



HIGHEST TOTAL IN BPL			
Team	Score	Opposition	Year
Dhaka Gladiators	217	Rangpur Riders	2013
Chittagong Vikings	214	Khulna Titans	2019
Duronto Rajshahi	213	Barisal Burners	2013
Khulna Titans	213	Rajshahi Kings	2017
Chittagong Vikings	211	Sylhet Sixers	2017



Chittagong Vikings batsmen Dasun Shanaka (L) and Mushfiqur Rahim were in prime form while Yasir Ali (Inset) hit a rare fifty by a non-national local player as they piled on 214 to win their BPL match against Khulna Titans by 26 runs at the Sylhet International Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Akbar to lead U-19s against England

SPORTS REPORTER



Wicket-keeper batsman Akbar Ali was named captain of the Bangladesh Under-19 team for the home series against England Under-19s as Towhid Hridoy is playing the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) for Sylhet Sixers.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 15-member squad yesterday for the series comprising one T20, three one-dayers and two four-day matches. The series will kick off with the lone T20 match on January 27 at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar.

"Akbar has been playing with the Under-19 team for quite a long time, so he is not new to the team. We didn't make much changes to the team that played in Sri Lanka in October last year but Towhid [who led the team in Sri Lanka] and pacer Shoriful [Islam] were not included as they are now playing the BPL. We will call them if needed for the four-day matches," said junior team selector Hannan Sarker yesterday.

Shamim Hossain, the left-handed batsman and leg-break bowler, was appointed Akbar's deputy for the series.

There are two more wicketkeeper-batsmen in the squad in Amite Hasan and Parvez Hossain. Rakibul Hasan was the only slow left-arm bowler while Rishad Hossain was the only specialist leg-spinner.

SQUAD: Akbar Ali (captain), Shamim Hossain (vice-captain), Prantik Nawrose, Tanzid Hasan, Parvez Hossain, Mahmudul Hasan, Amite Hasan, Shahadat Hossain, Rakibul Hasan, Ashraful Islam, Rishad Hossain, Ruhel Ahmed, Shahin Alom, Mirtunjoy Chowdhury and Tanzim Hasan.

Riders, Vikings bid Sylhet a special adieu

SPORTS REPORTER



A lot of high-scoring games and excitement were expected when the sixth edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) moved to Sylhet last week. Although the first few matches of the Sylhet phase had disappointed the crowd in that regard, after three dull matches spectators finally found what they were looking for as the last three matches were all high-scoring thrillers.

However, arguably the most exciting day of this edition's BPL so far came on the last day of the Sylhet leg yesterday. In the day's first game Rangpur chased down a 194 against Sylhet Sixers -- the highest successful chase of the current edition -- to win by four wickets, while in the second game Chittagong Vikings won by 26 runs against Khulna Titans after posting a mammoth 214

SCORES IN BRIEF	
RANGPUR RIDERS v SYLHET SIXERS	
SYLHET: 194 for 4 in 20 overs (Sabbir 85, Pooran 47 not out, Afif 19; Mashrafe 2-31, Shafiu 1-43)	
RANGPUR: 195 for 6 in 19.3 overs (Rossouw 61, de Villiers 34, Hakes 33; Taskin 4-42, Kapali 1-34, Irfan 1-34)	
Result: Rangpur won by 4 wickets.	
Player-of-the-match: Rilee Rossouw.	

SCORES IN BRIEF	
CHITTAGONG VIKINGS v KHULNA TITANS	
CHITTAGONG: 214 for 4 in 20 overs (Shahzad 33, Yasir 54, Mushfiqur 52, Shanaka 42 not out; Wiese 2-26)	
KHULNA: 188 for 8 in 20 overs (Taylor 28, Mahmudullah 50, Wiese 40; Jayed 3-33, Khaled 2-29)	
Result: Chittagong won by 26 runs.	
Player-of-the-match: Mushfiqur Rahim.	

Roussow on one and 12. Jaker was eventually replaced by Liton Das as keeper.

In the day's second game, being sent into bat, Chittagong Vikings posted the second highest total in BPL history riding on brilliant knocks from skipper Mushfiqur Rahim, Yasir Ali and Dasun Shanaka. After losing both openers in the Powerplay, Yasir and captain Mushfiqur struck an 83-run third-wicket partnership before the former was dismissed after scoring 54 off 36 balls. Mushfiqur was the next to fall after having scored a quickfire fifty, but a late cameo of 42 off 17 balls from Shanaka saw Chittagong finish on a high.

In chase of the daunting total, Khulna lost three quick wickets before a 26-ball fifty from skipper Mahmudullah Riyad and David Wiese's 40 took them close to the target, but eventually Khulna fell short as they could only manage 188 for eight, the lowest total of the day.



