



Fireworks go off after the athletes' parade during the opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics at the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo yesterday. (Inset) Swimmer Ariful Islam carries the flag and leads the Bangladesh contingent during the opening ceremony. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Curtains rise on GAMES OF HOPE

REUTERS, Tokyo

Japanese tennis star Naomi Osaka on Friday lit the Olympic cauldron to mark the formal start of Tokyo 2020, in an opening ceremony shorn of glitz and overshadowed by a pandemic but celebrated as a moment of global hope.

Organisers also paid tribute to medical workers as athletes from across the world paraded into an almost empty stadium, their smiles hidden behind masks for the first time.

Normally a star-studded display teeming with celebrities, the ceremony was low-key, with fewer than 1,000 people in attendance, strict social distancing rules and signs calling on spectators to "be quiet around the venue."

"With the world in a tough situation because of the coronavirus pandemic, I would like to pay my respect and express my gratitude to medical workers and all those who are working hard every day to overcome the difficulties," said the President of the organising committee, Seiko Hashimoto.

The ceremony climaxed with a fusion of traditional kabuki theatre - with its elaborate



makeup and costumes - and a jazz piano improvisation, on a stage topped with the cauldron for the Olympic flame.

After being passed from baseball legends to children, the torch was handed to Osaka, who walked to the base of the stage, which split open to reveal a set of stairs as the cauldron unfolded like a flower.

She then climbed the stairs and lit the cauldron as fireworks briefly illuminated the sky. At the parade, most countries were represented by both male and female

flagbearers in an Olympic first, but not everybody took pandemic measures. Teams from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and the Pakistan flagbearers paraded maskless in contrast to protocol and the majority of other athletes.

Members of the Canada delegation wore patches in the colour of the rainbow, the symbol of the LGBT community, on their jackets. U.S. first lady Jill Biden clapped the Americans as did France President Emmanuel Macron for the French team.

The Olympic oath, recited by the athletes at the end of the parade, has been updated for the Tokyo Games, with athletes swearing their commitment to inclusion, equality, and non-discrimination for the first time at the Olympics.

The opening also featured fireworks in indigo and white, the colours of the Tokyo 2020 emblem, and gave a nod to Japanese tradition represented by giant wooden Olympic rings linked to the 1964 Games also hosted by Tokyo.

Postponed for a year, organisers were forced to take the unprecedented step of holding the Olympics without fans.

## Ruman and Diya make Olympic waves

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's top archers Ruman Sana and Diya Siddique got off to smooth starts in their individual recurve events on the opening day of the Tokyo Olympics after finishing 17th and 36th respectively among 64 competitors at the Yumenoshima Park Archery Field in Japan yesterday.

Ruman, who secured a direct ticket to the Olympics, scored 662 out of 720 in the men's individual recurve event while Diya, who gained a wildcard entry, scored 635 out of 720 in the women's individual recurve event.

The duo also made it to the finals of the mixed recurve team event, qualifying as the 16th final team with a cumulative score of 1297 ahead of powerful nations like Canada, Ukraine, Malaysia, Brazil, Spain and Australia.

"I am really happy to have had a good start because the scores that I put up here today were beyond my expectations. I have not been having good performances in the recent past," Ruman told The Daily Star over the phone from Japan.

The 26-year old, who represent Bangladesh Ansar in domestic events, had a brilliant start and found himself in eighth place after the first 36 shots with a score of 337. Unfortunately, he failed to carry the momentum into the next and final 36 shots, when he tallied 325 points.

"There was a bit of wind in the second phase, so I faced some problems. However, I am happy with my overall performance despite the fact that I could have finished in the top ten had I replicated my performance in the first phase," added Ruman, whose best score in the qualification round was 685 during the 2019 South Asian Games.

Ruman, ranked 25th in the world, will face Tom Hall of Great Britain, who is 87th in the world rankings, on July 27 in the first

elimination round.

"Now I have to play and win the elimination rounds. I will definitely be playing to win the match and I am hopeful of winning the match," said Ruman.

Earlier in the day, 17-year-old Diya made a career-best 635 out of 720. She scored 307 over the first 36 shots before bettering the mark with 328 in the second half of the women's individual recurve event. South Korea's An San broke a 28-year-old Olympic record by scoring 680 to finish on top.

Diya will now take on 29th-seeded Dziominskaya Karyna of Belarus in the first elimination round on July 27. Karyna is ranked number 31 in the world, 124 places ahead of Diya in 155.

Ruman was also excited to have reached the target in the mixed team event after finishing 16th among 29 teams.

"It is a big achievement to book a ticket to the 16-team mixed event finals because Bangladesh often finished in the 20s in big tournaments. It is the first time we finished among the top 16 on a stage as big as the Olympics. To be honest, we didn't harbor many hopes of making it to the final of the mixed team event, but we did it. Diya recorded a career-best. We still can't believe we made it," Ruman said, adding that many in archery fraternity were surprised by their results.

However, Ruman and Diya face an uphill task. They are slated to play against South Korea, featuring the top two archers from the men and women's sections of the tournament. The South Koreans tallied 1368 in the first round, 71 points better than the Bangladeshi duo.

