

TODAY'S  
GOLD RUSH

ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS

Women's Artistic Individual All-Around  
10:15 PM

ATHLETICS

Men's 20km Race Walk

11:30 AM

Women's 20km Race Walk

1:20 PM

CANOE SLALOM

Men's Slalom

9:30 PM

FENCING

Women's Team Foil

Friday 12:30 AM

JUDO

Men 100 kg

Women 78 kg

8 PM

SHOOTING

Men's 50m Rifle Three Positions

1:30 PM

SWIMMING

Women's 200m Butterfly

Friday, 12:30 AM

Men's 200m Backstroke

Friday, 12:38 AM



SEINE-SATIONAL TRIATHLON: Paris Olympics organisers received a pre-dawn green light for yesterday's triathlon swim leg to be held in the Seine, ending days of suspense over whether the French capital's scenic river would be clean enough for racing. In the women's race, France's Cassandre Beaugrand made her break for gold on the last lap of the run stage, while Britain's Alex Yee ran a perfectly-paced 10km to snatch a dramatic gold in the men's triathlon.

PHOTO: AFP



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Archer Sagor faces early elimination

SPORTS REPORTER

Archer Sagor Islam, the only Bangladeshi athlete to qualify directly for the 2024 Olympics, has ended his Paris campaign with a 6-0 set-points defeat against Mauro Nespoli of Italy in the 1/32 elimination round of men's individual recurve event yesterday.

The 18-year-old archer from Bangladesh, who had finished 45th among 64 participants in the ranking round of his event, failed to put up a fight against the three-time Olympic medallist at the Esplanade des Invalides.

Sagor lost the first set by 30-27 points before putting up a bit of a fight in a 27-26 defeat in the second set. However, the teenager from Rajshahi lost the third set by 28-25 points to face an early elimination.

Sagor is the third of five Bangladeshi participants in the Summer Games this year. Earlier, shooter Robiul Islam finished 10m air rifle event with a 43rd finish among 49 contestants while swimmer Samiul Islam Rafi finished 49th among 69 swimmers in 100m freestyle event.

Swimmer Sonia Khatun and sprinter Imranur Rahman are yet to compete.

Triumph over adversity: Lind dreams of medal

AFP, Paris

For Danish table-tennis player Anders Lind, just making the Paris Olympics is a triumph over adversity: after breaking two vertebrae in a serious car crash, he feared he would never walk again.

Now the 25-year-old is into an improbable Olympic last 16 and dreaming of a medal.

When doctors x-rayed his spine after the crash in 2021, "they said maybe I'll never walk normally again," Lind told AFP after his win on Wednesday.

"They said maybe I'll have some nerve damage, and that with the bones that broke, there was a 70-80 percent probability that I would be paralysed," he added.

Even if he could walk again, none of the doctors he saw said he would be able to resume top-level sport -- news he said sent him spiralling into depression.

But with the help of a corset and zimmer frame, Lind began the long road to recovery that has taken him to performing in front of a packed Olympic crowd in Paris.

Despite having a metal rod inserted into his back, Lind said he suffers no major physical ill-effects from the accident, although he cannot bend as well as he used to.

Mentally, the near-death experience has given him a sense of perspective.

"If I have a bad match, I can look back and say, 'It's not as bad as it was then'," he said.

His setback has also given him a fierce determination that pulled him through in his last-32 match against Poland's Milosz Redzinski in a game in which he made a number of comebacks to prevail eventually.

A medal after the agonies he has suffered would be sensational, but the shock defeat of world number one Wang Chuqin has blown the draw wide open, he said.

"With the top seed going out, I'm dreaming for a medal. It's still a long shot, and it's very unlikely, but there is a chance, and if the chance comes, I'm going to take it," Lind said.

Race walks launch track and field festivities

SPORTS DESK

The undisputed crown jewel of every Olympic Games, the track and field events kick off today in Paris. The eagerly awaited series of competitions begins with the men's and women's 20km race walks.

Preliminary and qualification rounds for other events will commence tomorrow, ramping up the excitement as athletes vie for their spots in the finals.

The women's 100m final will take place on August 3, followed by the men's 100m final the next day, ensuring back-to-back nights of high-speed drama.

As the games progress, all sprint and middle-distance races will unfold on the striking purple track of the Stade de France in Paris. This iconic venue will also host the various field events, making it the epicenter of athletic prowess.

Meanwhile, the marathon and race walks will wind through the picturesque streets of the French capital, offering a scenic yet challenging route for the competitors.

The grand finale of the track and field events is the women's marathon on August 11, bringing these thrilling competitions to a close on the final day of the Games.

Throughout these days, fans will be treated to a dazzling array of running, walking, jumping, and throwing competitions, underscoring the essence of the Olympic spirit.

RACE WALK 20KM RECORD

MEN'S 20KM WALK

World record: 1:16:36  
Suzuki Yusuke (Japan)  
Nomi, 2015

Olympic record: 1:18:46  
Chen Ding (China)  
London, 2012

WOMEN'S 20KM WALK

World record: 1:23:49  
Yang Jiayu (China)  
Huangshan, 2021

Olympic record: 1:25:16  
Qieyang Shijie (China)  
London, 2012



GOAT Biles is back

AGENCIES

Simone Biles could claim her ninth Olympic medal in today's all-around final two days after leading the United States women to a gymnastics team gold in Paris.

