

SPORT

'Only aim is to win'

SPORTS REPORTER

It would be fair to say that the local players have so far dominated the Bangladesh Premier League since a glance at the list would show that the top-seven run-getters are all from Bangladesh. The wickets column is not too different either with Shafiqul Islam and Mohammad Shahid on top of the table.

However, the one surprise is the absence of Shakib Al Hasan at the higher ends of both of these lists. Considered the country's best Twenty20 player, Shakib is currently ranked 22nd with the bat and 17th with the ball, having accumulated 134 runs and six wickets.

For a person who has regularly done well in Bangladesh -- he was the player of the tournament in the first two editions -- this is an unfamiliar position for him.

However, the left-hander does not mind the current state at all and that is because he is not targeting the player of the tournament award this time.

"I can't see any cars on the field. What's the point of winning the man of the series?" he joked when asked about his performance following his game at Mirpur yesterday.

"Honestly, personal targets don't seem that important after a point. What is important is what you can do for your team. We still have a chance to win the trophy and personally I just have one target, to reach the final and then win if possible. And for that, just being a good team isn't good enough. You need luck as well. That is my ultimate target this time. Other than that I don't have any expectations.

"The important thing is to perform

whenever my team needs me to. I did that today. But that won't happen every day. We have very good players in our team. If we all can put up good performances it will be very difficult to beat us. We are very strong.

"Khulna is doing well, but I still think Chittagong is the best team in the BPL, especially with the foreigners they have. Rangpur's spin attack is good. I think this time the BPL is very competitive," he explained.

When asked if he remembers to have gone through such a lean patch in T20s before, Shakib defended himself. "If you judge performances just based on runs and wickets then it won't be right. You have to see how many balls I faced batting at my position or how I bowled.

"Whether I will get a wicket or not depends on luck. Nobody can tell you that they are going to get one or two wickets today. I feel that apart from the last game against Rajshahi, I bowled well overall. Yes, I haven't got the amount of wickets that everyone expects from me, but I don't have any expectations from myself this time. I just hope that the team does well," said Shakib.

On a different note, Shakib shared his experience of leading a star-studded squad that includes the likes of Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jaywardene and Dwayne Bravo.

"Many times it's easy, many times it's difficult. When everyone gives you an idea, it becomes a bit confusing. And at the same time, when you don't have an idea, they come up with brilliant ideas.

"Obviously it's a great experience playing with the likes of Kumar and Mahela. I think they have been captains for eight years at least so there's a lot to learn from them.



Dhaka Dynamites captain Shakib Al Hasan's unbeaten 26-ball 41, which featured four fours and a six, set the platform for a 32-run victory against Comilla Victorians in a Bangladesh Premier League clash in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

WOMEN'S ASIA CUP T20 Sombre start for Tigresses

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's cricket team fell to a crushing 64-run defeat to India in the opening match of the Women's T20 Asia Cup at the Asian Institute of Technology ground in Bangkok today.

Chasing a total of 118-6, Bangladesh were bundled out for a miserly 56 runs in 18.2 overs. Shaaila Sharmin top-scored with 18, while the experienced Salma Khatun -- who made 17 -- was the other double-digit scorer in the Bangladesh chase.

India off-spinner Anuja Patil took two wickets, while leg-spinner Poonam Yadav claimed three.

Earlier, after being sent into bat, India's total was built around a 70-run opening stand between Mithali Raj and Smriti Mandhana. Bangladesh's leg-break bowler, Khadijatul Kubra, took two wickets for 14 runs.

Bangladesh will play their second match against Thailand tomorrow.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: 118 for 6 in 20 overs (Mithali 49, Mandhana 41; Kubra 2-12)
BANGLADESH: 54 all out in 18.2 overs (Shaaila 18,

Gayle targets 55 sixes in next four games

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Vikings's trump card has arrived in Dhaka and he will be raring to go tonight when Tamim Iqbal's men take on an in-form Rangpur Riders at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Like almost every other T20 league in the world, West Indian legend Chris Gayle has dominated the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) since its inception.

On the whole, he has played ten matches in the BPL and boasts a batting average of 77.28, the highest among all players. In fact, the second highest, Imran Nazir's 43.33 in 11 games, is quite some distance away.

There have been a total of nine centuries in the BPL and the 'Universe boss' -- a moniker he uses to describe himself -- has scored three of those. It is not a surprise that he has scored 9,668 T20 runs at an average of 42. His closest competitor, Brad Hodge, has 7,052 runs and will never reach him.

Gayle is in Bangladesh to play just four matches, but with his six-hitting ability, there will not be any surprises if he breaks the 10,000-mark here.

When informed of the impending record, Gayle remarked: "You should have told me earlier. I would have come at the start of the tournament. It will be nice to be the first person to get 10,000 runs. I want the team to qualify so that I get a chance in the playoffs, and not just get knocked out after these four games. The finals are the

most important," said Gayle.

When reminded of his six-hitting statistic, he provided a flamboyant reply -- to no one's surprise.

