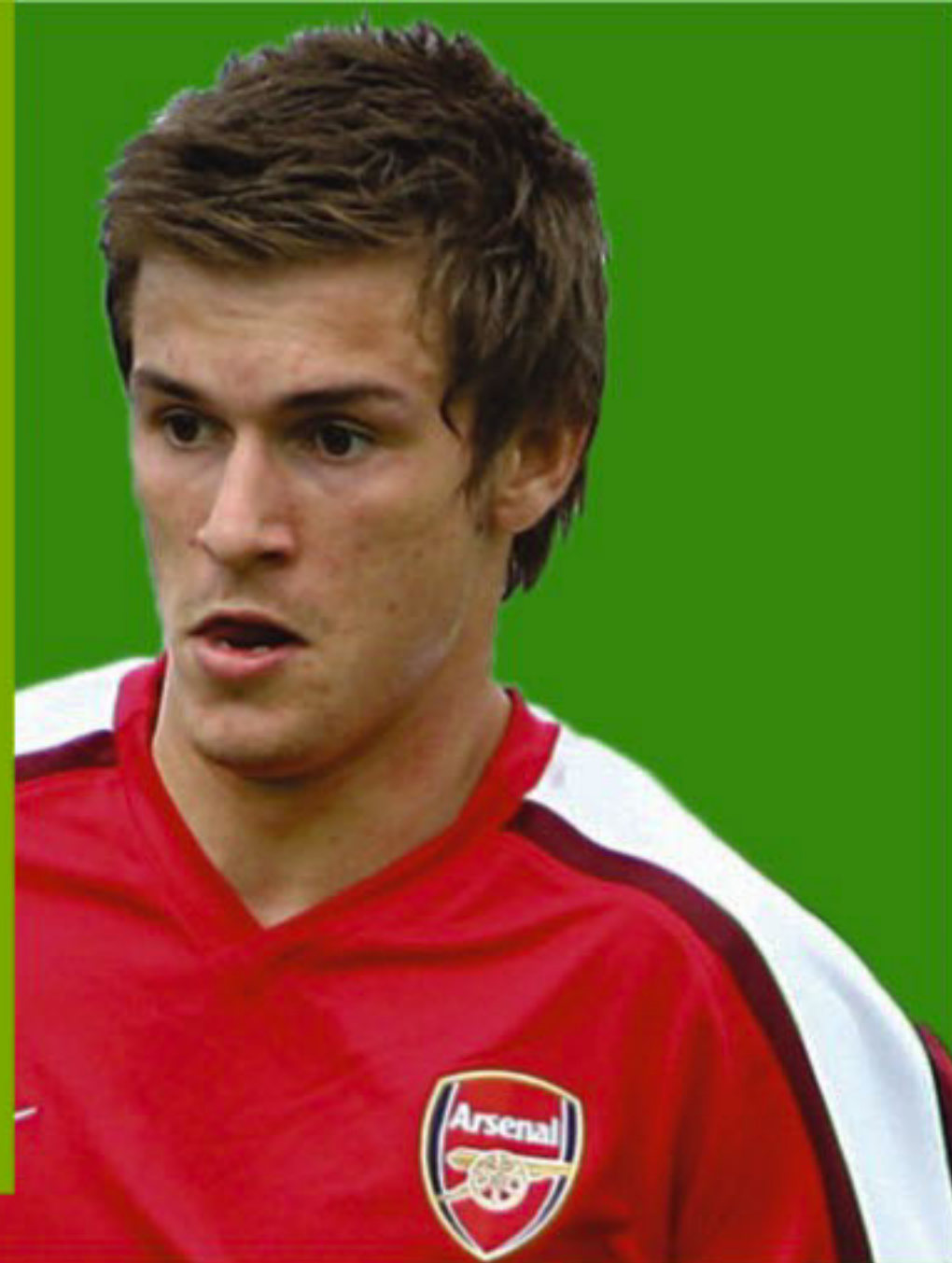


Star SPORT

Ramsey goals kill celebrity?