Sylhet Sixers opener Sabbir Rahman hit a superb 51-ball 85 but it proved to be in vain as Rangpur Riders chased down a steep total in Sylhet yesterday.

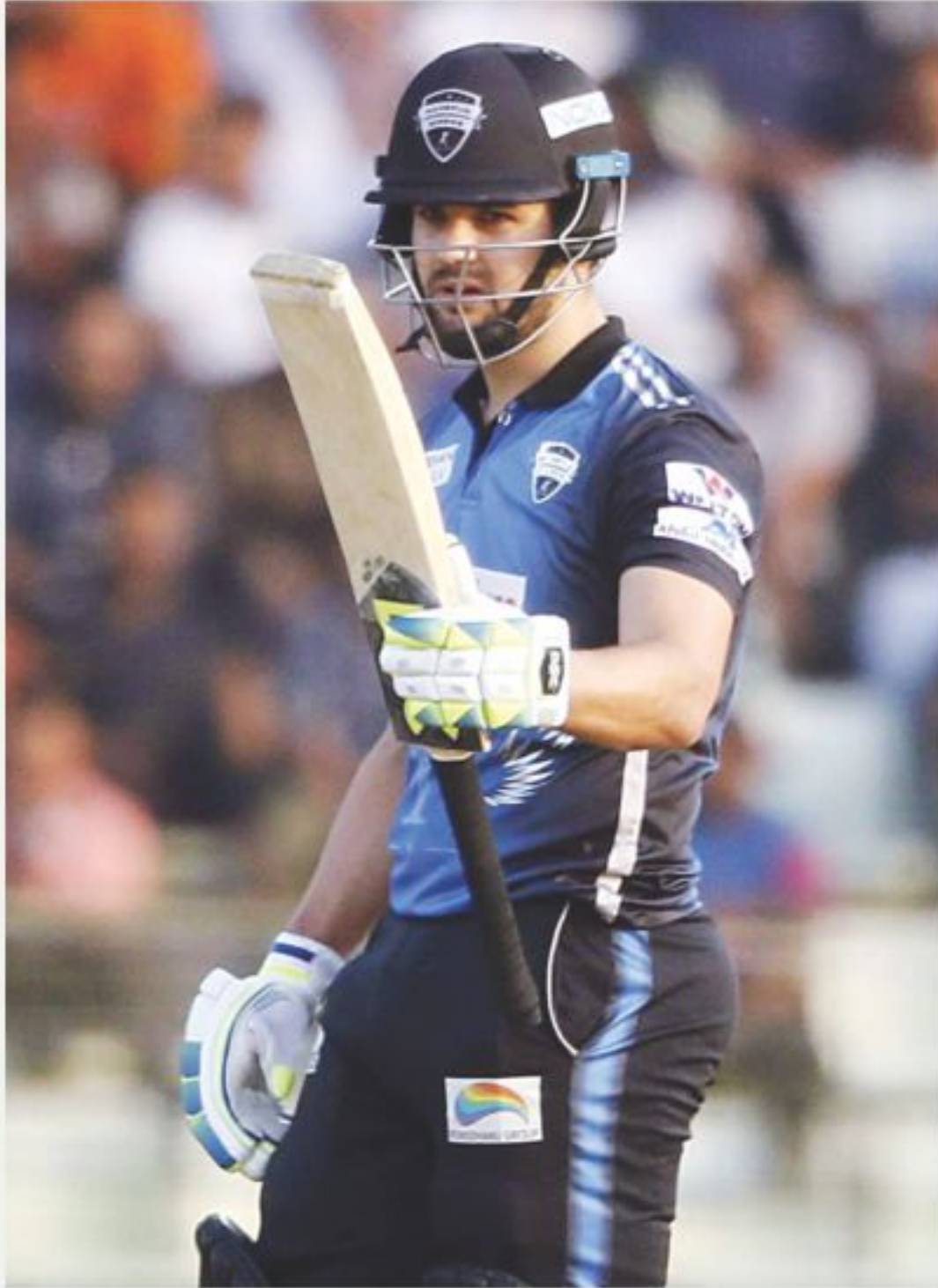
PHOTO: STAR

TALK ON



Probably just certain things are clicking for me at the moment. I had lady luck on my side at the start of the innings. I could have been out seven times in the first five overs. It is just about riding the wave and enjoying the time when you're in good form. Keep it simple and basic, know your scoring areas and keep rotating the strike.

RILEE ROSSOUW
RANGPUR RIDERS BATSMAN



With their tour of Australia done and dusted, India captain Virat Kohli (R) stuck around for a while to watch the ongoing Australian Open in Melbourne. Here, Kohli is seen chatting with one of tennis's Big 3 Roger Federer yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Kohli & Co praised for perfect finish

AFP, New Delhi



India's cricketers are being hailed a once-in-a-generation side as the World Cup looms, capping off a "perfect finish" to their historic Australia tour with a maiden one-day international bilateral series victory.

