Star SPORT
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WHACK-OMETER

TOTAL 6s HIT 228 | TOTAL 4s HIT 697

Most 6s by players: 12, Chris Gayle, Barisal Bulls
Most 4s by a player: 35, Kumar Sangakkara, Dhaka Dynamites

Imrul Kayes powered the Comilla Victorians through the early stages of their innings with an explosive knock of 67 off 48 balls, dispatching seven fours and two sixes and helping his side post 163 against Rangpur Riders in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Victorians romp into final

SPORTS REPORTER

The Comilla Victorians had played ten matches prior to the first qualifier and while they put in several passionate performances to win seven of those games, none matched the sheer amount of determination that they had in Mirpur yesterday.

From Ashar Zaidi's unbelievable all-round performance to Imrul Kayes's fearless stroke-play, from Abu Hider's piercing yorkers to Shuvagata Hom's full-length diving catch, it was a near flawless performance.

As a result of these performances what was expected to be a cracker of a qualifier turned out to be an extremely one-sided affair with the Victorians thrashing Shakib Al Hasan's Rangpur Riders by 72 runs, the biggest win of the tournament so far in terms of the runs.

The victory has taken Comilla into the final of the Bangladesh Premier League. Rangpur on the other hand will take part in the second qualifier and will need to win that in order to reach their first BPL final.

At no point in the match yesterday did the Riders seem comfortable. They were thwarted from the start courtesy of Comilla's openers, Imrul and Liton Das.

While the out-of-form Liton was understandably cautious, Imrul held nothing back. Even Rangpur's strike bowler Shakib wasn't spared. Imrul faced 8 of Shakib's deliveries and smacked 20 runs.

Kayes departed in the 16th over, being caught and bowled by Thisara Perera, after scoring 67 off 48 balls. In the same over, Perera dismissed Andre Russel and Ahmed Shehzad. An over later he dismissed Alok Kapali and, out of nowhere, completed a five-wicket haul.

At 126 for 5 in 17.4 overs, it seemed as though the Victorians had lost their steam after such a good start. However, Zaidi ran riot as Comilla added 31 runs in the last two overs. He smacked Mohammad Nabi for two fours and a six in the last over, which added 18 runs to Comilla's score.

After the exchange, Rangpur initially looked good as their openers Soumya Sarkar and Lendl Simmons raced to 36 runs off 4.2 overs. The openers had smacked Shuvagata for four fours in the third over and gave their side an exciting start.

However, once Shuvagata superbly caught Soumya at backward square -- running and catching the ball after performing a full-length dive -- off Abu Hider, in the fifth over, the match changed. Soumya, who was given a let-off in the previous delivery, was out for 25.

The catch was brilliant, but the delivery which followed was even better. Hider's full-length delivery hit Simmons' pads, causing him to fall over, and hit timber.

In over number seven, Zaidi got two wickets, including the crucial one of Shakib Al Hasan. At 44 for 3, Shakib was expected to employ a calm approach. Instead, the left-hander attacked Zaidi off the very first ball which resulted in him being caught at the deep and departing for a golden duck.

Once Zaidi sent back the in-form Jahurul Islam in the 12th over, the match had practically been won.

Rangpur were eventually bundled out for 91 in 17 overs. Both Zaidi and Hider finished with brilliant four-wicket hauls, but it was Zaidi who picked up the player-of-the-match award for his exploits with both bat and ball.

Kiwis take command

AFP, *Dunedin*

Kane Williamson joined the elite 1,000 runs-a-year club Saturday as New Zealand built a commanding 308-run lead over Sri Lanka with two days remaining in the first Test in Dunedin.

Only the threat of rain loomed as possible barricades for New Zealand, who closed day three on 171 for one.

Although Sri Lanka have their backs to the wall, forecast rain and an easy wicket means it is crucial for New Zealand to get the timing of their declaration right, according to Tim Southee.

Williamson, who started with 992 runs for the year, reached 1,000 by driving Rangana Herath elegantly over mid-off for four.

Brendon McCullum is the only other New Zealander to score 1,000 runs in a calendar year.

At the start of the day, the Kiwis removed Sri Lanka's last six wickets to have the tourists all out for 294, 137 runs in arrears.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 431 all out

SRI LANKA: First innings 294 all out (Karunaratne 84, Chandimal 83; Southee 3-71, Wagner 3-87)

NEW ZEALAND: Second innings 171 for 1 (Latham 72 not out, Guptill 46, Williamson 48 not out;

Bulls live to fight Riders

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Dynamites became the third team to exit the Bangladesh Premier League as they went down to the Barisal Bulls by 18 runs in the eliminator at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday evening.

