

First half was Mr Hyde; second half Dr Jekyll – and for a change, [the result] was different.

Manchester United manager Ralf Rangnick on win over Brighton



Mentor surprised at Shakib snub

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan's childhood mentor and Fortune Barishal's batting consultant Nazmul Abeeden Fahim said that if the IPL franchises had been aware of Shakib's current form, especially with the bat, the cricketer would not have gone unsold during the mega auction.

"his availability could be a big reason for not being picked in the IPL but it's disappointing because had the franchises realised the type of form he is in then they would surely pick Shakib. Not just with the ball but he has developed himself as a match-winner with the bat as well," Nazmul told the media yesterday.

"I think he could be more effective on better pitches in IPL and could have scored runs quickly. Any team would have benefited from picking him," Nazmul added.



Comilla Victorians opener Sunil Narine smashed a 16-ball 57, reaching fifty off just 13 balls to be the fastest player to the landmark score in the BPL, and powered his side to the final with a seven-wicket victory over Chattogram Challengers in the Qualifier 2 in Mirpur yesterday. Before Narine's carnage, Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Akbar Ali stitched together a 61-run sixth-wicket stand, helping Chattogram reach a respectable total.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

An unusual inspiration

REUTERS

Australia all-rounder Ashton Agar has vowed to overcome self-doubt and focus on the joy of cricket after finding his inspiration in an unusual place - a concert by south London rapper Loyle Carner.

Agar is aiming to return to test cricket for the first time since September 2017 after the 28-year-old was named in Australia's squad for the three-test tour of Pakistan next month.

Agar, who played a key role in Tuesday's Twenty20 win over Sri Lanka, said rapper Carner's fearlessness on stage at a Perth concert motivated the Australian to do the same on the cricket field.

"He was owning the stage and it was beautiful. I thought, 'This is so cool, he just has such great presence,' and we're all there to watch him," Agar told reporters on Wednesday.

"I was thinking to myself 'Oh God, I'd love to do that'. But at that moment I kind of realised I actually have the chance to do this all the time - every time I get to play cricket."

Chattogram lacklustre in penultimate hurdle

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Akbar Ali, between them, one just cannot get away from the media focus while the latter has not blossomed in the domestic circuit following one of Bangladesh cricket's greatest-ever achievements. Chattogram Challengers' batting has largely been carried by their English stars Will Jacks and Benny Howell throughout the ongoing BPL while other overseas star Chadwick Walton came up with vital runs just when they needed in the first Eliminator game against Khulna Tigers on Monday.

Jacks and Walton departed very early in the Chattogram innings during the second Qualifier match against Comilla Victorians yesterday. Thus, the responsibility fell to local stars such as captain Alif Hossain and Shamim Hossain but Comilla's Moeen Ali accounted for both in a tremendous spell as Chattogram slumped to 50 for five in eight overs.

From that point, it looked like Chattogram would have no response but it was the duo of Akbar and Miraz, considered by many to be capable of great leadership qualities, that carried Chattogram towards a challenging score.

Akbar bided his time initially as he was content on rotating the strike and

consolidating their disastrous starts. Moeen had gotten three wickets in his first two overs, conceding just four runs but Akbar took him on in the Englishman's third over, hitting a well-timed slog sweep to bring his side back into some relief. Next over, Mehedi came to the party as well, swinging his willow to find the boundary at cow corner against



youngster Tanvir Islam. Akbar kept impressing, hitting the bowler for six over cover in the last ball of that over.

During this tournament, Akbar has often not had any significant role to play with the bat, not preferred over the likes of Benny Howell and when he has been

able to come in, there has not been any late displays of solid power-hitting. This time he did show some glitter with the bat during a 20-ball 33 before departing to a Abu Hider slower delivery in the 15th over, after a 61-run stand with Miraz.

Chattogram was hoping that Howell would come good but a tremendous miscommunication with Miraz led to his run out for just three. Amidst effective death over bowling of Mustafizur Rahman, Miraz carried his side till the 19th over. A six off Shohidul Islam took him to 44 before he succumbed to the paceman's slower delivery, trying to go big again.

Miraz, too, had been able to recover something from this tournament after feeling hurt by the team management's decision to take away his captaincy. Youngster Mrittunjoy hit two back-to-back sixes off Shohidul to take his side closer to 150-mark before he fell to strange circumstances, caught on the boundary ropes by Hider - who seemed unsure himself initially whether his foot was touching the ropes - and given out perhaps because on-field umpire had given the soft signal of dismissal.

However, it was proven that when the overseas stars did not come good, the total was always going to be a middling one as Chattogram stopped at 148 all out. Sunil Narine then hit fifty in the tournament's history to make Chattogram's total look very small.

Bashundhara Kings Arena set for historic debut

ATIQUE ANAM

The Bashundhara Kings Arena is set to become the first privately-owned football ground to host a match of the Bangladesh Premier League, the top-tier professional football of the country.

Situated in Block N of the Bashundhara Residential Area in the capital and owned by Bashundhara Group, the venue has so far been used to hold practice sessions and friendly matches of Bashundhara Kings, but today this modern facility will go into history books when it hosts the defending league champions against Bangladesh Police.

Although the venue is still a work in progress, at least six months away from becoming what it aspires to be -- a first-of-its-kind private football club with state-of-the-art facilities and certification to stage international matches -- the Kings Arena is already a thing to admire and be proud of.

And certainly proud was Bashundhara Kings president Imrul Hassan, who provided the invited journalists a glimpse of the Kings Arena -- a part of an establishment that promises to be a gigantic sports complex -- on the eve of its BPL debut yesterday.

"We don't have much to be proud of on the international stage. The sports complex would be something we can be really proud of," Hasan said in his speech.

"We will host international matches from next season. This venue will be of a standard to host even World Cup matches. We hope other clubs will be inspired by this and will follow our example," the Kings president added.

According to Hasan and the project officials, the stadium, once completed, will host 14,000 spectators with seating facilities and will have floodlights installed for staging night matches. For the moment, though, only limited spectators will be allowed through invitations for the BPL matches.

And Bashundhara Kings, the two-time defending champions, might as well need all of that support when they host Bangladesh Police today as they are currently fourth in the points table with six points, one behind Abahani and Sheikh Jamal and level with Saif Sporting Club, following three match-days.

Having missed out on the first two domestic titles of the season -- the Independence Cup and the Federation Cup -- the defending champions started with a defeat against newcomers Swadhinata KS before bouncing back with single-goal victories against Uttar Baridhara and Muktijoddha Sangsad KS.

Grappling with injuries to key players, the Leviathans of Bangladesh football can definitely allow themselves some breathing space, even if momentarily, with a victory today ahead of Sheikh Jamal's match against Rahmatganj later in the day at the Sylhet District Stadium.





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