

SPORT

No DRS in Sylhet for now

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet



The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) experienced its latest organisational hiccup yesterday when, on the first day of matches of the Sylhet leg of the tournament, it emerged that there was no Decision Review System in place for players to challenge the umpires' calls. The reason given for this state of affairs was that the equipment was stuck at the Dhaka airport due to customs-related problems.

Less than four days had elapsed since BPL governing council member-secretary IH Mallick told reporters in Mirpur that the ongoing tournament's production was of such a high standard that it could only be seen in the IPL final, semifinal and in the World Cup.'

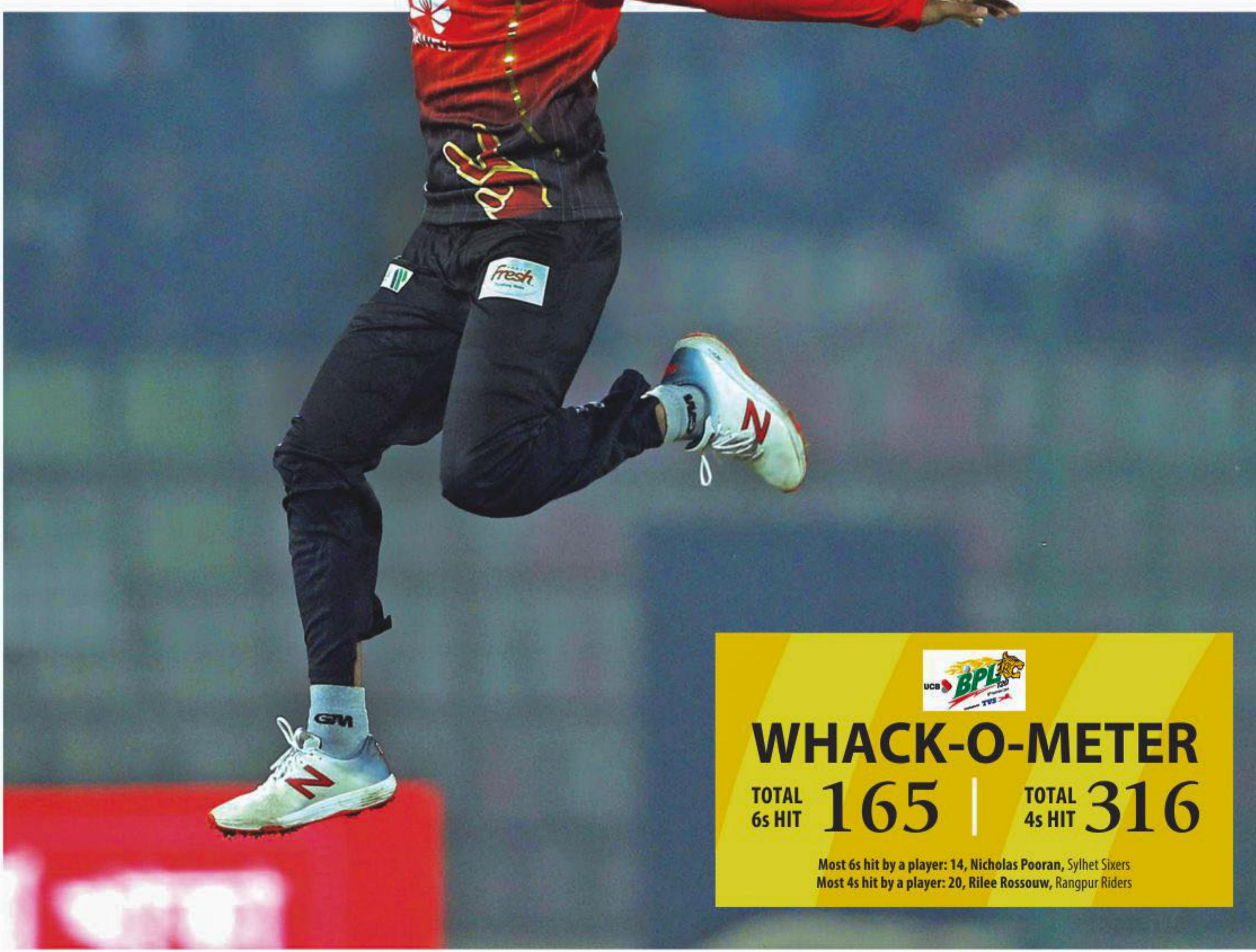
It seemed that cricket had once again become a gentleman's sport as despite some fifty-fifty decisions, no one challenged the umpires' calls. It was finally Mallick himself who did his best to clear the air.

