

**WHACK-OMETER**

TOTAL 6s HIT **160** | TOTAL 4s HIT **520**

Most 6s by a player: 9, Tamim Iqbal Chittagong Vikings  
Most 4s by players: 28, Dilshan Munaweera, Sylhet Superstars and Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chittagong Vikings



Rangpur Riders' left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny (R) celebrates one of his four scalps with teammates as the Sylhet Superstars batsman at the non-striker's end expresses his dejection during their BPL fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Riders through after Superstars' harakiri

**SPORTS REPORTER**

A day after the Barisal Bulls were bundled out for 58, the lowest score in the Bangladesh Premier League till date, the Sylhet Superstars were bowled for just 59 in Mirpur yesterday.

And akin to the Bulls' game, they lost the match to the Rangpur Riders quite emphatically as well.

The scoreboards may suggest that the wicket in Mirpur is getting more and more difficult to bat on. While that assessment may be partially true, the fact remains that Sylhet batsmen did not apply themselves too well.

It was something that Sylhet skipper Shahid Afridi admitted after the match.

"We did not follow our plan at all. I think we lost the match in the first six overs," said Afridi.

The Pakistan batsman himself was guilty of attempting an unnecessary down-the-track hit at a time when his side needed a stable batsman at the crease.

Even the ever dependable Mushfiqur Rahim surprised many by attempting a reverse sweep, a shot he does not play often, and getting out in the process.

Rangpur, courtesy of the eight-wicket win, have become the second team to make it through to the last four of the competition after the Comilla Victorians. The Shakib Al Hasan-led side now have 12 points from nine matches.

After being put into bat, Sylhet were rocked early by Arafat Sunny's turners. The left-arm bowler bowled the right line on a slow track, varied his pace and turned the ball just enough to outdo the batsmen. He finished with figures of 4 for 14.

"I opened the bowling after a long time and I really enjoyed it a lot. I just stuck to my line and got rewarded," Sunny said after the match.

By the end of the tenth over, Sylhet were 43 for 8, with Mohammad Nabi and Thisara Perera joining in the wickets column.

Sohail Tanvir, who came in at number eight, tried to resist with a 17-ball 20 but was dismissed by Nabi in the 12th over.

Two balls later, Nabi got Rubel Hossain caught-and-bowled to complete a three-wicket haul and wrap up the innings in just 11.5 overs. This was of course, the shortest ever innings played in the BPL.

While Rangpur did get hiccups losing Lendl Simmons in the second over and Soumya Sarkar in the sixth, Shakib's 24-ball 29 propelled the side home in 9.5 overs.

## Victorians first in last 4

**SPORTS REPORTER**

A brilliantly stitched 76 from Ahmed Shehzad helped Comilla Victorians topple Barisal Bulls' unimpressive 105 with more than two overs to spare in Mirpur yesterday.

The seven-wicket win, Victorians sixth, also took them at the top of the table with 12 points and a place in the last four of the competition with two more games in hand.

On the other hand, the final phase of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) hasn't been too kind to the Barisal Bulls so far as they crashed to their second consecutive defeat.

The loss though isn't likely to dent Barisal's chances of making it to the next round as they are currently placed third with ten points in eight matches.

Unfortunately for Barisal fans Chris Gayle's entry hasn't been as entertaining as they would have hoped. The West Indian seems to be in the process of adjusting to

**POINTS TABLE**

Teams	Mat	W	L	Pts	NRR
Comilla Victorians	8	6	2	12	+0.670
Rangpur Riders	9	6	3	12	+0.646
Barisal Bulls	8	5	3	10	-0.185
Dhaka Dynamites	7	3	4	6	-0.275
Sylhet Superstars	8	2	6	4	-0.462
Chittagong Vikings	8	2	6	4	-0.465

they put on 39.

Despite the low score, Barisal's hopes were high immediately after the exchange as they managed to remove openers Imrul Kayes and Liton Das for ducks. However, that joy didn't last for too long as Shehzad took control of the innings.

He shared a 34-run stand with Shoaib Malik for the third wicket. After Malik's dismissal in the tenth over, he was joined by an in-form Ashar Zaidi and together they took the side home.

Shehzad made a slow start, scoring his first 25 runs off 25 balls. While he was more focused on picking up the singles, he also did ensure to release the pressure with a boundary every time he gave away a string of dots.

He shifted gears after the tenth over when he went down the track and smacked Taijul Islam for a six. He reached his half-century off 43 deliveries in the 13th over when he cheekily dabbed one through the third man.

By the time Victorians won the game, Shehzad had hit 10 fours and a six and also took his overall BPL average above 50.

## ICC U-19 WORLD CUP Hosts pitted against holders

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Think Virat Kohli; think Soumya Sarkar. These are players who first introduced themselves to the world through the ICC Under-19 World Cup and eventually have gone on to occupy crucial positions in their respective national teams.

And so, when the eleventh edition of cricket's youth jamboree begins next month, it will be the turn of Bangladeshi fans to get the first opportunity of having a glimpse at the stars of tomorrow.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) yesterday announced the fixtures and groupings of the ICC U-19 World Cup at a city hotel in Dhaka. 48 matches will be played across eight venues in Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Sylhet and Dhaka, from January 27 to February 14.

