

# SPORT



In a battle of Lankans Upul Tharanga (L) and Kumar Sangakkara, the former had the last laugh as his unbeaten 69 powered Sylhet Sixers to a nine-wicket victory against defending champions Dhaka Dynamites in the opening match of the fifth edition of BPL at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Nasir's Sixers defuse Dynamites

MAZAR UDDIN from Sylhet

Nasir Hossain may not have a significant track record as a captain but one could hardly tell otherwise when he took up the job for Sylhet Sixers against defending champions Dhaka Dynamites in their Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) encounter yesterday. Backed up by the capacity crowd at the Sylhet International cricket stadium, which is hosting its first ever BPL fixtures, the home side were on top right from the word go. From opening the innings with the ball to ending with figures of 2 for 21 from his four overs, where he picked up Mehedi Maruf in the first over to restrict the Dhaka's strong batting line-up on 136 for 7, it was a clinical performance from Nasir and his side throughout the game. Sylhet cruised to the target in 16.5 overs following a magnificent 125 run first-wicket partnership from Upul Tharanga and Andre Fletcher.

the way he paced the innings was truly remarkable.

Earlier, when Nasir won the toss and elected to field, it was seen as a daunting task for any bowling side to be up against the likes of Lewis, Sangakkara, Shakib and Pollard but on the contrary his side made it look easy.

Pacers Abul Hasan and Liam Plunkett also played their parts as they made sure that the batters failed to try different approaches by utilising their accuracy and variations on a sporting track while picking up two wickets each for just 24 and 20 runs respectively.

On the other hand, high expectations combined with a lack of application could prove to be even costlier for Shakib's side despite having big names in their ranks.

None of the Dhaka batsmen were able to stretch their innings where Sangakkara's 32 runs off 28 balls was the only note worthy performance while Lewis and Shakib scored twenties.

Losing wickets at regular intervals held Dhaka back as they managed just 36 runs in the last five overs and were inevitably unable to post more than 170, which according to Shakib is a fighting total.

"We are proud to win our first game," Nasir said after the game before adding: "Our bowlers bowled well in the first six overs and continued that throughout the innings. Our game plan worked well."

This could be a good learning experience for Dhaka because they should now prepare their combinations more fully for the next game while Sylhet will be on alert when they take on Comilla Victorians today.

### SCOREBOARD

#### SYLHET V DHAKA

Dhaka Dynamites	R/B	4s/6s
Maruf c Whiteley b Nasir	0/3	0/0
Lewis c Hasan b Nasir	26/24	3/1
Sangakkara c Hasan		
b Plunkett	32/28	3/1
Mosaddেক run out	6/11	0/0
Shakib c Sabbir b Plunkett	23/21	1/0
Pollard c Nasir b Hasan	11/7	0/1
Delpport not out	20/13	0/1
Rashid c Fletcher b Hasan	3/6	0/0
Abu Hider not out	7/8	1/0
Extras: (lb-3, nb-1, w-4)	8	
Total: (For 7 wickets in 20 overs)	136	
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-56, 3-66, 4-76, 5-98, 6-114, 7-119		

#### Bowler

O	M	R	W	
Nasir	4.0	0	21	2
Shuvagata	3.0	0	27	0
Santokie	4.0	0	36	0
Hasan	4.0	0	24	2
Plunkett	4.0	0	20	2
Tajjul	1.0	0	5	0

#### SYLHET SIXERS

R/B	4s/6s
Tharanga not out	69/48 5/2
Fletcher c Lewis b Rashid	63/51 5/3
Sabbir not out	2/2 0/0
Extras: (w-3)	3
Total: (For 1 wicket in 16.5 overs)	137
Did not bat: Whiteley, Nasir, Shuvagata, Nurul Hasan, Tajjul, Abul Hasan, Santokie, Plunkett	
Fall of wickets: 1-125	

#### Bowler

O	M	R	W	
Shakib	4.0	0	23	0
Shahid	1.0	0	14	0
Saqlain	2.0	0	23	0
Abu Hider	3.0	0	27	0
Rashid	4.0	0	31	1
Delpport	1.0	0	7	0
Pollard	1.5	0	12	0

Result: Sylhet Sixers won by 9 wickets  
Players-of-the-match: Upul Tharanga

## Drop catches cost Rajshahi

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

Rajshahi Kings skipper Darren Sammy will surely be spending more time in catching practise after drop catches cost his side the game against Rangpur Riders by six wickets in their BPL match at the Sylhet International stadium yesterday.

