



Kings of Khulna opener Imrul Kayes launches into a slog-sweep during his sparkling 71 in the Destiny Group NCL T20s game against Cyclones of Chittagong at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Kings, Blazers ride high

SPORTS REPORTER



It was all about one-sided affairs in the Destiny Group National Cricket League T20s at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday as

Kings of Khulna and Barisal Blazers posted easy wins against their respective rivals.

Cyclones of Chittagong had hogged the spotlight before the kick off especially after roping in Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar but their third straight defeat not only made sure of the early departure of their Pakistan star but also all but confirmed their early exit from the tournament. Mathematically, however there is still a slim chance for Cyclones of Chittagong to qualify for the last four.

Kings of Khulna rode on Imrul Kayes' whirlwind 71 to bounce back strongly from their first match defeat as they inflicted a 78-run defeat on Cyclones of Chittagong in the day's second encounter in Mirpur.

National opener Imrul along with Sri Lankan Mahela Udawatta got off to a flying start as the opening pair added 40 runs in 3.4 overs before the latter was dismissed for 27 runs as Kings of Khulna put on 180 for seven, so far the highest total in the tournament.

Mahela smashed three fours and two sixes during his 12-ball 27 while Imrul cleared the fence thrice and hit five boundaries during his 48-ball 71 to be adjudged man of the match.

Occasional spinner Faisal Hossain suddenly brought his side back in contention by taking three wickets in an over but Farhad Hossain

took away the initiative by whacking two big sixes to make a 5-ball 15 while Abdur Razzak added 19 off 14 balls that contained one four and a six.

In three games, Shoaib got his only success when Shakib Al Hasan played a scoop only to reach the safe hands of Nafis Iqbal at short fine leg.

After Imrul it was Sri Lankan pacer Nuwan Zoysa who tore apart the Chittagong batting line-up by taking four wickets for 26 runs in their allotted four overs as the pre-tournament favourites finished their 20-over quota for 102-7.

Zoysa started the carnage by removing danger man Tamim Iqbal in the very first ball and Cyclones of Chittagong failed to recover from the early jolt. Number seven Nasir Hossain was the top scorer with an unbeaten 24.

The first match at Mirpur turned into a dull and drab affair when Rajshahi Rangers lost their composure after two consecutive wins to put up a fragile 115 runs before being bundled out in 19.1 overs.

Spinner Mahmudul Hasan, the all-rounder who led the Under-19 team in the recently concluded World Cup in New Zealand, caused the main damage by taking three wickets for 16 runs in four overs and later he was adjudged man of the match. Syed Rasel took two wickets for 24 runs.

The only resistance came from Australian Aiden Blizard who hit three fours and as many sixes to make a 26-ball 39.

Barisal Blazers reached the target comfortably with 118 for three with 23 balls to spare.

Nazimuddin (33), Bhanuka Rajapaksha (30)

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Rafique conquers Sultans

SPORTS REPORTER



Even at the wrong side of 40, Mohammad Rafique is turning in one good performance after another in the local scene. His latest exploit

took the Sultans of Sylhet yesterday in the Destiny Group National Cricket League T20s. Rafique claimed four important wickets to drive the Dhaka Dynamites to a 40-run victory at the BKSP in Savar.

The Dynamites notched up their second win in the competition as they rolled over the Sylhet side for just 93 runs in 17.3 overs after they themselves made 133-6 from their 20 overs, thanks to a 76-run sixth wicket stand between

POINTS TABLE

Team	P	W	L	T	Pts
Dhaka Dynamites	2	2	0	0	4
Rajshahi Rangers	3	2	1	0	4
Sultans Of Sylhet	2	1	1	0	2
Barisal Blazers	2	1	1	0	2
Kings Of Khulna	2	1	1	0	2
Cyclones Of Chittagong	3	0	3	0	0

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Mehrab Hossain and Jeewan Mendis.

Rafique opened the Dynamites' bowling and with his second delivery, removed the Sultans' opener Nazmus Sadat for a duck. In his next over, Rafique clean bowled Forhad Reza (7) and Dhaka were right on top after making a modest score.

Rafique's twin strikes helped ease the pressure on the other bowlers and Shahadat Hossain obliged, taking out Sultans' Pakistani recruit Faisal Iqbal (3).

Sylhet's icon player Alok Kapali steadied the ship and kept the chase going with a calm 33. The right-hander added 42 for the fourth wicket with big-hitter Nazmul Hossain Milon, who made 21 with a four and a six, but as soon as the pair fell, Sylhet slipped badly.

