

Mash magic sees Khulna in final

SPORTS REPORTER



Mashrafe Bin Mortaza rolled back the years, taking five wickets as a fired-up Gemcon Khulna gunned down high-flying Gazi Group Chattogram with a comprehensive 47-run victory in the first qualifier to reach the final of the Bangabandhu T20 Cup yesterday.

The former ODI skipper for the Tigers became only the second pacer for Bangladesh to pick up 150 wickets in this format after Mustafizur Rahman with his maiden five-wicket haul, helping Khulna bundle out their opposition for 163 runs.

It always looked like a tough ask for Chattogram chasing 211 runs as Mashrafe got into rhythm right away and got rid of the two big guns -- Soumya Sarkar for naught and Liton Das for 24 -- very early in the innings.

The veteran pacer, who was roped in by Khulna in the middle of the tournament following his eight-month hiatus from competitive cricket -- put the brakes on the chase by picking up those two wickets with great line and length and clever variation of pace. He went on to pick three more wickets and ended up with the figures of five for 35, announcing himself in this tournament in grand style.

Skipper Mohammad Mithun kept Chattogram's hopes alive but his departure for 53 put paid to those hopes. The port city side, however,



Gemcon Khulna players joined in the fun with Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who returned career-best T20 figures of 5 for 35 to dismantle Gazi Group Chattogram innings in the qualifier 1 of the Bangabandhu T20 Cup in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO:FIROZ AHMED

will get one more shot at the final berth when they take on Beximco Dhaka in the second qualifier today.

Earlier, Khulna's batting fired on all cylinders at the right time after being sent in to bat, courtesy of a blistering start from Jahanul Islam. The veteran right-hander,

along with his partner Zakir Hasan, added 71 runs for the first wicket before the latter departed for 17.

Jahanul, however, went on and

reached his fifty off 33 balls while Imrul Kayes, who was making a comeback to the side, kept the tempo before his dismissal for 25.

Jahanul continued his aggressive approach while Shakib Al Hasan joined the party as the left-hander seemed to return to his groove.

Jahanul departed for a well-made 51-ball 80, an innings featuring four sixes and five fours. If Jahanul's innings laid the platform for a

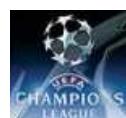
big total, skipper Mahmudullah Riyad made sure that big became mammoth with a whirlwind nine-ball 30, which included three consecutive sixes against young pacer Shoriful Islam.

Shakib struck a couple of sixes and fours for his tournament-highest 28 before departing in the last over as Khulna added 77 runs off the last five overs to post 210 for seven in 20 overs.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ROUND OF 16

Messi battles Neymar as Liverpool face German guns

REUTERS



Barcelona will face Paris St Germain and former striker Neymar while title holders Bayern Munich are up against Italy's Lazio in the last 16 of the Champions League after UEFA's draw was held on Monday.

The clash of Lionel Messi and Barca with last year's runners-up PSG is a repeat of their remarkable meeting at the same stage in 2017 when Barca overcame a 4-0 first leg loss to beat the French club 6-1 in Spain with Neymar scoring twice for the Catalans.

"We know them (PSG) well, they've got some exceptional players. Paris want to fight for the Champions League, last year they came very close to winning it and they want to go one better this time round, but we've got something to say about that," said Guillermo Amor, Barcelona's Director of Institutional Relations.

Bayern will start as favourites in

ROUND OF 16

Borussia Moenchengladbach v Manchester City
Lazio v Bayern Munich
Atletico Madrid v Chelsea
RB Leipzig v Liverpool
Porto v Juventus
Barcelona v Paris St Germain
Sevilla v Borussia Dortmund
Atalanta v Real Madrid

***First legs to be played on February 16, 17, 23, 24.
Second legs to be played on March 9, 10, 16, 17.
***The draw for the quarter-finals, semi-finals and final will take place on March 19.

their tie but will be wary of Simone Inzaghi's Lazio team who have reached this stage for the first time in 20 years.

"Lazio are an uncomfortable opponent, you saw that in the group," said Bayern sports director Hasan Salihamidzic. "It is always uncomfortable against Italian teams."

Premier League champions Liverpool will play last year's semi-finalists RB Leipzig creating a match-up between Germany's most highly

rated young coach Julian Nagelsmann of Leipzig with Liverpool's Juergen Klopp, the country's number one coach. Liverpool are unbeaten in their last ten matches against German teams in all European competitions, a run going back to 2002.

13-times European champions Real Madrid face Serie A club Atalanta, who reached the quarter-finals in their first Champions League campaign last season. Real have won ten of their last eleven games with Italian clubs.

Atletico Madrid will face Chelsea in a game which could include the return of striker Diego Costa to Stamford Bridge. Manchester City will take on Borussia Moenchengladbach, who are in the last 16 for the first time in the Champions League era.

Italian champions Juventus will face Porto, a game where Cristiano Ronaldo will return to his homeland Portugal.

The two legged ties will be played from Feb. 16



Neymar sustained a left ankle injury following a heavy tackle from Thiago Mendes, who was then red carded, during PSG's 1-0 home defeat against Lyon. "No news about Neymar," PSG coach Thomas Tuchel said after the game on Sunday.

