

'Far superior' Verstappen outpaces Hamilton



Max Verstappen cruised to victory at the Mexico Grand Prix on Sunday leaving defending champion Lewis Hamilton to admit the Red Bull car "is far superior". Hamilton clung on to finish second in his Mercedes holding off a late charge from Red Bull's Mexican driver Sergio Perez. "Their car is far superior this weekend and there was nothing we could really do about it," said Hamilton. Verstappen, who grabbed the lead on the first corner, finished 16.555sec ahead of Hamilton with Perez just over a second further back. The Dutchman increased his lead in the world championship to 19 points from Hamilton with four races left. "There's still a long way to go," Verstappen said. "It's of course looking good but also it can turn around very quickly."



Joy smashes successive tons

SPORTS REPORTER

A second successive first-class ton from Mahmudul Hasan Joy alongside fifties from skipper Mominul Haque and Shahadat Hossain helped Chattogram Division end the second day of their fourth-round National Cricket League (NCL) encounter against Barishal Division at a dominating position at the BKSP 3 yesterday.

Joy's patient 211-ball 121 helped Chattogram pile up 364 for four, leading by 128 runs at the end of the second day.

Resuming the day on 34 for no loss, Chattogram lost overnight batter Pinku Ghosh early. Joy, however, did not let the early jolt put Chattogram on the backfoot as he put up an 85-run stand with opener Jashimuddin, who was trapped in front by Monir Hossain after a 77-ball 49.

Skipper Mominul then ratcheted up the scoring rate with his 85-ball 81, laced with 11 boundaries, and strung together a 112-run stand with Joy to drive Chattogram to a commanding position.

Joy, who was the last one to fall on the day for Chattogram, starred in another 83-run stand with Shahadat, who remained unbeaten on 63. Runs also came in abundance from the willow of Dhaka Metropolis' batters as skipper Shadman Islam, Shamsur Rahman, Aminul Islam and Abu Hider smashed fifties against Rajshahi Division at the BKSP 4.

Shadman (62 off 112) and Shamsur (89 off 157) starred in a 129-run fourth-wicket stand while Aminul and Hider remained on 65 and 56, respectively, as Dhaka Metropolis ended the day with 353 for six on the board, leading by 121 runs.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Division's left-arm spinner Nazmul Islam bagged his seventh first-class fifer to help his side bundle out Sylhet Division for 265 after they had resumed the day on 79 for two at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium.

However, Sylhet's Sayem Alam (78 off 177) and skipper Zakir Hasan (67 off 143) were able to pick up fifties before both fell prey to Nazmul. Zakir Ali remained unbeaten on 67 but Nazmul ran through the tail to wrap up Sylhet's innings.

Dhaka ended the day on 22 for one, still trailing by 120 runs. In the other game in Sylhet, pacer Mrittunjoy Chowdhury and national Test team all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz shared nine wickets between them to help Khulna Division bundle out Rangpur Division for 222. Mrittunjoy scalped a fifer while Miraz returned figures of four for 74.

Khulna ended the day on 21 for one, with a lead of 56 runs.

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132 for 8 in 20 overs (Baard 21, Lingen 14, Erasmus 12, Wiese 26, Frylinck 15 not out; Bumrah 2-19, Ashwin 3-20, Jadeja 3-16)



Roy ruled out of T20 World Cup

REUTERS

England opener Jason Roy has been ruled out of the remainder of the Twenty20 World Cup due to a torn calf muscle, the England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a statement on Monday.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has approved batsman James Vince as his replacement.

Roy retired hurt with the problem during England's 10-run loss to South Africa in their final Super 12 match even though Eoin Morgan's team still qualified for the last four as the Group I leaders.

"I'm gutted to be ruled out of the World Cup. It is a bitter pill to swallow," Roy said. "I will be staying on to support the boys, and hopefully, we can go all the way and lift that trophy."

"It has been an unbelievable journey so far, and we have to continue expressing ourselves and concentrating on us."

India stars put IPL before country, says Kapil Dev

AFP, New Delhi

Indian legend Kapil Dev accused the country's cricket players of prioritising the cash-rich Indian Premier League over national duty, after the pre-tournament favourites were dumped out of the T20 World Cup.

"When the players prefer to play IPL over playing for the country, what can we say? I believe that every player should feel proud playing for their country," Dev, who led India to a World Cup victory in 1983, told ABP News.

"I believe that your national team should come first and after that franchise or any other team."

India on Sunday crashed out of the Twenty20 World Cup after New Zealand beat Afghanistan to book the second semi-final berth from Group 2.

Virat Kohli's side, who went



into the tournament as one of the

avourites, thrashed Afghanistan and Scotland but it was too late after losing heavily to arch rival Pakistan and to New Zealand.

In the build-up, Indian regrouped just two days after the Indian Premier League ended on October 15 in Dubai, adding to the time that the players spent in draining Covid-19 bubble conditions.

