



Cumilla Warriors skipper Dasun Shanaka was in marauding mood, smashing seven sixes and a four in the last two overs of their innings during a 105-run thrashing of Rangpur Rangers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Pay gap a discredit for us: Mushfiqur

SPORTS REPORTER



One of the most important issues surrounding the players' 13-point demand in the strike back in October this year was the discrimination in wages between foreign and local players in the Bangladesh Premier League.

Less than two months later, on the opening day of the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL), Bangladesh's wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim retrained the spotlight on the issue and said that the difference between the pay packages of local and foreign players was highly disappointing.

"If you see our players, Tamim or Shakib, we perform consistently the whole year but some players who are playing just the T20 format throughout the year are getting more wages. It feels different to us. So, I think it is a bit of discredit for us. If you see the other leagues, their local players are the highest-paid players," Mushfiqur, Khulna Tigers' skipper for the BBPL, told reporters at the Academy ground in Mirpur yesterday.

Bangladesh's A+ category cricketers will be paid Tk 50 lakh while foreign

A+ category cricketers will receive Tk 84 lakh. Bangladesh's A category cricketers are expected to get Tk 25 lakh while foreign cricketers in the same category will rake in Tk 56 lakh. According to the wicketkeeper-batsman, this discrepancy was a disappointment.

However, the experienced cricketer was hoping that such differences will not exist from the next edition of the BPL, when franchises reenter the picture.

"We never get the expected wages and we tried to notify them about it [during the players' strike]. They [BCB] also gave us hope. Maybe this BPL was arranged in a hurry and luckily it is happening. And it is now on the field; that is the main thing for us.

"And I am not only talking about top players; they should also review the other grades. The players who perform consistently the whole year should be ranked higher. Maybe there are only four-five top players who perform well consistently the whole year. If I say Shaiful [Islam] or Taijul [Islam], they played outstanding last year. Or Rahi. They are in B or C grade. So I think they [BCB] should look into these matters. And this will be good for Bangladesh cricket," he said.

Rangpur wilt after Shanaka blitz

SPORTS REPORTER



Skipper Dasun Shanaka led from the front as Cumilla Warriors started their Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League campaign on a roaring high with a thumping 105-run win over Rangpur Rangers in the second game of the opening day at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Chasing a challenging target of 174 posted by Cumilla courtesy of Shanaka's blistering unbeaten 75, Rangpur surrendered meekly and were bundled out for just 68, with Zakir Hasan unable to bat after he got injured while fielding.

Rangpur kept losing wickets at regular intervals and that opener Naim Sheikh's 17 was the highest score with only three batsmen able to reach double figures summed up the entire batting scenario in a one-sided affair.

On the other hand, it was a collective bowling display from Cumilla as pacer Al-Amin Hossain picked up three wickets while medium pacer Soumya Sarkar and left-arm spinner Sunzamul Islam bagged two wickets each.

SCORES IN BRIEF

CUMILLA WARRIORS: 173 for 7 in 20 overs (Soumya 26, Malan 25, Sabbir 19, Shanaka 75 not out; Sanjit 2-26, Mustafizur 2-37, Gregory 2-25)

RANGPUR RANGERS: 68 all out in 14 overs (Shahzad 13, Naim 17, Nabi 11; Al-Amin 3-14, Soumya 2-12, Sunzamul 2-4)

Result: Cumilla Warriors won by 105 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Dasun Shanaka.

Earlier, despite a poor start from Cumilla, it was raining sixes from skipper Shanaka in the latter stage of the innings, which helped them to post a formidable 173 for seven in 20 overs.

Electing to bat first, Cumilla were at one point struggling on 89 for six inside 14 overs before Shanaka took on the Rangpur bowlers. He struck nine sixes and three fours and remained unbeaten on a 31-ball 75.

Cumilla managed to add 65 runs in the last three overs of the innings, which included the most expensive one in the 19th over from

Mustafizur Rahman, during which the left-arm seamer conceded 26 runs.

Mustafizur, who started off confidently and gave away just 12 runs from his first three overs and also picked up the wickets of Soumya Sarkar (26) and Sabbir Rahman (19), lost his way in his fourth and final over.

Shanaka, who had struck two sixes in the previous over off Lewis Gregory, went on to hammer four consecutive sixes off Mustafizur, including one that came off a free hit. The longest of those sixes went outside the stadium over the deep mid-wicket region as Mustafizur eventually ended up with figures of two for 37.

Shanaka, who had led the Sri Lankan T20I side in Pakistan last month, reached his fifty off just 23 balls and finished off in style by smashing 23 runs in the final over from Junaid Khan, which included three sixes and a four.

The Pakistani left-arm pacer was the most expensive bowler for Rangpur and remained wicketless after conceding 47 runs off four overs.

Apart from Mustafizur, off-spinner Sanjit Saha and Gregory also picked up two wickets each for Rangpur.



Chattogram Challengers batsman Imrul Kayes hit a match-winning 61 in the BBPL opener against Sylhet Thunder at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SHORT CORNER

Asghar brought back as Afghan captain

Former Afghanistan cricket captain Asghar Afghan has been brought back to replace Rashid Khan and lead the team in all formats, the country's cricket board (ACB) said on Wednesday.

"As per the decision by ACB top management, senior player Asghar Afghan is reappointed as team Afghanistan's captain across formats," ACB said on its official Twitter account.

