

SPORT



Mominul Haque is perfectly balanced as he executes a lofted flick shot during his unbeaten knock of 63 for Rajshahi Kings against Rangpur Riders in a Bangladesh Premier League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

BCB looks beyond Hathurusingha

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is all set to begin their search for a new head coach for the Tigers as Chandika Hathurusingha remained rigid in his decision to quit the job.

Chandika communicated with BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury and, according to a board insider, the Sri Lankan once again expressed his unwillingness to continue with the job and said that he would stick to the decision he made during the South Africa tour. Now Chandika will visit Bangladesh within a short time to settle the contractual obligations.

One of Chandika's close aides in the Bangladesh team corroborated the news, sending a text message to a player which said "he is gone", and another stating "let's move forward". So unless there is a dramatic U-turn from the Sri Lankan, the Chandikera is going to end soon.

BCB director Jalal Yunus confirmed the latest communication between their CEO and head coach but he was not clear about whether Chandika had changed his mind or not.

"CEO [Nizamuddin] and Chandika talked about the issue but I cannot say what they discussed or whether he will join or not. But we will start to search for a new coach if he doesn't come in time," said Yunus.

"We will go slowly in search of a suitable head coach because we have enough time before the 2019 World Cup. I don't want to say whether he will continue or not but we

have to take preparations so that we can find a good coach. It's not that easy to find a good coach for the national team," he continued.

For a second successive day Chandika's resignation was the centre of discussion despite the fact that the BPL's Dhaka leg got underway at Mirpur yesterday.

Bangladesh ODI and Rangpur Riders captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and first match hero Mominul Haque had to face questions regarding the resignation at the post-match briefing.

"It is very difficult to say anything about this issue as board is still talking with him [Hathurusingha]. We just learnt that he resigned," said Mashrafe.

When asked whether he had gotten any hints during the South Africa tour, Mashrafe said: "Honestly I was there for two weeks but didn't feel like he was going to resign as we talked about a lot of positive things. We had actually wanted to win at least one game there [in South Africa]."

He was also unwilling to comment on whether the relationship between the coach and senior players had soured.

"We will know about the options when he confirms [his resignation] and we will give our opinion if the board wants. We still have time before the World Cup so whether Chandika stays or a new coach comes they will get enough time," added Mashrafe when asked about their choice for a new coach.

When asked about the issue, Mominul said with a smile: "It's better to avoid the question."

Mominul fashions Rajshahi's first win

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi Kings beat Rangpur Riders by eight wickets to register their first win of the fifth edition of the Bangladesh Premier League, thanks to a magnificent 122-run opening stand between Mominul Haque and Lendl Simmons, at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium yesterday.

Mominul remained unbeaten on 63 off 44 balls featuring four fours and three sixes while Simmons added 53 off 50 balls as Rajshahi chased down a modest target of 135 with 20 balls to spare.

However Mominul was a bit lucky as he had a reprieve on one when he pulled a short delivery from Rangpur skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza straight to deep square leg where Nazmul Islam dropped the rather straight forward catch. The pocket-sized dynamo, as Mominul is known in local circuit, made the blowing side pay for that transgression.

The left-hander, who last played a T20I for Bangladesh more than three years ago, was the more aggressive of the two openers, with his six over long-on against Sri Lankan pacer Lasith Malinga being one of the highlights of his effortless batting.

Interestingly Mominul also became the first Bangladeshi batsman to score a fifty in the ongoing BPL after a series of disappointing runs from the other locals.

"I think I am still being myself," Mominul said when he was asked whether he was eyeing a return to the limited overs side. "It's actually about how you set the target. If you make up your mind to improve, you have to make it a habit of not getting out after scoring 40-50 rather you have to stay till the end. Only then you can improve and I am trying just that."

Earlier Rangpur skipper Mashrafe opted to bat, reportedly by mistake, after a miscommunication with the coach Tom Moody who had asked him to field first. The decision came back to haunt Mashrafe's side who found going tough on a pitch which was on the slower side early on.

