

# SPORT



## New chapter at Changlimithang

### Under-18s stage incredible fightback to beat India 4-3

SPORTS REPORTER

**Bangladesh produced a Liverpool-esque fight back to stun regional powerhouse India 4-3 in the opening match of the SAFF U-18 Championship at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu, Bhutan yesterday.**

Having conceded three goals in the first half, the boys in red and green had looked dead and buried, but fittingly armed with red shirts, the Bangladesh players channelled their inner Liverpool spirit in the second half to score four times and upset the Indians, thereby taking the pole position in this five-team league format tournament.

It was a sweet revenge for the under-18 team, as they were eliminated by India in the semifinal stage of this tournament's last edition two years ago, when the tournament was branded as the SAFF U-19 Championship. This is also Bangladesh's second age-group level victory over India, and the first one since the under-16 team defeated their Indian counterparts to win the SAFF U-16 Championship title in Sylhet three years ago.

And coincidentally the win came at the venue where eleven months ago Bangladesh football had hit its lowest point, with the senior side's humiliating defeat at the hands of Bhutan in an Asian Cup Qualifying play fixture.

Bangladesh started the game brightly



Bangladesh players celebrate the second goal against India in a thrilling come-from-behind 4-3 win in the SAFF U-18 Championship at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

and looked to be the more dominant side for the first 15 minutes, but conceded the opening goal in the 19th minute when Lalawama effortlessly raced past a Bangladesh defender, on a long ball past the defence, and placed the ball down

Bangladesh's goalkeeper and into the net. India doubled the lead in the 32nd minute through Edmund Lalindika's expert spot-kick after Bangladesh skipper Tutul Hossain Badshah had brought down an Indian player inside the box.

Bangladesh should have reduced the margin in the 40th minute when Mohammad Shadhin had the goal at his mercy following Mohammad Al Amri's chip that had rebounded off the crossbar, but the centre-forward incredi-

bly lobbed the ball over the bar from inside the six-yard box.

India then seemingly took the game away from Bangladesh three minutes into stoppage time of the first half when Rebelo Princeson's dipping free-kick

ended up at the left-corner of the net, but Mahbub Hossain Roxy's changes turned the tables on the other side of the break.

Jafar Iqbal reduced the arrears with a powerful header from a corner ten minutes after restart before centre-back Rahmat Mia made it 2-3, striking from an indirect free-kick from the top of the six-yard box after India's goalkeeper had gathered a back-pass from one of their defenders.

India soon made two substitutions to stave off the Bangladesh attacks, but Bangladesh took full toll of India's nervous defending with Mahbub Rahman heading in the equaliser in the 74th minute.

India produced a couple of chances to regain the lead, but it was Jafar Iqbal's glancing header on a corner in the 91st minute which earned Bangladesh a memorable victory as the red and green camp erupted with joy.

Coach Roxy termed the victory as a brilliant job. "In my playing career, I never saw Bangladesh coming back from two goals down. In one word it was a brilliant job by my players." Roxy said at the post-match briefing. "In the second half we were able to execute the game strategy we had originally set out to execute. We perfectly carried out high pressing and our set-piece plan worked out accurately."

Meanwhile, hosts Bhutan beat Maldives in the second match of the day to share the top spot with Bangladesh.

Bangladesh will next take on Maldives tomorrow.

## Rajshahi only winners in draw-fest

SPORTS REPORTER

**Rajshahi Division registered the only win of the opening round of the 19th National Cricket League as they beat Sylhet by six wickets on the final day following four exciting days of cricket at the Shahid Karuamzann Stadium in Rajshahi yesterday.**

Chasing a target of 211, Rajshahi were expected to win as they resumed the final day on 86 for two and they went on to reach the target inside the first session.

Both overnight batsmen Farhad Hossain and Zunaid Siddique kept things under control and added 72 runs for the third wicket to lay the foundation for an easy win. Farhad scored a team-high 70 off 99 balls with 11 fours and a six while Zunaid Siddique added 46 as they snatched big maximum points from the 2nd encounter.