PHOTO: TWITTER

'Focus on series against Pakistan'

REUTERS, WELLINGTON



New Zealand stand-in captain Tom Latham said on Monday their sole focus was the upcoming Test series against Pakistan despite their 2-0 sweep of West Indies putting them in contention for a place in next year's world test championship final.

The Black Caps boosted their hopes of reaching the ICC World Test Championship final after securing back-to-back innings victories against West Indies. New Zealand moved into third place in the table for the world Test championship when they completed an innings and 12 run victory over West Indies in the second Test. The top-two sides face each other in the final at Lord's next year. The two ahead of New Zealand, Australia and India, will start a four-match series in Adelaide on Thursday.

"When you look too far ahead you can sometimes get caught out," Latham, who stood in for the absent Kane Williamson at the Basin Reserve, told reporters.

"Our focus will shift to Pakistan and whatever happens post that we'll assess."

ANISUR RAHMAN

After a seven-year hiatus, the third edition of women's football league just drew to a close on Sunday with the star-studded Bashundhara Kings becoming the new, undisputed champions, thanks to national forwards Sabina Khatun, Krishna Rani Sarkar and Tahura Khatun in their roster to make the key difference with other teams.

The prolific trio together scored 72 goals out of 249, struck in 42 league matches by over 60 players, without facing much challenge from the opponents but former national age-group right-back-turned forward Sadia Akter of Jamalpur Kacharipara Ekadash came into the spotlight after slotting a stellar double hat-trick in a 7-1 win over FC Uttar Banga, a feat even Sabina, Krishna and Tahura could not achieve in the league though they had struck a few hat-tricks.

Having skipped the first-leg of the league due to SSC examination, Sadia began playing for Kacharipara Ekadash in the second leg and helped her side finish third behind champions Bashundhara and Nasrin Sports Academy, also an outfit full with national players. The 16-year-old struck seven goals in six matches.

Sadia is not new to competitive football as she played for national U-14 and national U-16 team in Sri



PHOTO:FIROZ AHMED

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS

Bangabandhu T20 Cup
Qualifier 2
Dhaka vs Chattogram
Live from 4:30 pm
SONY SIX
Big Bash T20
Robert Hurricanes vs

Adelaide Strikers
Live from 2:15 pm
TEN 2
Serie A
Udinese vs Crotone
Live from 11:30 pm
Benevento vs Lazio
Live from 1:45 am

(Wednesday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
English Premier League
Wolves vs Chelsea
Live from 12:00 am
(Wednesday)
Manchester City vs West Brom
Live from 3:00 am
(Wednesday)

Live from 2:00 am
(Wednesday)
FACEBOOK
La Liga
Real Madrid vs Athletic Bilbao
Live from 3:00 am
(Wednesday)

Firebrand Mushfiqur keeps Dhaka alive

SPORTS REPORTER



wicketkeeper-batsman, known to be a very emotional individual, did not shy away from expressing raw emotion every time a poor delivery was bowled or a sloppily fielded effort took place in the field.

The former Bangladesh captain was extremely animated on one occasion and gave a bit of a dressing-down to Nasim Ahmed after the two almost collided while going for the catch of Afif at short fine-leg in the final ball of the 17th over, bowled by Shafiqul Islam. The collision was just avoided and Mushfiqur held on to the catch, but the skipper made Nasim feel the heat, attempting to throw the ball at him before being calmed by his teammates.

Earlier, Barishal bowlers did well



to reduce Dhaka to 25 for three in the Powerplay, including the dismissal of previous-match centurion Naim Sheikh for five.

Mushfiqur steadied the ship with support from Yasir Ali, the two resurrecting the innings from the disastrous situation.

Mushfiqur was dismissed for a 30-ball 43 but Yasir went on to score his second fifty of the tournament before being dismissed for a 43-ball 54. Young Akbar Ali played a cameo of 21 runs off nine deliveries to help Dhaka post 150 for eight, which eventually proved to be a winning score.

Gerard Houllier dies at 73

REUTERS, PARIS

Former France manager Gerard Houllier, who rebuilt Liverpool from Premier League underachievers into a cup treble winning side in 2001, has died aged 73, his former club said on Monday.

RMC sport and sports daily L'Equipe said Houllier, who also coached Paris St Germain, Olympique Lyonnais and Aston Villa, died after having a heart operation in Paris.

After an insignificant playing career in France's lower leagues, Houllier began coaching in 1973, earning his first big job with Lens before taking over at Paris St Germain. He became France's assistant coach in 1988 and then manager in 1992 but had a short, unsuccessful spell in charge.

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A diamond in the rough

Kings sign 28 players

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Bashundhara Kings partially completed their players' registrations for the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League as they signed 28 players including four new foreigners and as many local players yesterday.

They are also on the verge of signing England-born Bangladeshi midfielder Mahadi Ahmed on the last day of registration today, depending on the availability of documents like the player's Bangladeshi passport and others.

After cutting ties with all their previous foreign players including influential Daniel Colindres, the Kings have now pinned their hopes on two Brazilians Jonathan Da Silveira Fernandes and Robson Azevedo Da Silva, one Argentine Rahul Oscar Becerra and an Iranian Khaled Shafie.

They have also signed fit-again midfielders Masud Mia Jonny and Atiqur Rahman Fahad, who played for Kings last season. They also roped in two junior players -- goalkeeper Mehedi Hasan and defender Tariq Miah -- from lower leagues.