



With Rangpur Riders needing just nine runs to win from the last over, Rajshahi Kings left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman conceded only three runs to seal a five-run victory for his side in a BPL encounter at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'Nice to play against elder brothers'

SPORTS REPORTER



There were high hopes when young Mehedi Hasan Miraz was named captain of Rajshahi Kings for the sixth edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) as it would be a huge platform to prepare himself for future leadership opportunities.

The 21-year-old had led Bangladesh to a maiden semifinal finish in the ICC Under-19 World Cup in 2016.

For Mehedi, who often credits his Bangladesh ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza whenever he has a good time in the international circuit, yesterday was a



special occasion for the off-spinner as he managed to beat his idol Mashrafe's Rangpur Riders by five runs in a thriller.

"Obviously, it feels good and we all know he is our elder brother and Rangpur is the defending champion. It feels good to beat a team like Rangpur as we have a young side. It feels good to play against the elder brothers and as you saw, despite losing the game everyone came and congratulated me and supported me. There will be competitiveness on the field but off the field we share a great relationship," Mehedi said in the post-match press conference in Mirpur yesterday.

Talking about his captaincy, Mehedi informed that despite facing problems initially, he has gradually started to adapt to the role.

"I am improving day by day as I am doing the captaincy for the first

time in three years, since the Under-19 World Cup. But since then there was a gap and I struggled a bit initially. But gradually my brain has started to work accordingly and it will improve the more I play," he said.

Despite being on the losing side Mashrafe did not forget to praise Mehedi's leadership skills.

"Obviously it's very good for him [Mehedi]. The more he can learn from here, the more it will help him in international cricket. It's not just for captaincy in the international circuit; it is important for him to acquire leadership qualities from here. The earlier he adapts to it, the better it will be for him. Obviously it's a good thing for Mehedi to lead in the BPL," Mashrafe said.

## Fizz special halts Rangpur

*Mushy upstages Perera in Chittagong win*

SPORTS REPORTER



Even without taking a wicket, Rajshahi Kings pacer Mustafizur Rahman was the hero as his brilliant last over, that allowed just three runs when Rangpur Riders needed nine, sealed a thrilling five-run win over in the Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Needing 10 runs off the last over, the Fizz bowled four consecutive dot balls to Forhad Reza and Rilee Rossouw, on 43 at the other end, only managed to get strike in the last ball through a bye.

But the left-hander could not take the game to a Super Over and only managed to take a single off a fuller Mustafizur delivery as Rajshahi clinched their second win in four games.

Defending the small total of 135 for eight, it was Mustafizur who, despite being wicket-less conceded just 17 runs from his four overs, changed the scenario for Rajshahi.

SCORES IN BRIEF

**RAJSHAHI KINGS V RANGPUR RIDERS**  
**RAJSHAHI:** 135-8 in 20 overs (Mominul 14, Soumya 18, Hafeez 26, Zakir 42 not out; Gazi 1-25, Mashrafe 2-22, Shafiu 1-19, Farhad 2-17)  
**RANGPUR:** 130-6 in 20 overs (Gayle 23, Mithun 30, Rossouw 44 not out, Nahidul 16; Kamrul 2-22, Udana 1-22, Hafeez 2-22)  
**Result:** Rajshahi Kings won by five runs.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Zakir Hasan.

while chasing the modest target, Rangpur lost their way at the end and ended up on 130 for six in 20 overs. It was Rangpur's third defeat in five games and the defending champions will surely be looking for a comeback as the tournament shifts to Sylhet from January 15.

Rangpur however came up with a surprise when skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza opened the innings with Chris Gayle. However, the strategy did not work as Mashrafe edged a brilliant delivery from Kamrul Islam Rabbi for a second-ball duck in the first over.

In the day's second game, Mushfiqur Rahim's 41-ball 75 took Chittagong Vikings over the line by four wickets in their clash against the Comilla Victorians.

The right-hander smashed seven boundaries and four sixes and almost single-handedly willed Chittagong to a win. Mohammad Shehzad was the only other notable scorer for Chittagong, with a 27-ball 46, in chase of a 185-run target.

Earlier, it was Thisara Perera who stole the show with his dynamic 26-ball 74. The Sri Lankan was in rampant form, hitting eight sixes and three boundaries. He saved his best for last however, when he hit Frylinck for four sixes and a boundary in the penultimate over to provide a huge boost.

Unfortunately, Comilla's bowlers could not do the job in the end and do Perera's magnificent innings justice.

