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Hamsik robbed at gunpoint

Napoli forward Marek Hamsik has been robbed of a luxury Rolex watch by three masked men at gunpoint, according to Italian media reports Sunday. ANSA news agency said Hamsik escaped uninjured from the attack which happened on Sunday. The report said Hamsik had momentarily stopped in his BMW X6 car on the motorway as he drove his wife to the airport after the game at the San Paolo stadium, and was approached by three masked men on scooters. They smashed his car window before taking Hamsik's luxury watch after

Ryan drives Chittagong

SPORTS REPORTER



It will be a final clash between the Chittagong Kings and Dhaka Gladiators today as the Kings rode on a scintillating, unbeaten 44 from Ryan ten Doeschate to beat favourites Sylhet Royals by three wickets in the second semifinal of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The 150-run winning target looked a distant reality for the Kings when they lost their first two wickets for only four runs before being reduced to 96 for five in 14.5 overs. But the in-form ten Doeschate, the big name in Dutch cricket, turned the tide in favour of the port city franchise with a vital assist from Ariful Haque. Ten Doeschate finished the chase in style as the right-hander sliced left-arm pacer Sajidul Islam over point for a boundary to book the final spot with five balls to spare. Sylhet were in a good position to set another clash of the titans with Dhaka Gladiators, but ten Doeschate hit a six and a boundary to collect 16 runs against Afghanistan spinner Mohammad Nabi in the 17th over. Then Ariful, who scored 23 off 12 balls, put Elton Chigumbura to the sword in the next over, hitting two fours and a six to secure 21 runs and all but seal the fate of the match. His assault left only seven to be scored off the last two overs. Pacer Nazmul Hossain gave the Kings some last-minute jitters by removing Ariful and Kevon Cooper off

SCORES IN BRIEF

SYLHET ROYALS: 149 for 7 in 20 overs (Chanderpaul 16, Stirling 14, Mushfiqur 36, Nabi 10, Chigumbura 42 not out, extras 12; Taskin 1-24, Cooper 2-39, Enamul 2-24, Bopara 1-21). **CHITTAGONG KINGS:** 150 for 7 in 19.1 overs (Naeem 31, Nurul 33, ten Doeschate 44 not out, Riyad 14, Ariful 23, extras 4; Nabi 2-42, Nazmul 2-9). **Result:** Chittagong Kings won by three wickets. **Player-of-the-match:**

Chittagong Kings players celebrate the fall of a Sylhet Royals wicket during their BPL T20 semifinal at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. The Kings won the match by three wickets.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

BJMC down Muktijoddha

SPORTS REPORTER

Team BJMC notched up their fifth victory in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League by defeating visitors Muktijoddha Sangsad 1-0 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Guinean hitman Ismael Angoura struck the decider in the seventh minute of the match to help BJMC climb up to the fourth position with 19 points from 13 matches. Defeat for Muktijoddha Sangsad meant they stayed on sixth position with previous 15 points from 13 matches.

Despite having a depleted side, Muktijoddha Sangsad had showed signs of improvement as they ended the first leg on fourth position. However, the freedom-fighter's side have been struggling to keep their tempo ever since and managed only one point from their five previous matches.

In contrast, BJMC, who were in sixth position at the end of the first leg with just 11 points, turned around and secured eight points from five matches with two wins, two draws and a single defeat.

In last night's match, neither of the sides impressed and a lone move in the seventh minute decided the outcome in favour of BJMC.

Cameroonian midfielder

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GRAND FINALE TODAY Gladiators against Kings

SPORTS REPORTER



Dhaka Gladiators will lock horns with Chittagong Kings in the final of the Bangladesh Premier League today after an eventful month of cricket in three separate cities.

The final of the second edition of the BPL will be held from 6 pm at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

With a side full of superstars, Dhaka Gladiators were always expected to make it to the finals and perhaps even go all the way to claiming their second title in a row. They have lived up to the hype, proving to be the most balanced team as they ran up scores of 200 plus three times already.

"We have played well in the entire

tournament. But you won't get a second chance in the finals. So the match on Tuesday is all that matters now," said Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, captain of the Dhaka Gladiators yesterday. "You can't plan T20 cricket. There isn't much time to plan. Both the teams are strong, but what's important is the team spirit," he added.

Dhaka will be without the services of Chris Gayle, who was signed up for only one game. Gayle scored a whirlwind century that propelled Dhaka to the final but Mashrafe said that the team could cope in his absence.

"The first few games, we played without him. But we have good players. If Ashraf, Shakib and the foreign players can perform then we will do well. I hope that Gayle's absence won't be felt," said Mashrafe. Gayle's spot at the

top will be filled with Joshua Cobb, while Tillakaratne Dilshan, Darren Stevens, Kieron Pollard and Alfonso Thomas are expected to fill the foreign spots. They are expected to stick to their strategy by picking three slow-left armers - Saqlain Sajid, Mosharraf Hossain and Shakib al Hasan— with Mohammad Ashraful and Anamul Haque joining the foreign-dominated top order.

