

Barisal Bulls opener Dawid Malan scored a 33-ball 56 to take his side's score just beyond Rajshahi Kings' reach during their Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Mushy content with Bulls' late charge

SPORTS REPORTER



Nearly four thousand spectators deserved credit for their patience after they turned up to watch last night's Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The credit is especially owed as they waited till the last ball by which point it was hard to understand what the purpose was behind Rajshahi Kings' batting after Barisal Bulls' ordinary effort saw them reach 161 for four.

They might have been waiting for Kings captain Darren Sammy, but the West Indian was not allowed by his top-order batsmen to entertain the small crowd in a meaningful way.

However Samit Patel, who scored 62 off 51 balls for Rajshahi, shouldered the blame after the match, saying that they should have gone for big shots earlier in their innings.

Patel thought that they had conceded 15 runs too many which saw them losing the game by 17 runs.

On the other hand, Barisal Bulls captain Mushfiquur Rahim came to the press conference in an upbeat mood, although he said that he would have been happier if his team had gotten a win like this a few games earlier.

While his team still have the chance to reach the last four, the Bulls skipper was only looking to win the last game.

"Why are there only a few [reporters] here? I hoped it would be a big crowd as I came here as a winning captain," joked Mushfiquur before starting off the post-match press conference.

"I am happy with today's performance. Yes, after scoring over 100 runs in 13 overs I had expected a much better total -- at least 170 -- but we could not get the expected runs as we lost two set batsmen. Anyway, 161 was still a competitive score and my bowlers bowled really well," said Mushfiquur.

"If you look at the other side, we were not a strong side but still I had the hope of reaching the last four. But unfortunately, we did not perform according to our expectations in the last few matches. Now I am looking forward to finishing with a win," he

POINTS TABLE

Teams	M	W	L	Pts	RR
Dhaka Dynamites	10	7	3	14	+1.102
Chittagong Vikings	10	6	4	12	+0.587
Khulna Titans	10	6	4	12	-0.267
Rajshahi Kings	11	5	6	10	+0.009
Rangpur Riders	10	5	5	10	-0.255
Barisal Bulls	11	4	7	8	-0.618

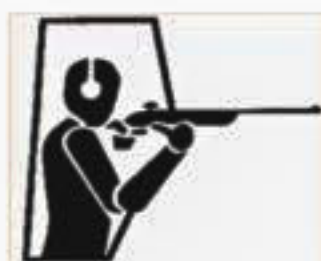
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The matches in Dhaka have not yielded as many runs as the matches in Chittagong, but Mushfiquur was not willing to blame the pitches.

"I think if you compare them to last season's, the pitches are better this time. I am not ready to blame [the pitches] because it's not too easy under these conditions where you do not get enough sunlight to keep the pitches well. You can still score runs here but I don't think the batsmen could capitalise on it," he observed.

BSSF eyes silverware in Tokyo

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Shooting Sports Federation (BSSF) yesterday unveiled an ambitious 'vision 2020' as they aim to win a medal in the Tokyo Olympics after putting pen to paper with high profile Danish coach Klavs Christensen at the Bangladesh Shooting Complex in Gulshan yesterday.

Bangladesh have so far taken part in nine Olympic Games since 1984, but have failed to produce any medal from the world's biggest sporting showcase. Winning a medal from the Olympics has always been a distant dream for Bangladesh as all of its athletes -- apart from golfer Siddikur Rahman -- have had to participate in the Olympics via wild card entries provided by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to ensure the participation of all member associations.

Shooting has always been considered a discipline where Bangladesh has the potential to win medals at the international level, a belief that has been justified as Bangladesh have won gold medals in the Commonwealth Games, Commonwealth Shooting Championships and South Asian (SA) Games.

However, that level has not yet been attained in events such as the Asian Games and Olympic Games

due to a lack of training facilities, qualified coaches, participation at international level and financial constraints.

Although the BSSF has hardly taken any initiative to improve the standard of the shooters compared to the world's best in the Asian and Olympic Games, this time the game's governing body is dreaming big by reappointing rifle coach Christensen up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The BSSF has also appointed Montenegrin pistol coach Marko Sokic up to 2018, a year a lot of international meets such as the Youth Olympics, Asian Games, ISSF World Cup and SA Games are scheduled to take place.

"With the hope to win a medal from the next Olympics, we have made a vision 2020 for Tokyo Olympics and roped in two high-profile coaches to conduct long-term training for shooters," said BSSF secretary general Intikhabul Hamid Apu during a contract signing ceremony with Christensen yesterday.

The BSSF has to bear expenses of 450 euros per day for the two European coaches and a few corporate houses including IFIC, Beximco, Hamim Group and Index Group have come forward to help the federation, informed Apu.

"Although four years of training is not good enough to win a gold medal from a platform like the Olympics,

we want to try it under the guidance of two coaches and we have already started our training programme for two months with 35 shooters, who have been selected from [a pool of] some 200 shooters," said Apu. "We can see the progress in 2018 when a lot of international tournaments will take place and then we can understand how the shooters will perform in the Olympics."

Christensen is hopeful of achieving the goal but first he wants his charges to qualify for the Olympics instead of gaining participation through wild cards. He also believes that he has found talented shooters in Bangladesh.

