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PHOTO: BAF

Gold cannot gloss over archery's shortcomings

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh claimed one gold and two silver medals in the compound events of the Asia Cup Archery Stage-2 in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, yesterday. The tally looked respectable, but the results exposed a gap between medal returns and performance, with several of Asia's strongest teams absent.

The compound women's team of Bonna Akter, Sreeporna Bishwas and Kulsum Akter Mone beat Kazakhstan 230-220 to win gold -- their first in the tournament -- needing just two victories in a four-team competition.

Bangladesh's other two teams fell to Kazakhstan in the finals. The compound men's trio of Himu Bachhar, Toriqul Islam and Newas Ahmed Rakib lost 230-224, while the mixed pair of Bonna and Rakib went down 153-142. Both settled for silver in six-team events.

South Korea, India, China, Japan, Malaysia and Chinese Taipei were among the major Asian archery nations missing from the competition. Against a field featuring improving sides such as Kazakhstan, Iraq, Syria, Sri Lanka, Palestine and Afghanistan, Bangladesh had a chance to dominate the compound events. Instead, the men's and mixed teams fell short at the final hurdle.

The results raise questions about whether Bangladesh are getting sufficient returns from year-round training and substantial investment under a foreign coach.

Bangladesh archers have previously shown they can compete at a higher level. Ruman Sana and Sagor Islam qualified for the Olympics on merit, while other archers won recognition at the World Archery Championships, World Cups and Asian Archery Championships. But several leading archers, including Ruman, Diya Siddique and Hakim Ahmed Rubel, have since migrated to the United States amid limited prospects at home.

Their departures have left a gap that newcomers have struggled to fill. Compound archers such as Himu and Newas Rakib offer promise, but their defeats in Iraq underline the difficulty of turning potential into results when medals are at stake.

Archery remains one of Bangladesh's potential routes to an Olympic medal. Realising that ambition, however, requires more than favourable draws and occasional podium finishes. Retaining established talent, building viable careers for newcomers and delivering in international finals are essential to sustained progress.

Bangladesh will contest three more finals in the recurve events today.



Six national records fell on the opening day of the Max Group 35th National Swimming, Diving and Water Polo Competition 2026 in Mirpur yesterday, with Bangladesh Navy's Samiul Islam Rafi setting a new 50m backstroke mark of 25.81 seconds, bettering his previous record of 26.05.

**Read full story on The Daily Star's website

Shadman's 'realisation' on cracking conversion code

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

The surface for the opening day of the first Test between Bangladesh and West Indies was not conducive to fluent batting. For a top-order batter, it demanded unwavering concentration, with deliveries rising sharply from a length or keeping low. Bangladesh opener Shadman Islam negotiated the challenge with patience and perseverance, remaining unbeaten on 99 before bad light brought an early end to the day's play. Movement and spin were also on offer, but the left-hander held his nerve to take control of his innings rather than let the conditions dictate terms.

Since scoring a century against Zimbabwe last April, Shadman had gone 17 innings without reaching the three-figure mark, managing four fifties and twice missing out on centuries against Ireland. His struggles, particularly away from home, had raised concerns over his place in the side and Bangladesh's World Test Championship (WTC) campaign.

Yet Shadman remains the seventh-highest run-scorer among Test openers over the past three years, with 1,115 runs. His problem, however, has been converting starts into big scores.

Yashasvi Jaiswal leads the run-getters with 2,346 runs, six centuries and 12 fifties. Ben Duckett has a conversion rate of 38.5 per cent, while Tom Latham's stands at 50 per cent. Shadman, by contrast, has a conversion rate of just 11.1 per cent, with one century and eight fifties over the same period.

Bangladesh batting coach Mohammad Salahuddin believes Shadman may be recognising the need to turn his starts into bigger scores.

"Yes, I think he may be realising it himself or maybe he has talked to others about it. His conversion rate is not really that high. He hit dominating fifties in many innings but he could not make them longer. Maybe there was an issue with the process," Salahuddin said after the day's play.

