



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

A CALLBACK TO FORGOTTEN GAMES AND SIMPLER DAYS

Amidst the endless commotion about cricket, football and other popular sports, it's easy to lose sight of traditional local games that have been around for centuries. Games like kanamachi, gollachut, dariyabandha have provided unfiltered joy to generations of young children in Bangladesh. However, in this current age, where sources of entertainment are endless, these simpler games have waned in popularity in urban communities. But in the rural communities, these games have retained some of their old charm as kids there still indulge in the simpler pleasures of local games. Here, students of Pabla Government Primary School in Dumuria, Khulna are seen taking part in some traditional games, free of any burden to excel, playing for just the joy of the game.

Qatar, Jordan look to answer critics

REUTERS, Doha

Qatar and Jordan will play an all-Arab Asian Cup final on Saturday where both teams are highly motivated to answer critics who gave them no chance of going so far.

Surprise package Jordan finished third in their group and scraped through to the knockouts, where they suddenly elevated their game to knock out heavyweights Iraq and South Korea.

That was a triumph for their Moroccan coach Hussein Ammouta, who was heavily criticised when they finished 2023 without a win in seven games, which included six losses.

While Jordan will play with nothing to lose in their first final, hosts Qatar are the defending champions after winning their maiden title in 2019.

Qatar disappointed fans when they lost all their World Cup group games in 2022, but they turned things around in the Asian Cup, scoring in every game en route to the final, including a thrilling 3-2 semi-final win over higher-ranked Iran.

"I hope we'll be ready when the first whistle blows and we'll respond to the critics, 99% of the time I don't listen to them since I don't find anything useful," said Jordan coach Hussein Ammouta.

"In Spain, there's a saying. Second place is first among losers. We're not satisfied with second, we will play for the trophy," said Qatar coach Marquez Lopez

'Decision to award the title jointly was a fair one'

Following the dramatic and confusing final of the SAFF U-19 Championship Women's Championship on Thursday night, where both Bangladesh and India were declared joint winners, India coach Shukla Dutta told Indian media that they deserved the title and were robbed. Speaking to *The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman* on Friday, Bangladesh coach *Saiful Bari Titu* refuted Dutta's assertion as he felt the decision was a fair one and one taken according to the book. Following are the excerpts of the interview:

The Daily Star (DS): How do you evaluate what happened in the final and your reaction to the India coach saying they were robbed of the trophy?

Saiful Bari Titu (SBT): I don't know whether someone was forced to concede defeat. We can also say the same thing. Actually we were getting ready to resume the game in accordance to the bylaws. I had such experience for Sheikh Russel which lasted for 16-17 kicks in penalty shootout during a domestic competition. It will not be wise for someone to say they have been forced to concede defeat. The announcement of joint champions is justified even though India played better than us in the final. Even beyond the bylaws, the decision to announce joint champions is justified because both teams performed well throughout the tournament.

DS: Is it because of Match Commissioners...

SBT: We can say anything about the bylaws, but a match commissioner must know that the toss happens when the situation is



hostile and there is unplayable condition. Before the final, the match commissioner should have done homework. If he knew, the shootout continued. A mistake can happen, but it happened in a final which is a big event.

DS: Was there anything your coaching staff or officials could have done when the toss was taking place?

SBT: After the completion of 11 shots each, I was talking to the goalkeeper and the toss happened quickly with our captain having no idea about it. The captain thought the toss was taking place to decide the resumption of the shootout. The most important thing is that he (the match commissioner) must know the bylaws of the tournament. He should call either the coach or the manager to inform his decision (of flipping the toss) but he did not do that. We

noticed the issue only when the India players ran towards their dugout to celebrate.

DS: Had the toss favoured your team, do you think the reaction would have been different from India?

SBT: Had we started celebrating after winning the toss, I'm sure India would also checked the bylaws and raised the toss issue.

DS: How different is the feeling of winning the title on your own and sharing it with another team?

SBT: It is a different honour to become sole champions but becoming joint champions is also good for the girls, who could have got hurt had they lost the final. Recognition is always big for players, especially when it comes from the top of the country. The girls were very happy as they came to the hotel celebrating the title from the stadium.