Osama Bin Laden, Steve Jobs, Muammar Gaddafi and, most recently, Whitney Houston have all coincidentally died in the days after a Ramsey goal for Arsenal. And now, the bizarre news team at Taiwan's NMAtv have given Ramsey's "kick of death" their animated treatment. In NMA's version of events, each person's death is literally caused by a football. They show Steve Jobs' life support machine getting smashed by one and Whitney Houston gets hit in the head while she takes pills on the edge of a bathtub. Poor taste or just NMA being NMA?



Khulna Royal Bengals captain Shakib Al Hasan (C) is mobbed by his teammates after his match-winning final over against Sylhet Royals in the BPL T20 at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Shakib at the death

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 finally attracted the much desired near-capacity crowd yesterday as the tournament touched down in the port city, but there was no change in Sylhet Royals' fortunes as they suffered a two-run defeat to Khulna Royal Bengals.

The big crowd at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium could not have asked for a better start to the Chittagong leg of the tournament as there was no shortage of excitement in the first match which Khulna won courtesy of some intelligent bowling from their inspirational skipper Shakib Al Hasan, who bowled the last over.

Despite Pakistani Kamran Akmal and former New Zealand all-rounder Scott Styris' heroics, Sylhet finished their first-leg campaign empty-handed while it was

Khulna's third win, which put them level with Dhaka Gladiators and Duronto Rajshahi.

Chasing a 172-run winning target, Sylhet lost wickets at regular intervals but Styris kept their hopes alive till the end when they needed 28 runs from the last two overs. Sylhet had almost turned the tables when Naeem Islam and Styris whacked two big sixes to in the 17-run penultimate over.

Then a confident Shakib bowled brilliantly, dismissing Naeem and Brad Hogg off the first two deliveries to ignite the crowd but veteran Styris seized back the initiative by smashing a six over long-on, bringing the equation down to four runs from the last ball; the right-hander though could manage only one run as Sylhet ended on 169-8.

"Confidence was the key behind this success. I took the challenge because I'm the captain and I never faced such a chal-

lenge as a bowler at the international level. But I was confident that I could manage it if I bowl in the right spot," said Shakib. "After the six, I was a little nervous because eleven runs was not a big target in the last over but once again the confidence came through."

Shakib though wasn't too pleased with his team's batting at the top of the order.

Akmal, meanwhile, praised the No 1 all-rounder in the world for his brilliant last over which saw his 41-ball 82 go in vain. "We were very close to winning the match but Shakib bowled brilliantly. He has a lot of experience and applied it there," said the Pakistani wicketkeeper-batsman.

The man-of-the match award however went to West Indies all-rounder Andre Russell, who followed his compatriot Dwayne Smith's 31-ball 55 that saw four sixes and three fours by smashing three fours and two sixes during his unbeaten 14-ball 35 and later picked up two wickets. It was his

second such award.

"He (Russell) has been proving why he was a hot-cake in the auction. But I also thank Smith who has so far contributed brilliantly with his bat and sometimes with his bowling," said Shakib.

Khulna must also thank Sylhet skipper Peter Trego for allowing them to put up a challenging total on the board as the military-medium bowler conceded 50 runs in his four overs. Russell and Nazmul Hossain punished him most, each smashing two sixes in two of his overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KHULNA: 171-6 in 20 overs (Smith 55, Shakib 14, Nasir 23, Nazmul 22 not out, Russell 35 not out; Tanvir 2-25, Nabil 2-32, Trego 2-50)

SYLHET: 169-8 in 20 overs (Akmal 82, Styris 48 not out; Russell 2-36, Shakib 2-30, Razzak 2-24)

Result: Khulna Royal Bengals won by two runs.

Why did Kings drop Tamim?



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

WHY ISN'T HE PLAYING? A dejected Tamim Iqbal walks off with Chittagong Kings team owner Sameer Quader Chowdhury (R) yesterday after he was dropped in the last minute in their BPL T20 game against Duronto Rajshahi in his home ground.

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



It was local hero Tamim Iqbal's absence that was the main talking point, even louder than any talk about the BPL T20 game between Chittagong Kings and Duronto Rajshahi.

The Chittagong Kings team management had said that Tamim would be available for yesterday's match in his hometown and it was widely expected that the left-hander had recovered from the groin injury. But in the end, he was kept out of the final eleven.

According to the player list handed out to the media before the match, Tamim was slated to play in place of Jahurul Islam, but a deletion mark beside his name hinted at the last-minute nature of the withdrawal.