"I am not saying don't play cricket there (for franchises) but it is now BCCI's responsibility to plan their cricket (schedule) better for the future," the 62-year-old Dev said of the Indian cricket board.

"What we can learn from this defeat is to not repeat the mistakes that have been made. This is the biggest lesson."

The Times of India daily said

that preparations for the next T20 World Cup, in Australia next year, should begin immediately.

That includes infusing "fresh blood" into the side, such as partnering likely new T20 captain Rohit Sharma with Ruturaj Gaikwad at the top of the batting order and giving chances to Suryakumar Yadav, Harshal Patel and Deepak Chahar, the newspaper said.

The Hindustan Times reported that after their exit was sealed on Sunday, India called off a training session ahead of the final match against Namibia on Monday "as players brooded what might have been".

"India's inability to hold their weight in knockout rounds of ICC events has been sticking out like a sore thumb. This time they have also missed the bus to reach the last four," the newspaper said, bemoaning that India "failed to adapt and tweak their tactics according to the conditions".



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Bangladesh players carry the frame of the goal during a practice session in Colombo yesterday, ahead of today's opening match of the Mahinda Rajapaksa Trophy against Seychelles. The match was originally scheduled for Monday but torrential rain forced its deferral to Tuesday for a 4:30pm (Bangladesh time) kick-off.

PHOTO: BFF

MSC thrash Victoria to stay second

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Mohammedan continued their winning run and consolidated their Super Five position in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League with a 10-2 victory over Victoria SC at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

With seven wins from as many matches, Mohammedan joined archrivals Abahani in second position with 21 points, three behind leaders Mariner Youngs Club, who have played eight and won all of those matches.

Since the start of the top-flight league in the middle of October following the Club Cup tournament, Mohammedan, Abahani and Mariner Youngs have been in fine



form, with Mariner Youngs scoring highest 53 goals followed by Abahani's 45 and Mohammedan's 44.

However, Mohammedan have the best record when it comes to defence. The Black and Whites have conceded only three goals and kept five clean sheets. Club Cup champions Mariner Youngs have

conceded nine while Club Cup runners-up Abahani conceded seven goals.

Though the three giants have not faced each other yet, the clashes between these three teams in the first phase and the Super Five stage will likely have a big say in deciding the title race.

With the three giants having already ensured their Super Five berths in the 12-team league, four more clubs -- Sonali Bank (15 from eight matches), Ajax SC (15 from nine matches), Bangladesh SC (13 from eight matches) and Shadharan Bima (12 from nine matches) -- are fighting for the two remaining spots.

Though the midtable sides could not provide much challenge to the title contenders, the battles between these teams and the ones at the lower end of the table have been quite intense.

Australia set to tour Pakistan for first time in 24 years

REUTERS

Australia will tour Pakistan next year for the first time since 1998 with the visitors playing three Tests, three one-day internationals and a Twenty20 match from March to April, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said on Monday.

The announcement is a huge boost for Pakistan cricket after New Zealand and England cancelled tours in September citing security concerns.

"I am delighted to welcome Australia to Pakistan. From a personal point of view, it pleases me no end that we'll be engaged in a three-test match series, connoisseurs delight," PCB Chairman Ramiz Raja said in a statement.

The Tests would be part of the World Test Championship while the ODIs would be linked to the inaugural ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League.

Australia will play tests in Karachi (March 3-7), Rawalpindi (March 12-16) and Lahore (March 21-25) followed by the limited over matches in Lahore between March 29-April 5.

Kiwi kings of swing eye World Cup final

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Trent Boult and Tim Southee are New Zealand's kings of swing, unstarry but deadly with the new ball and looking to inspire the Black Caps to the T20 World Cup title.

They face England in Wednesday's semi-final in Abu Dhabi where the two veteran seamers will be key to slamming the brakes on opposing openers Jos Buttler and Jason Roy.



Left-arm Boult has 11 wickets at the tournament from five games, second only to Sri Lanka leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga's 16 in eight.

Southee, also 32 years old, has seven wickets with his pinpoint right-arm seam.

Such is their dependability, New Zealand have only had to summon six bowlers at the tournament.

The other four have 14 wickets combined; eight of those have gone to spinner Ish Sodhi.

"We complement each other with the left-arm, right-arm," said Southee who is

also no slouch with the bat.

When he made his Test debut back in 2008 against England in Napier, he smashed 77 off 40 balls with nine sixes, batting at 10. He had also taken 5-55 with the ball. "Our strength is to swing it. When it swings, it's dangerous," added Southee.

Boult and Southee have been the foundation for New Zealand being able to strangle opposition batsmen at the World Cup.



They made the semi-finals with four wins in five. In three of those wins, mighty India were limited to 110, Namibia limped to 111 off their 20 overs and Afghanistan managed just 124.

Boult relaxes between matches by playing the guitar and has become used to being instrumental" headlines.

He was a relatively late arrival to T20 cricket, only making his international debut in 2013. Since then he has collected 57 wickets in 39 games to go along with his 292 Test victims and 169 in ODIs.