Mohammad Ashraf, who had earlier suffered a first-ball duck, took three wickets while Shahadat ended up with two scalps. Tapoish Baisya picked up one wicket.

Man-of-the-match Rafique came back to wrap up the Sultans with his third and fourth wickets as Sylhet suffered their first defeat in the tournament after they defeated the Cyclones of Chittagong on Monday.

The Dhaka bowlers actually made the win look a lot easier for Dhaka when it wasn't so.

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MSC resolve row with African trio

SPORTS REPORTER

Nigerian trio Alamu Bukola, Dami Emmanuel and Emeke Christian returned to the Mohammedan Sporting Club fold after being promised clearance of their wages within the next two weeks.

The first two took to the field against Arambagh KS in the ongoing Bangladesh League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Mohammedan SC were asked to pay at least two months' wages.

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KKR on the brink

SPORTS REPORTER

Chennai Super Kings batsman Suresh Raina blasted unbeaten 78 in half the number of balls to all but end Kolkata Knight Riders' interests in the current IPL season while keeping his team very much on the chase for a semi-final place. Riding on the 78 from Raina and an unbeaten 50 from Murali Vijay, Chennai raced past Kolkata's modest total of 139 with nine wickets in hand and 39 balls to spare. The only wicket to fall was that of Mathew Hayden for nought in the first over. Raina's 78 consisted three sixes and 11 boundaries while Vijay's fifty had two sixes and four fours in it.

But their work was made all the more easy earlier in the day with a man-of-the-match performance by Murali Vijay.

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CLUB CUP HOCKEY

Usha depose Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Usha Krira Chakra staged a fabulous fightback to knock out defending champions Abahani through a 5-2 drubbing in the second semifinal of the Dhaka Bank Club Cup Hockey at the Maulana

Bhahani Hockey Stadium yesterday. Usha will meet Mohammedan Sporting Club, who thrashed Sonali Bank 8-1 on the first semifinal, in the final on April 16.

Krishna Kumar bagged three goals for Usha while Maksud Alam and Mostafizur

Rahman got the other two after the young Abahani brigade had raced to a shock 2-0 lead within 17 minutes of the first half. But for a couple of minutes in which Abahani dominated, Usha were in command for most part of the game and enjoyed the lion's share of support from the stands too.

After the first quarter in which no team asserted any considerable authority on the match, Abahani took the lead in the 15th minute from the first penalty corner of the match through Jamil Bin Talib. Jamil had taken the corner himself and was at the right place in front of goal when Asaduzzaman Chandan's shot rebounded off the goalkeeper for an easy finish. If that wasn't shocking enough for the favourites, the bewildered Usha players fell further behind two minutes later when Niloy scored an opportunistic goal when he was left unmarked inside the box. Moshir Rahman Biplob's free-hit from the right-hand corner of the box was calmly slotted into the net by Niloy. But that was as good as things got for Abahani.

Usha started pressing and threatened the Abahani goal a couple of times before skipper Maksud made it 1-2 striking from an unmarked position on the 23rd minute. Krishna scored the equaliser seven minutes later. It was a beautiful goal that started with a darting run from Moududur Rahman Shuvo towards the box. Shuvo

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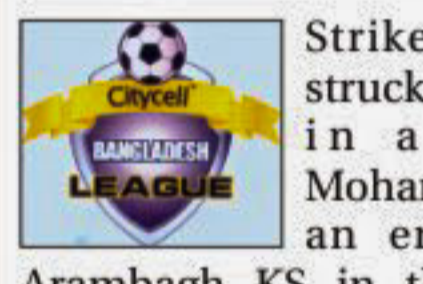


PHOTO: STAR

THE GREEN LANTERN: Usha Krira Chakra's Krishna Kumar is just too happy to score his third goal against Abahani in the Dhaka Bank Club Cup hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhahani Hockey Stadium yesterday. Usha will meet Mohammedan in the final on Friday.

Emily goes goal-crazy

SPORTS REPORTER



Striker Zahid Hasan Emily struck a mind boggling five goals in a match to power Mohammedan Sporting Club to an emphatic 7-0 win over

Arambagh KS in their Bangladesh League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Apart from Emily's brilliance, winger Nasir Chowdhury and striker Alamu Bukola Olaleken netted a goal apiece in a completely one-sided match.

The unique feat also took Emily joint highest in the scorers list along with Abahani striker Sherif din Mohammad and Sheikh Russel forward Samad Omari on 12 goals.

And upon scoring his third goal, Emily became the only player in the history of the professional football league to have scored hat-tricks in all three editions.

