are one of the strongest sides defensively and they have improved immensely," said the Malaysian after the

match at the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium hockey field in Jakarta.

Bangladesh were kept at bay by the side ranked 16 places lower than them throughout the entire first half. Krishnamurthy's charges failed to earn a single penalty corner in this time while Thailand won four consecutive penalty corners towards the end of the half, the third of which came off the crossbar while the fourth was blocked by goalkeeper Abu Sayeed Nippon.

Bangladesh earned their first penalty corner in the 35th minute, and penalty corner specialist Ashraful Islam made no mistake to place it at the back of the board, beating the opposition goalkeeper to his right. He doubled Bangladesh's lead from the second penalty corner six minutes later, picking the left-top corner of the net this time.

The men in red and green should have got a third before the end of the third quarter, but Milon Hossain's shot from in front of goal went straight at the goalkeeper.

Thailand though were rewarded in the 48th minute for an enterprising play when Borirak Harpan dinked the ball over Nippon while taking a tumble after being fed through by Nisman Maseela.

Bangladesh however, ensured the victory in the 54th minute when Milon parried the ball from the goal line after Rasel Mahmud Jimmy's shot was half-blocked by the Thailand goalkeeper.

Ashraful admitted that the penalty corner conversion made the difference in the game. "They could not capitalise on their penalty corners but we scored from both the penalty corners we earned. So it was the penalty corners that eventually won us the game," Ashraful said.



Bangladesh hockey team defender Ashraful Islam (L) struck twice from penalty corners as the men in red and green secured a 3-1 win over Thailand in the Asian Games hockey event yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Bangladesh's campaign nearing end

SPORTS REPORTER from Jakarta



Bangladesh archers wrapped up their Asian Games campaign yesterday with a couple of good results and a couple more near-misses at the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium archery ground.

The campaign ended with defeats in the compound event's pre-quarterfinals; with the men losing narrowly against Indonesia and women being outclassed by the host country as well.

The men's team, featuring Ashim Kumar Das, Jaber Alam and Abul Kashem Mamun, lost by 230-228 points while the women's team, comprised of Roksana Akter, Bonna Akter and Suma Biswas, lost by 222-208 points.

Although the compound event was not the

discipline which Bangladesh had pinned most of their hopes on, the men's performance was praised by the coach.

"It was a bit of bad luck as we played against the hosts who are very good," coach Martin Frederick said. "We could have been in the quarterfinals had luck favoured us. Another team in the pre-quarterfinals scored 227 points, one less than us and still went through."

The German coach also found positives from the campaign, with one of his team's reaching the quarterfinals while most of the others were eliminated from the pre-quarterfinals or the earlier stage.

"Things could have been better but we had a few good outings, including Ruman Sana's effort, the recurve mixed team reaching the quarterfinals and compound men's team's performance. We have some international competi-

tions coming up, and through this they will improve further," said Frederick.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh's men's golf team finished 16th out of 20 teams with Shahab Uddin finishing 55th and Shomrat Sikder, Mohammad Farhad and Shafique Bakha finishing in 61st position among 86 golfers. The women's team finished 13th among 15 teams, with Sonya Akter sealing 33rd position and Liza Akter grabbing the following position out of 42 golfers.

Away in Palembang, skeet shooter Sabbir Hasan finished 28th among 30 participants to bring Bangladesh's shooting campaign to an end.

Bangladesh's individual participation in the 18th Asian Games will end with sprinter Sumi Akter's 800m dash in the morning while the hockey team will continue their journey in the group stages.

JAKARTA JAMBOREE

AFP, Jakarta

A FAMILY DOUBLE

Rim Jong Sim bagged North Korea's seventh weightlifting gold of the Asian Games in Indonesia on Sunday to complete a remarkable family double, just a day after a victory by her little sister.

Like her 22-year-old sibling Rim Un Sim in Saturday's 69kg category, the reigning Olympic champion enjoyed a comfortable margin of victory in the 75kg class -- this time by a massive 26kg.

"I was a bit nervous after my sister won, just hoping I could do the same," said a delighted Jong Sim, 25, who was watched by her sister Un Sim as she further extended North Korea's record weightlifting haul at the Asian Games.

The sisters couldn't hold back their emotions after Jong Sim was presented with her gold medal by North Korean Sports Minister Kim Il Guk and the secretive country's anthem played for the seventh time in seven days of competition.

After wiping away her tears, Un Sim told AFP: "I was so happy for 'Onni' (big sister). I knew she could win but I couldn't hold back when I thought of her and my country."

It was a sentiment echoed by Jong Sim. "This gold is not just for me but for my country," she told reporters. "I cried when I thought about my country. I can't wait to go back home now."

CHAMPION CHELIMO BLASTS HEAT

World champion Rose Chelimo made light of brutal conditions on Sunday to scoop Asian Games gold for Bahrain with a run-away win in the women's marathon.

The Kenyan-born athlete produced a devastating break from the leading pack



It was a family affair at the women's weightlifting competition in Jakarta as Rim Jong Sim (L) won the 75 kg category yesterday, a day after younger sister Rim Un Sim clinched gold in the 69 kg event.

PHOTO: REUTERS

after the 25-kilometre mark in Jakarta and ploughed a lonely furrow as she crossed the line to win in a modest time of two hours, 34.51 seconds.

Chelimo's gold continued Bahrain's recent Asian Games success in the marathon after Eunice Kirwa and Hasan Mahboob -- both also born in Kenya -- won the women's and men's titles in 2014.

Despite smashing her rivals in a slow race to take gold, Chelimo admitted that Jakarta's heat and poor air quality had caused her problems.

"It was bad, it was too hot," the 29-year-old told AFP. "I felt something in my throat too. The air here, you feel like it's hard to breathe. I felt like I wasn't going to finish but I found some morale and hope to keep going. Thank God I finished with no harm."

"But I'm very proud to be the Asian champion," said Chelimo, who captured the world title in London last year.

'NORTH KOREA NOT SCARY'

The success of a joint Korean basketball team showed the two sides of the divided peninsula can work together, a South

Korean player said, saying she'd realised North Koreans aren't "scary" after all.

Kim Han-byul -- who was born Kimberly Roberson to a Korean mother and an American father in Indiana -- was speaking after Unified Korea thrashed Thailand 106-63 to set up a semi-final clash with Taiwan at the Asian Games on Thursday.

She said there had been hurdles to overcome when the women's team got together, but they were now aiming for the podium.

"Our aim is to get a medal. We only got together for a short time so that was an obstacle; you need to build a chemistry in sport. There is a little language barrier, like the dialect is different," Kim told reporters.

"But anything can happen. Peace on the court, peace everywhere," she said with a smile.

"The people on both sides are the same. They are not scary or anything like portrayed on the internet," she said.

"We have been focusing on just the basketball bit. But yeah, it's been the normal girl talk with them. Food is also common between us."

Robi ends deal with BCB

SPORTS REPORTER



Telecommunications company Robi Axiatra Ltd prematurely terminated their sponsorship deal with the Bangladesh cricket team yesterday, citing a 'loss of relevance' in their agreement with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

In a statement, Robi did not offer details of exactly what terms were at issue but said that the contract has been terminated with immediate effect. BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, however, told The Daily Star yesterday that the reason could be because of conflicting interests as some of the players are personally represented by other telecommunication companies.

Robi became title sponsors of the national team in 2015. Their contract was renewed in 2017 to stretch till the end of the 2019 World Cup in June-July in England.

While saying that it was a great honour to be associated with the Bangladesh team, Robi's statement added "because of a loss in the relevance of our current

sponsorship agreement with the BCB, Robi decided, with sincere regret, to discontinue the sponsorship of the national cricket team with immediate effect."

"When they started as sponsors, their demand was that players could not have conflicting interests," Nizamuddin said over phone. "But some players had personal contracts that pre-dated Robi's relationship with the BCB. Over the last six-seven months we have held meetings with Robi, giving them a discount and also assuring them that the conflicting contracts will be ended. I think they are using this as an excuse to get out."

In line with a recent BCB directive to players to wrap up their personal contracts with competing telecommunication companies, Tamim Iqbal has terminated his deal with Grameenphone, as has Shakib Al Hasan with Banglalink. Mashrafe Mortaza's deal with Grameenphone is also headed the same way. Nizamuddin said all the conflicts would have ended anyway with the expiration of their respective contracts.

This development comes after Robi posted Tk 44.4 crore in net losses in the second quarter of the year.



Barbados Trident speedster Mohammad Irfan bowled the most economical four-over spell in T20 history, taking two wickets for just one run against St Kitts and Nevis Patriots in a CPL match in Bridgetown on Saturday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Irfan most stingy

AFP, Paris

Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Irfan bowled the most economical spell in Twenty20 history on Saturday, only conceding a run from his final ball.

The giant 7ft 1in (2.16m) left-arm, playing for Barbados Tridents against St Kitts and Nevis Patriots in the Caribbean Premier League, also took the wickets of the usually big-hitting West Indies internationals Chris Gayle and Evin Lewis.

But Irfan ended up on the losing side anyway, as after he had bowled his maximum four overs, the Patriots chased down their target of 148 with seven balls to spare to win by six wickets.

"I'm really happy. I would've been happier if the team won, but I am happy that I bowled one of the best spells in T20 cricket," said Irfan after the match.

"I liked bowling on the lively wicket, and I get extra bounce because of my height, so yes, a satisfying performance."

The 36-year-old, who hasn't played internationally for two years, dismissed star man Gayle with the first delivery of the innings.

Irfan ended with figures of four overs, three maidens, with two wickets for one run.

Su fastest man of games

India shine in sprint event

ATIQUE ANAM from Jakarta

China's Su Bingtian set a new Asian Games record to become the fastest man of the continent while India showed that they are an emerging power in Asian sprint with three silver medals at the

Gelora Bung Karno Stadium last night.

Su, a second-place finisher from 2014, clocked 9.92 seconds to set the Games' new record, but missed out on a new continental record by 0.01 seconds.

Qatar's Tossin Ogunode took the silver medal while Japan's Ryota Yamagata took the bronze -- both clocking 10.00 seconds.

China's Su Bingtian took the silver medal while Japan's Ryota Yamagata took the bronze -- both clocking 10.00 seconds.

But the day was special for India, who grabbed silver medals in women's 100m, women's 400m and men's 400m.

Dutee Chand of Orissa finished second to Bahrain's Edidiong Odiong in the women's 100m, with Dutee clocking 11.32 seconds, two hundredths of a second slower than Odiong. China's Wei Yongli took bronze.

Chand's medal comes after she missed the last Games in a row over her elevated testosterone levels caused by hyperandrogenism.

She was, however, later cleared of the ban after she appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in 2015. But her performance last night was a massive surprise given the fact she only clocked 11.75

seconds in the South Asian Games two years ago, finishing third.

That same year the 22-year-old clocked 11.69 seconds in Rio Olympics before improving her timing to 11.52 seconds in the Asian Championship last year. And yesterday's timing was her career best, an improvement of 0.20 seconds from her previous best.

Meanwhile, Hima Das from Assam grabbed silver in women's 400m clocking 50.79 seconds, 0.70 seconds slower than Bahrain's Naser Salwa, who set a new games record.

Yahya Muhammed Anas from Kerala grabbed silver in men's 400m at 45.69 seconds, 0.80 seconds slower than gold winner Hassan Abdellah of Qatar.

Tigers' camp from today

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh will begin their preparations for the Asia Cup, scheduled to start from September 15 in the UAE, as the 31-member preliminary squad will start the training camp at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium from today.

Test and T20I skipper Shakib Al Hasan, who is currently in Saudi Arabia to perform hajj, is expected to return on August 29 and Mahmudullah Riyad, who is playing the Caribbean Premier League for St Kitts and Nevis Patriots, will join the side on September 7. All other members of the squad are expected to join the camp from the first day.

Head coach Steve Rhodes is also expected to be present from the first day of the training camp, accompanied by trainer Mario Villavarayan and physio Thihan Chandramohan.

Bangladesh bowling coach Courtney Walsh and batting consultant Neil McKenzie will join the camp on September 2 ahead of the skills training sessions.

The cricketers will start the camp with fitness and fielding sessions in the first week, and it will be followed by the skill training and match scenario sessions in the next week before the final squad departs for the UAE on September 9.

Bangladesh will take on Sri Lanka in the opening game of the group stage on September 15 in Dubai and will then face Afghanistan in the second match on September 20 at Abu Dhabi.