



PHOTO: STAR

PICTURE PERFECT: Sultans of Sylhet's Alok Kapali executes a copybook square-drive during his match-winning knock of 62 against Rajshahi Rangers in an NCL T20s match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Kapali makes Sultans roar

SPORTS REPORTER



Alok Kapali reminded all of his class with an elegant half-century as the Sultans of Sylhet bounced back from their last match defeat with a 26-run victory over Rajshahi Rangers in the Destiny Group National Cricket League T20s at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The right-hander continued his good form in the competition and produced some eye-catching shots during his 38-ball 62 as the Sultans of Sylhet amassed 182 for six, the highest total in the tournament, in their share of 20 overs after deciding to bat first.

"I have a target with the tournament and so far I am happy with the way I batted in the last three games. I'm looking forward to getting back my place in the national side. There was a question that I was reluctant to join the national camp but I know why I did it. My health was the first priority," said Kapali, who failed to make it into the final squad for the upcoming ICC Twenty20 World Cup.

It was fantastic to watch the way the stylish batsman improvised, including a particular shot that he played over extra cover. He smashed three boundaries and a six over long on against pacer Mukter Ali

to secure 18 runs from the 18th over while Shafiqul Islam conceded 17 runs in the penultimate over following four boundaries from Kapali.

Sri Lankan Kaushalya Weeraratna set the tone as the opener came up with a blazing knock of 40 that came from 27 deliveries with three fours and two sixes.

The man-of-the-match award however went to Sylhet's spinner Farid Uddin Masud who relieved his team by removing two openers Australian Aiden Blizard (13) and Hannan (21) as they got off a flying start scoring 30 runs in 2.1 overs. Masud also dismissed dangerman Naeem Islam.

But number six batsman Shuvagoto Hom threw a real challenge to Sylhet before the right-hander fell victim to a run-out for a 24-ball 51 that saw two fours and four massive sixes. Rajshahi were restricted to 156 for eight.

His dismissal made sure Rajshahi suffer their second consecutive defeat in four games while Sultans of Sylhet secured their second win in three matches.

CYCLONES OF CHITTAGONG V BARISAL BLAZERS

Without their two Pakistani recruits Shoaib Akhter and Khuram Manzoor, the Cyclones of Chittagong bounced back strongly from their third straight defeat as they posted an easy eight-wicket victory over Barisal Blazers at BKSP.

After pacer Kazi Kamrul's four-wicket haul, Tamim Iqbal hit his second successive half-century to script a comfortable win. Kamrul claimed four wickets for 23 and left-arm spinner Enamul Haque picked up three for 15 as Barisal were bundled out for 92 runs.

Shahriar Nafees top scored with 30 off 33 balls with four boundaries.

In reply, Cyclones of Chittagong reached the target scoring 95 runs for two wickets in 13.5 overs thanks to Tamim who made unbeaten 65 off 51 balls that contained six fours and four sixes.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SULTANS OF SYLHET: 182-6 in 20 overs (Kaushalya 40, Dhiman 21, Kapali 62, Mashrafe 26, extras 4; Shuvo 3-33, Sanjamul 2-23).

RAJSHAHI RANGERS: 156-8 in 20 overs (Hannan 21, Nadif 31, Shuvagoto 51, extras 7; Masud 3-25, Mosharraf 3-23).

Result: Sultans of Sylhet won by 26 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Farid Uddin Masud.

BARISAL BLAZERS: 92 all out in 17.2 overs (Nafees 30, extras 6; Kamrul 4-23, Enamul 3-15).

CYCLONES OF CHITTAGONG: 95-2 in 13.5 overs (Tamim 65 not out, Aftab 15, extras 8; Zia 1-16).

Result: Cyclones of Chittagong won by eight wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Kazi Kamrul and Tamim Iqbal.

Dynamites blow up Kings

SPORTS REPORTER



Shamsur Rahman rode his luck to drive Dhaka Dynamites to a seven-wicket victory over the Kings of Khulna in the Destiny Group National Cricket League T20s at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The right-handed opener struck 51 off 52 balls as the Dynamites took only 18.5 overs to reach 127-3, in reply to Khulna's 124-8 from 20 overs, in a match discernable by alarmingly poor fielding.

Shamsur's charge down the wicket to Farhad Hossain should have been a good stumping by Kings' wicketkeeper Mohammad Mithun, but he failed to gather the ball at a stage when the match could have swayed either way. Next over, Shamsur skied Ilias Sunny but senior left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak dropped a sitter at short third-man.

Only a ball earlier, Razzak let a dab from Jeewan Mendis go through his legs and his day was summed up when he hurled one wide of both wicketkeeper and the left-handed Sri Lankan for five wides. It was shocking, especially coming from a seasoned campaigner like Razzak, who gave away 25 runs from his 3.5 overs.

Mendis and Shamsur added 80 for the third wicket after Dynamites captain Mohammad Ashraf fell to opposite number Shakib al Hasan for just 7. One-down Rumman Ahmed also failed to make an impression, going for just three.