The opening match will take place at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong between hosts Bangladesh and reigning champions South Africa.

Bangladesh, who are yet to win the U-19 title, have been placed in Group A alongside South Africa, Namibia and Scotland.

The final will take place at Bangladesh's home of cricket in Mirpur.

Sri Lanka's champion batsman Kumar Sangakkara, pacers Mustafizur Rahman and Taskin Ahmed, who represented Bangladesh in the U-19

**GROUPINGS**

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D
South Africa	Pakistan	England	Australia
Bangladesh	Sri Lanka	West Indies	India
Scotland	Afghanistan	Zimbabwe	New Zealand
Namibia	Canada	Fiji	Nepal

that he was never 'good enough' to play the U-19 World Cup throughout his career. He asked each and every team to enjoy themselves in Bangladesh and also admired the importance of the tournament.

"I watched a lot of players who have played in the U-19 World Cup and it's great to see that their talent was recognized at such young age. They got the exposure at an international stage to showcase their skills and that introduced them to professionalism, structure and the required expectations," said Sangakkara, who however missed the opportunity of featuring in

World Cup before, were the star attraction of the launching ceremony, also attended by Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan Paopn and ICC General Manager - Cricket, Geoff Allardice.

A witty Sangakkara jokingly said



Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara (L) and Bangladesh's pace sensations Taskin Ahmed (C) and Mustafizur Rahman pose with the trophy of the ICC Under-19 World Cup, which will be held in Bangladesh in January-February next year, during a programme at a city hotel yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

**PREMIER cemeNT**

## Mash eyes top spot

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Having sealed a spot in the last four, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and the Comilla Victorians are now targeting to finish on top of the league.

As per the format of the BPL, the top two teams will face-off in the first semifinal. While the winner will straightaway head to the final, the losing team will get another shot in the eliminator round.

In a sense, it gives a side a much-needed security and it therefore is no surprise that the Victorians are targeting that spot.

"I think we just need one more win to confirm the top two and we are all focused towards that now. That is our first target. It will be unfortunate if we don't claim any of those two spots," said Mashrafe after the Victorians secured a seven-wicket win over the Barisal Bulls yesterday in Mirpur.

While they are in a comfortable position now, not had many expected the Victorians to be in such a state at the start of the competition. While they do have the likes of Ahmed Shehzad and Shoaib Malik at the moment, they didn't really have any big names at the initial stages.

Mashrafe admitted that he was a little scared on Day One, when he had to prepare an eleven for the opening match.

"It was quite difficult initially. After I sat down with the coach and made the team for the first match against Dhaka, I did feel a little nervous. However, after that players started performing and everything went well.

"We don't have big stars but we are playing good as a team. If you notice, the teams, which have most number of contributors, are winning matches in this competition. Yes Ahmed Shehzad played a brilliant innings today but our bowling was disciplined as well," said Mashrafe, while referring to the likes of Ashar Zaidi and Darren Stevens who had economy rates of below three in yesterday's game.

While he did praise his bowlers, he also admitted that the kind of wicket in which the matches are taking place, are making it quite difficult for the batsmen to score.

"It's a very unpredictable wicket. In T20 cricket, captains generally prefer to bat first and post a high score to put pressure on the opponents. However, on these wickets a majority of the captains are electing to field after winning the toss.

