



PHOTO: ATIQUE ANAM/COLLECTED

HISTORY-MAKERS: (Clockwise from L) Celebrated archer Ruman Sana jokingly flexes his muscle with a delighted Bangladesh archery team coach Martin Frederick after winning gold in the men's recurve individual of the 13th South Asian Games in Pokhara yesterday. Ety Khatun, the 14-year-old archer from Chuadanga who achieved an individual milestone by becoming the first female athlete from the country to win three gold medals in a single edition of the Games, shows the victory sign after clinching the women's recurve individual gold. Soheli Rana and Suma Biswash talk to the media after each winning their respective individual compound events. Thus the archers won all four individual events yesterday to finish with 10 gold medals out of 10 to contribute heavily in scripting a new history for Bangladesh in the regional multi-sport extravaganza.

ARCHERY'S QUIVER OF GOLD

EVENT	OPPONENT	RESULT	MEDAL
Recurve Men's Team (Ruman, Hakim & Tamimul)	Sri Lanka	5-3	Gold
Recurve Women's Team (Ety, Mehnaz, Beauty)	Sri Lanka	6-0	Gold
Recurve Mixed Team (Ruman, Ety)	Bhutan	6-2	Gold
Compound Men's Team (Ashikuzzaman, Sohel, Ashim)	Bhutan	225-214	Gold
Compound Women's Team (Sushmita, Shyamoli, Suma)	Sri Lanka	226-215	Gold
Compound Mixed Team (Sohel, Sushmita)	Nepal	148-140	Gold
Recurve Men's Individual (Ruman)	Bhutan	7-1	Gold
Recurve Women's Individual (Ety)	Bhutan	7-3	Gold
Compound Men's Individual (Sohel)	Bhutan	137-136	Gold
Compound Women's Individual (Suma)	Sri Lanka	142-134	Gold
Compound Men's Individual (Ashim)	Sri Lanka	145-135	Bronze

ARCHERY HITS BULLSEYE

ATIQUE ANAM from Pokhara



Ety Khatun and Suma Biswash, two of the lesser-known archers from Bangladesh, could not hold back their tears as they rose to prominence by winning gold medals in the 13th South Asian Games to lead the country to unprecedented success, both for the discipline and the country.

Ety, the rising star of Bangladesh's most successful sporting discipline of recent times, was relieved to add an individual gold to her tally, after having helped the team win two gold medals the previous day.

"I didn't feel any tension during team events yesterday, but today I was feeling nervous. I

didn't have a good sleep last night due to the tension," said the 14-year-old, who fought back from 2-3 sets down to beat Seema Sonam of Bhutan by 7-3 sets in the final.

Ety became a national star after her double-gold medal feat on Sunday. Suma, who comes from a very different background to Ety's, having lived in Dhaka all her life, was not the favourite to win the final in her event. She had waited, quietly, for her moment of glory.

A sportsperson from her childhood, Suma had played cricket and was in contention for the women's kho kho team before archery came calling.

Although Bangladesh won all 10 gold medals in archery, there was less expectation

BD'S TOP FIVE BEST GOLD HAUL

Year	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
2019 (Nepal) (Till Dec-9)	19	34	80	133
2010 (Dhaka)	18	23	56	97
1993 (Dhaka)	11	19	32	62
1985 (Dhaka)	9	17	38	64
1995 (Madras)	7	17	34	58

regarding a few events in the compound category. Suma was one of those who had inspired less faith for the team management.

"Yesterday when they were talking, I heard

Zia sir [assistant coach Ziaur Rahman] say they were confident of gold from Ruman, Ety and Soheli. But he didn't say my name. It made me all the more determined to do well," said the 24-year-old, who was taught the game by her elder brother Anwar Hossain.

Sohel bagged the country's other gold in the men's individual compound before Ruman, the most successful archer of the country, fittingly ended proceedings with a 7-1 sets win in the men's individual recurve final over Kinley Tshering of Bhutan.

It was a straightforward victory for Ruman, who achieved many an accolade in this calendar year.

The 24-year-old from Khulna started the year with a silver medal in the 3rd ISSF World

Ranking Championship in Dhaka in February before winning a bronze medal in World Archery Championship in Netherlands in June, securing a quota place for next year's Olympics. He added a gold medal to his growing cabinet in the Asia Cup (Stage-3) in Philippines in September before the three-gold haul in Pokhara.

It was a perfect end to a year that had started on a high and went even higher.

"This is my last international tournament of the year. It's the best year of my 10-year career. This is also the best year for Bangladesh archery," said Ruman, who was looking to participate in many more international events for a good outcome in the Olympics in Tokyo next year.

