

# SPORT



With 36 needed from 18, Khulna Titans' Ariful Haque took it upon himself to score all those runs in just 13 balls in their BPL match against Rajshahi Kings at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Ariful conjures Titans' 4th win

SPORTS REPORTER



Young paceman Hossain Ali was intelligent enough to bowl it full and straight and hit the middle stump after Mahmudullah Riyad missed the first two deliveries that were full and outside off. The 19-year-old right-arm paceman from Narsingdi, who already gained attention with his pace and smooth action, thus ended the Khulna Titans skipper's pivotal knock of 56 to bring Rajshahi Kings back into contention in the 13th over.

But it was Khulna local hero Ariful Haque who was the difference-maker in chasing down Rajshahi's total of 166 with two wickets and four balls in hand in an exciting Bangladesh Premier League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. "Unbelievable the way Ariful played," was the appreciation from Mahmudullah after the 25-year old batsman from Rangpur showed his big-hitting ability during unbeaten 19-ball 43 that contained four boundaries and two sixes.

Nazmul Hossain, Carlos Brathwaite and Shafiu Islam were dismissed cheaply after Mahmudullah's departure, and the Titans needed 36 from 18. The task was a tough one for a lower-middle order batsman but Ariful found his target in Hossain and secured 18 runs in the 18th. Ariful found a gap between cover and mid-off to hit first boundary off the first ball; he hammered a drive right back at the bowler and lofted a ball over mid-off for six to enthral the crowds and team adviser and national selector Habibul Bashar. "I must say he was

amazing. His best asset is his courage. Actually it was so fantastic to watch this match as our local boys like Mushfiqur Rahim, Hossain Ali, Riyad and Ariful played so well," said Bashar.

"I targeted that over. Hossain tried to block while I tried to hit and in the end I was successful. I was confident about scoring 36 runs from the last three overs," said Ariful, who loves T20 cricket the most. He did manage the feat, scoring 36 of the last 37 runs -- the other one being a wide -- off just 13 balls. "Advice from coach Mahela Jayawardene really helped in my batting."

Player-of-the-match Ariful finished the chase in style with the help of some terrible bowling from Dwayne Smith when nine was needed from the last over.

The first ball was a low full toss over leg and Ariful punished it over deep square leg, followed by a scoop for four past short fine leg off the next ball, another full toss, to confirm Titans' fourth win in seven matches.

Earlier, Mahmudullah set the foundation during his 44-ball 56 that saw eight eye-catching boundaries and a six after Pakistani paceman Mohammad Sami provided two early breakthroughs. James Franklin was the other Rajshahi bowler to put Titans in a spot of bother, taking two wickets in the middle.

Rajshahi managed 166 for eight thanks to opener Dwayne Smith's 36-ball 62 that featured seven fours and four sixes and Mushfiqur's 33-ball 55 with four fours and three sixes after they were reduced to 21 for three in 5.3 overs.

In the end the total was not good enough to defend but produced a good game to watch.

SCOREBOARD					
RAJSHAHI V KHULNA					
	R/B	4s/6s			
Smith c Nazmul b Afif	62/36	7/4			
Mominul c Nazmul b Junaid	5/5	1/0			
Bell-Drummond b Junaid	0/2	0/0			
Zakir c Prasanna b Jayed	0/2	0/0			
Mushfiqur c Ariful b Jayed	55/33	4/3			
Franklin not out	29/27	0/1			
Sammy c Ariful b Junaid	3/5	0/0			
Mehedi b Brathwaite	3/3	0/0			
Sami b Junaid	3/4	0/0			
Naem not out	1/3	0/0			
Extras: (lb-1, w-1)	5				
Total: (For 8 wks in 20 overs)	166				
Did not bat: Hossain Ali					
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-13, 3-21, 4-97, 5-141, 6-146, 7-157, 8-162.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Jayed	4	0	29	2	
Junaid	4	0	27	4	
Shafiu	4	0	35	0	
Brathwaite	4	0	33	1	
Prasanna	1	0	15	0	
Afif	3	0	23	1	
KHULNA TITANS					
	R/B	4s/6s			
Walton b Sami	4/3	1/0			
Rossouw c Sammy b Mehedi	20/17	1/1			
Prasanna lbw b Sami	6/5	1/0			
Mahmudullah b Hossain	56/44	8/1			
Afif c Mominul b Franklin	5/5	1/0			
Brathwaite b Franklin	12/12	1/0			
Nazmul c Mominul b Smith	4/4	0/0			
Ariful not out	43/19	4/2			
Shafiu b Sami	5/4	1/0			
Junaid not out	1/3	0/0			
Extras: (lb-1, w-11)	12				
Total: (For 8 wks in 19.2 overs)	168				
Did not bat: Abu Jayed					
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-13, 3-80, 4-85, 5-107, 6-114, 7-123, 8-128.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Sami	4	0	29	3	
Hossain	4	0	38	1	
Franklin	4	0	30	2	
Mehedi	3	0	24	1	
Naem	2	0	20	0	
Smith	2.2	0	26	1	
Result: Khulna Titans won by 2 wickets.					
Player-of-the-match: Ariful Haque.					

