

## SPORT



On a two-match losing streak after a bright start to their BPL campaign, Sylhet Sixers skipper Nasir Hossain (C) will try to carry the smile he was sporting during training at the BCB Academy Ground in Mirpur yesterday onto the field by winning today's clash with Rangpur Riders in the day's second game. The first match will be a clash between top-placed Dhaka Dynamites and second-placed Comilla Victorians.

PHOTO: STAR

## Tamim, Liton fined

SPORTS REPORTER

Comilla Victorians skipper Tamim Iqbal and wicketkeeper Liton Das were fined 50 per cent of their match fees yesterday, as the two were involved in a verbal altercation with the umpire during their match against Rangpur Riders at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium on Saturday.

Both cricketers were found guilty of breaching the Level-2 Code of Conduct which relates to 'showing serious dissent' to an umpire's decision.

The first incident took place when Sri Lankan umpire Ranmore Martinez turned down a confident leg-before appeal against Riders opener Chris Gayle in the very first over, bowled by off-spinner Mahedi Hasan. Tamim came charging to the umpire and was seen engaged in a heated debate.

The second incident involving the same umpire occurred in latter stage of the innings when Martinez turned down a caught behind appeal against Rangpur skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza. Wicketkeeper Liton and Tamim both were furious over the decision and made some offensive gestures.

Apart from the fine, both players were slapped with three demerit points each. Four demerit points results in automatic suspension for one game.

## Herath denies Perera DRS controversy

IANS, Kolkata

Experienced Sri Lanka left-arm spinner Rangana Herath denied the allegations that off-spinner Dilruwan Perera was looking at the dressing room while asking for a Decision Review System (DRS) in the 57th over of their first innings.

"I mean it is simple as this. I was asking for the review from Nigel (Llong). Maybe Dilruwan also heard that. That's it," Herath told reporters at the end of the fourth day's play.

Batting on duck after playing seven balls with the score on 208/7 in the 57th over, Perera was seen to be walking back after he was given lbw by umpire Nigel Llong off a Mohammed Shami delivery which caught him in front of the off-stump.

# Table-toppers clash today

SPORTS REPORTER



It will be an exciting encounter when the two best teams in the Bangladesh Premier League -- defending champions Dhaka Dynamites and an inspired Comilla Victorians -- clash for the first time this season in the first game of the day at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today.

Tamim Iqbal's Comilla is brimming with confidence after their 14-run win over a star-studded Rangpur Riders when they managed to diffuse the explosive duo of Chris Gayle and Brendon McCullum to defend a rather modest total of 153 on Saturday.

Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan has been phenomenal for the Victorians so far with an economy rate of just over four runs per over and along with surprise package of young off-spinner Mahedi Hasan, who was instrumental in their win over Rangpur, will be the key figures in the bowling line-up.

The Victorians will be looking for skipper Tamim, who has looked shaky since returning from his injury, to fire but another local left-hander in Imrul Kayes is in fine form and is expected to come good along with West Indian Marlon Samuels and English batsman Jos Buttler.

With four wins in five games, Comilla are just a point behind table-toppers Dhaka Dynamites, who have nine points and the same number of wins in six games.

Shakib Al Hasan's Dhaka has managed to

bounce back strongly after their defeat to Sylhet Sixers in the tournament opener, winning four of their five games since.

Dhaka's West Indian opener Evin Lewis is the second-highest run-scorer in the league so far with 204 runs in five innings, one of which was



Sylhet Sixers mentor Waqar Younis speaks to media yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

a blistering 38-ball 64 against Rajshahi Kings as Dhaka posted over 200 for the second time in the tournament.

From Shahid Afridi to West Indies big hitter Kieron Pollard, Dhaka's stalwarts are in terrific form and the addition of Pakistan's left-arm

pacer Mohammad Amir, who joined the side on Saturday, only added more firepower to an already formidable line-up.

Meanwhile, the second fixture of the day will pit Nasir Hossain's Sylhet, who are yet to win a game after their three successive victories in the first leg in Sylhet, will be up against a demoralised Mashrafe Bin Mortaza-led Rangpur, who are languishing at the bottom of the table with just one win from four games.