"There has been some trouble between customs officials and C&F [clearing and forwarding] agents at the airport for the last three days," Mallick told The Daily Star last night. "The equipment will reach Sylhet either tomorrow [Wednesday] or the day after [Thursday]."

It was learnt that each venue for the BPL -- Dhaka, Sylhet and Chattogram -- required specific calibrations, which is why the equipment in Dhaka could not be shifted over to Sylhet.

The ongoing sixth edition of the tournament started with similar controversy as, while including the DRS for the first time the powers that be neglected to include the Ultra Edge, Hot Spot or Snickometer, all of which determines whether the ball made contact with bat. The franchises were reportedly told beforehand that there would be no Ultra Edge, but it was brought in a week into the tournament after negative publicity was created when decisions were overturned without sufficient evidence. The excuse for the delay was that the Ultra Edge operator could not procure a visa.

Fans, and indeed players, will hope that the DRS makes it to Sylhet soon, along with operators with correct documentation.



On what turned out to be a spin-friendly track in Sylhet, Comilla Victorians off-spinner Mahedi Hasan exploited the wicket brilliantly, picking up four wickets for 22 runs in a BPL match against Sylhet Sixers yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

WHACK-O-METER

TOTAL 6s HIT 165 | TOTAL 4s HIT 316

Most 6s hit by a player: 14, Nicholas Pooran, Sylhet Sixers

Most 4s hit by a player: 20, Rilee Rossouw, Rangpur Riders

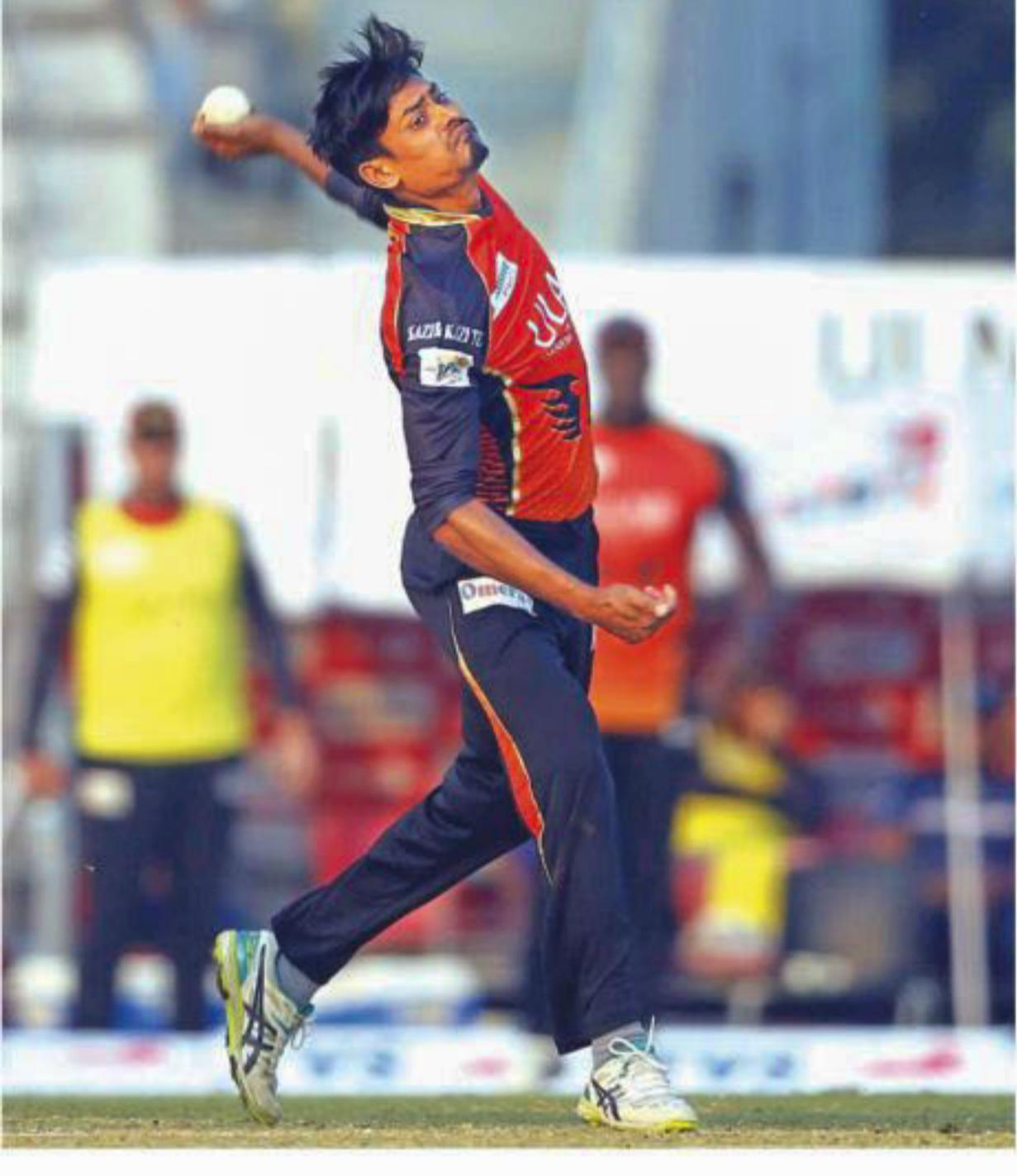
TALK ON



I think you have to be clever with what you want to do. You have to analyse other batters, and find out their strengths and weakness. And then try to exploit their weaknesses as much as you can. They have some big names -- Pooran, Warner and a couple of good bowlers as well. We will do research on them, and try to use our strength as much as we can.

BENNY HOWELL
RANGPUR RIDERS BATSMAN

Sixers and Sylhet disappoint, Khulna bag first win



SAKEB SUBHAN from Sylhet



After a mostly underwhelming first leg on slow and low Dhaka wickets, there was hope that things would liven up when the Bangladesh Premier League moved to the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, where the pitch was expected to offer more runs. But the wicket disappointed almost as much as Sylhet Sixers did when they were shot out for 68 during an eight-wicket defeat at the hands of Comilla Victorians last night.

It was Comilla off-spinner Mahedi Hasan's four-wicket haul that dragged the rug from under the home team's feet. The 24-year-old broke the spine of Sylhet's batting by dismissing Andre Fletcher, skipper David Warner and Afif Hossain in the second over. Sylhet fell to 22 for seven by the eighth over and only an unbeaten 33 from local boy Alok Kapali -- the only double-digit score -- averted record embarrassment.

