



Bangladesh captain Litton Das's return to the side was not a memorable one as he could only score five off eight during their 16–run defeat against the West Indies in the first T20I at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Ft Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Chattogram yesterday. Pacer Tanzim Sakib looks desolate as the visitors earlier launched a late assault in their innings, plundering 83 runs in the last eight overs in an unbroken fourth-wicket stand.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Rakibul joins exclusive nine-wicket club in NCL

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan joined the elite club, claiming nine wickets in an innings for Mymensingh against Sylhet in the National Cricket League at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium on Monday.

Rakibul finished with figures of 9-168, becoming only the fifth Bangladeshi bowler to achieve the feat in domestic first-class cricket, joining Sunzamul Islam, Saqlain Sajib, Mosharraf Hossain, and Abdur Razzak, who has accomplished it twice.

Despite Rakibul's heroics, Sylhet opener Shykat Ali produced a career-best 175, forging a crucial 148-run ninth-wicket partnership with pacer Ebadot Hossain. Sylhet posted 489 all out, securing an 88-run first-innings lead. Mymensingh ended day 3 at 58 for no loss, keeping the contest alive.

Elsewhere, Khulna dominated Barishal at Khulna Divisional Stadium, bowling them out for 224 in the second innings and chasing the modest target of 38 with seven wickets in hand. The match ended on a somber note, as Barishal physiotherapist Hasan Ahmed passed away due to cardiac arrest.

At the Sylhet Academy Ground, Nacem Islam's unbeaten 137 powered Rangpur to 358, but Dhaka fought back, reaching 212 for 2 in the second innings and securing a 75-run lead, with Jishan Alam unbeaten on 80.

Chattogram's Yasir Ali narrowly missed a century, scoring 92 as they declared at 277 for 9, while Shafiqul Islam claimed four for Rajshahi. Rajshahi, previously dismissed for 196, reached 219 for four thanks to unbeaten fifties from Priotom Kumar and SM Meherob. They now need 264 runs on the final day to secure a challenging victory, keeping the domestic season intensely competitive.



Jaker's fall from grace

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Chattogram

An automatic choice across formats not too long ago, wicketkeeper-batter Jaker Ali Anik has experienced a rapid rise and fall in just over a year.

After missing all three ODIs against the West Indies in Mirpur, Jaker was again left out for yesterday's opening T20I in Chattogram. However, his omission surprised few, given his lean run of form, and concerns have grown over his limited shot range and inability to clear the ropes in the slog overs – shortcomings that have drawn increasing scrutiny.

Critics had contended that Jaker should have been omitted from Bangladesh's previous T20I series against Afghanistan. Instead, the team management entrusted the 27-year-old with the captaincy in the absence of regular skipper Litton Das who was sidelined with a side strain injury – continuing the trend from the Asia Cup. Ironically, Jaker lost his place in the very match that marked the regular skipper's return.

Jaker's international journey began at the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou, but it was his explosive 34-ball 68 against Sri Lanka in March 2024 – featuring six towering sixes – that announced his arrival. Strong follow-up performances in the Zimbabwe T20Is secured him a spot in Bangladesh's T20 World Cup squad later that year.

He carried that momentum into the longer formats too. In Tests, Jaker impressed with a fifty



on debut against South Africa in Chattogram before producing a match-winning 91 in Kingston during Bangladesh's historic win over the West Indies. His ODI start was equally promising – an unbeaten 37 on debut against Sri Lanka followed by scores of 48 and 62 not out in the Caribbean, even though Bangladesh lost both games.

But the spark has faded since.

Jaker has gone four ODIs without a fifty, managed single-digit scores in his last three Test innings and has failed to reach double figures in four of his last six T20I innings.

As Bangladesh prepare to host Ireland for a two-match Test series next month, and with Litton Das and Mushfiquur Rahim both fit and Mahidul Islam Ankon pressing for inclusion, Jaker now faces an uphill battle to reclaim his place.

Butler knows 'the problems and the answers'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team suffered a 5-1 defeat to Thailand in their second and final FIFA international friendly at the 72nd Anniversary Stadium in Bang Mod, Bangkok, yesterday.

Playing with a high defensive line and showing sluggish movement at the back, the women in red and green were exposed repeatedly by Thailand's pace and precision. The hosts, ranked 51 places above Bangladesh in the FIFA standings, demonstrated their superiority throughout both friendlies, following up a 3-0 win in the first match with another emphatic victory.