Despite having Gayle and McCullum in the line-up, Rangpur were unable to chase a 154 against Comilla, and will surely be desperate to make a comeback.

Legendary Pakistan fast bowler Waqar Younis, who is the mentor of Sylhet, informed that he is helping the young cricketers in the team to develop as a unit.

"I think we have got the experience in our bowling line-up. We have got Tim Bresnan and [Liam] Plunkett in our side, who have experience in the international arena. We have couple of youngsters also. Abul Hasan is also there. They are talented kids. We started the tournament well by winnings three games. "Unfortunately some injuries halted our progress. Plunkett could not give his hundred per cent. But we are hoping to bounce back," Waqar told the reporters yesterday.

"I am trying to help the fast bowlers and also trying to help the batsmen. I am in this business for many years. I have worked in all these T20 leagues also. I know how things can be done in this kind of competition," he added.

# 'We could have won'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh suffered a heart-breaking two-run defeat through Duckworth Lewis method in their ACC Under-19 Asia Cup semifinal fixture against Pakistan in Malaysia on Thursday. However, Bangladesh skipper Saif Hasan believes that his side could have won the rain affected game had it been completed.

In reply to Bangladesh's 274 for six, Pakistan were on 199 for five in 39 overs before rain forced the umpires to call off the encounter and thereby put an end to the young Tigers impressive run in the tournament.

"We dominated the whole game and were ahead till the rain came. But they managed to score 9-10 runs in the previous over which took them ahead and it is unfortunate for us as we don't have control over the weather. If the game was able to be completed then I think we would have won," Saif told reporters.

Going into the competition, there were concerns over Bangladesh's batting department following the home series defeat to Afghanistan and the loss to Nepal.

However, opener Pinak Ghosh, Saif and Afif Hossain scored runs consistently

throughout this Asia Cup and will surely be a boost to the side ahead of the Under-19 World Cup in New Zealand next year.

Upon returning to Bangladesh yesterday Saif along with his deputy Afif immediately joined the Bangladesh Premier League outfit Khulna Titans.

"Obviously it's a great platform to get the highest amount of exposure, last year Afif got huge exposure by playing the BPL. The best thing about this tournament is that you

will get a lot of exposure if you perform well and I am looking forward to utilising this opportunity," said Saif.

The young left-hander will now be afforded the invaluable opportunity to work under Sri Lankan Mahela Jayawardene, the incumbent Khulna Titans head coach. Saif also informed that he has already received some instructions from the legendary

cricketer on how to improve his batting.

"He is a great batsman and also one of my favourite players as I followed him since my childhood. I will try to learn as much I can from him. He said to me during the net session that as I have returned from a different format I should try to stay busy and rotate the strike. And then I can play my shots and even if I get out there is no problem," Saif added.



SAIF HASAN

# Afghans maul Pak to clinch title

CRICINFO, Kuala Lumpur



Ikram Faizi's unbeaten 107 and a five-for from off-spinner Mujeeb Zadran clinched the maiden Asia Cup title for Afghanistan Under-19s, with a 185-run win over Pakistan Under-19s in the final in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday.

Mujeeb came into the final having taken six wickets against Nepal Under-19s in the second semifinal and a six-for against Pakistan in the side's first match of the tournament. His domination over the opponents continued - having dismissed Pakistan's openers by the fourth over, Mujeeb returned in his second spell to pick up three lower-order wickets without conceding a run. His 5 for 13 took his overall wicket tally in the tournament to 20. Mujeeb was well-supported by leg-spinner Qais Ahmad, whose three wickets included Mohammad Taha - the leading run-getter in the tournament - and wicketkeeper Rohail Nazir. Taha and captain Hasan Khan were the only two Pakistan batsmen to score in double-figures in an innings that lasted 22.1 overs.

Earlier, having been put in to bat, Afghanistan's top three did the bulk of the scoring. The openers, Rahman Gul (40 off 53 balls) and Ibrahim Zadran (36 off 76), began with a 61-run opening partnership before Faizi took charge of the innings, smashing 10 fours and two sixes en route to his 113-ball 107.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AFGHANISTAN UNDER-19s: 248 for 7 in 50 overs (Gul 40, Ibrahim 36, Faizi 107 not out, Rasooli 18; Shaheen 2/42, Musa 3-46)

PAKISTAN UNDER-19s: 63 all out in 22.1 overs (Taha 19, Hasan 10; Mujeeb 5-13, Qais 3-18)

Result: Afghanistan Under-19s won by 185 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Ikram Faizi.