"You know that a South Korean archer broke an Olympic record in archery today, so you can understand how strong they are but we are not thinking about our opponents. We want to keep cool and put up our natural performance. If we can perform then we will be happy," said Ruman.



## Australia's Bangladesh tour hangs in the balance

SPORTS REPORTER

With no immediate decision from Cricket Australia over their upcoming tour of Bangladesh after the second ODI between Australia and West Indies at Barbados was cancelled due to a non-playing member of the Windies staff testing positive for Covid-19, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) still remains hopeful to host the Aussies in scheduled time.

However, clouds have already started to hover over the tour and a lot will depend on the outcome of the COVID-19 tests on Friday. According to Australian media, if any member of the Australian side tests positive, there is a possibility their tour to Bangladesh will become uncertain.

"Many media have said that there is doubt about the series but there has been no such communication yet from Cricket Australia after the cancellation of the second ODI today. Hopefully, the series will begin on time," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

"In the new normal, everyone is facing such situations and we don't know how they are managing it from afar. But BCB has

ensured that we can hold a series during these times. I talked to the CEO of CA on Thursday and they seemed very optimistic. If there were any immediate decision then we would have been informed for sure."

CA had wanted BCB to arrange the matches in a single venue and with all the matches set to be played at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. The BCB had already announced the tight schedule of the five match T20I series -- from August 3 till August 9 -- where the Aussies are set to arrive in Dhaka on July 29.

Meanwhile, CA and BCB had also agreed to 10-day quarantine in a bio-secure bubble ahead of the series, but in order to maintain that protocol it puts Bangladesh's experienced Mushfiqur Rahim's participation in serious doubt.

On July 14th, Mushfiqur had to leave the team's bio-bubble in Harare and return to Bangladesh and thus was unable to meet the quarantine requirements. "According to the conditions put forward by CA regarding the quarantine period, Mushfiqur does not qualify since he had to leave the bubble. We are still holding talks on whether Mushfiqur can play the series. There are some grey areas," said Nizamuddin.

## Zimbabwe level T20 series

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's wayward and inconsistent performance in all three departments led to a 23-run defeat for the visitors in the second T20I as the hosts Zimbabwe made a comeback to level the three-match T20I series in Harare yesterday.

Young debutant Shamim Hossain's 29-run cameo from 13 balls made things somewhat interesting in the latter stage of the match but eventually, the Tigers were bundled out for 143 runs in 19.5 overs while chasing a target of 167 runs.

Shamim arrived at the crease in the 12th over when Bangladesh was struggling at 73 for six, needing

another 94 runs from the last eight overs. The left-hander started off with a couple of sixes with the slog sweep and then struck a six and two fours to Wesley Madhevere, taking sixteen runs in his over, to bring down the equation to 58 off the last five overs.

However, the quick fire from the 20-year-old came to an end in the very next over, when he was caught at long-on while trying to go for another six to pacer Luke Jongwe, as things went bad to worse for the Tigers.

Earlier in the chase, Pacer Blessing Muzarabani dismissed both the openers early, who scored fifty in the first game. Mohammad Naim was bowled on five after his attempted cut led to an inside-edge, while just three balls later

Soumya Sarkar handed a catch at extra-cover on eight.

From then on, the left-arm spinner Wellington Masakadza spun the visitors into further trouble. He first dismissed Shakib Al Hasan, who was caught at covers on twelve, followed by skipper Mahmudullah Riyad and Mahedi Hasan who threw their wickets while going for the big shots.

Bangladesh batters never looked composed enough at any point and yet they kept going hard at the Zimbabwean bowlers and ended up losing wickets at regular intervals. Afif Hossain's 24 remained the second-highest score for the Tigers.

During the first innings, a below-average show from Bangladesh's fielding department

had helped the hosts to gain the upper hand. The visitors dropped a few easy chances and also missed out on a couple of run-out opportunities.

Madhevere, who was dropped on 44 by Mahmudullah at cover on Shakib's bowling, top-scored with 73 off 53 balls. Left-hander Ryan Burl struck few lusty blows in the end and remained unbeaten on 34 off 19 balls as Zimbabwe added 54 runs in the last five overs of their innings.

Left-arm seamer Shoriful Islam picked up three wickets conceding 33 runs from his four overs while Shakib and Mahedi scalped a wicket each for the Tigers.

The third and the final series-deciding T20 match is scheduled to take place tomorrow.



Zimbabwe players celebrate the dismissal of Bangladesh Opener Soumya Sarkar during the second T20I in Harare yesterday. (L) Ryan Burl smacks one during the Zimbabwe innings. PHOTO: TWITTER



## SCORES IN BRIEF

**ZIMBABWE:** 166 for six in 20 overs (Madhevere 73; Shoriful 3-33; Mahedi 1-11)

**BANGLADESH:** 143 all out in 19.5 overs (Shamim 29, Afif 24; Masakadza 3-20, Jongwe 3-31)

**Result:** Zimbabwe won by 23 runs  
**Player-of-the-match:** Wesley Madhevere