Biles is the big favourite coming into the event after qualifying for the final by a healthy margin, and the drama may centre on the race for silver featuring a Tokyo rematch between defending champion Sunisa Lee of USA and Brazil's

Rebeca Andrade.

Lee held off Andrade for gold in the Tokyo all-around final, from which Biles withdrew due to a potentially dangerous mental block known as the "twisties".

The 27-year-old American -- considered the greatest gymnast of all time -- appears to be a different person to the one who abruptly pulled out of the Tokyo Games.

"After I finished vault I was relieved because, phew, there were no flashbacks or

anything," Biles told a packed press conference after clinching her fifth Olympic gold.

Biles said her second team gold -- eight years after her first -- felt different.

"It was just like we were a little young and naive," she said of 2016. "So it didn't hit the way that it does now.

"Now that I'm much older, we have so much more experience and we're out here really having fun and enjoying what we're doing."

Back in coaching, Maruful eyes SAFF U-20 final berth

SPORTS REPORTER

Veteran coach Maruful Haque is looking forward to guiding the Bangladesh under-20 football team to the final of the SAFF Under-20 Championship in Nepal later this month as he returns to coaching after a year-long sabbatical.

The former national team head coach, who left Sheikh Jamal Dhanmendi Club early last year and then worked as a technical advisor to Chittagong Abahani last season, has been given the charge of the under-20 team by the Bangladesh Football Federation for the first time.

Talking to The Daily Star after conducting the first training session in Kamalapur yesterday, the successful club coach said he would try to focus on the tactical side of things in the South Asian event, which will take place in Kathmandu from August 18 to 28.

Bangladesh have been pitted against Sri Lanka and Nepal in Group A while Group B features India, Bhutan and Maldives.

"I am getting to know the players personally although I've seen most of them play in the Bangladesh Premier League," Maruful said. "With only around two weeks left for the SAFF Under-20 Championship, it will not be possible to focus on the players' fitness. So I would try to focus mainly on tactical aspects of the players, majority of

whom played in the last premier league."

The under-20 team features three players -- Mehdi Hasan Srabon, Mojibor Rahman Jony, and Chandon Roy -- with senior national team experience while eight players come from the BFF Academy. The coach feels the team is strong enough to make it to the final.

Bangladesh had played in the final in the last edition as well, eventually losing to hosts India after extra time.

"We were runners-up last time around. So

I'm pretty confident we will reach the final this time too," said Maruful, who will also guide the team in the AFC U-20 Asian Cup Qualifiers in Vietnam next month.

Bangladesh will play against hosts Vietnam as well as Syria, Bhutan and Guam in that qualifying campaign, with 10 group winners and five best

runners-up teams slated to qualify for the final round.

Maruful feels that he would get more time for that competition, hence he is setting the target high. "We will get more time to prepare for that tournament. Our target will be to qualify for the final round," the coach said. "We always do well at youth level and the teams like Syria and Vietnam are only mid-tier teams in Asia. So we can definitely target the final round."



Taskin on red-ball track, Shakib available

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are awaiting key returnees to the Test outfit ahead of the Pakistan series in mid-August with ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan confirmed as available while pacer Taskin Ahmed, who had decided to sit out Tests owing to injury issues at the beginning of the year, is likely to return to the red-ball format.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus addressed the media yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium and gave updates on players returning from injuries or otherwise.

"He [Shakib] is available [for the Pakistan Tests]. He has talked with me, the board, and also the selectors," Jalal told reporters yesterday.

Shakib, currently playing the Global T20 League in Canada, will either return to the country before the series or join the team directly in Pakistan. Shakib has played in just four Tests in the last two years and questions regarding his availability for the longer format keep resurfacing ahead of any Test series.

"If time is not available then he will move directly from Dubai to join the side [in Pakistan]. Or else, as he has been told, he will join the side in Dhaka and go through one or two days of practice before departure," Jalal added.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bangladesh will play two Tests in Pakistan on August 21 and September 30. Keeping the series in mind, six national team stars have already been named in the 'A' team's tour of Pakistan -- preceding the national team's Test assignment in Pakistan -- to play the first four-day fixture on August 10.

Meanwhile, Taskin Ahmed began training in Mirpur and also gave a fitness test on Tuesday.

Taskin had issues bowling in red-ball cricket owing to a shoulder injury and had decided to sit out Tests. He played his last Test in June last year although he had continued in other formats, featuring for the Tigers in the T20 World Cup in the USA and the West Indies in June. On Tuesday, he bowled with a red ball during an individual practice session.

Taskin has been given the green light to continue on the trajectory to return to Tests by physios following the assessment but a final call is to be made by BCB chief physician Debashish Chowdhury when he sees the reports.

"Taskin had an assessment yesterday [Tuesday]. He is being considered for red-ball. It will be the selectors' call," Jalal confirmed to the media on Taskin being considered for Pakistan Tests.

Meanwhile, another Test prospect Ebadot Hossain had been sitting on the sidelines since an ACL injury last year in July saw him miss out both the ODI and T20I World Cups.

"Ebadot is recovering. We are in communication with him and he has recovered about 70 percent. Hopefully, he will recover more in the next two months. He is still in rehabilitation," Jalal said.