It was good news all around for the Black and Whites as the Nigerian duo Bukola and defender Dami Emmanuel both started after

being left out of the team for the last two matches over a row related to unpaid wages.

However, despite this record achievement for Emily, Mohammedan still trail leaders Abahani by four points and ultimately Emily's feat might be the only consolation the giants draw from this edition of the league.

Mohammedan, however did not start brightly and showed a lack of combination initially with the inclusion of seemingly unfit Bukola and Dami. They had to wait for over half-an-hour to open the floodgates, although they should realistically have taken the lead in the first six minutes with Nasir and Ariful Islam spoiling sitters.

After having missed almost an open net, Emily scored his first in the 37th minute when a ricochet came his way outside the box and he cleverly chipped the ball over goalkeeper Mitul Hasan to give Mohammedan a deserved lead.

One minute from half-time, Emily being set up by a Bukola cross, rose high to thump a header home. The fleet-footed forward completed his hat-trick two minutes into the second

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PHOTO: STAR

EMILY ON FIRE: Zahid Hasan Emily of Mohammedan Sporting Club rounds off Arambagh goalkeeper (R) Mitul Hasan to score the fourth of his five goals during their Bangladesh League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Flintoff not yet fit

Cricket

AFP, London

Andrew Flintoff admits he still does not know when he will make his long-awaited comeback from knee surgery.

Flintoff has been troubled by knee problems for years and retired from Test cricket after helping England win the Ashes against Australia last year.

But the all-rounder still hopes to play one-day matches for his country and had an operation on his left knee soon after the Ashes triumph in a bid to cure the latest problem.

However, initial hopes that he could be fit to play for Lancashire at the start of this season had to be revised following further surgery in January.

Now the 32-year-old hopes to be batting again in practice this month or early in May, while his updated timetable of recovery

remains to play again for his county by the end of July, with a view to returning in limited-overs cricket for England in due course.

Speaking at Lancashire's media day on Monday, Flintoff said: "It's going all right. The first five weeks since the latest operation have been just resting, letting it all settle down."

"The past three or four weeks I've been able to work pretty hard, cycling, swimming, kayaking. I've got a bit of strength back in my legs."

"I've not got a date that I can just pull out of the air. But after the last operation we said five or six months, which is going to take us to the end of July, early August."

"So that's the only time frame. I've not done any cricket yet but over the next few weeks I'll get a bat back in my hand."

Despite his injury woes, Flintoff still believes he can recapture his best form when he finally gets back in action, even though he admits he has feared at times that his career could be over.

"Before every operation, it does cross your

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WOMEN'S CRICKET

Ansar cruise, Abahani just make it

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani came up trumps in the battle of bowlers when they defeated Azad Sporting Club by eight runs in the Women's Club Cup cricket tournament at the Gulshan Youth ground yesterday.

In a low-scoring affair, the Dhanmondi giants batted first and were bowled out for just 85 runs in 22.4 overs. Azad's Bristy Roy and Champa Chakma took four wickets each.

Abahani opener Montaha Khatun struck a patient 35 off 63 balls with the help of five boundaries as all the batswomen around her perished.

In reply, Azad Sporting made a meal of the small target. They were eventually bowled out for 77 runs from 32 overs with Irin Sultana scoring 34 off 66 balls.

Abahani's Supriya Rani and Subarna Islam took three wickets each with Subarna picking up the player-of-the-match award for her excellent performance.

In the other match of the day, Ansar & VDP crushed Kalabagan Krira Chakra by ten wickets at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Batting first, Kalabagan made just 77 before being all

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Barca coaches due in May

SPORTS REPORTER

Barcelona's coaching staffs of the youth wing are scheduled to come to Bangladesh to conduct a three-day seminar for the local coaches as well as the budding booters this May.

YKK, a garments accessories company, is bringing the Barcelona coaching staff under its corporate social responsibility. They did a similar thing in 2008 when they brought the AS Roma coaching staff to Bangladesh.

The coaches will first conduct a one-day seminar for the local coaches on May 6 and some 30 coaches including all BFF-appointed coaches will take part and on May 7 and 8, some 250 budding booters aged between 10-12 will learn from them some tricks of the trade.

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DAY'S EVENT

THURSDAY
NCL T20s
Rajshahi v Sylhet
Time: 1:00pm
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium

Dhaka v Khulna
Time: 5:20pm
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium

Chittagong v Barisal
Time: 10:30am
Venue: BKSP-2

Bangladesh League
Sheikh Russel v Ctg Abahani
Time: 4:30pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium