



Mahedi Hasan spun Dhaka Platoon to a 61-run victory over Rangpur Rangers under lights in the Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Mahedi initiated Rangpur's early collapse removing both openers -- Mohammad Naim and Shane Watson -- in the first over and finished with figures of 3-13 as Rangpur were all out for 84 in reply to Dhaka's 145.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Sabbir dims his own shine

SPORTS REPORTER

Since his entry into international cricket in 2014, Sabbir Rahman's talent has never been in doubt. The right-hander's cricketing ability was once again showcased during Cumilla Warriors' Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) encounter against Khulna Tigers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

However, Sabbir's 39-ball 62 could only add to his woes as even after such a brilliant knock, Cumilla faltered and suffered a 34-run loss. The right-hander has only himself to blame for not being able to see his side through. The 28-year-old looked elegant and did everything right -- pacing his innings brilliantly as he smashed seven fours and two maximums at a strike rate of 158.97 while chasing a challenging 180-run target -- till he succumbed to his own temper and saw all his efforts go in vain.

Although the scoreboard shows that it was Mohammad Amir who had Sabbir caught during a crucial phase of the chase and changed the momentum of the game, it was rather Sabbir who scripted his own downfall and saw his team suffer for his it.

Moments after being involved in a verbal spat with Amir, Sabbir scooped the left-arm for a boundary through fine leg in the penultimate delivery of the 15th over. That boundary not only ensured Cumilla were on course to the target, needing 50 off 31 deliveries and six wickets in hand, but was also a good cricketering reply to what was a delivery deserving of the outcome. Sabbir, who looked quite animated and involved in frequent verbal exchanges with the bowler throughout the over, also tried to follow up his boundary with another one. But this time, he was taken at square leg by Rilee Rossouw, sparking jubilation among Khulna players.

Even after throwing his wicket away, Sabbir was not done with Amir. He was still expressive and tried to exchange a stare and words with Amir before leaving the field but the smirk on Amir's face indicated that the bowler had won the battle for his side this time.



Sabbir was recalled to the eleven after being dropped in the previous game for poor form. It could have been a strong statement if he kept his emotions in control and deliver a win. Cumilla captain Dawid Malan mentioned during the post-match conference that while it was a brilliant knock, Sabbir would be disappointed for giving up from such a good position.

"I think as batsman in general, you get in, you want to finish games or win games, that is what you judge yourself on, not just the number of runs you score, you judge yourself on the number of wins or contribution you have to winning games. I think he probably would be disappointed that he did not bat that little bit longer, but he played a hell of a knock," said Malan.

Instead of making a strong statement upon his return, Sabbir -- who has been sanctioned for off-field disciplinary breaches in the past -- provided evidence of Cumilla coach Otis Gibson's words a day before. "I don't know [why Sabbir is not scoring], he does well in practice. But in the middle... I think sometimes he lacks in clear thinking."

That is an unfortunate statement about someone almost in his sixth year of international cricket.

Frylinck advances Khulna's cause

SPORTS REPORTER

Sabbir Rahman scored his first fifty of the season after the tactical change to promote the struggling batsman to open the innings, but it did not help Cumilla Warriors in the crucial Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) encounter as Khulna Tigers registered a convincing 34-run win in the days' first game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Khulna's South African seamer Robbie Frylinck made the difference with figures of five wickets for 16 four overs -- his second five-wicket haul of the BPL. It was also the second-best bowling figures in the ongoing BBPL and helped bundle Cumilla out for 145 runs in their chase of 180.

Sabbir, who was dropped in the previous game after a series of failures, was the only highlight for Cumilla with the bat but his effort eventually went in vain.

With six wins in 10 games, Khulna took one step further to a play-offs spot while Cumilla's fifth loss in 11 games sees them see them needing a win in their last game against the same opposition today to have a chance of qualifying.

Opening for the first time this season, Sabbir was compact while at the same time playing some delightful strokes that kept Cumilla in the hunt.

However, early blows such as the

losses of opener Stiaan van Zyl and (12) in-form skipper Dawid Malan (1) meant they were behind the game from the start. Sabbir then paired up with Soumya Sarkar and added 51 for the third wicket before the latter departed in the twenties once more.

Sabbir went on to register his fifty off 33 balls as Cumilla were

still eyeing a win as they needed 72 off 41 balls.

But the hot-tempered cricketer seemed to lose his cool after engaging in a verbal spat with Khulna's Pakistani seamer Mohammad Amir after hitting him for a four in the 15th over and was caught off the very next ball for 62 off 39 balls with seven fours and

SCORES IN BRIEF

KHULNA TIGERS: 179 for 2 in 20 overs (Najmul 38, Mehedi 39, Rossouw 71 not out, Mushfiqur 24 not out; Soumya 1-39, Wiese 1-30)

CUMILLA WARRIORS: 145 all out in 18.2 overs (Sabbir 62, Soumya 22, Yasir 27; Amir 2-18, Frylinck 5-16, Shahidul 2-34)

Result: Khulna won by 34 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Robbie Frylinck



All-rounder Robbie Frylinck (R), who bagged a fiver, helped Khulna Tigers to a 34-run win against Cumilla Warriors in a BBPL match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

two sixes.

Cumilla were still in the hunt, needing fifty off the last five overs, but it was Frylinck who picked up wickets at regular intervals to take Khulna to a rather easy win.

Earlier, Khulna made a solid start after being asked to bat as Nazmul Hossain Shanto and Mehedi Hasan Miraz adding 71 runs in the opening stand.

Both Shanto and Mehedi departed for thirties, after which South African Rilee Rossouw continued his brilliant form and struck a blistering unbeaten 71 off 36 balls, which was studded with four sixes and six fours.

Rossouw, along with skipper Mushfiqur Rahim, added an unbeaten 85 for the third wicket with the latter hitting an unbeaten 24 off 17 balls to post a challenging total.



Khulna Tigers' Rilee Rossouw replicated his favourite footballer, Liverpool forward Sadio Mane's celebration after taking the catch of Sabbir Rahman during their BBPL fixture in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

Tests now a priority on Pakistan tour?

SPORTS REPORTER

While uncertainty still looms over Bangladesh's tour of Pakistan, the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) outlook may be changing after the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) communicated that they were keen to host Bangladesh for the Test series first with the T20s rescheduled for a later date.

BCB President Nazmul Hassan informed reporters yesterday about PCB's stance of prioritising the Test series.

"A full series was scheduled and we previously let them know that the team wants to play the T20 series and we were discussing the possibility of whether the Test series could be rescheduled for a later time.

"They [PCB] are more interested in the Tests since it's the [World] Test Championship of the ICC. They have informed that Tests are more important and it would not be difficult to reschedule the T20 series for a later date," Hassan said.

Bangladesh were originally scheduled to play three T20s and two Tests in Pakistan in January-February 2020 but the BCB had communicated that they did not want to play both series on one tour and wanted to play only the T20s.

The BCB president had later thrown the tour into doubt when he said that they were only going to go to Pakistan if they could form a side of considerable strength, adding that many of the players and management personnel did not want

to tour Pakistan for a longer period and preferred a short tour.

A T20 series would take a week to complete but a two-match Test series would have to be spread over two weeks. After PCB's latest communication of intent, the ball is in BCB's court and Hassan said that a decision will be given today.

The president once again met with a few senior players yesterday in order to update them on the scenario. A number of players have reportedly already consented for the tour.

"We have gotten the reports from [government] agencies concerned and some discussions are left but my understanding is that we will be able to reach a decision tomorrow.

"Mushfiqur did not show any interest to go from the very first moment. The other players wanted a short tour," he said.

"We haven't taken a decision yet and we let all the players know today [Wednesday] and we are hoping that we will be able to make a decision tomorrow [Thursday]," he said, before adding that a one-off Test series works in BCB's favour since the duration of the tour will not become an issue.

The ongoing World Test Championship -- for which series of two Tests is a minimum -- was still a concern since not playing the series could mean losing points.

"We have to see what will happen if we go or if we don't. Our concern right now is what will happen in case we don't go. We're not clear since the Test Championship is ICC's."

Warne's 'Baggy Green' crosses AUD 500,000

Shane Warne's Baggy Green, which the spin legend had put on auction has crossed AUD 500,000, with two days still remaining for the bidding. The auction is being held to raise funds for the bushfire that has hit large parts of Australia.

Apart from Warne, Australian fast bowling great Jeff Thomson too has decided to auction his Baggy Green.

"I don't have much of my memorabilia left, so these two items are quite rare and special," Thomson was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au. --AGENCIES

Green banned for illegal bowling action

Sydney Thunder off-spinner Chris Green was Wednesday banned from bowling for three months after being found to have an illegal action.

The 26-year-old was reported by the umpires after Thunder's Twenty20 Big Bash League clash with the Melbourne Stars in Sydney on January 2. --AFP

Zimbabwe to host SL for two Tests

Zimbabwe have announced a hastily arranged tour by Sri Lanka

for two Test matches to be played in Harare this month as coach Lalchand Rajput says they are ready for a "new beginning".

The first game at the Harare Sports Club will be played from Jan. 19-23 and the second from Jan. 27-31, and represents a return to Test cricket for Zimbabwe for the first time since their tour of Bangladesh in November 2018.

Zimbabwe are not part of the on-going ICC Test Championship and so no points will be up for grabs in the series.

Zimbabwe have confirmed that all-rounder Sean Williams will be their new Test captain following the retirement of Hamilton Masakadza, who has since moved into the role of director of cricket. --REUTERS

Bangabandhu school cricket from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Bangabandhu School Cricket Tournament-2020 kicks off in Rajshahi today to mark the nationwide celebration of the year of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the nation.

Cricketers from 32 schools of Rajshahi are taking part in the tournament to be held in T20

format at the AHM Kamaruzzaman Memorial Divisional Stadium and women's sports complex.

Rajshahi Mayor and the tournament's main patron AHM Khairuzzaman Liton opened the tournament yesterday.

Former national cricket captain Khaled Masud Pilot, who is also the convener of the tournament committee, chaired the function.



Windies ease to victory

APP, Bridgetown

Opening batsman Evin Lewis fell agonisingly short of a century as his undefeated 99 helped West Indies to cruise to a five-wicket win over Ireland in the first one-day international at Kensington Oval on Tuesday.

The 28-year-old left-hander made his runs off 99 balls with 13 boundaries and two sixes.

After dismissing Ireland for just 180, the West Indies reached their target with 100 balls to spare.

For Lewis, it was his eighth ODI half-century but he made a gallant attempt to go to what would have been a third century.

With the scores level, he launched Barry McCarthy over extra cover but his hopes of a six to end the game in style fell just inches short.

SCORES IN BRIEF

IRELAND: 180 all out in 46.1 overs (Tucker 31, Adair 29; Joseph 4-32, Cottrell 2-39, Joseph 2-30)

WEST INDIES: 184 for 5 in 33.2 overs (Lewis 99 not out, King 20; Simi 2-44)

Result: West Indies won by five wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Alzarri Joseph