After the 80-run stand was ended by a needless run-out, Dynamites' other Lankan import Milinda Siriwardana completed the formalities by hitting a boundary in the 19th over.

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Onus on MSC Club Cup final today

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club and Usha Krira Chakra will both be looking to recapture the title of the season's curtain-raising tournament when they lock horns in the final of the Dhaka Bank Club Hockey tournament today.

Mohammedan stormed to the final with a massive 8-1 thrashing of last year's runners-up Sonali Bank while Usha came from behind to also thrash holders Abahani 5-2 on way to the final, which gets underway at 3.30 pm at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

The Black and Whites, having shrugged off the failure of qualifying for last season's final, already proved their worth with superb performances. National striker Rasel Mahmud Jimmy and penalty corner specialist Mamunur Rahman Chayan are almost unstoppable in front of the opponents' goalpost, giving the Mohammedan faithful a lot of hope ahead of the big game.

No doubt the team management will be expecting another spirited performance like they displayed against Sonali Bank but nevertheless, they pin their hopes on Jimmy and Chayan along with veterans Isa Mia and Musa Mia.

"Individual skill is important, but it is a team game and the team spirit is the key to success,"

said Mohammedan coach Barkatullah Chapal yesterday.

"Confidence level of players are high after having thrashed Sonali in the convincing way and we are looking forward to repeating that performance against Usha and win the title," he added.

Mohammedan, who have a bunch of current and former national players, look the better side on paper than Usha. Chapal also admitted this fact but believed nothing will be achieved until the players could justify their worth on the field.

Ariful Islam Prince, Zahidul Islam Rajon and Sajjad John have been suffering from minor injuries but the coach is optimistic about their chances to play the final. However, MSC Hockey committee secretary Sajed AA Adel informed they are bringing Malaysian forward Chua Boon for the final as Boon was scheduled to arrive yesterday night.

Coach Chapal is also planning on how to stop opponents Usha, who staged a brilliant comeback against Abahani to reach the final after four seasons. Usha had however lifted a hat-trick of Premier League titles till last season.

Usha coach Jamal Haider also admitting Mohammedan is a better side, adding that they will try to put an end to their title drought in the Club Cup.

"Like Mohammedan we also have some

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PHOTO: STAR

Sheikh Russel's Moroccan recruits Samad Omari (R) and Salah Maslous (L) celebrate after their team's third goal against Chittagong Abahani in a Bangladesh League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Russel keep up chase

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Russel KC survived a scare in the second half before handing visitors Chittagong Abahani a 3-1 defeat in their home match of the Bangladesh League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Moroccan Salah Maslous, Jahidur Islam and Samad Omari struck one goal apiece for Russel while Mithun Chowdhury pulled one goal back, which was more entertaining in the second half with both sides putting up a show of attacking football.

It seemed that Russel thought they were going to win the game easily against a side, who suffered a 2-0 defeat to them in Chittagong. But their victory was not so easy and at once it seemed they were going to drop their first points in the second leg before surviving a few close calls to beat Chittagong Abahani.

Sheikh Russel looked determined to repeat the feat of their first meeting and came within a whisker of taking the lead inside 16 minutes but Rajon Miah failed to turn in a Salah Maslous corner from the top of the eight-yard box.

Chittagong Abahani also squandered a sitter with national striker Mithun Chowdhury driving a weak shot straight to goalkeeper Mamun

Khan in the 34th minute.

Sheikh Russel, however, were very unlucky not to get the lead soon after as an Aminul Islam strike off a Jamal Nakhle corner came off the post just one minute before the break.

After the resumption, both sides pressed hard for a lead and Russel came close twice with Rezaul Karim and Aminul sending chances wide and Salah finally broke the deadlock when a rebound off an Omari header came his way and the Moroccan winger chipped home from the edge of the box in the 58th minute.

But their joy lasted only two minutes as Abahani's national striker Mithun availing a cross from the right darted into the box to dodge the goalkeeper and level the margin.

In the 68th minute, Samir should have doubled the margin, but he drove an Abdullah Parvez left-side cross miles off the target when composure was needed to find the back of Abahani's net.

When it seemed that the match was going to head for a draw, defender Zahirul eased the pressure for Sheikh Russel after he volleyed in a cross from substitute Mobarak Hossain in the 80th minute.

Omari made the result safe after he was badly tackled by Jamiruddin inside the danger zone. The Moroccan made the result safe

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What to WATCH

Max & SuperSport2

Indian Premier League Kings XI Punjab v Deccan Chargers Live from 8:30pm

ESPN

Sportscentre India Sports News Live at 8:30pm

SuperSport7

Bundesliga Cologne v VfL Bochum Live from 12:30am (Saturday)

ATN Bangla

NCL T20s Chittagong v Dhaka Live from 2:00pm

Sylhet v Barisal Live from 6:00am

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Modis in IPL controversy

PTI, New Delhi

The controversy surrounding Indian Premier League (IPL) Kochi franchise took yet another political turn yesterday as Lalit Modi was accused of working under the pressure of Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi for taking away the bid to Ahmedabad.