While Dhaka's place in the final was expected, it was an altogether different story for Chittagong Kings who were in dismal form at the start of the tournament. But they picked up their form midway and grabbed the third qualifying spot with 12 points. And with yesterday's victory in the semifinal against the Sylhet Royals, the Kings will be bringing momentum into the game.

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U-16 FOOTBALL Arambagh face MSC in opener

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan SC will play against Arambagh KS in the opening match of the Grameenphone U-16 Football Tournament which kicks off at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on February 20. Abahani will face Muktijoddha Sangsad in the second match of the day at the same venue.

The two arch-rivals will face each other on February 25 as both of them were pitted in the same group of the eight-team competition.



Dhaka Gladiators captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R) and his key all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan are having a chat at the BCB Academy ground yesterday, ahead of their BPL T20 grand finale against Chittagong today.

PHOTO: STAR

PRELIMINARY SQUAD NAMED FOR SL Marshall drafted in



SPORTS REPORTER

Marshall Ayub was the only surprise inclusion in a largely familiar squad as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced the 25-member preliminary squad for the Tigers' tour of Sri Lanka in March.

The 24-year old Marshall earned the call-up on the back of a sparkling domestic season where he scored two double centuries. Marshall was the top-scorer in the 14th National Cricket League and also led the charts in the brand new Bangladesh Cricket League. Apart from Marshall, Shamsur Raham, Sabbir Rahman and Robiul Islam were also

drafted into the squad again. There had been some talk of a recall for the once-talismanic Mohammad Ashraful, but the right-hander was ignored by the selectors, despite showing some glimpses of form in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). Bangladesh's final Test squad will be announced next week, as selectors are still waiting on the fitness of a number of players, chief among who is Shakib al Hasan. The all-rounder will be travelling to Australia for a medical check-up.

"We have to wait for Shakib's reports. If he can't play the Test matches then we actually have to replace him with two other players," Akram Khan told reporters in Mirpur yesterday, confirming that a 16-member team might be named in that case.

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Ctg Abahani win

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Abahani posted their first victory in the Premier Bank Bangladesh Championship League when they handed a 2-0 defeat to Wari Club at MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Shrugging off the 1-0 defeat against Farashganj SC in their previous match, hosts Chittagong Abahani went ahead in the very fifth minute with a strike from Palash Samanta before Ismail Jahed wrapped up the victory scoring one minute from time.

WORLD HOCKEY LEAGUE Bangladesh lose 2-5

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's bid for the Hockey World Cup Qualification got off on the wrong foot as they surrendered a 2-0 lead to ultimately lose by 2-5 against Ireland in their opening fixture of the World Hockey League (Round-2) at the Major Dhyanand Stadium in New Delhi yesterday.

Bangladesh took a surprising 2-0 lead within the 18th minute, but could not keep the momentum, allowing the 15th-ranked side in the world to bounce back. The European giants scored three goals within 10 minutes to take a 3-2 lead into the break. They added two more goals in the second half as Bangladesh tried to keep the margin of defeat to a respectable one.

Bangladesh started the match brightly and came close to taking the lead in the very fourth minute, but Pushkor Khisha

Mimo's effort was saved by Ireland goalkeeper. Mamunur Rahman Chayan made two good saves before Bangladesh took the lead in the 16th minute.

Moshiur Rahman Biplob put a fierce through-ball from the right for Moinul Islam Koushik, who drove to change the direction of the ball to put it into the net. Three minutes later, Chayan doubled the margin from a penalty corner, combining with Sheikh Mohammad Nannu and Kamruzzaman Rana.

Bangladesh fought equally until they conceded the first goal from a counter-attack in the 22nd minute. Nannu had lost the ball in the Ireland half which Michael Darlington collected and raced into the Bangladesh half to set up Alan Sothorn for an easy goal. The same striker made it 2-2 in the 29th minute after Rasel Mahmud

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AFC CHALLENGE CUP QUALIFIERS Preliminary squad named



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) pinned their hopes on the old guard when they announced a 33-member preliminary squad for the AFC Challenge Cup Qualifiers, which is scheduled for March 2-6 in Nepal.

Midfielder Shahedul Alam Shahed was the only exclusion from the national squad that played two friendly matches against Thailand and Malaysia in November last while goalkeeper Sultan Ahmed Shakil and Jewel Rana have been called for the senior camp for the first time.

The announcement comes three days before Dutch coaches Lodewijk de Kruijff and Rene Koster are scheduled to arrive. Bangladesh will leave for Nepal on Feb 25 to compete against Palestine, Nepal and Northern

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ROAR WITH THE KINGS



PHOTO: STAR