

SPORT



Evin Lewis' 31-ball 75, which upstaged Anamul Haque's exploits with the bat, powered Dhaka Dynamites to a seven-wicket victory against Chittagong Vikings in their BPL fixture at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Table-toppers dominate

SAKEB SUBHAN from Chittagong

The ongoing Chittagong leg of the Bangladesh Premier League continued to be the highlight of the fifth edition as the strip at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium produced another day of big scores, although yesterday's games did not have the competitiveness that characterised the first two days of the tournament's port-city leg. The top teams had a good day as top-placed Khulna Titans notched the highest score of the edition in their 68-run defeat of Rajshahi Kings after second-placed Dhaka Dynamites cantered to a seven-wicket win over Chittagong Vikings, which effectively knocked the home team out of the race for the playoffs.

Khulna's Shafiqul Islam scalped five for 26 to bowl out Rajshahi for 145 in 19 overs in chase of the Titans' 213 for five. It was one of the more one-sided matches of BPL 2017 as Rajshahi were out of the running halfway through the chase when skipper Darren Sammy was caught for one in the 11th over. Only Rony Talukdar (36) and Mehedi Hasan Miraz (29) scored more than 20 for Rajshahi. Shafiqul picked up the wickets of Luke Wright, Mominul Haque, Sammy, Mushfiqur Rahim and the last one of Mohammad Sami to pick up his first five-for in T20 cricket.

Sammy had won the toss and chosen to field and on a good pitch his bowlers were put to the sword, first by Nazmul Hossain (31-ball 49), then Nicholas Pooran (26-ball 57 with six fours and three sixes) came to the party. Holding it all together was Afif Hossain's unbeaten 38-ball 54 and he allowed the big-hitting Carlos Brathwaite to come in and have his way in the last four overs, which yielded 50 runs. Brathwaite scored 34 off 14 with three fours and as

many sixes. Two of those sixes came off celebrated pacer Mustafizur Rahman in the 17th over, when the left-handed paceman dropped the West Indian on zero off his own bowling. Mustafizur did not enjoy his second match back from injury as he gave away 48 runs in four wicketless overs.

In the day's first match, an Evin Lewis special outshone and outpaced Anamul Haque's second fifty of the season as Dhaka made a chase of 188 look simple, winning with seven balls to spare.

After winning the toss Chittagong scored 187 for five, thanks to a 47-ball 73 from Anamul and 59 off 40 from skipper Luke Ronchi. Dhaka skipper Shakib Al Hasan was taken for 51 runs off his four overs, and although Sunil Narine had fabulous figures of one for 11 in four overs, no other bowler conceded fewer than nine runs an over. At the halfway stage, Dhaka would still have drawn some hope from the bowling lineup they were up against -- only Luis Reece (7.27) among their frontline bowlers have an economy rate below 7.5 while Taskin Ahmed, Al-Amin Hossain and Tanbir Hayder have all conceded more than nine runs per over this season.

And it proved to be a cakewalk as Lewis hammered a 31-ball 75 with three fours and an astonishing nine sixes. Four of those sixes came in one over, the ninth, from Sunzamul Islam and the first three were in consecutive deliveries. The third in that sequence brought up Lewis's fifty off 24 deliveries. By the time he left, caught off a Rayad Emrit full toss at deep point, the West Indian was not only the highest run-scorer of this edition but also left his side an imminently manageable 69 runs off 52 balls to win. His dismissal was followed by the departure of Joe Denly in the next over for 44, but Shakib and Cameron Delpert (43 off 24) stitched together an untroubled 67-run fourth-wicket stand in 41 balls to take Dhaka home.

MOMENTS

SHAKIB THE HUNTED

Chittagong Vikings skipper Luke Ronchi is a New Zealander by birth, but before he played for New Zealand he had a spell with the Australian national team and seemed to have picked up some Aussie habits, namely going after the opposition captain to weaken the enemy. Dhaka Dynamites skipper Shakib Al Hasan came into yesterday's match with a five-wicket haul in Dhaka, so Ronchi seemed to bring the Aussie out in him when Shakib was bowling. The left-arm spinner bowled the second and fifth overs, and in the latter Ronchi's mindset rubbed off on Anamul Haque. The local batsman hit the icon for a six over extra cover and then handed it over to his captain. Two sixes over long off with a

four over cover in between flowed off Ronchi's bat, setting Shakib on way to his most expensive T20 figures of one for 51 from four overs. It speaks to Dhaka's strength and Chittagong's weakness that not even that was enough.

BRATHWAITE TRIES, TRIES AGAIN

Khulna Titans' six-hitter Carlos Brathwaite came out to bat in a situation tailor-made for him. His team was on 163 in 16 overs and it was time to launch, no two ways about it. He ended with a 14-ball 34 but he was given a helping hand by Rajshahi Kings initially. He had to face the dangerous Mustafizur Rahman first up in the 17th over, and should have been on his way back without a run to his name but

anyone who has followed Mustafizur would have known that he would not catch the steep caught-and-bowled chance that Brathwaite offered off a miscue. In the next ball, Brathwaite scooped and Mohammad Sami at short fine leg could have stopped the ball inside the boundary, but he inexplicably gave up on the chase. What should have been a three turned into a four and that meant that the West Indian was on strike. He teed off next ball and it went up miles, only to just land over the ropes in front of the sightscreen. The last ball was more typical -- a straight hit that landed behind the sightscreen. Rajshahi had their moment and let it slip, and Brathwaite did not need a second invitation.