Rangpur openers continued their poor run of form in their third consecutive game as Johnson Charles departed after scoring two while his opening partner Adam Lyth was dismissed by Farhad Reza for just four.

Mohammad Mithun was the second victim of Reza as he top-edged a short ball to cover after scoring 18.

All-rounder Ravi Bopara, however, continued his fine form and resurrected the innings somewhat. The Englishman remained unbeaten on 54 off balls, featuring three fours and two sixes. Shahriar Nafees was the second highest scorer for the side with 23 runs off 31 balls.

The last three overs of the innings yielded 34 runs as Rangpur thought they put a modest total on the board, only to find Rajshahi come out with all guns blazing.

SCOREBOARD

RANGPUR V RAJSHAHI

RANGPUR RIDERS	R/B	4s/6s
Charles c Franklin b Mehidi	2/3	0/0
Lyth c Mehidi b Farhad	4/5	1/0
Mithun c Mominul b Farhad	18/15	2/1
Bopara not out	54/51	3/2
Nafees c Waller b Williams	23/31	2/0
Perera c Mominul b Franklin	4/6	0/0
Ziaur not out	11/10	0/1
Extras: (b-7, lb-4, nb-1, w-6)	18	
Total: (For 5 wickets)	134	
Did not bat: Mashrafe, Razzak, Malinga, Nazmul.		
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-32, 3-33, 4-82, 5-94		

BOWLER	O	M	R	W
Mehidi Hasan Miraz	4.0	0	19	1
Mohammad Sami	4.0	0	19	0
Farhad Reza	4.0	0	28	2
KOK Williams	4.0	0	34	1
JEC Franklin	3.0	0	14	1
Nihaduzzaman	1.0	0	9	0

RAJSHAHI KINGS	R/B	4s/6s
Simmons run out (Perera)	53/50	4/1
Mominul not out	63/44	4/3
Waller b Perera	4/2	1/0
Talukdar not out	10/4	2/0
Extras: (lb-1, w-7)	8	
Total: (For 2 wickets in 16.4 overs)	138	
Did not bat: Franklin, Mushfiqur, Mehidi, Farhad, Williams, Sami, Nihaduzzaman.		
Fall of wickets: 1-122, 2-127.		

BOWLING	O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	4.0	0	27	0
Malinga	3.0	0	30	0
Razzak	3.4	0	34	0
Nazmul	1.0	0	10	0
Bopara	2.0	0	17	0
Perera	2.0	0	12	1
Ziaur	1.0	0	7	0

Result: Kings won by 8 wickets.
Player-of-the-match: Mominul Haque.

Dhaka maul Sylhet on day of revenge

SPORTS REPORTER



On a day of revenge, Dhaka Dynamites handed Sylhet Sixers an eight-wicket thrashing, the same margin of defeat that they were subjected to a week ago against the debutants.

In the double-header opening day of the Bangladesh Premier League's Dhaka leg at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, the defending champions actually overpowered Sylhet after Rajshahi Kings avenged their Sylhet-leg defeat against Rangpur Riders in the first game.

The Dhaka crowd witnessed a glimpse of the fury of one Shahid Afridi, who was playing his first game after missing the opening leg in Sylhet. After his four-wicket haul had restricted Sylhet to posting a hopeless 101-9, he rained sixes and fours while opening the innings with West Indian Evin Lewis.

Afridi smashed two sixes in the first over off Tim Bresnan, followed by another one off Taijul Islam in the second and after a boundary in the third over the right-hander smashed two more sixes, again off Taijul. And by the time he was out in the fifth over for 37 off 17 balls, a leg-before decision that appeared a bit harsh, Dhaka had raced to 59.

Lewis then took over from where Afridi had left off and the left-hander was in a hurry to

finish things off as he hit a flurry of sixes and fours. He smashed 44 off 18 balls as Dhaka blitzed to 106-2 in just 7.5 overs. Dhaka skipper Shakib Al Hasan joined the fun with an unbeaten 18 off 11 balls as his side registered their second win in three games.