SHORT CORNER



Foreign hard-hitters finding life difficult in BPL

"To be honest, I don't really like playing like that. I don't like that sort of innings. I found batting here quite hard. Generally, in this tournament, I found the wickets quite difficult," Sylhet Strikers batter Harry Tector said at the press conference after hitting 61 off 52 balls which powered his team to five-wicket win against Khulna Tigers yesterday.

Warner, Zampa star as Australia beat WI

David Warner slammed 70 off 36 balls in his 100th Twenty20 international and Adam Zampa grabbed three wickets as Australia beat the West Indies by 11 runs in the opening clash of their three-match series yesterday.

France to play Italy and Belgium in Nations League

World Cup runners-up France, European champions Italy and Belgium will face off in the 2024-25 UEFA Nations League, while holders Spain will be favourites to win a group comprising Denmark, Switzerland and Serbia.

**Read The Daily Star website for the full stories.

Imranur, Shirin continue dominant streak

SPORTS REPORTER

Sprinters Imranur Rahman and Shirin Akter continued their dominant streak in the domestic circuit, winning the gold medal in their respective events in the opening day of the 47th National Athletics Championships at Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) yesterday.

Imranur clocked 10.36 seconds to retain the men's 100m gold while Shirin clocked 12.11 seconds to win gold in the women's 100m event for the 15th time in her career.

Imranur, running in lane 6, overcame the challenge from runnersup Mohammad Ismail (10.67 seconds) and bronze medallist Rakibul Hasan (10.72 seconds) to win his third gold in a row.

Ismail and Rakibul gave Imranur some competition till about the halfway point but the London-based 30-year-old sprinter had the last laugh on the newly installed track at the BNS.

Since the arrival of Imranur, no one has been able to beat the expatriate in the domestic circuit.

Imranur, however, claimed that he has never taken his compatriots lightly and prepares hard to remain Bangladesh's fastest man.

"Every time I tried to come first because there was no guarantee of retaining the title. Anything could happen in the championship, a sprinter could win or get disqualified in the competition.

"I always respect my countrymen and never take them lightly. I always take proper preparation to become



the fastest sprinter in Bangladesh because milliseconds can make the difference in the sprint and I try to do my best," said the national-record holder.

Imranur's timing yesterday was a slight improvement of his Asian Games' timing of 10.44 seconds, which delighted the sprinter.

"I am content with the timing but I will be trying to improve my timing at international competition,"

said the county's fastest man, who is scheduled to compete in this month's Asian Indoor Athletic Championships where last year he won a gold medal in the 60m sprint.

"I think there will be some pressure on me to regain the gold medal because it is a new competition with probably new athletes. I will be trying to defend the title. The preparation is all right but I want to focus on some new things in the coming days to improve myself," said Imranur.

Meanwhile, Shirin, who beat second-placed Sumaiya Dewan (12.29 seconds) and third-placed Samia Akter Sathi (14.01 seconds), was over the moon with the win.

"I am satisfied with my timing as well as becoming the fastest woman for the 15th time," Shirin said. "In the sprint event, everyone is very close in terms of performance, so winning the gold medal is very challenging and joyous for me," said Shirin.

Meanwhile, high jumper Ritu Akter (1.76 meter), shot put thrower Zakia Akter (13.52 meter) and 5000m runner Samsun Nahar Ratna (18:49.38 minutes) set up new records in their respective events on the opening day of two-day championship.



TOP 5 INDIVIDUAL ODI SCORES

- 264 Rohit Sharma vs SL in 2014
- 237* Martin Guptill vs West Indies in 2015
- 219 Virendra Sehwag vs West Indies in 2011
- 215 Chris Gayle vs Zimbabwe in 2015
- 210* Pathum Nissanka vs Afghanistan in 2024

Sri Lanka batter Pathum Nissanka celebrates after scoring a double century in the first ODI against Afghanistan at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium in Kandy yesterday. The right-handed batter became the first from his country to score a double ton and smashed 20 fours and eight sixes for his unbeaten 139-ball 210-run knock which helped propel Sri Lanka to 381 for three after they were put into bat first.

PHOTO: AFP