## Shakib accepts penalties

SPORTS REPORTER



Dhaka Dynamites skipper Shakib Al Hasan was fined 50 per cent of his match fee and slapped with three demerit points yesterday following his altercation with umpire Ranmore Martinez. The incident occurred in Dhaka's Bangladesh Premier League fixture against Comilla Victorians on Monday. A total of four demerit points results in an automatic one-game suspension.

During the tightly contested encounter, Shakib flew into a rage after the Sri Lankan umpire turned down a leg-before appeal. Off the fifth ball of the ninth over Shakib's delivery pitched on middle and leg turned back to hit Imrul Kayes on the pad. Shakib then confidently made the appeal but was denied, effectively sending the left-hander into a fit of rage as he directed a few harsh words at the official before kicking the ground in frustration.

Shakib admitted the offence and accepted the penalties proposed by match referee Samiur Rahman and therefore there was no need for a formal hearing.

Meanwhile, Comilla Victorians' fast bowler Hasan Ali should be glad he was fined only 25 per cent of his match fee due to the gesture he aimed at Dhaka Dynamites' Mosaddek Hossain, after dismissing the young batsman. Following the wicket Ali pulled out his signature celebration before indicating Mosaddek's way back to the dressing room, an act that caused friction between the two and led to a heated moment. Hasan was also handed two demerit points.

Earlier, Comilla skipper Tamim Iqbal, his teammate Liton Das and Sylhet Sixers icon player Sabbir Rahman were fined 50 per cent of their match fees for a similar altercation with the aforementioned umpire in addition to three demerit points each.

It seems on-field tantrums have become a regular affair this BPL season.

## Perera's last-over magic

SPORTS REPORTER



Rangpur Riders pulled off a thrilling three-run win against Dhaka

Dynamites in a Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Thisara Perera bowled a fantastic last over, where he conceded just six runs and took the wickets of Kieron Pollard and Abu Hider Rony, thus rendering Dhaka skipper Shakib Al Hasan's five for 16 futile.

Rangpur turned the match on its head in the last three overs when Rubel Hossain, Lasith Malinga and Perera bowled magnificently.

Dhaka, chasing Rangpur's modest 142, needed 16 off the last three overs with Kieron Pollard and Mehedi Maruf at the crease. But Rubel bowled beautifully to concede just three runs in the 18th over and also clean bowled Maruf for 15.

Then Malinga, who was wayward before bowling the penultimate over, took the wicket of Nadif Chowdhury, leaving Dhaka needing 10 runs from the last over with two wickets in hand.

With Pollard on strike, Dhaka still had a great chance to win but he refused two singles against Perera, which swung the equation in

Rangpur's favour.

Pollard hit the third ball, a full toss from Perera, for a massive six over midwicket, leaving the equation at four runs from three deliveries.

But as was the case in the previous game, where Rangpur pulled off a victory in similar fashion against Sylhet, Perera clean bowled Pollard with the fifth delivery after the

gigantic West Indian right-hander refused to take a single off the fourth delivery too.

The Sri Lankan right-arm pace bowler sent Rangpur Riders into a frenzy when he bowled Abu Hider with the last ball of the match.

It was Rangpur's third win from six games that brought them into contention for a place in the play-offs. On the



Pacer Thisara Perera's (R) nerveless last over gave Rangpur Riders a thrilling three-run victory over Dhaka Dynamites in a BPL fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## MOMENTS

### FLYING PRASANNA

Khulna Titans' Seekugge Prasanna employed his acrobatic skills to grab a near impossible catch and dismiss Rajshahi Kings left hander Zakir Hossain during their Bangladesh Premier League encounter yesterday. It was an Abu Jayed full-length delivery off the last ball of the third over that Zakir, albeit mistimed, smacked towards the mid-wicket region. The ball looked as though it had gone past Prasanna's head at short mid-wicket but the Sri Lankan leapt backwards fully stretched and palmed the shot with his right hand to complete the phenomenal catch. This feat is undoubtedly one of the best catches of the season and puts Prasanna right up there with Nadif Chowdhury, who earlier made a similarly outrageous catch.

### ROSSOUW FACES THE MUSIC

Khulna Titans opener Rilee Rossouw looked confident coming in to chase a target of 167 against Rajshahi Kings. The left-hander seemed unperturbed despite Khulna losing two quick wickets at the other end. However the scene changed after the second ball of the 10th over, bowled by Mehedi Hasan Miraz. Rossouw hit the ball over cover for a boundary but the umpire suddenly signalled it as a dead ball since the ground's Disk Jockey (DJ)

failed to turn off the music on time. Rossouw was clearly furious with the decision and vented his frustration by striking the pad with his bat. He then tried to play the same shot off the next ball but this time he was caught at cover, resulting in another burst of anger from the South African. It seems the distraction was a little too much to handle.