The team management however explained that the player himself pulled out from the eleven at the last moment, complaining of pain in his groin. But despite this justification, the doubts about the real reason behind his absence failed to be cleared.

The left-handed national opener has been allegedly involved in a bust-up with the franchise's technical director Dean Jones last week though the former Australian batsman has denied of any such occurrence. Tamim's rapport with the Kings' management has not been at its best ever since the team auction last month, said a source close to the owners.

He has so far only played Chittagong's first match against Duronto Rajshahi at Mirpur.

Full house, finally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) finally got its soul yesterday when a large crowd arrived at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium after the disappointing turnouts in Dhaka.

Fans thronged the port city stadium to enjoy cricket, wave flags and wear the colours of their respective teams and gathered in front of the ticket counters since early noon.

Although there were a few hundreds empty seats during the first match between Sylhet Royals and Khulna Royal Bengal Tigers, the stands filled the stands to the brim before the start of the second game that involved home team Chittagong Kings and Duronto Rajshahi.

Tahmina Akhter, an official of a private bank, came with five family members to enjoy the matches. "I could not enjoy any match of World Cup as I could not get any ticket and the cost of the tickets was also very high," she said. "I am feeling good as I have got the opportunity to enjoy the T20 match and get the tickets for only Tk 200."

"It is the first time we are enjoying T20 match in this [Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury] stadium so we expect Chittagong Kings through their performances fill up the expectation of the cricket fans like us," she added.

BPL governing council secretary Sirajuddin Mohammad Alamgir said, "if same audiences enjoy several matches in the same venue it would bring pressure financially to the audiences and it might be monotonous to them."

Keeping the interest of cricket fans, they lessened the price of tickets so that they could be able to enjoy the matches and encourage their favorite team, he added.

Alamgir expects Chittagong fans with their presence would make the tournament lively during this week's matches.

Rajshahi now joint leaders

SPORTS REPORTER from Ctg

The atmosphere was electric as the faithful came out in huge numbers to support home side Chittagong Kings, but Duronto Rajshahi spoiled the party by snatching a ninerun victory in a keenly contested match at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

There was a lack of batting fireworks in the low-scoring match but the excitement was provided through a fine bowling effort from Rajshahi.

The two left-arm spinners, Chittagong's Arifat Sunny and Rajshahi's Saqlain Sajib dominated the proceedings under lights, but in the end the effort of Saqlain combined with Pakistan pacer Mohammad Sami brought success for Rajshahi, who continued their winning run with their fourth consecutive victory to share the top spot with Chittagong Kings on eight points.

With the victory Rajshahi also avenged their first-leg defeat against the same opponents.

Rajshahi's dream seemed



Brothers Union and Team BJMC players engage in an aerial tussle during their Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Brothers on the board

SPORTS REPORTER



Strugglers Brothers Union registered their first point of the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League when they held newcomers Team BJMC to a 1-1 draw at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Brothers took the lead in the 41st minute when Nigerian striker Joshua Olalekin side-volleyed at the near post, before BJMC's Cameroonian defender Bayebeck grabbed the equaliser with an easy tap in the 75th minute.

The first point in three matches put the Oranges in ninth position while BJMC, who were playing their second match after an 18-day break, are in the fourth position with four points.

The match started with a minute's silence observed for the death of the sister of a Brothers Union defender Adams Jankasa on Wednesday. The Nigerian defender chose to stay back and played the match full 90 minutes.

With coach Syed Naemuddin back in the dugout, Brothers started the match livelier and dominated most of the first-half. The Oranges twice came close to opening the score as Nigerian Kingsley Chigozie shot over the crosspiece and in the 15th minute before Joshua hit the side-netting from a close range in the 25th.

Brothers eventually took the lead in the 41st minute as when Joshua hit the back of the net with a side volley after Chigozie's miscued shot on an Anik cross fell to him at the top of the six-yard box.

Team BJMC stepped up the attack in the second half and created a number of chances. Jules Ikanga came close to equalising in the 67th minute but his shot from a very promising position went over the bar.

Their persistence paid off as eight minutes later when Bayebeck stabbed in from a goal mouth melee after a cross from the right wing was miscued by fellow striker Rony Islam in front of goal.

Joshua should have snatched an injury time winner for

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