The Men in Blue will return home to India triumphant without having lost a Test or limited-overs series -- a first on Australian soil.

The Test victory was India's first in 71 years of trying in Australia, a crowning achievement burnished by another historic first as the visitors clinched the ODI series 2-1 in Melbourne on Friday.

India earlier drew a three-match Twenty20 showdown 1-1 after one match was washed out, ending the tour without losing a series in any format.

"Perfect Finish To Dream Tour", declared the Mail Today daily on page one Saturday.

"One-Day wonder Down Under", ran a front page headline in the weekend edition

of the Indian Express newspaper. Other Indian dailies called it a "perfect ending" and "series of firsts".

Captain Virat Kohli, riding on a high, is already looking ahead to the World Cup in May, confident his men have hit their stride as the coveted ODI cup looms.

"We are feeling confident and balanced as a side with the World Cup in mind," the skipper said.

"In all the three series we bounced back in different stages, and I think that builds team character ahead, especially when the World Cup is so near. If everyone contributes at different stages, it is then you win a big tournament."

The India side is being tipped as one of the best in years.

Special praise was reserved for veteran wicketkeeper-batsman Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who defied critics to smash an unbeaten 87 and register his third straight ODI half-century.

Legendary batsman Sachin Tendulkar praised Dhoni on Twitter, saying he "once again played the role of the anchor beautifully!"

Pakistan win first ODI

AFP, Port Elizabeth



Hashim Amla hit his 27th one-day international century but his effort went in vain as Pakistan won the first ODI by five wickets at St George's Park on Saturday.

Pakistan opener Imam-ul-Haq scored a 101-ball 86-run and Mohammad Hafeez remained unbeaten for 71 to see as Pakistan reached the 267-run target with five balls to spare.

Amla (108 not out) shared a second-wicket partnership of 155 with debutant Rassie van der Dussen (93) but the pair were unable to dominate against steady bowling on a slow pitch.

Although Pakistan were only able to claim two wickets, they bowled well on a windy day, with captain Sarfraz Ahmed juggling his bowlers in short spells.

Scoring was slow during the middle overs with seamer Hasan Ali and leg-spinner Shadab Khan bowling particularly well. They took one for 42 and one for 41 respectively in their ten overs.

Amla and Reeza Hendricks (45) put on 82 off 105 balls for the first wicket before Van der Dussen made a slow start in his first one-day international, taking ten balls to score his first run.

But the scoring rate picked up and Van der Dussen hit six fours and three sixes in a 101-ball innings. Amla made his

SCORES IN BRIEF
SOUTH AFRICA: 266 for 2 in 50 overs (Amla 108 not out, Hendricks 45, Van der Dussen 93; Hasan 1-42, Shadab 1-41)
PAKISTAN: 267-5 in 49.1 overs (Imam-ul-Haq 86, Babar 49, Hafeez 71 not out, Shadab 18 not out; Olivier 2-73)
Result: Pakistan won by 5 wickets.



South Africa batsman Hashim Amla (R) celebrates after scoring a century during the first ODI against Pakistan in Port Elizabeth yesterday. Opener Amla remained unbeaten through South Africa's innings but his effort eventually went in vain.

PHOTO: AFP

Hazlewood out of SL Tests

AFP, Melbourne

Australia suffered a big blow Saturday with star fast bowler Josh Hazlewood ruled out of their two upcoming Tests against Sri Lanka with a back injury and Jhye Richardson replacing him.

The vice-captain has hurt the same part of his back that sidelined him last year.

But Cricket Australia physiotherapist David Beakley said he was confident Hazlewood would recover in time for the World Cup in England and Wales.

"Josh has reported some back soreness over the last few days and scans have revealed a very early stage stress fracture in the same lower back area as his previous injury from last summer," he said on the Cricket Australia website.

"He will now begin a rehabilitation program and we are confident he will be available for selection ahead of the ICC Cricket World Cup in the UK later this year."

Richardson, who has impressed in the one-day series against India, joins Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins and Peter Siddle as the pace attack in the squad to face Sri Lanka.

The first Test -- a day-nighter -- starts next Thursday in Brisbane, with the second in Canberra.

"Jhye has had an impressive first half in his Sheffield Shield season and no-one could deny he has now continued that form in ODI matches for Australia," said national selector Trevor Hohns.

WHACK-O-METER

TOTAL 6s HIT

238

TOTAL 4s HIT

461

Most 6s hit by a player: 18, Nicholas Pooran, Sylhet Sixers

Most 4s hit by a player: 32, Rilee Rossouw, Rangpur Riders