Shashi Tharoor, the man at the centre of the controversy facing allegations of securing sweat equity for his friend Sunanda Pushkar from the Kochi team owners, expressed his readiness to make a statement in parliament after a second meeting in two days with Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee.

Kochi franchise spokesman Satyajit Gaikwad on Thursday brought Narendra Modi in the line of fire, saying the whole world knew about his nexus with Lalit Modi and

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WOMEN'S CLUB CUP CRICKET

BKSP, Abahani find it easy

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP and Abahani registered easy victories in the Women's Club Cup cricket tournament yesterday.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, the sports institute crushed Dhaka Wanderers Club by a whopping 156 runs while Abahani won by nine wickets against Kalabagan Krira Chakra at the Gulshan Youth ground.

Sanjida (43) and Nuzhat (51) were amongst the runs as BKSP posted 255 all out from 38.2 overs. The Wanderers' bowlers were also at fault, giving away 51 extras of which 39 were wides. Only Kamrunnahr started with the ball, taking four wickets for 48 runs.

Wanderers were bowled out for just 99 runs in reply, with Parvin scoring 31. BKSP's Dolly took three cheap wickets while Sumana took two.

Away in Gulshan, Abahani took 16.5 overs to overhaul Kalabagan's 90 runs with Montaha (35*) again making a good contribution. She shared an unbroken second wicket partnership of 80 runs with Suborna, who made 24. Nur Jahan took the only wicket to fall.

Earlier, Sharmin took 4 for 18 as Kalabagan were bowled out for 90 runs from 29.2 overs. Apart from Sharmin, Supriya took two wickets.

INTERFERENCE IN IPL

Tharoor in hot water

AFP, New Delhi

Indian minister and former high-flying UN official Shashi Tharoor was under pressure Wednesday to step down over a controversy involving the ownership of a new Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket team.

Junior Foreign Minister Tharoor has been in the eye of a storm since Sunday when news broke that a female friend -- said by Indian media to be his girlfriend -- had been granted a free stake in a new franchise of the glitzy IPL.

Tharoor had helped to put together the consortium that bought the Kochi team -- in Kerala, the state he represents in parliament -- and the opposition has alleged that the free stake worth 15 million dollars was a "consideration" for his services.

The main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party has demanded he resign and the Communist party echoed the call on Wednesday, urging the

54-year-old to step down until his name is cleared.

"The whole episode is getting murkier and murkier. Tharoor's continuation in the job has become untenable. He should quit," D. Raja, senior leader of the Communist Party of India told AFP.

The Congress party, which Tharoor joined in 2008, initially backed him, but has since fallen silent. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, a close ally, said during a visit to Washington that he is seeking details on the controversy.

The suave, debonair Tharoor, who spent almost three decades in the United Nations before quitting in 2007, was elected MP from Thiruvananthapuram, capital of southern Kerala state last year.

He has denied allegations of impropriety, saying he had "neither invested nor received a rupee for my mentorship of the team."

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ICC WORLD T20s Tigers to play 2 warm-up matches

ICC MEDIA RELEASE

The International Cricket Council (ICC) yesterday announced the schedule of warm-up matches to be played in the lead-up to the ICC World T20s to be staged in the West Indies from April 30 to May 16.

With just 16 days to go before the first match takes place in Guyana, the teams will play a series of warm-up matches. They will play their warm-ups from April 27 to 29 in Barbados, St Lucia and Guyana. Bangladesh will play two games against Barbados and England, both in Barbados, on April 27 and 28 respectively. However none of these matches will carry official Twenty20 International status.

Delhi sweat for victory

CRICINFO, Chennai

Chennai Super Kings were restricted to their lowest total of the Indian Premier League this season at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, and yet they threatened to defend it. On a pitch that offered bounce and sharp turn Delhi Daredevils lost three wickets for a song, before Gautam Gambhir and Mithun Manhas batted with determination to secure a valuable victory yesterday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 112 for 9 in 20 overs (Badrinath 30, Vijay 17, Bollinger 16 not out, Hussey 15, Raina 15, Nehra 3-26, Sehwaag 2-18)

DELHI DAREDEVILS: 113 for 4 in 18.4 overs (Gambhir 57 not out, Manhas 25 not out, Karthik 13; Bollinger 2-24)

Result: Delhi Daredevils won by 6 wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Gautam Gambhir.



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistani television artist Veena Malik talks with media after submitting a case against Mohammad Asif outside the police station in Lahore on Tuesday.

Veena files police case against Asif

PTI, Lahore

The financial feud between Mohammad Asif and his ex-girlfriend Veena Malik is getting nastier with the actress filing a police complaint against the Pakistani pacer for allegedly sending threatening messages.

"I have filed a complaint that Asif is sending me threatening messages. He has threatened to harm me if I don't stop pursuing my demand that he return the loan he has taken from me," Veena told PTI.

The feud over money matters between the two celebrities has snowballed into a major controversy with the Pakistan Cricket Board cautioning Asif to focus on his preparations for the Twenty20 World Cup.

Pakistan's Interior Minister

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