Shanto leads defence of cricket gold

SPORTS REPORTER from Pokhara



Bangladesh men's cricket team defended their South Asian Games title in style, cruising to a seven-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the final at the Tribhuvan University Ground yesterday.

Skipper Nazmul Hossain Shanto anchored the innings with an unbeaten 35 as Bangladesh chased down a modest victory target of 123 with 11 balls to spare.

Shanto clenched his fist as he cut Shammu Ashan through the covers for the winning boundary, fittingly scoring the winning runs after having led the team from the front, scoring the tournament's highest 159 runs in three matches.

There was no over-the-top celebration from the Bangladesh team, who were the defending champions and favourites to win this title, having

come with a strong side featuring a number of national team players.

"We rested a few players for this game as we were playing four games on the trot. This helped us because they [Sri Lanka] didn't play against these players yesterday," Shanto said after the match. "It is a good feeling to win gold. We came here with this target and I'm glad we achieved it."

Earlier after winning the toss, Bangladesh bowled the islanders out for 122 runs in 20 overs, with right-arm pacer Hasan Mahmud taking three wickets and leg-spinner Tanvir Hasan taking two for 28. Three of the Sri Lankan batsmen were run out including opener Pathum Nissanka (24), who together with Nishan Madushka (16), had given the Lankans a brisk start by reaching 33 runs in four overs. But three wickets in the next two overs derailed Sri Lanka's innings and they never recovered from those blows.

The chase was comfortable as

Bangladesh were ahead of the eight-ball right from the start, with Saif Hassan (33) and Soumya Sarkar (27) giving the team a watchful start, reaching 44 in 7.5 overs. Soumya fell to an excellent catch and 39 runs later, Saif got dismissed through a run-out, but there was hardly any worries at any stage of the chase.

It was a sweet revenge for Bangladesh, who had lost by nine wickets against the same opposition the day before in their last round-robin match.

Cricket was first included in the SA Games roster in the 2010 edition in Dhaka where the hosts had won the title. The sport was discarded from the roster in the following edition in India before making a return this time around.

The men's effort made it a clean sweep for Bangladesh in cricket, with women winning the title on Sunday, beating Sri Lanka by two runs in a nail-biting finish.



The gold rush for Bangladesh in the ongoing 13th edition of the South Asian Games might have been led by the archers but it was the Bangladesh Under-23 team that secured the record 19th gold for the country yesterday. The Bangladesh team pose with their medals after beating their Sri Lankan counterparts by seven wickets at Kirtipur. PHOTO: COLLECTED



The Sri Lanka cricket team arrive in Islamabad yesterday, ahead of their Test series against Pakistan starting on December 11. PHOTO: TWITTER

Sri Lanka arrive in Islamabad

Begin first Test tour since 2009 attack

AFP, Islamabad



Sri Lanka embarked on the first Test cricket tour of Pakistan in 10 years on Monday following the deadly 2009 attack on their team that plunged Pakistan into sporting isolation.

"Touchdown Islamabad," tweeted the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), along with video of the players at the airport, while PCB chief executive Waseem Khan called their arrival a "historic occasion".

Sri Lanka will play two Tests under heavy security, one in Rawalpindi -- where Pakistan's army is headquartered -- and the second in Karachi, ending a decade-long absence for cricket's five-day format since the attack.

Eight people were killed and several players and officials were wounded when militants opened fire on a convoy of buses travelling to a Test in Lahore in March 2009.

"This is my first tour to Pakistan," said Sri Lanka skipper Dimuth Karunaratne, who opted out of the team's recent limited-overs tour of Pakistan.

"After the 2009 incidents players were scared to tour Pakistan but in the last two years or so Sri Lanka and other teams have toured Pakistan." He added: "We want to play good cricket in Pakistan and hope they give us some good security."

The 2009 attack slammed the door shut on international sporting fixtures in cricket-loving Pakistan as foreign teams refused to visit over

security fears.

Pakistan's cricket team has been forced to play its home matches on neutral ground in the United Arab Emirates, resulting in financial losses and hard times for Pakistani fans.

International cricket began making inroads back into the country when Zimbabwe became the first team to play in Pakistan in 2015, paving the way for a smattering of Twenty20 matches ever since. But Test matches -- considered the pinnacle of international cricket -- have until now remained absent. The first Test starts in Rawalpindi on Wednesday and the second is in Karachi from December 19.

"Pakistan's losses due to non-hosting of international cricket have been substantial," Waseem told AFP.