Batting first, Barisal were restricted to 135. In reply though, Dhaka's perennial problems with the bat persisted as they could manage only 117.

Truth be told, Dhaka's chase never seemed to get going. They tried to experiment with their opening pair again and this time opened with Forhad Reza and Abul Hasan. That didn't help them as Abul's wild swings were nowhere near the ball. He got dismissed for 11 in the fourth over. That was followed by the departure of Mohammad Hafeez who seemed to be struggling against Kevon Cooper's bouncers. Eventually he pulled one of those bouncers and got caught in the deep in the sixth over.

Two overs later Forhad was dismissed for a 20-ball 20 and suddenly they were at a precarious 44 for 3.

The onus was once again on Nasir Hossain and skipper Kumar Sangakkara. However, this time none of them could rescue the Dynamites. Sangakkara departed by the tenth over after giving away a leading edge to Al-Amin Hossain. That was a big blow to the Dynamites and the wicket seemed to affect the other batsmen mentally as they completely failed to perform.

The only glimmer of hope for Dhaka in the match arrived in the 17th over when Malcolm Waller smacked Mohammad Sami for two sixes and a four and brought the equation down to 34 needed off 18 balls. The hopes of an unlikely win were further fuelled after Mosaddek Hossain switch-hit Taijul Islam for a six in the second ball of the 18th over.

That brought down the equation to 27 off 16 deliveries. However, Taijul got both Mosaddek and Waller with the last two balls of that over, crunching any hopes that Dhaka had.

Earlier, the Barisal Bulls had made a brilliant start after being put in to bat first. While they lost Rony Talukdar in the first over of the match, Chris Gayle and Sabbir Rahman put on a brilliant 70-run stand for the second wicket to revive the Bulls.

By the end of the tenth over, the Bulls had crossed the 70-run mark and were cruising to a brilliant score. The flow of runs needed to be stopped and as result Kumar Sangakkara brought Mustafizur Rahman into the attack.

With the third ball of the tenth over, Mustafizur bowled a vicious cutter which jagged back and uprooted Gayle's stumps. A dismayed Gayle, who was previously seen whisking bowlers at will, didn't seem to have any clue regarding that delivery and departed for 31.

After that the run-rate dropped for Barisal and wickets began to tumble.

Sabbir was removed for 41 in the 13th over by Nabil Samad and Mehedi Maruf followed an over later when he was trapped in front by Mosharraf Hossain.

Barisal skipper Mahmudullah Riyad tried his best to revive the side's scoring rate with a 33-ball 37. However, with Mustafizur reintroduced into the attack in the death overs, the scoring rate never got up.

SUPERMOKH CUP

Bangladesh teams in Plate finals

SPORTS REPORTER

Both the Bangladesh under-13 and Bangladesh under-12 football teams booked their berth in the finals of the Plate Championships in the Supermokh Cup in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. The Bangladesh under-13 team beat Dinamo Zagreb 3-1, while Bangladesh under-12 team beat Global FC of Philippines 3-0 to move into the finals.

Amit gave Bangladesh under-13 team the lead in the 51st minute, but Dinamo Zagreb equalised 11 minutes later. However, Bangladesh skipper Fahim restored the lead in the 70th minute before Shakib confirmed the victory scoring in the stoppage time.

Bangladesh under-13s will take on Buriram United of Thailand, the team they had drawn against 2-2 in the first match of the competition, in the final today.

In the under-12 competition, Shohag, Rashed and Monir scored the three goals as Bangladesh beat their Philippine opponents comfortably for a place in today's final.

It's a rare sight of Chris Gayle missing a delivery and getting bowled. Interestingly, it was the first ball he faced against Mustafizur Rahman in a BPL fixture between Barisal Bulls and Dhaka Dynamites yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

PREMIER cement

SCOREBOARDS

VICTORIANS V RIDERS

COMILLA VICTORIANS	R/B	4/6
Kayes c & b Perera	67/48	7/2
Liton stumped Mithun b Sajib	28/37	1/0
Mashrafe c Shakib b Perera	1/5	0/0
Russell c Sajib b Perera	3/4	0/0
Zaidi not out	40/15	4/2
Shehzad lbw b Perera	0/1	0/0
Kapali c Al-Amin b Perera	2/5	0/0
Shuvagata stumped Mithun b Nabi	12/5	1/1
Hider not out	1/1	0/0
Extras (lb 2, w 6, nb 1)	9	
Total (For 7 wkts in 20 overs)	163	

