

VIRUSHKA GIVE PACERS AN UPGRADE

Former England captain Michael Vaughan said he witnessed Virat Kohli and his wife Anushka Sharma give up their business class seats for India's pacers for the trip from Adelaide to Perth. Vaughan, who is on commentary duties in Australia, said Kohli and Anushka sacrificed the comfort of business class seats so India's fast bowlers could get some rest and space before the second Test gets underway later this week. "Witnessed @imVkohli & his wife give up their Business class seats to allow the Quicks more comfort & space on the trip from Adelaide - Perth!! Danger Australia... Not only are the quicks more relaxed... The Skipper is managing his troops with great human touches," Vaughn tweeted on Tuesday night.

— AGENCIES



Sheikh Russel amble into last four

SPORTS REPORTER

Last season's runners-up Chittagong Abahani followed defending champions Arambagh KS to be eliminated from the quarterfinals of the Independence Cup with a 2-0 defeat at the hands of Sheikh Russel KC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Uzbek forward Azizov Alisher and Nigerian striker Raphael Odoyin scored one goal apiece within the span of three minutes in the first half to set up the former champions' semifinal clash against Brothers Union on December 19.

Sheikh Russel came into the last-eight battle on the back of two goalless draws against Bashundhara Kings and Sheikh Jamal DC and had a clear headache with their toothless attackers against a side that had bagged seven points and scored four goals in three matches.

However, the day belonged to the foreign striking duo of Azizov and Odoyin, who did not disappoint their side like the Federation Cup quarterfinal where they were beaten by Bashundhara Kings after substitute Towhidul Alam Sabuz scored a 118th-minute winner.

Azizov looked bright throughout the match and came close to breaking the deadlock in the 29th minute when he

nutmegged two defenders inside the box to go close but goalkeeper Mohammad Nehal grabbed his low shot.

Azizov made amends six minutes later to put Sheikh Russel ahead with a spectacular left-footed volley from inside the box after Odoyin headed down a cross from Bishwanath Gosh.

After conceding, Chittagong Abahani looked a bit disorganised and Sheikh Russel KC took full advantage of the haphazard condition within three minutes. National midfielder Bipro Ahmed released a long ball from the edge of the opposition box but a Chittagong Abahani defender deposited it to unmarked Odoyin instead of clearing the ball and the Nigerian striker punished the port city side with a powerful low shot at the far post, giving goalkeeper Nehal no time to react.

Chittagong Abahani, despite enjoying better ball possession in the second half, could not break Sheikh Russel's rock-solid backline.

"We played against two opponents (Bashundhara Kings and Sheikh Jamal DC) who were very much attacking, so we were a bit cautious in the group-stage matches but today we pressed hard from the beginning to get goals and the tactic worked well in the first half," said Sheikh Russel coach Saiful Bari Titu, who is now dreaming of playing in the final.

CTG ABAHANI 0 - 2 SHEIKH RUSSEL
AZIZOV 35', ODYOIN 38'



Tottenham Hotspur striker Lucas Moura (R) prodded home an 85th-minute equaliser against Barcelona which, coupled with Inter Milan's 1-1 draw with PSV, saw Spurs through at the Italians' expense.

PHOTO: AFP



Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker rushed from his goal and plunged his gigantic frame in front of Napoli striker Arkadiusz Milik deep in stoppage time to pull off one of the saves of the Champions League this season and ensure Mohamed Salah's goal would see the Reds through.

PHOTO: AFP

Alisson gives Liverpool belief

AFP, Liverpool



In the group's other match, Liverpool were saved the ignominy of an early Champions League elimination by the slimmest of margins, as the huge money invested in goalkeeper Alisson Becker came good in a tense 1-0 win over the Italians.

The Brazilian number one rushed from his goal and spread his 6ft 3in frame to bravely block from Arkadiusz Milik deep into stoppage time. The save also preserved his 12th clean sheet in 22 appearances since Liverpool splashed a then world record £67-million fee on a goalkeeper in July.

"If I knew Alisson was this good - I would have paid double," said a beaming Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp, clearly relieved to have escaped the group stages despite losing all three away games to group

winner Paris Saint-Germain, Napoli and Red Star Belgrade.

Tied on points and head-to-head record with Napoli, Liverpool only progressed because they totalled more goals in their six group games.

"The save Ali made [was] unbelievable. It was of course a lifesaver tonight," added Klopp.

Defender Virgil Van Dijk opined that their Champions League escape could serve as a springboard to win Europe's elite competition.

A fine finish from Mohamed Salah put Liverpool ahead, but the Reds needed Becker's stunning save before they could finally relax.

"It [the Champions League] is something that we all want, it's something that we are going to give everything for," Van Dijk said. "We want to play at the highest level and the Champions League, other than the Premier League, is the highest level."

"We want to reach the maximum and hopefully do better than we did



last year in the Champions League. You need to have dreams, you need to go for it, otherwise why would you be a footballer?"

'HUMBLE' PSG NOT GETTING CARRIED AWAY

Paris Saint-Germain coach Thomas Tuchel said his side need to "stay humble" after they thumped Red

Star Belgrade 4-1 on Tuesday and qualified for the last 16 of the Champions League, finishing ahead of Liverpool and Napoli to top a tight Group C.

First-half goals from Edinson Cavani and Neymar set the French champions on their way, before a bullet header from Marquinhos, Kylian Mbappe's injury-time strike and Liverpool's win ensured first place in the group.

"We made mistakes, but I really liked the reaction after Belgrade's goal. We controlled the match," Tuchel said.

"We are happy, we came for qualification and we showed our intentions (with the win)," said Mbappe, who also laid on Cavani's opener.

Asked about PSG's chances of winning the Champions League, Mbappe added: "We need to see what we'll have in front of us. The goal is to get to the quarterfinals, but we'll deal with what we are given in the draw."

SHORT CORNER

Silver for Mabria, Smriti

South Asian Games gold medallist Mabria Akter Simanta bagged a silver medal in 71kg category in the 5th International Solidarity Weightlifting Championships after bettering her individual performance in Cairo, Egypt yesterday.

Simanta, who had a national record of lifting total 172 kilos - 75 kilos in snatch and 97 kilos in clean and jerk - lifted a lot of 180 kilos to finish behind Egypt's Rania Mohamed Ezzat, who lifted a total of 207 kilos to ensure the gold medal. Simanta lifted 80 kilos in snatch and 100 kilos in clean and jerk.

Meanwhile, Smriti Akter bagged a silver medal in 45kg category lifting total of 123 kilos - 55 kilos in snatch and 58 kilos in clean and jerk, informed Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation's vice-president Mohyuddin Ahmed.

—SPORTS REPORTER

Booters' bans reduced

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) reduced the punishment of Bashundhara Kings defender Sushanta Tripura and striker Towhidul Alam Sabuz and Abahani defender Mamun Mia after the three footballers appealed to reconsider their punishment.

Having reviewed the punishment of those footballers, the BFF Appeal Committee on Tuesday reduced Tripura's eight-match ban to six matches while Sabuz's and Mamun's six-match bans to five matches each. However, the committee kept the monetary punishment unchanged.

The BFF Disciplinary Committee had handed the punishment on four players from Bashundhara Kings and Abahani as they engaged in ugly brawl during the Federation Cup final in November. Abahani's striker Nabib Newaj Jibon has already served a two-match ban in the ongoing Independence Cup.

—SPORTS REPORTER

Indians, Aussies excited by prospect of pacey track

AGENCIES, Perth



India are treating their pace bowlers like prize-winning thoroughbreds after the series-opening win over Australia in Adelaide while cautioning them against straining too hard at the reins when the second match gets underway in Perth.

Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah took 14 of 20 wickets at Adelaide Oval in a fine debut as a pace trio on Australian soil that helped fire the tourists to a 31-run win on Monday.

India coach Ravi Shastri said all three were being spared net duties on Tuesday to freshen up before the second test starting at Perth Stadium on Friday.

"I think fast bowlers are a precious commodity and they need to be taken care of like what you do with a racehorse," India bowling coach Bharat Arun

I can say that not only now [based on] what they did in Adelaide, but what they've done over a period of time, in South Africa, in England and now in Australia. This is probably the best group of fast bowlers India has had.

BHARAT ARUN
INDIA BOWLING COACH

told reporters in Perth on Wednesday. "And that's exactly what's happening."

Friday's test will be the first played at the new Perth Stadium, which has a drop-in pitch and succeeded the WACA as the city's premier venue. The curator is keen to produce a fast, bouncy wicket not unlike the WACA. According to Arun, the been the biggest change over the last few seasons has been the consistency of India's pacers.

"I think consistency was a big issue earlier," said Arun ahead of the second Test. "That's something we have addressed with the bowlers. This is something they've really worked very hard on. They have responded well."

Australia coach Justin Langer said he expected a pacey wicket at the Perth Stadium and declared captain Tim Paine "ready to go".

"I'm really fascinated and can't wait to see what the wicket brings," he told reporters. "There's only been one four-day game in its history."

"I went and watched a bit of the NSW versus WA game -- there was certainly some pace and bounce there. We've also seen some pace and bounce in it during the one-dayers and T20 game."

But he said neither team would know how the drop-in pitch plays in Test conditions until the match begins on Friday.



Tangur Racing, a local electric motorsport team, is going on a tour in 2019 with their electric vehicle to promote clean transportation and sustainable lifestyle. The nationwide tour will take place in March, 2019 followed by a global tour covering 7 cities, 14 countries and 3 continents. The tour details were announced yesterday at The Daily Star Centre.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

SPORTS REPORTER



Country's top two male shuttlers Salman Khan and Gourav Singha were eliminated from the pre-quarterfinals in men's singles event of the Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh International Challenge after posting victories in the second round at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium in Paltan yesterday.

Salman, the national champion, made a good start against India's shuttler Kevin Arokia in the third round or pre-quarterfinal by posting a 21-19 win in the first set, but the 23-year-old failed to carry the momentum in the next two sets to lose 17-21, 15-21.

Salman had earlier beaten Malaysia's Nibal Ahmed 21-10, 21-10 in the second round.

Gourav, the country's top-ranked shuttler, however could not produce any resistance against Malaysia's Mohammad Naim, losing 21-14, 21-16 in the pre-quarterfinals. Gourav

had earlier beaten Maldives' Shaheed Hussein 21-17, 21-13 in the second round.

Chand Lal also faced elimination from the third round after losing by 21-6, 21-8 to Malaysia's Cheerandeev Arutchelvan.

In women's singles, Rehana Parvin lost to Sri Lanka's Letshanaa Karupathevan 21-7, 21-5 in the second round.

The elimination in both men's and women's singles players means that local shuttlers once again failed to cross the pre-quarterfinal hurdle in this tournament, which was introduced in 2011.

"I have no dissatisfaction as I played according to my strength. I beat Kevin in the first set but went down in next two sets due to lack of confidence as well as inexperience at international level," said Salman, who however reached the quarterfinals of men's doubles pairing with Anamul Haque.

Bangladesh also moved into quarterfinals in women's doubles and mixed doubles.

স্বল্পমূল্যে অধিক ফিচারসহ
SSTAR মোবাইল হাতের নাগালে।

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