Both Ravi Bopara and Thisara Perera who remained unbeaten on 39 off 23 balls and 20 off 12 balls respectively for Rangpur were dropped by the Rajshahi fielders in the crucial moments of the game.

Luke Wright and Samit Patel were the main culprits for Rajshahi after dropping three catches.

Mohammad Mithun and Shahriar Nafees held the ship after Rangpur were struggling on 15 for 2 losing both openers Adam Lyth (0) and Johnson Charles (9) early.

The pair added 75 runs in the third wicket and more importantly they kept the required run rate well under control. Mithun however was dismissed scoring highest 46 off 33 balls as Rajshahi started to take control. Nafees also departed scoring 35 off 34 balls with three fours and two sixes,

Rangpur required another 42 runs from 29 balls until drop catches eventually cost Rajshahi the game.

Earlier lethal Lasith Malinga made his BPL debut for Rangpur but not with much venom picking up two wickets for 34 runs from his four overs. Rony Talukdar hit a team-highest 38-ball 47 before Rangpur skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who changed his jersey number from 2 to 0, bowled him as Rajshahi posted 155 for 4 in 20 overs.

Left-arm spinner Nazmul Islam did some snake dance to entertain the huge crowd as he picked up the wickets of Wright and Mushfiqur Rahim.



**Rony Talukdar's innings-highest 47 drove Rajshahi Kings to 154 for eight in their Bangladesh Premier League match against Rangpur Riders at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.**

PHOTO: STAR

### SCOREBOARD

#### RAJSHAHI V RANGPUR

RAJSHAHI KINGS	R/B	4s/6s
Wright c Perera b Nazmul	11/14	1/0
Morninul c Rubel b Sohag	9/7	1/0
Rony b Mashrafe	47/38	3/2
Mushfiqur c Bopara b Nazmul	11/8	1/0
Patel lbw b Malinga	3/6	0/0
Franklin not out	26/22	1/1
Sammy c Lyth b Malinga	29/18	1/2
Farhad Reza run out	0/2	0/0
Mehedi run out	15/5	3/0
Extras: (lb-2, w-1)	3	
Total: (For 8 wickets in 20 overs)	154	
Did not bat: Nihaduzzaman, Williams.		
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-61, 3-75, 4-80, 5-90, 6-135, 7-135, 8-154.		

#### Bowler

O	M	R	W	
Mortaza	4.0	1	18	1
Sohag	1.0	0	5	1
Nazmul	4.0	0	20	2
Rubel	4.0	0	43	0
Malinga	4.0	0	34	0
Perera	2.0	0	23	0
Bopara	1.0	0	9	0

#### RANGPUR RIDERS

R/B	4s/6s
Charles lbw b Reza	9/11 1/0
Lyth c Reza b Mehidy	0/1 0/0
Mithun c Wright b Williams	46/33 1/3
Nafees b Franklin	35/34 3/1
Bopara not out	39/23 3/2
Perera not out	20/12 2/0
Extras: (lb 1, nb 1, w 4)	6
Total: (For 4 wickets in 20 overs)	155
Did not bat: Mashrafe, Rubel, Gazi, Nazmul, Malinga	
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-15, 3-90, 4-113	

#### Bowler

O	M	R	W	
Mehidy	4.0	0	31	1
Patel	2.0	0	14	0
Nihaduzzaman	3.0	0	23	0
Farhad Reza	3.5	0	30	1
Williams	3.0	0	30	1
Franklin	3.0	0	26	1

Result: Rangpur won by 6 wickets  
Player-of-the-match: Ravi Bopara

## A good platform to hone my skill

It is impossible to forget Carlos Brathwaite's four sixes in the last over off Ben Stokes that clinched West Indies' scintillating victory over England in the ICC World T20 final last year. The hard-hitting batsman was later named captain of the T20 side, but also saw the other side of the coin as he was dropped from the ODI team. The 29-year-old, who will play for Khulna Titans in this season's Bangladesh Premier League, spoke to The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin about his current assignment, those four sixes in the World T20 final and his future. The excerpts are below:

The Daily Star (TDS): What made you choose Khulna Titans?

Carlos Brathwaite (CB): The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) is one of the best franchise leagues and here I have the chance to work with the legendary Mahela (Jayawardene). I will try to look and learn from him, not just as a cricketer but also as a person. That's what really sold me on the BPL; the ability to work with Mahela and take my game forward in the sub-continent.

TDS: This is your first appearance in the BPL...