In the day game, the first of the Sylhet leg, Khulna finally unearthed some mojo from a wicket that took turn and earned their first success of the season with a 25-run win over Rajshahi Kings yesterday.

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam -- a Bangladesh Test specialist -- was the out-

SCORES IN BRIEF

KHULNA TITANS v RAJSHAHI KINGS

KHULNA: 128 for 9 in 20 overs (Ariful 26, Malan 15; Udana 2-36, Mehedi 2-21, Arafat 2-25)

RAJSHAHI: 103 all out in 19.5 overs (Mehedi 23, Arafat 15; Taijul 3-10, Junaid 3-26, Mahmudullah 2-12)

Result: Khulna won by 25 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Taijul Islam

standing performer with three wickets for just 10 runs from four overs as Rajshahi were bowled out for 103 in 19.5 overs after Khulna scored what earlier seemed to be a below-par 128 for nine -- the lowest total successfully defeated in this edition.

After winning the toss, Khulna lost the wickets of openers Jahurul Islam and Junaid Siddique, but the former with a 13-ball six had provided a fast start that Junaid and Dawid Malan maintained for the first six Powerplay overs, which ended with the score on 44 for two. The eight overs after Junaid's dismissal in the fifth over produced no boundaries for Khulna, but gave Rajshahi the wickets of Dawid -- trapped in front by Mehedi Hasan Miraz in the eighth -- and Mahmudullah Riyad, caught at deep midwicket in the 11th over off Arafat Sunny.

By then, with the score on 65 for four, they seemed to realise that a moderate score on the wicket would be a challenging one and played accordingly. Nazmul Hossain Shanto was run out in the 13th over and Carlos Brathwaite, after breaking the boundary drought, was trapped in front by Arafat Sunny in the same over.

From 82 for six, Ariful Haque played the most valuable hand of the match -- a 27-ball 26 which lifted the score above the 120-mark. In between, Isuru Udana picked up David Weise and Mustafizur Rahman ensured that there would be no late flourish in the last over, conceding just three runs while getting Ariful caught and brilliantly running out Taijul Islam with a direct hit.

Rajshahi, however, failed to take the lessons from the wicket and were guilty of playing too many shots at the start. Laurie Evans departed off the fourth ball, pulling

SCORES IN BRIEF

SYLHET SIXERS v COMILLA VICTORIANS

SYLHET: 68 all out in 14.5 overs (Kapali 33 not out; Mehedi 4-22, Ria 3-15, Dawson 2-4)

COMILLA: 69 for 2 in 11.1 overs (Shamsur 34 not out, Imrul 30 not out; Tanvir 1-10)

Result: Comilla won by 8 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Mahedi Hasan.