Sylhet were earlier bundled out for 128 in their first innings, but Rajshahi suffered tremendous batting collapse of their own and were skittled for 79 runs, courtesy of some

SCORERS IN BRIEF	
<b>DHAKA METRO VS CHITTAGONG</b>	Robul 100; Nasir 5-70
<b>DHAKA METRO:</b> 344 all-out 1st Innings and 169-6 declared (Marshall Ayub 74 not out; Mehedi Hasan Raja 3-37)	<b>Result:</b> Match drawn.
<b>CHITTAGONG:</b> 130 all-out 1st Innings and 193-4 (Sazzad Haque 82, Tasamul Haque 46 not out, Sharif Ullah 2-66)	<b>Result:</b> Match drawn.
<b>KHULNA VS RANGPUR</b>	
<b>RANGPUR:</b> 471 all-out 1st Innings and 37-4 (Naeem 135, Dhiman 105, Sohravard 89, Masroor 3-12)	<b>Result:</b> Match drawn.
<b>KHULNA:</b> 495-9 declared (Anamul 216, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza bagged three wickets in a short cameo.	
<b>Wicketkeeper-batsman Anamul resumed the fourth day on 172 and went on to score 216 off 356 balls during his eight-hour-plus stay at the crease.</b>	
<b>Khulna took the first innings lead and declared on 495 for nine after Rangpur had posted 471 in their first innings, courtesy of centuries from Naeem Islam and Dhiman Ghosh.</b>	
<b>Rangpur's Nasir Hossain bagged a maiden five-wicket haul in first class competition, ending with the</b>	

brilliant bowling by off-spinner and eventual man-of-the-match Sayem Ahmed.

However, the Jahurul Islam-led side made a brilliant comeback in the second innings and dismissed Sylhet for 162 before going on to clinch the first win of the season.

The other three games ended in draws due to continual interruptions by rain.

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figures of five from 70 to 200 overs.

Rangpur looked like they would have to face the music in their second innings after Mashrafe bowled a gem of a spell. The right-arm seamer scalped two wickets in his second over of the day and followed that up with another scalp in the next over and had given away just 12 runs from four over before rain once again interrupted play. Unfortunately the downpour continued, forcing the match to be called off just eight overs as Rangpur were reeling at 37 for four.

Mashrafe, who picked up just one wicket in the first innings, is expected to take part in the second round of the league before departing for South Africa for the three-match ODI series against the Proteas.

Persistent rain plagued the Tier 1 match between Dhaka Division and Barisal at Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar, forcing three days of play, including the final day, to be abandoned. Only the second day saw players take the field and Dhaka posted 309 for two in their first innings with centuries from Rony Talukder and Safi Hasan. Not a single ball was bowled after that.



The Bangladesh coaching staff get players through a stretching session at the Willowmore Park in Benoni where they will start their South Africa tour with a three-day match against CA Invitation XI starting on September 21.

PHOTO: BCC

## Rumana fier destroys Hillool

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national women's team captain, Rumana Ahmed helped defending champions Rupali Bank begin their Women's Premier Division Cricket League campaign on a high by bagging five wickets as her side comprehensively beat Hillool JS by ten wickets in the BKS-3 ground in Savar yesterday.

After opting to bat, Hillool suffered a horrible collapse courtesy of Rumana's leg-spin.

Only three batsmen were able to reach double digits as Hillool were bundled out for 70 runs in 36.2 overs.

Rumana ended with brilliant figures of five wickets for just six runs from 7.2 overs while Sheikh Jakir took three.

Rupali Bank reached the target in just nine overs with opener Sanjida Islam unbeaten on 50, smashing eight fours and a six, while Ayesha Rahman was not out on 16.

In the other match of the day, Kheलगar SKS beat Kalabang CBK by six wickets by D/L method.

Kheलगar reached the revised target of 124 after losing four wickets in 39.5 overs. Rubya Haidar top-scored with 49.

Earlier, after being asked to bat, Kalabang were all out in 126 in 49.2 overs. Ritu Moni picked up three wickets and Fendosi took two.

## Plunkett up for Gayle contest

Eng-WI first ODI today

AFP, Chester-le-Street



England fast bowler Liam Plunkett is excited by the prospect of facing West Indies' big-hitter Chris Gayle in an upcoming one-day international series.

Veteran left-handed opener Gayle gave England a taste of what they can expect in the five-match ODI clash with a typically rapid 40 as World Twenty20 champions West Indies beat England by 21 runs in the lone T20 international of their tour in Durham on Saturday.

A sell-out crowd were rewarded for braving a cold and rainspight night in Chester-le-Street by the sight of Gayle smashing three fours and four sixes in just 21 balls.