CB: I had my name in the draft last year and was picked by Barisal but unfortunately couldn't fulfil my contract because of international duties. This year I really wanted to experience the tournament

because I am not in the Test team and saw this as an opportunity to improve my batting. I want to play spin well and there's no better person to work with than Mahela.

TDS: Do you want to regain your spot in the ODI side through this BPL?

CB: As a player and individual I want to get better each day regardless of what was said and reasons why I was dropped. This BPL isn't a matter to test my arm, it's about improving my batting, bowling, fielding and fitness to try and become the best version of myself. And so, in the future, if I get reselected I will give my best but even if not, I will still try to be my best version. But for the moment I am only focused on the BPL and giving the franchise my best.



TDS: Have you set any personal targets?

CB: We have an important game tomorrow [Sunday] so I want to be prepared. I would like to continue performing for my franchise but haven't set any personal goals because if I set goals and can't deliver then it's frustrating and adds pressure. My ultimate dream

is to improve and be the best I can be and hopefully by the end of my career I can look back and say it was a very good, successful career and that I gave my hundred per cent for each team that I played for.

TDS: Did players like Chris Gayle and Kieron Pollard inspire you to become a hard-hitter?

CB: Gayle, Pollard, [Dwayne] Bravo and Marlon Samuels did inspire me to become better. Each of them had challenges as we all do; from injuries to selection, which they overcome. When I face similar challenges, I look to them for inspiration on how to make it in.

TDS: How has your life changed after the World T20 final in 2016?

CB: Many expect a repeat of that and that adds extra pressure. Usually, a good performer is not

considered as one for long because everyone expects greatness every time. I think I've done pretty well since then and that's due to the attitude I adopted: taking it one day at a time only trying to control what's in my hands.

TDS: What was going through your mind in that famous last over against England?

CB: I was just numb and wanted to watch the ball, I knew Samuels was at the other end with 70 or 80 odd. So I tried to get bat on ball and went for a boundary but I really wanted to get him on strike. Thankfully I managed to hit four balls for the maximum and we won while I was the person with bat in hand. It was a magnificent achievement for the West Indies women's and men's teams to become world champions simultaneously.

### MOMENTS

#### NASIR LATE FOR TOSS

Dhaka Dynamites skipper Shakib Al Hasan was made to wait alongside the match referee for five minutes as Sylhet Sixers captain Nasir Hossain was nowhere to be found when the time came for the toss. It is possible that Nasir could have been so busy at the team meeting that it slipped his mind but he soon came rushing onto the pitch to end the delay, which perhaps was an elaborate mind game or a fruitful last minute meeting as the hosts came out victorious in the end.

#### EVIN LEWIS SURVIVES BEAMER SCARE

Dhaka Dynamites opener Evin Lewis looked confident early in the innings against Sylhet Sixers but that quickly changed on the fifth ball of the seventh over as pacer Liam Plunkett sent a nasty beamer rocketing towards the West Indian. It was a fast delivery pointed directly at his face and so when Lewis tried to duck it, he was smacked right on the back of his helmet. The left-hander then immediately fell to the ground while everyone on the ground rushed to his aid. After awhile though, he was back on his feet with no serious injuries. However, the incident could have affected his concentration as he was dismissed the very next over by Nasir.

#### FRUSTRATED POLLARD THROWS HIS BAT

It was a lack of cohesion for the star studded Dhaka Dynamites that cost them their encounter with Sylhet Sixers yesterday. Nothing had gone right for the defending champions and even the big man Kieron Pollard, who came to the crease looking to chance his arms, departed



West Indies and Dhaka Dynamites all-rounder Kieron Pollard losing his bat. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

in a bizarre fashion. The right hander was dealing in singles after striking a six and was forced to remain calm. When he finally went for a big one off seamer Abul Hasan's foolish length delivery, he mistimed the slower ball and was caught at long-off. But more importantly he lost his grip on the bat, which flew quite a long distance. Luckily no one was hurt and Pollard grabbed his bat before taking the long trudge back to the dressing room.

#### ELECTRIFYING SYLHET CROWD HOST THEIR MAIDEN BPL

The atmosphere at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium was absolutely electrifying as the fifth edition of the BPL got underway in the eastern part of the country. It was a full house yesterday with not even a single vacant space in the stadium while thousands even gathered outside. The enthusiastic crowd cheered on the home team for practically every ball and just to put the icing on the cake, the Sylhet Sixers went on to convincingly win the fixture against holders Dhaka Dynamites.