



Khulna flawless; Rangpur winless

SPORTS REPORTER



Rangpur Rangers' frustration Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) continued Mohammad Nabi's

fell to a fourth straight defeat yesterday. This time, it was Khulna Tigers who registered a comprehensive eight-wicket win in the day's first game at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram.

Khulna are beaming with confidence, Mushfigur Rahim's side clinching their third win in as many games.

It was star South African batsman Rilee Rossouw who did the damage, celebrating his blistering fifty with some dance moves in chase of a modest 138-run target which was overtaken

SCORES IN BRIEF

RANGPUR RANGERS: 137 for 9 in 20 overs (Naim 49, Fazle 42; Shafiul 3-21, Amir 2-24) KHULNA TIGERS: 138 for 2 in 12.3 overs (Rossouw 66 not out, Gurbaz 37; Mustafizur 1-18) **Result:** Tigers won by 8 wickets. Player-of-the-match: Shafiul Islam



Rangpur's chase got off to a rocky start as they lost opener Nazmul Hossain Shanto (1) in the second over. However, young Afghanistan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Rossouw carved the path to victory for Khulna with a 61run third-wicket stand.

Rossouw and Gurbaz took a toll on the Rangpur bowlers and added the third-highest score, 81 for 1, in the Powerplay overs in the history of BPL.

Gurbaz was eventually dismissed by young pacer Mukidul Islam after scoring 37 off 22 but Rossouw continued and reached his 25th halfcentury in the format off just 23 deliveries.

Rossouw ensured an easy win and remained unbeaten on 66 off just 31 balls with the help of nine fours and two sixes. Skipper Mushfiqur, who got the winning runs, was unbeaten on 17 as Khulna got home with 45 balls to spare.

Earlier, Rangpur made a good start as opener Naim Sheikh added 49 off 32 while Fazle Mahmud added 42, but the batting side lost wickets at regular intervals to help Khulna remain in control.

Pacer Shafiul Islam was instrumental for Khulna and picked up three wickets for 21 runs from four overs while left-arm pacer Mohammad Amir and right-arm seamer Shahidul Islam scalped two each.

A question was posed to Rossouw at the post-match press conference about whether his fancy celebration after reaching 50 was inspired by his mother, who is a dance teacher in South Africa and the top-scorer of the last edition of the BPL responded: "Everything was just hitting the middle of my bat. About the celebration, it was inspired from celebrations in FIFA (the video game series) I had told the boys I would celebrate that way if I scored a fifty.

Meanwhile, it was learned that Rangpur were in talks to rope in Australian all-rounder Shane Watson for the latter stages of the tournament. However, it will be difficult for Rangpur to get to the latter stages as they need to win at least six of the remaining eight games to stay in contention for a playoff spot.

A shaky pace establishment

MAZHAR UDDIN from Chattogram



The ongoing special edition ` Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier (BBPL) has League

provided some of the lesser known young pacers a platform to showcase their talent, but when it comes to established and proven fast bowlers, it has been a disappointing show so far.

Youngsters like Mehedi Hasan Rana, Mukidul Islam, Hasan Mahmud and a few other pacers who are yet to represent the country have caught the eye with their pace and performances.

22-year-old left-arm pacer Mehedi is the top wicket-takers in the BBPL so far, having bagged eight wickets in three games for Chattogram Challengers before his fourth game against Cumilla Warriors yesterday.

The onus was also on the experienced national pacers such as Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Abu Jayed, Abu Hider and Al-Amin Hossain as the selectors had said before the tournament that they would keep a close eye on the performances of local players ahead of the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup in Australia next year.

Hider had a particularly bad day yesterday as he conceded 38 runs in two overs while bowling for Cumilla against Chattogram.

Despite the pitches in Dhaka and Chattogram being sporting ones that have offered opportunities for both bowlers and batsmen to shine, Bangladesh's pacers have so far failed to cash in.

Left-arm pacer Mustafizur has been struggling for quite some time now and his star has been diminishing, the latest sign being that he was unsold in the Indian Premier League auction on Thursday.

In mid-2016 Mustafizur had announced himself as the king of cutters to begin his international career, but he is now struggling to find his feet even in the BBPL and more importantly, he has become a predictable proposition for batsmen.

The 24-year-old picked up four wickets in four games for Rangpur Rangers at an economy rate of 8.32, which clearly indicates that his bowling in this edition has been largely ineffective.

Mustafizur's Rangpur teammate and another once highly-rated pacer, Taskin Ahmed, is also following the same path. The tall right-arm pacer has been hit over the park in the BBPL so far with an economy rate of 12.60 in three games and is yet to pick up a wicket.

More telling is the fact that the national pacer is yet to bowl his full quota of four overs in any of those three games, which reflects a lack of trust from the captain.

The scenario for Abu Jayed also remains the same who has been the only highlighting aspect for the Tigers during the two match test series in India last month remained sloppy in the BBPL for Rajshahi Royals.

The right arm pacer so far picked up two wickets in three games with an expensive economy rate of 9.14. Cumilla's left arm seamer Abu Hider

who went for 13 runs in his first over against Chattogram yesterday had picked up just two wickets in three games with an economy well over ten runs per over.

Although the likes of Shafiul Islam and Al-Amin Hossain have managed to pick four wickets in the tournament, but the venom expected from them has been

The fact that the most experienced of the lot -- Bangladesh ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza -- has picked up three wickets in four games for Dhaka Platoon at an economy rate of 8.62 sums up the scenario of Bangladesh's pace bowling unit.



MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN

Econ M 3 8.32

TASKIN AHMED

12.66

Eng call up Bess and Overton

AGENCIES, London



England added two bowlers to their squad on Friday after illness struck the camp less than a week before the first Test against hosts South Africa, the England and Wales Cricket

Seamer Craig Overton and off-spinner Dominic Bess will join the squad as cover ahead of the start of the four-test series, which begins on Boxing Day

"Dominic Bess and Craig Overton have been called up to the England men's Test squad as cover ahead of the first Test starting on Boxing Day against South Africa at SuperSport Park, Centurion due to illness in the camp," read the ECB statement. "Bess and Overton are due to arrive at the team's base in Johannesburg on Saturday morning."

Bowlers Jofra Archer, Stuart Broad and Jack Leach are among a host of squad members hit by 'flu-like' symptoms sweeping through the England camp. Batsmen Joe Denly and fielding coach Carl Hopkinson were also suffering,

Bess, 22, played two tests against Pakistan in 2018 while 25-year-old Overton won the last of four caps in the Ashes in September. The Somerset duo are due to arrive in Johannesburg on Saturday. The raft of sick players saw England request a downgrading

of their three-match warm-up game against South Africa A at Willowmoore Park in Benoni, which began on Friday with England winning the toss and electing to bat. The downgrading of the game offers the chance for

the sick trio to still get in some bowling practice over the weekend before the start of the first test at Centurion next It is the last chance for the likes of Archer and Broad,

expected to start the first test, to bowl after they missed a

two-day warm-up game that ended on Wednesday. "ECB would like to take this opportunity to thank CSA (Cricket South Africa) for their flexibility on this situation and to emphasise that under normal circumstances we would have wanted to play the match first-class, but illness in the camp has made this very problematic," the ECB said

England have had little time to rest after spending seven days at home following a recent two-test series in New

Shaheen keeps Pakistan in it



Paceman Shaheen Shah Afridi took a maiden five-wicket haul to lead Pakistan's fightback after Sri Lanka gained a crucial lead in the second Test in Karachi on Friday.

The 19-year-old took 5-77 and was ably supported by new-ball partner Mohammad Abbas (4-55) to keep Sri Lanka down to 271 on a tricky National stadium pitch.

That gave the visitors a lead of 80 runs over Pakistan's first innings total of 191.

By the close of second day's play Pakistan had wiped off 57 of the deficit for no loss but still trail by 23 runs with all 10 wickets in hand and three days to play.

Opener Abid Ali -- who became the first batsman ever to hit a debut hundred in both Test and one-day international in the first

match in Rawalpindi -- was unbeaten on 32 and Shan Masood on 21 not out.

The first Test in Rawalpindi ended in a draw due to bad weather, leaving both teams to fight it out for the series win in Karachi. Sri Lanka fought through Dinesh Chandimal

who made 74 and Dilruwan Perera who made a fighting 48 batting at number nine.

With his team wobbling at 80-5 in the morning, Chandimal built partnerships of 67 with Dhananjaya de Silva (32) for the sixth wicket, 37 for the seventh wicket with Niroshan Dickwella (21) and then another 51 with Perera for the eighth.

Chandimal was finally dismissed by parttime spinner Haris Sohail, caught at backward point after he mistimed a cut. He hit ten boundaries in his 143-ball knock.

The extended two-and-a-half hour first

session belonged to Pakistan who took three early wickets after Sri Lanka resumed at 64-3.

Abbas and Shaheen rattled the Sri Lankan batting.Abbas had nightwatchman Lasith Embuldeniya caught for 13 before left-armer Afridi dismissed Angelo Mathews, also for 13. De Silva, who scored a century in the first Test, batted with grit to frustrate Pakistan and

take Sri Lanka to 170-6 at lunch Shaheen broke the stand by luring De Silva into hooking straight into the hands of deep

square-leg fielder Abbas, who held a running

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: First innings 191 and second innings 57 for no loss (Abid 32 not out, Masood 21 not out)

SRI LANKA: First innings 271 all out (Chandimal 74, Perera 48; Afridi 5-77, Abbas





Sri Lanka batsman Dinesh Chandimal hit 74 to help his side take a crucial lead, but young Pakistan pacer (R) Shaheen Shah Afridi made sure that the damage was contained with his maiden five-wicket haul on the second day of the second Test at the National Stadium in Karachi yesterday.

Kallis admits to frustration

Econ

AGENCIES, Cape Town

Jacques Kallis says watching South African cricket stuck in the doldrums in recent years has been 'frustrating' but he was confident the Proteas would be restored to its former glory. The South African great

has been roped in to help with the turnaround as batting consultant. Kallis joined the squad

for their camp in Pretoria ahead of the first Test of a four-match series against England from Boxing Day. "It's been a frustrating

couple of years for everyone to see where South African cricket has dropped to, Kallis said on Friday.

"It's about getting into a system where I think it is on the way up, off the field things are getting taken care of, and we trust the guys that are involved to get us back to where we need to be."

Kallis was among a host of drastic changes to the management with Mark Boucher as head coach and Charl Langeveldt appointed as bowling coach.

"From a cricketing point of view I want to get involved to get us back to where we belong among the top few sides in the world, Kallis said.

"If I can help in that process, I would certainly love to do that. I've always said if I join something I want to leave it in a better place than when I joined."