"I have hit 50 sixes in ten innings? I will see if I can hit 55 in four innings. It is what I am known for, the Six Machine. I try to entertain as much as possible. Hopefully it will be a good wicket tomorrow so I'm looking forward to it," said Gayle.

"My objective is not to worry about the stats but to try to entertain the people as much as possible. I haven't played cricket for four to five months since the Caribbean Premier League so it is good to be back in the game. Tomorrow is a chance for them to get glued to the TV not only locally but overseas as well. Chris Gayle is back, and hopefully I will get off to a good start. It will be good to open the batting with Tamim as well," he added.

The Vikings will be the 19th T20 outfit Gayle will be representing in his career and he hopes he can make a good impact. He had been following the Vikings on television and he thinks they have the momentum with them right now.

"I am looking forward to representing Chittagong Vikings. They were in fourth position last time I checked. They gained some momentum after losing a couple of games and it is good to join a team with momentum. Hopefully I can get a winning start as I return to the BPL.

"I did watch few of the games back home in Jamaica. I followed their scores for sure and from time to time looked at the other teams to get accustomed and try to see what's going on in Bangladesh,"

Shakib ignites Dynamites

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan put in what was arguably his best performance of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) this season to lead the Dhaka Dynamites to a convincing 32-run win over the Comilla Victorians at Mirpur yesterday.

Batting first, a quick 26-ball 41 towards the end from the Dhaka skipper led the Dynamites to a strong 170. In reply, the struggling reigning champions were restricted to just 138 for 8. While Dwayne Bravo scalped their wickets, Shakib finished with figures of 1 for 30.

The win has helped Dhaka become the third team to secure at least ten points after the Rangpur Riders and the Khulna Titans and they are currently placed second, below the Titans.

On the other hand, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's Comilla are rock bottom with just two points from eight matches. Shakib's blitz towards the end was the reason why the Dynamites managed to post a total past the 160-mark because prior to the left-hander's knock they were moving along at a slow pace.

After Mehedi Maruf was stumped in the fifth over for 22 off 17, Sri Lankan legends Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jaywardene shared a 45-run stand for the second wicket before both batsmen were bowled by Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan, who was Comilla's best bowler of the

day with figures of 2 for 26 in four overs.

At the end of 15 overs Dhaka were poised at 109 for 3 and it seemed like they would not reach the 170-mark. However Dhaka scored 61 runs in the last five overs, 30 off which were scored by Shakib. He was supported well by Mosaddek Hossain's 18-ball 25 and Seekuge Prasanna's 4-ball 11. While Mosaddek hit one six and two fours, Prasanna hit one six and one four.

Shakib on the other hand, hit one six and four fours. The highlight of his knock came in the 19th over when he dispatched Mohammad Sharif for a four and a six down the order.

After the exchange, the Victorians lost wickets at regular intervals and never seemed comfortable against Dhaka's bowlers.

While openers Nazmul Hossain Shanto and Khalid Latif struck the ball well, their dismissals saw Comilla lose their way. Nazmul was removed in the fifth over for a 19-ball 17 and Imrul Kayes was the next to depart as he was stumped off Abu Jayed in the ninth over.

Their key player though was Khalid, who was looking good with four fours and a six. However, once he was caught down the ground courtesy of a slower delivery from Bravo in the 11th over, Comilla collapsed. From 72 for 2 in 10 overs, they went down to 106 for 6 in 16 overs.

Dwayne Bravo finished with figures of 3 for 32 and was the best bowler of the day, while Prasanna, Mohammad Shahid, Nasir Hossain, Shakib and Abu Jayed took one each to restrict the Victorians to 138 for 8 at the end of 20 overs.

Bairstow knock revives England

REUTERS, Mohali

Jonny Bairstow's composed 89 helped England survive some atrocious top order shot-making and reach 268 for eight at close of play on the first day of the third test against India on Saturday.

Alastair Cook won the toss but the tourists conceded much of the advantage with poor shot selection and could have been in a deeper hole but for India's poor catching and Bairstow's dogged resistance.

The keeper-batsman featured in 50-plus partnerships with Ben Stokes and the recalled Jos Buttler to revive England, who are 1-0 down in the five-match series.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 268 for 8 (Cook 27, Bairstow 89, Stokes 29, Buttler 43;)

5TH MEN'S AHF CUP BD romp into final

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh romped into the final of the 5th Men's AHF Cup after thrashing Singapore 8-0 in the first semifinal yesterday.

The charges of Oliver Kurtz scored twice in the first half and pressed harder on their opposition at the other side of the break to score six more goals and record this emphatic victory at the King's Park hockey Ground in Hong Kong yesterday.

The men in red and green are scheduled to play the final today at 5:00pm BST, against either Sri Lanka or Hong Kong, who will face off in the second semifinal earlier in the day.

Bangladesh, the champions of the 2008 and 2012 editions, found it difficult to breach the Singapore goal line and so had to wait until the 26th minute to open the scoring. Young midfielder Roman Sarkar gave Bangladesh the lead from a field goal before Milon Hossain made it 2-0 three minutes later.