The two friendlies were part of Bangladesh's preparations for next year's AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers, and the results highlighted the significant gap that still exists between Bangladesh and the top-tier Asian nations. The British head coach, Peter Butler, now faces the challenge of tightening his defence and improving the team's physical conditioning before heading to Australia in March for



the Asian Cup.

Although Butler made some adjustments to the system, he opted to retain his preferred high-line defence – a decision that proved costly. Thailand's physically stronger and faster forwards repeatedly breached Bangladesh's backline, scoring three goals within the first 35 minutes.

Thai midfielders and defenders frequently exploited space behind

Bangladesh's defence with long balls and incisive through passes, leaving defenders Afeida Khandakar, Kohati Kisku, and Sheuli Azim struggling to keep up. Goalkeeper Rupna Chakma was often forced to come off her line to deny further damage.

Bangladesh, meanwhile, tried to build attacks through winger Ritu Porna Chakma, who showed determination but found it difficult to break

through Thailand's composed defence. Long-range efforts from Bangladesh also failed to trouble the opposition, though Shamsunnahar Jr's glancing header provided a rare highlight and a small boost of confidence for the forwards.

Despite the heavy defeat, Butler remained positive about his team's effort and potential.

"We have to be honest with ourselves – we're not at their level," Butler said in a video message after the match. "We played a very, very good team with some wonderful players. They're stronger and fitter than our girls, but I'm proud of them. They never gave up."

He added: "I'm pleased with certain aspects of our game, though we'll always struggle physically and with limited resources and training facilities. I don't believe in the blame game or making excuses. This environment is difficult, but I'm not despondent. I'm disappointed with some of the goals we conceded, but I'm very positive moving forward. I know the problems – and I know the answers to fix them."



VICTORY BEYOND THE SCORELINE

In Berrechid, Morocco, history was written in courage, not goals. Afghan Women United -- a team of refugees -- stepped onto the field on Sunday for their first international match since fleeing a homeland where women's sport is banned. They scored first, through Manozh Noori's penalty, igniting tears and cheers that transcended the scoreboard. Chad won 6-1, but for these women it was a triumph of resilience, a reclaiming of identity and proof that even in exile, the spirit of Afghan women's football endures, supported by FIFA's mission to protect the rights of all women and girls to play and dream freely.

PHOTO: FIFA

First division clubs unhappy over league schedule

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) on Sunday announced that the next edition of the First Division Cricket League will begin on November 18, however, many of the participating clubs are unhappy with CCDM's announcement and as their demand of deferring the league was ignored.

CCDM held a meeting with 20 first division clubs on October 22, which, barring three, the other outfits attended.

The CCDM relayed that this year's first division league would begin in early November, reversing the recent trend of holding the third division league first.

According to first division outfit Amber Sporting Club's cricket secretary Ziaur Rahman Topu, most clubs disagreed with the proposed schedule in the meeting.

"We said that our league ended in March and asked how can we play again in the first week of November. Majority of the clubs were not in agreement," he said.

"Later Faruque [Ahmed, BCB vice-president] bhai showed up in the meeting and said it was the board's decision. I said, 'why did you call us to the meeting since you could have just notified us by a letter? Since you won't listen to us, why call the 20 clubs and why all this preparation?'," he said, adding he stormed out of the meeting after that.

However, CCDM chairman Adnan Rahman Dipon claimed that majority of the clubs had agreed to play the league in the proposed schedule. "Verbally, maximum clubs wanted to play. Officially, they should send a letter because it's the board's decision, I am just a subcommittee chairman," he said.

Topu claimed that only clubs that have directorship in the board are willing to compete and the other teams had proposed the December-January window.

He further said that around 45 clubs across divisions are going to send a letter to Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Aminul Islam Bulbul ahead of the first division league's players' transfer window on November 5 and 6.

SHORT CORNER

Bangladesh miss out on CAVA Cup final

Hosts Bangladesh's bid to play in the final of CAVA (Central Asian Volleyball Association) Cup was crushed with a 3-1 sets defeat to Afghanistan in their final group match at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur on Monday.

India's Iyer hospitalised in Sydney

India vice-captain Shreyas Iyer has been hospitalised in Sydney after suffering a rib-cage injury that caused internal bleeding during the third ODI against Australia on Saturday. Scans revealed a laceration injury to his spleen from that impact, with bleeding detected in the rib-cage region.

Bavuma returns for India Tests

Temba Bavuma was on Monday named as captain of South Africa's squad for two World Test Championship matches in India next month having recovered from injury. Bavuma has captained South Africa in ten Tests, winning nine and drawing one.

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