SCOREBOARD				
CHITTAGONG V DHAKA				
CHITTAGONG VIKINGS	R/B	4s/6s		
Ronchi c Afridi b Shakib	59/40	4/4		
Soumya b Narine	1/5	0/0		
Anamul c Delpert b Hider	73/47	3/6		
Van Zyl run out (Saddam/Hider)	2/6	0/0		
Zadran c Lewis b Shahid	16/10	1/1		
Sikandar not out	26/11	4/0		
Emrit not out	1/1	0/0		
Extras: (lb-2, w-7)	9			
Total: (For 5 wks in 20 overs)	187			
Did not bat: Tanbir, Sunzamul, Al-Amin, Taskin.				
Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-124, 3-140, 4-148, 5-170.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mosaddek	1	0	9	0
Shakib	4	0	51	1
Narine	4	0	11	1
Afridi	3	0	29	0
Hider	3	0	35	1
Saddam	2	0	22	0
Shahid	3	0	28	1
DHAKA DYNAMITES	R/B	4s/6s		
Lewis c Zadran b Emrit	75/31	3/9		
Afridi c Ronchi b Taskin	0/2	0/0		
Denly c Sikandar b Tanbir	44/39	4/1		
Shakib not out	22/17	3/0		
Delpert not out	43/24	2/3		
Extras: (lb-2, w-5)	7			
Total: (For 3 wks in 18.5 overs)	191			
Did not bat: Jahurul, Mosaddek, Narine, Hider, Saddam, Shahid.				
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-119, 3-124.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Taskin	3	0	35	1
Sikandar	4	0	37	0
Al-Amin	2	0	19	0
Emrit	3	0	24	1
Soumya	3	0	30	0
Sunzamul	1	0	26	0
Tanbir	2	0	18	1
Result: Dhaka Dynamites won by 7 wickets.				
Player-of-the-match: Evin Lewis				

WHACK-OMETER

TOTAL 6s HIT 345 | TOTAL 4s HIT 662

Most 6s hit by a player: 23, Evin Lewis, Dhaka Dynamites
Most 4s hit by a player: 27, Luke Ronchi, Chittagong Vikings

WHAT THEY SAID



A crisis of belief

It's just that juggling act really in trying to get the guys in when they are going to feel confident as well. Because it's a hard thing if you give the ball to a young guy or anyone really and they have to bowl to a Gayle, a Lewis, an Afridi, a Tamim -- they know they are going to come hard. They [the bowlers] need to believe in themselves that they can do it and everyone has to back them. They need to believe and I think at times that's where we struggle.

- Chittagong Vikings captain **Luke Ronchi** on his bowlers after being knocked out of BPL 2017



Having big hitters is a good thing

I think it [having competition among the big hitters] is a good thing. Obviously we have some big hitters in the team. But they are being managed very well in every game. We are playing as a team. We have quite a few right-hand hitters who can handle off-spinners. And we also have some left-hand big hitters when the opposition have left arm spinners. So we are playing according to the opposition. Having a lot of big hitters in the team is a good thing.

- Dhaka Dynamites' **Cameron Delpert**, who came in for Kieron Pollard, states the obvious

SCOREBOARD				
KHULNA V RAJSHAHI				
KHULNA TITANS	R/B	4s/6s		
Nazmul lbw b Franklin	49/31	5/2		
Rossouw run out	6/7	1/0		
Afif not out	54/38	0/5		
Mahmudullah b Franklin	1/3	0/0		
Pooran c Sammy b Franklin	57/26	6/3		
Brathwaite b Sami	34/14	3/3		
Ariful not out	1/3	0/0		
Extras: (b-2, lb-3, nb-2, w-4)	11			
Total: (For 5 wks in 20 overs)	213			
Did not bat: Archer, Shafiqul, Abbott, Jayed.				
Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-73, 3-75, 4-163, 5-210.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Sami	4	0	22	1
Mehedi	4	0	42	0
Mustafizur	4	0	48	0
Williams	4	0	46	0
Franklin	4	0	50	3
RAJSHAHI KINGS	R/B	4s/6s		
Mominul b Shafiqul	11/8	2/0		
Wright c Archer b Shafiqul	1/7	0/0		
Rony c Rossouw b Jayed	36/23	5/1		
Zakir c Mahmudullah b Jayed	19/12	4/0		
Sammy c Mahmudullah b Shafiqul	1/2	0/0		
Mushfiqur b Shafiqul	11/10	1/1		
Franklin b Archer	14/10	1/0		
Mehedi c Ariful b Afif	29/23	1/2		
Sami c Ariful b Shafiqul	18/14	2/0		
Williams st Pooran b Mahmudullah 1/4	0/0			
Mustafizur not out	0/1	0/0		
Extras: (lb-1, w-3)	4			
Total: (All out in 19 overs)	145			
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-13, 3-68, 4-68, 5-80, 6-80, 7-120, 8-136, 9-138, 10-145.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Jayed	4	0	48	2
Abbott	3	0	22	0
Shafiqul	4	0	26	5
Archer	3	0	15	0
Brathwaite	2	0	17	1
Mahmudullah	2	0	9	1
Afif	1	0	7	1
Result: Khulna Titans won by 68 runs.				
Player-of-the-match: Nicholas Pooran				