### A TREAT FOR SPECTATORS

Despite it being a busy working day in the capital, the second BPL game yesterday between star-studded sides Dhaka Dynamites and Rangpur Riders was played in front of a full house at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium. It is a dream come true for the country's avid cricket fans that get to witness big names of world cricket

such as Chris Gayle, Brendon McCullum, Shahid Afridi, Keiron Pollard and of course Shakib Al Hasan pitted against each other. There was not even a single vacant spot at the home of cricket in Mirpur where the crowd witnessed the first Gayle storm of the tournament, extraordinary bowling by Shakib and some sensational hitting from Afridi. The spectators must surely feel that they got their money's worth while watching their heroes at full swing during the tense game that was wrought with drama.

## Aussies bank on pacers

### First Ashes Test starts tomorrow

AFP, Brisbane



New-look Australia will bank on their pace attack terrifying England once again when two unfamiliar line-ups open hostilities for the Ashes, the oldest prize in Test cricket, in Brisbane on Thursday.

Australia's surprise selections raised plenty of eyebrows but they will hope their pace trio of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins can replicate Mitchell Johnson's devastating bowling at the Gabba ground in 2013.

England also have an untested batting line-up and their campaign to retain the Ashes urn was dealt a major blow when star all-rounder Ben Stokes was suspended pending investigations into a brawl outside a nightclub.

The build-up to the biennial series, which dates back to the 19th century, has been traditionally feisty, with opener David Warner saying he regarded facing England as "war" and several Australian players reminding the tourists of their treatment by Johnson four years ago.

The firebrand left-armer set the tone for the 2013-2014 Ashes with his ferocious fast bowling to take nine wickets at the Gabba as

the Australians inflicted a crushing 381-run defeat, triggering a 5-0 series rout.

The Starc-led pace trio have never bowled together in a Test but they stack up favourably with Australia's greatest pace combinations, with their combined career strike rates better than their gloried predecessors.

Australia have a formidable record at Brisbane's intimidating 'Gabbatoir' where they have not lost a Test match since 1988, and where England are winless in 31 years.

Starc appears key to Australia's series hopes and he has targeted England's big two batsmen, captain Joe Root and former skipper Alastair Cook, in the five-Test series.

"Cook and Root are the two main ones at the top who have played a heck of a lot of cricket and done really well at home and away," Starc said.

"Both of them are guys we have to focus heavily on in hopefully getting them out cheaply and getting stuck into that inexperienced batting order."

Starc said watching footage of Johnson's fireworks at the Gabba four years ago had inspired him to replicate his match-winning performance.

"We all still are (inspired). Whenever you see highlights from that series it was unbelievable," he said.

SCOREBOARD					
RANGPUR V DHAKA					
	R/B	4s/6s			
RANGPUR RIDERS					
Gayle c Hider b Mosaddek	51/28	5/4			
McCullum b Afridi	6/8	1/0			
Mithun c Mosaddek b Shakib	22/26	1/0			
Nafees c Amir b Shakib	9/9	1/0			
Mashrafe c Narine b Afridi	15/11	1/1			
Bopara run out	12/16	0/0			
Perera c Hider b Amir	15/9	1/1			
Zaheer c Pollard b Shakib	4/9	0/0			
Malinga not out	1/1	0/0			
Shohag b Shakib	0/1	0/0			
Rubel c Mithun b Shakib	0/1	0/0			
Extras: (lb-4, lb-1, w-2)	7				
Total: (All out in 19.5 vers)	142				
Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-71, 3-88, 4-109, 5-112, 6-132, 7-141, 8-141, 9-142, 10-142.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Hider	2	0	9	0	
Narine	4	0	29	0	
Amir	4	0	34	1	
Afridi	4	0	39	2	
Mosaddek	1	0	4	1	
Shakib	3.5	0	16	5	
Pollard	1	0	6	0	
DHAKA DYNAMITES					
	R/B	4s/6s			
Lewis lbw b Shohag	28/25	0/3			
Narine c Mithun b Mashrafe	0/1	0/0			
Shakib b Shohag	11/11	1/0			
Jahurul b Mashrafe	29/19	4/1			
Mosaddek run out	2/6	0/0			
Maruf lbw b Rubel	15/24	1/0			
Afridi b Rubel	21/15	1/2			
Pollard b Perera	12/14	0/1			
Nadif c Bopara b Malinga	2/6	0/0			
Amir not out	0/0	0/0			
Hider b Perera	0/1	0/0			
Extras: (lb-5, nb-2, w-12)	19				
Total: (All out in 20 overs)	139				
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-25, 3-69, 4-75, 5-75, 6-111, 7-128, 8-133, 9-139, 10-139.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Mashrafe	4	0	30	2	
Shohag	4	0	18	2	
Malinga	4	0	20	1	
Rubel	4	0	29	2	
Perera	4	0	37	2	
Result: Rangpur Riders won by 3 runs.					
Player-of-the-match: Chris Gayle.					