SCORES IN BRIEF

**COMILLA VICTORIANS V CHITTAGONG VIKINGS**  
**COMILLA:** 184 for five (Lewis 38, Saifuddin 26 not out, Perera 76 not out; Khaled 3-34)  
**CHITTAGONG:** 186 for six in 19.4 overs (Shahzad 46, Mushfiqur 75; Saifuddin 3-45)  
**Result:** Chittagong won by four wickets.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Mushfiqur Rahim

## RARITIES



PHOTO: STAR

Rajshahi Kings were slapped with a five-run penalty after skipper Mehedi Hasan Miraz was guilty of 'fake fielding' against Rangpur Riders yesterday. The incident took place in the 12th over of Rangpur's innings bowled by Mehedi, when the off-spinner darted towards square leg and put in a slide despite the ball having already

passed him. Due to Mehedi's intention to dupe the batsmen into not taking the second run the on-field umpire decided to give penalise Rajshahi. Mehedi admitted his mistake during the post-match briefing and said: "Yes, I knew the rule and I admit the mistake and I hope I won't repeat that again."

## DPL from Feb 20

SPORTS REPORTER



The upcoming edition of the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) will start from February 20 and the players-by-choice system will once again be in place, a Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) official informed yesterday.

The decision to keep the players-by-choice system -- during which the 12 clubs choose from a player pool in a sequence decided by lottery -- was taken after consulting with the clubs. The CCDM has decided to host the country's lone fifty-over tournament from February 20.

"This year we are going to players' by choice system after the consent of the participating clubs'. It's always tough to get the national team's players for their international commitments and considering the

participation of the players we're going to players' by choice system," said CCDM acting-in-charge Tawhid Mahmood.

"We have decided to start the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) just after the BPL ends. Bangladesh's tour of New Zealand will go on till March 22 from February 15. The tour will start with ODIs, so those who will not play Test series will play group phase DPL matches. But all the players will be able to play from the Super League stage."

Tawhid said that the CCDM is yet to decide whether they will be able to telecast at least one or two important matches of the Super League.

Each team can retain a maximum of three players and after the players' draft, clubs can release three players on the basis of mutual understanding. Any foreign player will be considered a free player but each team can field only one foreigner in the playing eleven.

## De Kock powers Proteas' surge

AFP, Johannesburg



A century by Quinton de Kock ensured Pakistan would face a huge task in their quest for a consolation win in the third and final Test against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday.

Needing 381 runs to win, Pakistan scored 153 for 3 at stumps on the third day.

De Kock equalled his Test-best score of 129 before South Africa were bowled out for 303.

It was De Kock's fourth Test century and his first in two years.

De Kock went to the wicket with his

side in some trouble at 93 for five, at which stage their lead was a modest 170.

De Kock shared a sixth wicket stand of 102 with Hashim Amla, who made 71, before adding 79 for the eighth wicket with Kagiso Rabada (21).

In an innings studded with flowing strokes, De Kock reached his fifty off 49 balls and his century off 121 deliveries.

He was finally caught in the deep, trying for a second successive six off leg-spinner Shadab Khan, after facing 138 balls and hitting 18 fours and a six.

Shadab finished with three for 41 while medium-pacer Faheem Ashraf took three for 42.

Pakistan opening batsmen Imam-ul-Haq and Shan Masood both

started confidently as they scored freely against Dale Steyn and Vernon Philander, neither of whom was able to find the swing or seam movement that they generated in the first innings.

Pakistan have only made one total over 200 in their first five innings in the series and have not batted for longer than 70.4 overs.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings 262 & second innings 303 (De Kock 129, Amla 71, Bavuma 23; Shadab 3-41, Ashraf 3-42)

**PAKISTAN:** First innings 185 & second innings 153 for 3 (Shafiq 48 not out, Masood 37, Imam 35; Steyn 2-37, Olivier 1-41)



South Africa wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock struck a herculean 138-ball 129-run knock on the third day of the third Test against Pakistan at Wanderers Stadium yesterday, keeping the side on course to what could be a series clean sweep. PHOTO: AFP

## Rayudu's action flagged

REUTERS, Undated

India's part-time off-spinner Ambati Rayudu has been reported for a suspect bowling action during the first one-day international against Australia in Sydney, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Sunday.

Rayudu must now have his bowling action tested within 14 days but can continue to bowl at the international level until the test results are out.

"The match officials' report, which was handed over to the India team management, cited concerns about the legality of the 33-year-old off-spinner's bowling action," the ICC said in a statement.

Rayudu bowled two overs for 13 runs against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Saturday, as India lost the first one-day international by 34 runs.

Meanwhile, all-rounder Vijay Shankar and batsman Shubman Gill will replace the suspended KL Rahul and Hardik Pandya in India's limited overs team, the Indian cricket board (BCCI) has said.

Rahul and Pandya were suspended pending an investigation into comments they made about women on a TV show this week which have been condemned as sexist and inappropriate.