Fall of wickets 1-79, 2-87, 3-107, 4-112, 5-112, 6-126, 7-149

BOWLING	O	M	R	W
Sammy	1	0	5	0
Nabi	4	0	39	1
Sunny	2	0	19	0
Shakib	4	0	42	0
Al-Amin	2	0	11	0
Sajib	3	0	19	1
NLTC Perera	4	0	26	5

RANGPUR RIDERS	R/B	4/6
Simmons b Hider	25/20	5/0
Soumya c Shuvagata b Hider	9/8	1/0
Jahurul c Hider b Zaidi	9/15	0/0
Mithun stumped Liton b Zaidi	5/10	1/0
Shakib c Mahmudul b Zaidi	0/1	0/0
Nabi c Shuvagata b Mashrafe	12/11	1/1
Al-Amin b Russell	3/8	0/0
Perera b Hider	11/13	1/0
Sammy b Zaidi	6/4	1/0
Sunny b Hider	7/10	1/0
Sajib not out	1/2	0/0
Extras (w 3)	3	
Total (All out in 17 overs)	91	

Fall of wickets 1-36, 2-36, 3-45, 4-45, 5-62, 6-62, 7-68, 8-82, 9-84, 10-91.

Bowling	O	M	R	W
Shuvagata	2	0	23	0
Kulasekara	2	0	10	0
Hider	3	0	19	4
Zaidi	4	1	11	4
Mashrafe	4	0	13	1
Russell	2	0	15	1

Result: Comilla Victorians won by 72 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Ashar Zaidi.

BULLS V DYNAMITES

BARISAL BULLS	R/B	4/6
Rony c Waller b Nasir	4/6	1/0
Gayle b Mustafizur	31/19	4/2
Sabbir c Mosaddek b Samad	41/39	3/3
Mahmudullah c Reza b Mustafizur	37/33	4/0
Mehedi lbw b Mosharraf	10/12	2/0
Emrit not out	9/10	0/0
Cooper not out	0/1	0/0
Extras (lb 3)	3	
Total (For 5 wkts in 20 overs)	135	

Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-74, 3-84, 4-102, 5-135

BOWLING	O	M	R	W
Nasir	3	1	9	1
Mosaddek	3	0	37	0
Mustafizur	4	0	21	2
Abul	1	0	18	0
Shah	4	0	18	0
Samad	3	0	16	1
Mosharraf	1	0	6	0
Reza	1	0	7	0

DHAKA DYNAMITES	R/B	4/6
Hasan c Gayle b Cooper	11/14	2/0
Reza c Rony b Al-Amin	20/20	1/1
Hafeez c Mehedi b Cooper	1/5	0/0
Sangakkara c & b Al-Amin	10/14	1/0
Nasir c Mahmudullah b Al-Amin	16/18	1/0
Mosaddek c Emrit b Taijul	26/27	0/1
Waller c Mehedi b Taijul	18/10	1/2
Shah c Mahmudullah b Cooper	0/2	0/0
Mosharraf not out	3/6	0/0
Samad not out	3/4	0/0
Extras (b 1, lb 3, w 5)	9	
TOTAL (For 8 wkts in 20 overs)	117	

Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-27, 3-44, 4-52, 5-69, 6-110, 7-110, 8-110.

BOWLING	O	M	R	W
Sami	4	0	27	0
Al-Amin	4	0	15	3
Cooper	4	0	17	3
Emrit	4	0	29	0
Mahmudullah	2	0	12	0
Taijul	2	0	13	2

Result: Barisal Bulls won by 18 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Al-Amin Hossain.

From being just another, albeit very talented, 19-year-old in the cricket setup, Abu Hider (L) has become a BPL sensation, topping the wickets column and having a great season. PHOTO: STAR

Hider, a find of BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

His celebration has already become a trademark in the Bangladesh Premier League, his 21 wickets this season have made him the highest ever wicket-taker in a single season of the BPL, and he has already been dubbed as a great prospect for Bangladesh's future; 19-year-old left-arm pacer Abu Hider is having a dream run at the moment.

He might have only recently entered the scene, but the way he gritted out the tense scenario yesterday and throughout the BPL so far depicts a boy mature beyond his years.

His four-wicket haul yesterday included a full-length delivery that actually tripped Lendl Simmons and hit timber; a dream sight for any young pacer.

Following the match yesterday, both skippers had encouraging words for the left-armer.

