

SPORT



Jahurul Islam (C) celebrates scoring the winning runs after (R) Kieron Pollard's 24-ball 55 catapulted the Dhaka Dynamites to a position of strength during their four-wicket victory against Khulna Titans in their BPL fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.



PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

Pinak-powered U-19s KO India

SPORTS REPORTER



After their run to the Under-19 World Cup semifinals in early 2016, the new-look Bangladesh Under-19 team notched a major scalp yesterday by defeating their Indian counterparts by eight wickets and knocking the defending champions out of the ACC Under-19 Asia Cup.

Powered by opener Pinak Ghosh's unbeaten 81, the clinical win in their Group-A fixture at the Royal Selangor Club in Kuala Lumpur, means that the young Tigers emerge from their group as unbeaten champions and have now qualified for the semifinals.

After being sent in to bat, India posted 187 for eight in a rain-interrupted game that was reduced to 32 overs a side, but the young Tigers sped to 191 for two in just 28 overs to clinch an easy win.

According to Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB's) age-level selector Ehsanul Haque, who is accompanying the team in Malaysia, the victory should give Bangladesh more confidence when they face Pakistan at the Kinrara Academy Oval in the first semifinal tomorrow.

"I think the boys played some fearless cricket to beat a strong side like India. We were under a bit of pressure as we had to win after Nepal managed to beat India in the group game. I think this win will definitely help the boys gain the confidence needed for the semifinal against Pakistan," Ehsanul told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

Openers Pinak and Naim Sheikh handed Bangladesh a flying start, adding 82 runs for the first wicket before the latter was dismissed for 38 off 44 balls featuring three fours and two sixes.

Shortly after, skipper Saif Hassan was sent packing for 16 but Towhid Hridoy and Pinak crafted a match-winning unbeaten partnership of 83 for the third wicket. Towhid then put the bow on the win by hitting a boundary for the winning runs.

Left-hander Pinak, long touted as a face for the future but a batsman who was struggling for runs of late, faced 77 balls for his 81 which included six fours and three sixes, while Towhid finished on 48 off 32 with four sixes and two fours.

Not all the credit, however, should go to the batsmen as earlier, the bowlers managed to pick wickets at regular intervals and prevent India from reaching a significant score. No Indian batsmen reached a fifty as Salman Khan top-scored with an unbeaten 39. Bangladesh off-spinner Robiul Haque scalped three wickets for 43 runs during his six overs while both Nayeem Hasan and Afif Hossain took two apiece.

On Friday Nepal will face Afghanistan in the second semifinal.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA U-19s: 187 for 8 in 32 overs (Anuj 34, Riyan 19, Harvik 21, Salman 39 not out, Shiva 17; Nayeem 2-38, Robiul 3-43, Afif 2-38)
BANGLADESH U-19s: 191 for 2 in 28 overs (Pinak 81 not out, Naim 38, Towhid 48 not out, Mandeep 2-36)



Pinak Ghosh (L) receives the player-of-the-match award after scoring an unbeaten 81 against defending champions India in their Youth Asia Cup fixture yesterday. PHOTO: BCB

SCOREBOARD

KHULNA V DHAKA

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Nazmulst Jahurul b Narine	24/25	3/0		
Klinger c Hider b Shakib	10/14	2/0		
Dhiman c Shakib b Hider	2/9	0/0		
Rossouw c Mosaddek b Hider	34/30	3/0		
Mahmudullah c Jahurul b Afridi	14/10	2/0		
Brathwaite not out	64/29	4/6		
Afnul not out	4/4	0/0		
Extras: (lb-2, nb-1, w-1)		4		
Total: (For 5 wks in 20 overs)		156		
Did not bat: Archer, Dananjaya, Shaiful, Abu.				
Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-29, 3-46, 4-71, 5-125.				