Player-of-the-series: Mujeeb Zadran.

# Openers give India edge

AFP, Kolkata



Openers Lokesh Rahul and Shikhar Dhawan hit fluent half-centuries to lead India's fightback after conceding a significant first innings lead to Sri Lanka on day four of the rain-hit opening Test on Sunday.

The duo put together a 166-run stand before Dhawan fell to paceman Dasun Shanaka for 94. India lead by 49 runs after overcoming a 122-run deficit in their second innings.

Cheteshwar Pujara, on two, was batting alongside Rahul, on 73, when bad light ended an absorbing day's play at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.



Openers Shikhar Dhawan (R) and Lokesh Rahul's 166-run partnership helped India bounce back against Sri Lanka on the fourth day of the first Test at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Rangana Herath made Sri Lanka stand tall until the second session with a defiant 67 that steered the visitors to 294 in response to India's 172.

But soon Rahul and Dhawan made batting look easy on a sunny afternoon -- a welcome change from the rainy start on the first two days -- to keep the Sri Lankan attack at bay.

In-form Rahul registered his ninth score of 50-plus runs in the last 11 innings, getting equal support from the left-handed Dhawan, who recorded his fourth Test fifty.

The two batsmen smashed 19 boundaries between them, including two sixes from Dhawan, forcing Sri Lanka skipper Dinesh Chandimal to juggle his bowling options.

Shanaka, with little time left for the day to end, denied Dhawan what would have been the batsman's seventh Test hundred in 27 matches.

Earlier Sri Lanka, who started the day on 165-4, suffered a middle-order stutter before Herath put on stubborn partnerships against a persistent pace attack.

The left-handed Herath, Sri Lanka's premier spin bowler, showed great resolve during his knock which lasted 105 balls and included nine boundaries.

Herath, who registered his third Test fifty, finally fell to paceman Bhuvneshwar Kumar after mistiming and slicing to deep point.

Fast bowler Mohammed Shami also made it count after dismissing both overnight batsmen, Niroshan Dickwella and Chandimal, to check Sri Lanka's progress in the morning.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Dickwella, who made 35, and Chandimal, 28, had scored briskly to extend their partnership to 62.

Kumar and Shami claimed four wickets each while third quick Umesh Yadav chipped in with two scalps.

The visitors are seeking their first Test win on Indian soil in the three-match series.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 172

SRI LANKA: First innings 294 (Samarawickrama 23, Thirimanne 51, Mathews 52, Chandimal 28, Dickwella 35, Herath 67; Kumar 4-88, Shami 4-100, Yadav 2-79)

INDIA: Second innings 171 for 1 (Rahul 73 not out, Dhawan 94; Shanaka 1-29)



The Afghanistan Under-19s celebrate their maiden trophy, achieved through a 185-run thrashing of Pakistan in the ACC Under-19 Asia Cup final in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

PHOTO: ACC

# Get behind us: Lehmann

AFP, Brisbane



Coach Darren Lehmann on Sunday urged former greats to get behind the Australian team for this week's Ashes Test series opener against

England following uproar over the selection of the squad.

Shane Warne led the chorus of disapproval of the 13-man squad, saying "Australia look confused", while his former leg-spin Test bowling partner Stuart MacGill lashed the selectors as "morons".

Wicketkeeper Tim Paine was chosen for his first Test in seven years and 34-year-old Shaun Marsh was recalled to the Test side for the eighth time in controversial selections

announced on Friday.

"Everyone is entitled to their opinion, aren't they?" Lehmann told reporters in Brisbane, where the first Ashes Test begins on Thursday.

"I'd just like all our players, ex-players, to be really positive about the Australian cricket team.

"Let's just get everyone from Australia behind the Australian cricket team and let's get moving forward."

Paine is in the Test side despite not keeping in any of Tasmania's three Sheffield Shield games this season and spending much of the previous season as an understudy.

Paine has not scored a first-class century for 11 years, while his first-class average, when playing, over the past three seasons is below 20.