Leg-spinner Rashid, 21, was named captain for all formats with Afghan as his deputy in July after a dismal run at the 50-over World Cup in England.

Afghan, 31, was reinstated at the helm with Rashid demoted to vice-captain.

-- REUTERS

Dar set to break record as a Test umpire

Alem Dar is set to break Steve Bucknor's record of most Tests as an umpire in the first match of the series between Australia and New Zealand, which starts in Perth on Thursday.

The 51-year-old, who took up umpiring after playing first-class cricket in Pakistan, is standing in his 129th Test match as an on-field umpire.

He stood in his first Test in Dhaka in 2003 during England's tour of Bangladesh.

"This is one milestone I had never thought of when I began my umpiring career. It is a truly amazing feeling and a high point of my life when I take the field here in Australia," Dar said.

-- AFP



PHOTO: COLLECTED

SANTOKIE CAN'T SPOT THE LINE

Sylhet Thunders West Indian pacer Krishmar Santokie raised some eyebrows in the BBPL opener when he followed up a massive wide in the second over of Chattogram Challengers' chase with an even more bizarre no-ball. In the third ball of the over, Santokie surprised everyone with a ball that pitched just outside the wide mark down the leg side with right-hander Avishka Fernando on strike. Wicketkeeper Mohammad Mithun had to dive full length to collect it. Two balls later, Santokie overstepped the crease by a massive margin that exceeded even the infamous no-ball of Pakistan pacer Mohammad Amir at Lord's in 2010. However, Sylhet skipper Mosaddek Hossain made no comment on the subject in the post-match conference, saying that he did not pay attention when the incident took place.

Lankans make Pakistan toil

AFP, Rawalpindi



Test cricket made its long-awaited return to Pakistan after a deadly attack in 2009, with the home team led by fast bowler Naseem Shah dominating Sri Lanka on Wednesday.

Naseem, who is just 16, grabbed 2-51 on the opening day of the first Test which marked a momentous occasion in Pakistan cricket at Rawalpindi stadium.

Sri Lanka won the toss and batted and closed the day at a precarious 202-5 after bad light stopped play 20.5 overs early.

At close Dhananjaya de Silva was unbeaten on 38 and Niroshan Dickwella not out 11 as Sri Lanka

spoiled a good 96-run start given by skipper Dimuth Karunaratne (59) and Oshada Fernando (40).

Pakistan struggled for wickets in the first session as Sri Lanka reached 89-0 at lunch.

Shaheen Shah Afridi trapped Sri Lankan skipper Karunaratne leg-before soon after lunch to trigger a collapse which saw the visitors lose four wickets within just 31 runs in the post lunch session.

Karunaratne hit nine boundaries in his 110-ball knock. Naseem then had Fernando caught at slip for 40, an innings laced with six boundaries and a six.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: First innings 202 for 5 (Karunaratne 59, Fernando 40, Mathews 31, De Silva 38 not out; Naseem 2-51)

Imrul, Mithun fly local flag

SPORTS REPORTER



Local stars lit up the opener of the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) between Chattogram Challengers and Sylhet Thunders at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

While Mohammad Mithun smashed an unbeaten 48-ball 84 -- his career-best T20 score -- to help Sylhet Thunders post a challenging 162 for four, it was Imrul Kayes who stole Mithun's thunder with a magnificent 38-ball 61 to ensure a five-wicket victory for Chattogram Challengers.

Bangladeshi players excelling in the opener should please the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) as prior to the start of the T20 league, board officials said that the one-of-a-kind BBPL -- arranged solely by the BCB without the franchises involved in six previous editions -- would be a splendid platform for locals to make a statement ahead of the T20 World Cup in October 2020.

Imrul, who had walked in after Nazmul Islam removed Junaid Siddique and Nasir Hossain in successive deliveries in the fourth over to put Chattogram in a spot of bother at 20 for two, said that the assurance of being picked in the coming games changes a player's style of play.

"In the national team we play one or two T20s in a series. Sometimes we play T20 matches right after playing a Test or ODI. Sometimes I played one or two matches and then I get to play a T20. So, in the national team when you cannot score runs in one match, it becomes difficult for you to play the next game -- the pressure gets to you. But here I know that if I play well or badly, I will be playing all the matches. This freedom is very important. And when you have such freedom, then the way you play changes," said Imrul, who was dropped from the T20 squad that toured India for three T20Is last month.

Imrul, who had abysmal outings during the Two-Test series in India, also mentioned that he cannot replicate his domestic form at the international stage due to the frequent questions asked by the journo regarding his form.

"I lose my form when you guys [journalists] ask questions. I stay in form and then lose it," said Imrul with a smirk, later adding that the criticism he receives for bad performances is usual for a famous player like him.

Although it may be too early to say whether locals will keep dominating, it sure was a bright start for the likes of Imrul and Mithun on the opening day. While the BCB will be happy with what transpired in the opening game, there remain some issues that need the board's attention as none of the two teams complied with the preset guidelines -- playing at least one wrist spinner and have him bowl the full four-over quota and also employing an express fast bowler capable of bowling over 140kmph -- provided by the board.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SYLHET THUNDER: 162 for 4 in 20 overs (Charles 35, Mithun 84 not out, Mosaddek 29; Rubel 2-27)

CHATTGRAM CHALLENGERS: 163 for 5 in 19 overs (Fernando 33, Imrul 61, Walton 49 not out; Nazmul 2-23)

Result: Chattogram Challengers won by 5 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Imrul Kayes.