Pollard trumps Brathwaite

SPORTS REPORTER



After a few dull matches in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur was finally treated to an exciting blast of T20 cricket yesterday. The large crowd was a witness to big-hitting Premier League (BPL), the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur was finally treated to an exciting blast of T20 cricket yesterday. The large crowd was a witness to big-hitting

four boundaries during his unbeaten 29-ball 64, which helped Khulna score 156 for five after recovering from a slothful 47 for three in the first 10 overs. Dhaka were however more sluggish in their chase as they were reduced to 41 for five at one stage but Pollard's rain of sixes bought them back into the game and put his side in a good place before he was dismissed. Underterred by that setback, the local

duo of Jahurul Islam and Mosaddek Hossain put on 43 for the unbeaten seventh-wicket stand to make sure Pollard's knock would not go in vain. Understandably, Pollard's 24-ball 55 that contained six huge sixes -- including four in a Mahmudullah Riyad over -- and three fours was praised highly by everybody. "I was just happy to finish the

Powerplay, but we did that today and that gives us confidence," said Shakib during the post-match presentation. Khulna coach and Sri Lanka great Mahela Jayawardene also showered praise on the two good knocks in the match. "It [Pollard's] was a very good knock. Carlos did something similar for us. That's what T20 cricket is all about," said Mahela.

WHACK-OMETER

TOTAL 6s HIT 159 | TOTAL 4s HIT 297

Most 6s hit by a player: 11, Luke Ronchi, Chittagong Vikings, and Carlos Brathwaite, Khulna Titans
Most 4s hit by a player: 18, Upul Tharanga, Sylhet Sixers

SCOREBOARD

CHITTAGONG V COMILLA

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Ronchi lbw b Saifuddin	31/19	5/1		
Soumyast Liton b Nabi	30/32	2/1		
Munaweera b Rashid	19/25	0/1		
Raza c Al-Amin b Bravo	20/24	1/0		
Misbah not out	16/11	2/0		
Jordan not out	16/9	2/0		
Extras: (b-4, w-3)		7		
Total: (For 4 wks in 20 overs)		139		
Did not bat: Anamul, Tanbir, Sunzamul, Subhshis, Taskin.				
Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-83, 3-96, 4-120.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Nabi	3	0	19	1
Al-Amin	2	0	23	0
Arafat	3	0	14	0
Saifuddin	4	0	30	1
Rashid	4	0	17	1
Bravo	4	0	32	1

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Tamim c Subashis	4/10	0/0		
Liton b Munaweera	2/20	2/0		
Imrul c Tanbir b Sunzamul	45/36	2/3		
Buttler st Ronchi b Sunzamul	44/31	3/2		
Samuels not out	17/8	1/2		
Nabi not out	0/4	0/0		
Extras: (lb-1, w-8)		9		
Total: (For 4 wks in 18.1 overs)		140		
Did not bat: Bravo, Saifuddin, Arafat, Rashid, Al-Amin.				
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-39, 3-113, 4-134.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Munaweera	4	0	17	2
Raza	4	0	30	0
Jordan	2	0	21	0
Subhshis	1	0	14	0
Sunzamul	3	0	14	2
Taskin	2	0	18	0
Tanbir	2.1	0	25	0

Result: Comilla Victorians won by 6 wickets. Player-of-the-match: Imrul Kayes.

BCB imposes new NOC rules

SPORTS REPORTER

It comes as a surprise to many that the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to grant only two No Objection Certificates (NOCs) annually to contracted players who wish to take part in leagues overseas.

This decision took effect immediately after the BCB issued the new restrictions which will be imposed on all forms of cricket. The board also declared it mandatory for the cricketers to participate in Bangladesh's first-class competitions.

"It is a principled, policy decision by the board. We will allow two NOCs per year and it will be on a case-by-case basis with immediate effect. We want to give them enough rest and manage their injuries. We want to ensure all our players are available for international matches," Nizamuddin informed reporters yesterday.

It was also learnt that the BCB took this course of action following the national team's disastrous South Africa tour, where Shakib Al Hasan took a break from the Test series, which could have also triggered the board's decision.

This verdict will hurt Shakib the most as he is the busiest Bangladesh cricketer. Participating in competitions such as the Indian Premier League, Big Bash League, Pakistan Super League and the Caribbean Premier League keeps the star all-rounder busy year round while Tigers' teammates Tamim Iqbal, Mustafizur Rahman and lately Mahmudullah also started participating in tournaments abroad.

Tamim, Shakib and Mustafizur were recently selected by franchises in the UAE to play the T10 competition next month in Dubai and so, following the BCB's decision, it will be interesting to see whether the players are allowed to participate or not.