A total of 11 sixes were struck, five apiece from Afridi and Lewis, who clobbered 26 runs in the fourth over off left-arm spinner Taijul.

English pacer Bresnan, who removed Afridi

and Cameron Delpert in successive deliveries, was the only notable performer for the Sixers.

Earlier, Sylhet suffered a horrible batting collapse after being sent in to bat and were reeling at 53 for 9 in 13 overs before Abul Hasan and Taijul added 48 runs for the last wicket.

Abul remained unbeaten on a 26 ball 30 while Taijul was not out on 16.

Afridi took 4-16 while West Indies leg-spinner Sunil Narine scalped three to reach the 300-wicket landmark.

Jayawardene asks for patience

SPORTS REPORTER

Although concerns were raised over the decision to include five foreign players in the playing eleven for teams in the ongoing fifth edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), Khulna Titans coach Mahela Jayawardene believes that this will strengthen the sides while also serving as a good challenge for local players to prove their worth.

The legendary Sri Lankan batsman observed that it would create tougher competition and urged patience from the locals for their home grown players to perform.

"I think compared to last year, the quality of overseas players improved. It is always going to be a tough competition," Jayawardene

told reporters after a training session at the National Academy ground in Mirpur yesterday.

The right-hander, who scored 1,493 runs in 55 T20Is, went on to add: "It is just two matches for each team. Give it some time. I think combination wise, it gives you more strength. It is a good challenge for local players to prove themselves. Only the best can play. Bangladesh want 11 players (at the top), not 30."

The 40-year-old, who played for Dhaka Dynamites in the previous edition of the BPL, is undertaking his maiden stint as a coach for the Titans and is enjoying his new role.

"The challenges are different as a player and a coach. I managed to enjoy my stint as a player and am doing the same thing as a coach. I am relaxed and want to see if I can help the younger guys," he concluded.



Former Pakistan skipper Shahid Afridi performs his trademark wicket celebration while featuring for Dhaka Dynamites against Sylhet Sixers in Mirpur yesterday. Afridi took four wickets before showing a glimpse of his destructive ability with the bat with a 17-ball 37.

PHOTO: STAR

Youths' scrappy win

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh recorded a hard-fought two-wicket win against Nepal in a rain-curtailed youth Asia Cup game at the Kinrara Academy Oval in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia yesterday.

Chasing the revised target of 180 runs in 40 overs, the Bangladesh youths required 11 runs in the last over. Naem Hasan and Robiul Haque struck crucial boundaries in that nerve-racking over as the young Tigers reached 181-8 with a ball to spare.

Opener Naim Sheikh top-scored with 52 off 82 balls that included three fours and a six while his partner Pinak Ghosh added 24 runs to give Bangladesh a good start in their opening Group A game. But after the departure of Naim Bangladesh went on to lose quick wickets at regular intervals, forcing the required run-rate well over nine runs per over at one point of the game.

But Afif Hossain scored a 33-ball

39 with one four and a six before being run out and Mahidul Islam added a 20-ball 23 to help Bangladesh seal a scrappy win.

Kamal Singh and Sandeep Lamichhance picked up two wickets each for Nepal.

Earlier, Nepal scored 167 for 6 in 40.1 overs before rain halted the game.

Bhim Sharki was the highest scorer with 44 off 40 balls while Rohit Kumar added 40 for Nepal.

Off-spinner Nayeem Hasan was the pick of the Bangladesh bowlers with 3-33 in his nine overs while Hasan Mahmud, Qazi Onik, and Afif bagged a wicket each.

Saif Hasan and his troops will take on Malaysia Under-19 side in their next game at the same ground on Monday.

SCORE IN BRIEF
NEPAL U-19S: 167 for 6 in 40.1 overs (Bhim Sharki 44, Rohit Kumar, Nayeem 3-33)
BANGLADESH U-19S: 181 for 8 in 39.5 overs (Naim 52, Afif 33, Sandeep 2-35)
Result: Bangladesh U-19s won by two wickets.