The coach hopes the innings will help the left-hander develop a better understanding of how to build on promising starts.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

"I think this innings will help him and I think he is finding out for himself what he should be doing at that time. I hope what I am saying is that this innings will teach him a lot. It will teach him a lot of things," he added.

Judgement and patience were crucial throughout the day. Shadman rotated the strike with 38 singles, collected nine twos and struck 10 boundaries when opportunities arose. His priority, however, was to minimise risk against both pace and spin.

"Sometimes we may play risky shots or there may be tough periods where we may play loose shots. But I think he assessed the wicket, overcame that difficult time and took the innings under his control. It's been a while I have seen an innings like that from him," Salahuddin said.

"I think he worked on it and that's why the innings got bigger," he added.

For Shadman, the challenge now is to carry that approach forward. His unbeaten 99 could prove a valuable lesson in managing difficult periods and converting promising starts into hundreds, provided he can replicate the discipline in the innings to come.

"I think there is something for bowlers here, and they can get a lot of help if they bowl well. I think our batters handled the conditions quite well, though our top order could have done a little better. Had we been able to handle the initial period, I think we could have been in a better position. However, I would say that being three wickets down at the end of the day is probably a decent position for us. But I would say that drama could unfold in this Test at any moment."

Bangladesh batting coach
MOHAMMAD SALAHUDDIN

"Spin is going to play a very important role in deciding who wins the series. I guess the outcome of the series will depend on who bats the best and who plays spin the best. So, as a team, we've got to be disciplined in both batting and bowling. Simple as that."

West Indies spinner
JOMEL WARRICAN



PHOTO: REUTERS

Fleetwood shoot Gunners down

STAR SPORTS DESK

Fleetwood Town pulled off one of the biggest upsets in Carabao Cup history, dumping Premier League champions Arsenal out on penalties to reach the quarterfinals.

Ranked 84 places below the Gunners in the football pyramid, Fleetwood -- currently 18th in League Two, the fourth division of English football -- stunned Mikel Arteta's side when Aaron Loupalo-Bi struck in the 21st minute. Viktor Gyokeres equalised after the break, but Arsenal wasted chance after chance before teenager Max Dowman was sent off in the 86th minute for kicking out at Harrison Neal.



Jay Lynch then denied Ben White and Martin Odegaard late on to force a shootout, where he saved Bruno Guimaraes' spot-kick before Conor Haughey converted the winner to spark wild celebrations at Highbury Stadium.

Fans stormed the pitch, players swore in post-match interviews and Fleetwood boss Matt Lawlor fought back tears.

Arsenal had arrived to a welcome of flames and fireworks, but a drone halted play early on, delaying the restart by eight minutes. Despite making nine changes, Arteta's side managed just one goal from 26 shots and 59 touches in the Fleetwood box.

Dooley adds defensive cover amid injury concerns

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh head coach Thomas Dooley has called up defenders Tajuddin and Abdullah Omar for the ongoing preparation camp ahead of the SAFF Championship, seeking cover amid fitness concerns over Bishwanath Ghosh and Topu Barman who made it to the 28-member preliminary squad.

"We could add another two players as we had some injuries," Dooley told reporters before yesterday's training session at the National Stadium. "[Bishwanath] He is very important for us but we have to be careful if he



pulls his hamstring again."

The US-German coach indicated that Tajuddin and Omar could make the 23-member final squad if they impress in training. Dooley also pushed back against a recent report suggesting he did not trust his players, urging the media to focus on the team's preparations rather than negative narratives.

"If I'm asked a question, can we win against Bhutan without Hamza? Yeah, of course we can. And I trust my players.

"We have to perform every single time ," Dooley said, adding that he had told players and staff he did not want to "deal with anything that is negative".

WHAT TO WATCH

T Sports
Bangladesh vs West Indies
1st Test, Day 2
Live from 9:30 am
Pakistan ODI Tri-Series
England vs Sri Lanka
Live from 2:00 pm
NCL GT20
Live from 8:00 pm

Star Sports Network
Nepal Premier League
Live from 5:30 pm

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