**SCOREBOARDS**

BULLS V VICTORIANS					SUPERSTARS V RIDERS				
Batsman	R	B	4s	6s	Batsman	R	B	4s	6s
Gayle lbw b Malik	8/11	1/0	1	0	Munaweera b Arafat	0/5	0/0	0	0
Lewis c Malik b Stevens	15/23	1/1	1	0	Junaid c & b Arafat	5/6	1/0	0	0
Rony c Imrul b Zaidi	19/23	2/0	2	0	Nurul c Soumya b Shakib	8/10	1/0	0	0
Maruf b Zaidi	0/3	0/0	0	0	Mushfiqur c Muktar b Arafat	9/10	0/0	0	0
Mahmudullah b Hider	26/27	4/0	4	0	Bopara lbw b Perera	5/10	0/0	0	0
Sabbir b Rabbi	17/21	1/0	1	0	Afridi st Mithun b Shakib	4/3	1/0	0	0
Prasanna not out	15/10	0/1	0	0	Milon b Arafat	0/3	0/0	0	0
Emrit not out	2/2	0/0	0	0	Tanvir c Muktar b Nabi	20/17	1/1	1	0
Extras: (lb-1, w-2)	3				Razzak c Jahurul b Nabi	4/4	1/0	0	0
Total: (For 6 wickets in 20 overs)	105				Shahid not out	0/1	0/0	0	0
Fall of wickets: 1-21, 2-40, 3-42, 4-45, 5-88, 6-88.					Rubel c & b Nabi	0/2	0/0	0	0
					Extras: (lb-1, w-3)	4			
					Total: (All out in 11.5 overs)	59			
					Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-12, 3-24, 4-25, 5-29, 6-30, 7-38, 8-43, 9-59.				
BULLS V VICTORIANS					SUPERSTARS V RIDERS				
Bowler	O	M	R	W	Bowler	O	M	R	W
Malik	4	0	15	1	Arafat	4	0	14	4
Shuvagata	2	0	18	0	Shakib	4	0	25	2
Hider	4	0	26	1	Nabi	2.5	0	15	3
Stevens	4	0	9	1	Perera	1	0	4	1
Zaidi	4	0	12	2					
Rabbi	2	0	24	1					
COMILLA VICTORIANS	R/B	4/6							
Liton c Sabbir b Sajedul	0/1	0/0			RANGPUR RIDERS				
Imrul c Rony b Al-Amin	0/8	0/0			Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shehzad not out	76/63	10/1			b Shahid	5/8	1/0		
Malik st Rony b Taijul	8/15	0/0			Simmons c Mushfiqur				
Zaidi not out	20/18	1/1			b Shahid				
Shakib lbw b Arafat	2				Soumya c Munaweera				
Prasanna	2.3	0	22	0	b Shahid	11/14	1/0		
Mahmudullah	2	0	7	0	Shahid not out	29/24	4/0		
Result: Comilla Victorians won by 7 wickets.					Jahurul not out	9/13	0/0		
					Extras: (lb-4, w-2)	6			
					Total: (For 3 wickets in 9.5 overs)	60			
					Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-14, 3-48.				
BULLS V VICTORIANS					SUPERSTARS V RIDERS				
Bowler	O	M	R	W	Bowler	O	M	R	W
Sajedul	3	0	18	1	Tanvir	2	0	12	0
Al-Amin	3	0	11	1	Shahid	4	0	18	2
Emrit	3	0	15	0	Munaweera	1	0	3	0
Taijul	4	0	32	1	Afridi	2	0	12	0
Prasanna	2.3	0	22	0	Rubel	0.5	0	11	0
Mahmudullah	2	0	7	0	Result: Rangpur Riders won by 8 wickets.				
Result: Comilla Victorians won by 7 wickets.					Player-of-the-match: Ahmed Shehzad.				
					Player-of-the-match: Arafat Sunny.				

## Fever-hit Jamal leaves camp

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Midfielder Jamal Bhuiyan has been admitted to a hospital on Sunday night with fever and stomach pain, a day after he left the national team's training camp in Savar, informed team manager Amirul Islam Babu yesterday.

"Jamal was admitted to a hospital in Uttara last night [Sunday] with fever and stomach pain. He went through various medical tests, the results of which will be available tomorrow [Tuesday]," said Babu.

Meanwhile, midfielder Abdul Baten Komol and defender Keshto Kumar are also suffering from injuries.

Komol sustained a knee injury while Keshto sustained a muscle injury.

"Both Komol and Keshto have been recovering while Zahid Hasan Emily has recovered from his knee injury and took part in two hours of training today [Monday]," said team physio Shajib Shams Bakshi.

## Ashwin sinks dogged SA

**AFF, New Delhi**

India overcame gritty resistance from South Africa's batsmen to win the fourth and final Test by a massive 337 runs in New Delhi on Monday and seal the series 3-0.

India had to work hard for victory after the world number one side resorted to hours of stubborn defensive batting, scoring at barely a run an over, in the hope of salvaging a draw.

But their plans were dashed by the equally determined Indian bowlers led by off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, whose 5-61 in the second innings saw him finish the series with a total of 31 wickets.

Paceman Umesh Yadav chipped in with three wickets as South Africa were bowled out for 143 soon after tea, after being set a massive target of 481.

"All wins are special but this one more so because we had to work harder for it," said Indian captain Virat Kohli.

"The South African batsmen put their heads down and were playing for a draw.

"We were surprised with how they were defending (but) our bowlers did not lose patience. They can be really proud of their effort today."

India went into the final Test with a 2-0 lead, having already won the first and third matches. The rain-hit second game ended in a draw.

India declared on 267-5 after making 334 in their first outing, thanks to man of the match Ajinkya Rahane who hit centuries in each innings.

The Proteas fought bravely in the first two sessions Monday but their innings unravelled soon after tea, as they lost their last five wickets inside 5.1 overs.

The win helped India climb two places to second in the world Test rankings.

AB de Villiers (43 off 297 balls) and skipper Hashim Amla (25) stonewalled the attack during their marathon innings but some of the other batsmen caved in without making much effort.

"You got to do what is best for the team," said Amla. "It is easy to go out there and get some runs but we tried to take it as deep as possible and get something out from this game."

The series defeat was South Africa's first in nine years away from home.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**

**INDIA:** First innings 334

**SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings 121

**INDIA:** Second innings 267 for 5 decl

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Second innings 143 (Bavuma 34, Amla 25, De Villiers 43; Ashwin 5-61, Jadeja 2-26, Yadav 3-9)

**Result:** India won by 337 runs and clinched 4-match series 3-0.

**Player-of-the-match:** Ajinkya Rahane.

**Player-of-the-series:** Ravichandran Ashwin.