While the 2-0 scoreline at the end of the first half suggested a keen contest, the second half proved to be one-way traffic with skipper Rasel Mahmud Jimmy getting the team's third two minutes after restart. Mamunur Rahman Chayan, Pushkor Khisha MIMO and Krishna Kumar Das joined the goal fest before Ashraf Islam wrapped up the victory with consecutive penalty corner conversions in the final few minutes of the game.

A win in today's final would confirm Bangladesh's participation in the Asia Cup next year.



The arrival of Twenty20's poster boy Chris Gayle added an exciting vibe to Chittagong Vikings' training session yesterday. The West Indian will feature in tonight's match against an in-form Rangpur Riders.

PHOTO: STAR

SCOREBOARDS

DYNAMITES V VICTORIANS

DHAKA DYNAMITES	R/B	45/66
Maruf st Liton b Samad	22/17	3/1
Sangakkara b Rashid	33/28	4/0
Jayawardene b Rashid	31/27	4/0
Shakib not out	41/26	4/1
Mosaddek c Liton b Sohail	25/18	2/1
Prasanna not out	11/4	1/1
Extras: (b-1, lb-2, w-4)	7	
Total: For 4 wickets in 20 overs	170	

Did not bat: Bravo, Sunzamul, Nasir, Jayed, Shahid

Fall of wickets: 1-38, 2-83, 3-95, 4-141.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	4	0	31	0
Shanto	1	0	10	0
Mohammad	3	0	40	0
Sohail	4	0	36	1
Samad	3	0	16	1
Rashid	4	0	26	2
Al-Amin	1	0	8	0

COMILLA VICTORIANS

COMILLA VICTORIANS	R/B	45/66
Shanto c Shakib b Shahid	17/19	2/0
Khalid c Sunzamul b Bravo	38/33	4/1
Kayes c Sangakkara b Jayed	9/7	1/0
Shehzad c Sunzamul b Bravo	22/22	0/1
Liton c Sangakkara b Prasanna	5/6	0/0
Mashrafe b Bravo	10/8	0/1
Sohail st Sangakkara b Nasir	14/12	0/1
Rashid st Sangakkara b Shakib	3/3	0/0
Al-Amin not out	9/8	1/0
Sharif not out	2/2	0/0
Extras: (b-2, w-7)	9	
Total: For 8 wickets in 20 overs	138	

Did not bat: Nabil Samad

Fall of wickets: 1-24, 2-57, 3-72, 4-91, 5-106, 6-106, 7-113, 8-134.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Jayed	4	0	20	1
Shahid	2	0	6	1
Shakib	4	0	30	3
Bravo	4	0	32	3
Prasanna	4	0	30	1
Sunzamul	1	0	11	0
Nasir	0.4	0	4	1
Mosaddek	0.2	0	3	0

Result: Dhaka Dynamites won by 32 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Shakib Al Hasan.

KINGS V TITANS

RAJSHAHI KINGS	R/B	45/66
Mominal c&b Mahmudullah	12/12	2/0
Junaid c Pooran b Shafiqul	21/18	3/1
Sabbir lbw b Mosharrarf	16/18	1/1
Patel c&b Cooper	16/23	1/0
Akmal lbw b Cooper	9/6	0/1
Sammy not out	71/34	4/5
Mehedi run out (Anifal)	1/1	0/0
Farhad c Cooper b Shafiqul	3/5	0/0
Abul run out (Naeem)	3/3	0/0
Extras: (lb-1, w-1)	2	
Total: (For 8 wickets in 20 overs)	154	

Did not bat: Sami, Nazmul

Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-34, 3-55, 4-66, 5-87, 6-88, 7-116, 8-154.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shuvagata	1	0	5	0
Mahmudullah	2	0	7	1
Junaid	4	0	25	0
Cooper	4	0	31	2
Shafiqul	4	0	53	2
Mosharrarf	4	0	25	1
Taibur	1	0	7	0

KHULNA TITANS

KHULNA TITANS	R/B	45/66
Wessels b Sammy	36/32	4/0
Hasanzaman run out (Sabbir/Umar)	1/3	0/0
Shuvagata c Junaid b Nazmul	2/5	0/0
Mahmudullah b Abul	33/33	3/1
Pooran c Sammy b Mehedi	28/12	1/3
Anifal not out	25/21	2/0
Cooper c Umar b Sami	14/12	1/0
Taibur not out	2/2	0/0
Extras: (lb-4)	4	
Total: (For 6 wickets in 20 overs)	145	

Did not bat: Junaid, Mosharrarf, Shafiqul

Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-15, 3-62, 4-101, 5-107, 6-129.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Nazmul	4	0	17	1
Sami	4	0	32	1
Patel	3	0	18	0
Abul	4	0	25	1
Sammy	1	0	8	1
Mehedi	2	0	27	1
Farhad	2	0	14	0

Result: Rajshahi Kings won by 9 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Darren Sammy.