Junaid Khan straight to mid on and Mehedi signalled his intentions with a first-ball six over point. A 29-run second-wicket partnership between Mehedi and Mominul Haque was the best it got for the Kings, and Mahmudullah Riyad trapping Mominul Haque started the rot. Taijul then dispatched Mehedi, Soumya Sarkar and Ryan ten Doeschate and Mahmudullah accounted for Zakir Hasan to have Rajshahi reeling on 55 for six in 12th over. Junaid Khan and Weise then did the rest as the Kings surrendered meekly.

In the evening match, at 22 for seven, Sylhet were on the verge of the lowest ever T20 score as they were still seven shy of Tripura's 30 all out against Jharkhand in 2009. Kapali however ensured that no such embarrassment occurred as he took them past that mark and also 39 -- the lowest score on Bangladesh soil 'achieved' by the Netherlands against Sri Lanka in the 2014 World Twenty20 -- and 44, the lowest ever BPL score recorded by Khulna Titans against Rangpur Riders in 2016.

But it was of course not enough, and despite both Comilla openers Tamim Iqbal and Anamul Haque being removed for ducks, skipper Imrul Kayes and Shamsur Rahman took the team home with 77 balls to spare.



Even though the Dhaka leg of this year's BPL witnessed a low turnout, many assumed that the Sylhet phase would get bigger crowds. However, the first day of play in Sylhet turned out to be dull both on and off the pitch as uncompetitive matches were played out in front of sparse crowds.

PHOTO: STAR

Dhoni, Kohli make it 1-1

AFP, Adelaide



Veteran wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni steered India to a six-wicket victory over Australia in the second one-day international to level the series in Adelaide on Tuesday.

Former skipper Dhoni, playing in his 334th ODI, coolly guided India across the line with four balls to spare to back up a dazzling century from captain Virat Kohli.

India successfully chased down a target of 299 runs set by Australia who scored 298 for nine with Shaun Marsh scoring 131 off 123 balls.

The three-match series now goes to a decider in Melbourne on Friday after Australia won the opening game in Sydney by 34 runs.

"Tonight was an MS (Dhoni) classic," player-of-the-match Kohli said. "He takes the game till the end, when only he knows what's going on in his mind, and he backs himself to hit those big shots at the end."

"And hats off to Dinesh (Karthik) too, he came in and took the pressure off him."

When Kohli holed out to Glenn Maxwell at deep mid-wicket to end his stellar knock of 104 off 112 balls, it was 37-year-old Dhoni who took charge to pilot his side home with support from Karthik with an unbeaten 25.

Dhoni was physically struggling in the hot conditions and needed treatment from the team physio to finish his match-winning knock and keep India alive in the series.

India lost four wickets in their chase after Australia's total.



India captain Virat Kohli celebrates his century in the second ODI against Australia yesterday. The visitors won by six wickets courtesy of a late 55-run surge from (Inset) MS Dhoni.

Sawhney named new ICC CEO

AFP, New Delhi

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Tuesday named Manu Sawhney its new chief executive officer to replace David Richardson, who will step down after the World Cup in July.

The 52-year-old Indian will join ICC from next month before formally taking over the reins later this year from Richardson, a former South Africa wicketkeeper-batsman.

Sawhney, a former chief executive of Singapore Sports Hub and managing director of ESPN Star Sports, is also a non-executive director and member of the audit committee of Manchester United Limited.

ICC chairman Shashank Manohar ratified Sawhney's appointment after consulting with the nominations committee.

"I am delighted to confirm Manu's appointment today," Manohar said in a statement.

"He brings 22 years of outstanding commercial experience to the ICC and will lead the delivery of our new global growth strategy for the game."

Sawhney said it was a "great privilege" to serve the global cricket community.

Extras aided the boys

SPORTS REPORTER



I.E.S High School defeated Scholastica Senior Campus Mirpur by seven wickets in their opening fixture of the Dhaka Metro phase of the Prime Bank National School Cricket tournament at the Jaharul Haque Hall field in Dhaka University yesterday.

In a 50-over match, it only took about 25 overs for the match to see a winner as Scholastica were bundled out for just 38 runs after having played 18.4 overs while

their counterparts I.E.S High School reached the target in less than seven overs.

In a very low scoring affair, seven of Scholastica's batsmen were dismissed without even troubling the scores and no batsmen could even reach double figures as a majority of their runs (24) came from extras. I.E.S' inntings was also aided with extras as 18 extra runs were conceded in their chase of the low total.

Sadly it seems, the opening fixture of a major grassroots tournament has failed to create any hope for the future.