The news came as quite a shock to the country's cricketers but due to the BCB's new media restrictions, players are not able to speak on various matters, which include this latest one.

Comilla complete Ctg double

SPORTS REPORTER



Comilla Victorians registered their third consecutive win, the second over Chittagong Vikings, this time by six wickets, in a Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

With this win Comilla Victorians jumped into the second position behind holders Dhaka Dynamites. But the second match under lights was an anticlimax after a thrilling first game that Dhaka won against Khulna Titans in the last over.

The Victorians were never in trouble in chasing down a modest target of 140 with 11 balls to spare with Imrul Kayes, who is in fine form, top-scoring with 45 off 36 balls that included two fours and three sixes, one of which over deep mid-wicket to a Chris Jordan length delivery was a treat to watch.

But the left-hander was unable to finish it off just like English opener Jos Butler, who was dismissed with his side only six runs away from victory. The right-hander scored a 31-ball 44 with three fours and two sixes.

Playing his first competitive game since his injury during the South Africa tour, Tamim Iqbal failed to make an immediate impact. He skied a short delivery from off-spinner Dilshan Munaweera after scoring four while his opening partner Liton Das once again threw his wicket after a confident 21.



Imrul Kayes's 36-ball 45 propelled Comilla Victorians to a six-wicket victory over Chittagong Vikings in their BPL encounter at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Earlier, Chittagong made a flying start after being asked to bat, adding 46 runs in the first five overs. But they lost the way in the middle and scored just 49 runs in the next ten overs, which was the biggest downfall of the innings.

Kiwi opener Luke Ronchi struck a magnificent six over long-on in the first over off Mohammad Nabi but was eventually trapped leg-before to Saifuddin when he misjudged the line going for a flick after scoring 31 off 19 balls including five fours.

Soumya Sarkar, who struggled to time the ball, eventually departed while coming down the track against Nabi. The left-hander was stumped by Liton after scoring

30 off 32 balls with two fours and a six.

Munaweera was undone by a Rashid Khan googly which broke the middle-stump into two pieces. He scored a sedate 25-ball 19. Sikandar Raza also perished while trying to break the shackles placed by the disciplined Comilla attack. He scored 20 off 24 balls.

There was hardly any fire power in the lower half of the Chittagong batting and they eventually ended up with 139 for 4 after their share of 20 overs.

It was Chittagong's third defeat in four games and they now remain at the bottom of the seven-team table alongside Rajshahi Kings.

MOMENTS

JAHURUL'S WINNING ASSIST

The story of the first match of the day was about the battle between two West Indian big hitters in Dhaka Dynamites' Kieron Pollard and Khulna Titans' Carlos Brathwaite. Brathwaite hit six sixes in his 29-ball 64, and Pollard matched the maximums in his 24-ball 55 during the chase. In the end, it seemed to be Pollard's slightly higher strike rate that tilted matters in the end, but something that many will not remember about the match is that Brathwaite's superior bowling talent almost clinched the match. Defending just six runs in the last over, a paltry amount in the context of the match, Brathwaite delivered three inch-perfect yorkers to Jahurul Islam and suddenly the equation became a much more nerve-wracking five from three. It became four from two as Mosaddek Hossain took a single off the fourth ball. Then Jahurul came up with a moment of inspiration -- the first reverse scoop he played in a match and it connected well enough to make it to the unmanned third man boundary. Pollard may have won the Caribbean battle, but he needed a Bangladeshi assist to get over the line.

DESTRUCTIVE RASHID

When one sees a stump broken into two pieces, it is usually a fast bowler of considerable pace that is the perpetrator, but yesterday it was a leg-spinner, and it was not Shahid Afridi bowling one of his faster ones. Comilla Victorians' leg-spinner Rashid Khan bowled a googly in the second ball of the 16th and Chittagong Vikings' right-hander Dilshan Munaweera went back to cut. Much like most other batsmen, Munaweera failed to read the variation and the quick, sharp incoming delivery dattered into timber, breaking the stump into two pieces. It also damaged the microphone and camera attached to the stump and the match officials had to set up a new one to resume play again. It seems the Afghanistan spinner is dangerous in more ways than one.