"The BPL has a bit more pressure than our other domestic tournaments because there are foreign players here. The way he [Hider] bowled today, he has shown a lot of maturity. I asked him to bowl at pressure situations," said Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

"I have seen him from very close. He is very promising. I believe he has a good future for Bangladesh, but then again there is a huge difference between club and international cricket."

While Shakib Al Hasan was a bit more circumspect, he too was glad to witness the rising pace bowler.

"I don't comment on players until and unless I have observed them for at least one to one-and-a-half years. But obviously the way he has proved himself in this tournament, he is someone we can look towards for the future.

"His performance will definitely inspire a number of other hopefuls," said Shakib.

Mashrafe also reckoned that Abu's rise could create a more comfortable scenario for the national pacers.

"I always believe that pace bowling is something that can win matches. You need to groom these pacers if you want to win Test Cricket," said Mashrafe

"And they can only learn if they keep playing in such high-pressure situations. If we can continue this, we will have a good number of back-up pacers," he added.

The skipper also spoke well of Ashar Zaidi, who smacked 40 off 15 and took a four-wicket haul yesterday.

"The way Zaidi has been performing for us is unbelievable. We never expected him to perform that way. When he was batting, we had given him a message that we wanted to

Beauty of an agonising wait

AL-AMIN

Like many yours truly was really disappointed when both Dhaka Dynamites and Barisal Bulls decided against fielding their two top draws -- Mustafizur Rahman and Chris Gayle -- in their inconsequential final group league clash of the Bangladesh Premier League on Thursday night.

Both teams had good reasons to rest their valuable assets before their blood-and-thunder clash in the Eliminator 1 last night. But for the spectators, who could hardly wait to see how Bangladesh's young prodigy Mustafizur bowls against the Gayle-force, it was really a disappointing decision.

The wait appeared to finally be over when Gayle walked along with Rony Talukder to open the Barisal Bulls innings in front of a capacity crowd at Bangladesh's home of cricket in Mirpur last night. But Dhaka captain Kumar Sangakkara decided to play with the patience of Mustafizur fans by introducing spinners from both ends. Gayle gleefully accepted that challenge, merrily hitting those slow bowlers all over the park.

Sangakkara finally introduced Mustafizur in the fifth over. Still, Mustafizur was denied to have a go against the most dangerous batsman in the world. It was mainly because party-pooper Sabbir Rahman, played all the six deliveries with a dead bat and refused to take a single. The agony of the pensive fans, waiting to see the bout, mounted when the left-arm pace bowler was not reintroduced in the next four overs. Sangakkara was however kind enough to bring Mustafizur in the tenth over and a kinder Sabbir took a single off the second ball.

The moment arrived and the crowd, anticipating something, roared as the lithe left-arm pacer started his seamless run and bowled one of his already famous in-cutters. Gayle went on the front-foot and thought he had covered the line of the ball. But by the time the lazy left-handed West Indian giant realized that he erred, the ball, which moved in considerably, found the big gap between his bat and pad before knocking his off-stump.

While Gayle looked dumfounded, an excited Mustafizur, who had earlier announced that the wicket of Gayle would fulfil his childhood dream, embarked on a trademark celebration -- clapping his hands until it became sore.

Gayle is the latest high-profile casualty of Mustafizur, who has announced his unmistakable arrival in world cricket with a mesmerizing performance this year. Already forcing his way into the ICC ODI team of 2015, this young lad can't stop entertaining. At the end of the day, it's not about whether Dhaka or Barisal won. But the fans will cherish that one

Holder upbeat despite loss

AFP, *Hobart*

Skipper Jason Holder insisted his West Indies team's massive innings defeat to Australia in the first Test Saturday was not a step backwards.

It was Groundhog Day again for the tourists, who capitulated to an innings and 212-run loss well inside three days in Hobart after being sent back in and bowled out for 148 off just 36.3 overs in the second innings.

But Holder put on a brave face against the continuing Windies underachievement.

"I wouldn't say it's a step backwards, obviously in the past we've shown that we can compete. We had a really good series against England where we competed really well and then the Australians came in after that and we fell back a little bit," Holder said.

"But the spirit in the dressing room is still there, we had a few one-day series and then we had first-class cricket back home where players from here did well. So it's just a case where we need to put together a collective effort for longer periods in the game.

"I just felt we have too many good spurts of cricket we're not continuing on through the duration of the game," concluded Holder.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: First innings 583 for 4 decl

WEST INDIES: First innings 223 all out (Bravo 108, Roach 31; Hazlewood 4-45)

WEST INDIES: Second innings (following on) 148 all out (Brathwaite 94,