INTER-SPECIES CRICKET? The importance of the National Cricket Championship is best summed up by this picture of 11 dogs sharing the field with cricketers during the match between Jessore and Chittagong at the Gor-e-Shahid Boro Math in Dinajpur on Sunday.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

Going to the dogs

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur



Bangladesh is now engrossed in the glamour and entertainment surrounding the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). The presence of local and international stars and the media attention provides a wealth of 'cricketainment' for fans. Therefore it is understandable that the 38th National Cricket Championship (NCC) was completely overshadowed by the cash-rich T20 tournament. Still, it is hard to comprehend that the NCC fixtures, where 64 districts participated in the first round before only eight moved on to the second round, took place in such a ground at the Gor-e-Shahid Boro Math in Dinajpur where stray dogs, cows and goats entered of their own volition and the outfield turned out to be a risky one.

The tournament, which began on November 20, falls under the jurisdiction of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) while the District Sports Association (DSA) in Dinajpur hosted the second round matches, featuring Jessore, Chittagong, Nilphamari and

Munshiganj, that ended with an encounter between Munshiganj and Nilphamari yesterday. Jessore has set up a showdown with Rajshahi in the final on November 30 at Pabna by emerging champions from the Dinajpur phase.

However, various team officials and players have expressed frustration over the poorly managed competition, saying that it was very irritating for them to see animals enter at random during their matches while adding that it is not fair to arrange a tournament on an uneven ground.

On the condition of anonymity, a pace bowler from Jessore said: "The ground was too hard and uneven for a proper cricket match but I believe it could have been a little better had the authorities nursed it properly beforehand. I played a few matches at the Dinajpur Stadium before and that ground was better than this one, so I cannot understand why the organisers chose this ground." Meanwhile, a former national player said that the wicket was actually a really good one as it provided good bounce and carry for pacers but the condition of the outfield paired with poor manage-

ment mars the event.

When attention was drawn regarding the issue to Dollar Majumdar, secretary of Dinajpur DSA, he said that the pitch of the Dinajpur Stadium was not ready and also dismissed the notion that stray animals entered the ground during the match.

"The organisers could have easily surrounded the ground with something like barbed wire to prevent animals from entering. I think the authorities should also take care of the accommodation and food," said another player, who also preferred not to be named.

Despite the fact that players such as Mohammad Ashraf, Tushar Imran and Syed Rasel are participating, the contest has gotten very little publicity.

"I am a cricket fan but only came to know today [Monday] that national cricket matches are being played in Dinajpur and Ashraf played here," said Rafiqul Islam.

Everyone involved, seemingly with the exception of the organisers, believe that this tournament deserved better treatment from the concerned authorities as a large number of the cricket fraternity flocked from all over the country to participate.

Australia draw first blood

Gabba remains a nightmare for England

AGENCIES, Brisbane



The Gabba remains a venue of despair for England, with Australia clinically closing out the first Ashes Test in Brisbane to take a 1-0 on Monday ahead of the second installment beginning in Adelaide on Saturday.

It was the seventh time Australia had vanquished England by 10 wickets in the Ashes and leaves the home side unbeaten at their Gabba fortress in 29 years.

"The first Test of an Ashes is very important, there was a bit of pressure but I'm really pleased with how we played. The way we pulled it back to win from the position we were in, it's extremely pleasing. I'm proud of the way the boys fought. We had to show some really good character."

--- Australian skipper **Steve Smith**.

"For three days, we played some excellent cricket. Unfortunately, when we got into good positions, we didn't quite capitalise on it."

--- England skipper **Joe Root**.

Needing only 56 runs for victory, David Warner and Bancroft resumed and made light work of the pursuit for a thumping 10-wicket triumph. A few dark clouds threatened overhead but England needed a biblical downpour. It never arrived as the home side

reached 0/173 with minimal fuss. Bancroft showed a cool head after finding himself all over the back pages, being given a life on 60 when he edged one off Jake Ball past first slip but looking anything but the Test match rookie otherwise. His selection over Matt Renshaw has been justified.

He hit the winning runs to finish on 82, while Warner flirted with a century before the match ended with him on 87.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ENGLAND: First innings 302
AUSTRALIA: First innings 328
ENGLAND: Second innings 195
AUSTRALIA: Second innings 173 for no loss (Warner 87 not out, Bancroft 82 not out)
Result: Australia won by 10 wickets and led the 5-match series 1-0.
Player-of-the-match: Steven Smith.