"It is not easy to win a medal in the Olympics because a lot of countries are trying and they invest lots of money. If you ask me about the medal, I can just say that I really hope for it. My first goal is take direct qualification from the qualifying tournaments which I think is achievable. I believe achieving entry on merit will be a big step for the Bangladeshi shooters," said Christensen, who has been working with Bangladeshi shooters since last March.

Meanwhile, a 19-member contingent featuring 16 shooters were scheduled to leave here last night for Iran to take part in the Asian Air Gun Championship and the BSSF officials and Christensen hope to see some progress in the ninth edition of the championships, scheduled for December 3-9.

Carlsen's 3rd in a row

AFP, New York



Norwegian Magnus Carlsen extended his dominance over the chess world on Wednesday by winning the World Chess Championship for the third consecutive time on Wednesday, beating his Russian challenger Sergei Karyakin in a tiebreaker.

The win puts Carlsen closer to the status of chess legends such as Garry Kasparov, who dominated the game for 15 years.

Although Karyakin foiled predictions by tying Carlsen in 12 regular rounds, the Norwegian champion beat him in the final phase of four quick-fire extra games.

The battle for the world chess crown ended up in the dramatic tiebreaker on Wednesday after a win apiece and nine draws. So the young stars -- both aged just 26 -- headed into the chess equivalent of extra time in soccer.

Unlike the earlier rounds, which lasted an average of six hours, the rapid-play rules meant the players had just 25 minutes each, so each game was over in an hour.

The accelerated games left plenty of opportunity for harried mistakes, and while predictions were difficult, Carlsen -- a king of the blitz format and world number-one since 2010 -- had remained favourite.

The Norwegian, who turned 26 on Wednesday, has played several blitz tournaments this year, beating US Grand Master Hikaru Nakamura in one in October.

But he has occasionally shown flashes of losing his cool, as when he slammed the door of the press room after defeat in the eighth round, earning a fine of five percent of his prize money.

Carlsen won the championship -- organized by the International Chess Federation, FIDE -- in 2013 and 2014, beating Indian Viswanathan Anand.

Karyakin has known Carlsen for years and had little to lose, with no one even having expected him to reach the final.

"Sergei has impressed everyone with his tenacity these last few weeks so he is perfectly capable of pulling an upset," said Wesley So, who travelled to New York from Minnesota to watch the clash.



Norwegian Grand Master Magnus Carlsen holds up the World Chess Championship trophy after beating Russian counterpart Sergei Karyakin in New York on Wednesday.

PANASONIC OPEN Jamal in 30th place

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh golfer Jamal Hossain got off to a good start in the Panasonic Open India as he finished with a score of 72, securing par.

The 31-year-old traded three birdies for as many bogeys as he secured the 30th position alongside 28 others at the scenic Delhi Golf Club.

The Indian duo of Jyoti Randhawa and Mukesh Kumar are leading the table of the US 4,00,000 tournament with scores of five-under-par (67).

There were four players tied for third with scores of two-under-par (70), while 23 players hit one-under-par (71) to stay at seventh.

Bravo takes WICB to court

IANIS, Port of Spain



West Indies batsman Darren Bravo is taking legal action against the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) after he was dropped from the squad before their recent tri-nations One-Day International (ODI) series in Zimbabwe.

Bravo is claiming unlawful dismissal after he was sent home by management committee for blasting WICB president Dave Cameron in a row over contracts, reports CMC.

The Guardian newspaper reports that Bravo's lawyer sent a pre-action protocol letter to the WICB last week which has been received by the board.

Bravo, the most consistent batsman for the Caribbean side in the longest format, was overlooked for the top tier and offered a Grade C contract.

The row between Bravo and Cameron erupted after the WICB chief stated that Bravo's performance was not consistent enough to merit a higher grade of pay.

Bravo lashed out at Cameron on social media platform Twitter, accusing him and the board officials of never offering him a Grade A contract in the first place despite his consistency.

In the tweet, Bravo was alleged to have referred to the WICB President as "a big idiot".

Lankans have pace, but need to swing: Akram

AFP, Colombo



Legendary Pakistani pacer Wasim Akram said that Sri Lanka had a promising crop of fast bowlers despite their traditional reliance on spin after holding a coaching session with the islanders Thursday.

After spending several hours with the national team's main established strike bowlers and promising youngsters, Akram said there was no lack of raw pace but they needed to develop their ability to swing the ball.

"Most of the bowlers had a pace of 130 to 140 kmph," said Akram who himself bowled at a similar pace in the 1990s when he was one of the world's leading players.

Akram, who is now 50, said slower wickets were a fact of life in South Asia, particularly in Sri Lanka whose most successful bowlers have been spinners.

long as they had the right tricks up the sleeve.

"The idea is to teach them how to believe in themselves and how to fox out the batsmen," he said after a coaching session at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SCC) grounds in Colombo.

Akram was joined at the SCC by Sri Lankan legends Aravinda de Silva and Chaminda Vaas.

Vaas, a former seamer, was recently tasked with identifying fast bowling talent across the cricket-mad island.

Akram took 414 Test wickets and 502 in 356 one-day internationals -- both still a Pakistan record.

Sri Lanka Cricket Chief Thilanga Sumathipala said they invited Akram to mentor local players in the next two years and visit the island at least twice a year.

"We have invited him to be with us in the next two years as our consultant in pace bowling," said Sumathipala.

Sri Lanka are to embark on a tour of South Africa later this month to play three Tests, three T20 matches and five ODIs.

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