It was a reminder that the 37-year-old Jamaican has lost none of his power at the crease and England are preparing for more of the same when the ODI campaign starts at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

"I don't think anyone knows (how to bowl to Gayle) do they?" said Plunkett. "He's such a good player he just hits the ball out of the park wherever he wants."

None of the West Indies side that played on Saturday featured during their recent 2-1 Test series loss in England.

But the likes of Gayle, Marlon Samuels and Jerome Taylor, who missed the Test series because of a clash with the Caribbean Premier League Twenty20 tournament and the legacy of a bitter dispute with Cricket West Indies chiefs, are now back in the fold.

"It's good they have their experienced players back, a lot of stars, and that's what you want to play against," said 32-year-old Plunkett.

"You want to beat the best they can bring over."

While the West Indies also have two World Cup titles behind them, England have yet to win a major global one-day international trophy, while the 2010 World Twenty20 Cup Caribbean their lone piece of International Cricket Council silverware.

But England are a much-improved ODI side since their woeful first-round exit at the 2015 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

"In one day games we're a good team, we haven't won any silverware obviously but in terms of the last two years with the amount of games and series we are a confident team," Plunkett said.

"We feel like we should beat them (West Indies)."

## BPL begins Nov 3rd

SPORTS REPORTER

The fifth edition of the Bangladesh Premier League T20 tournament is scheduled to begin from November 3rd at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, which will make its debut as a venue for the cash-rich tournament, as announced by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday.

The opening fixture will feature new comers Sylhet Sixers against defending champions Dhaka Dynamites.

This season's BPL will be played across three cities - Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. A total of 46 matches will be played, including the final which is set to take place on December 12th at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Earlier, Barisal Bulls were ruled out from this season as the franchise was unable to meet the financial terms set by the BPL governing council.

The players' draft for the fifth edition of the BPL took place on September 16.

## A fulfilling knock

SPORTS REPORTER

It was a test of character for wicketkeeper-batsman Anamul Haque Bijoy as he registered his maiden double hundred on the final day of Khulna Division's National Cricket League match against Rangpur Division at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna, which ended in a draw yesterday.

The right-hander smashed Rangpur's left-arm spinner Sohravard Shuvo to the boundary to reach the landmark and he celebrated the 41st double hundred in Bangladesh's first class competition with vigour. Anamul had previously come agonisingly close to the landmark five years ago before being dismissed on 193 against Dhaka Metro.

The 24-year-old displayed tremendous maturity and temperament in a stop-start game in Khulna, where rain had interrupted the better part of the match. Anamul came to bat in the second session of the second day and reached his fifty off 58 balls before going on to smash his 13th first class century 100 balls later on the same day after Rangpur had posted a massive 471 before being bowled out in their first innings.

The cricketer from Kushtia was unbeaten on 172 after rain had allowed only 39 overs of play on the third day, but the wait was worth it as he reached the magic figure within the first hour of the fourth day after facing 330 balls.

Anamul was finally dismissed after scoring 216 runs off 356 deliveries in the marathon eight-hour innings, having struck 18 fours and two sixes before being trapped leg before by off-spinner Nasir Hossain. However, his innings enabled Khulna to take the all-important first innings lead

before declaring on 495 for nine.

According to Anamul, it was his best knock in first class competitions, especially considering that it was difficult for him to remain focused for long periods as rain interrupted the match a few times while he was at the crease.

"To be honest it was a tough ask for me to keep my concentration levels high as there were frequent breaks in the game due to rain. But I am happy with the way I approached the innings. I think my patience has improved a lot. This is an area I was willing to improve on and luckily I got the result at the start of the season," Anamul told The Daily Star yesterday.

The wicket-keeper batsman played his last international game during the ICC World Cup in 2015, where he had injured his shoulder while fielding, and has been unable to stage a comeback to the national team since.

BCB president Nazmul Hassan had earlier stated that the wicketkeeper-batsman was among the contenders for a place in the national team before the squad for the South Africa tour was announced, but ultimately he did not find a place.

However, Anamul informed that he was not thinking of the national team but instead looking to concentrate only on his performances.

"At the moment I am only focusing on my game and I don't want to think about anything else. I used to think a lot about staging a comeback to the national team before, but that put extra pressure on me. So I have decided to keep improving my game and the rest is up to Allah," he concluded.



Anamul Haque celebrates his maiden double hundred for Khulna on the final day of their National Cricket League fixture against Rangpur yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB