

Sylhet gatecrash Shakib party to secure second straight win in BPL

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The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk: Shakib Al Hasan hammered a brilliant 32 ball-67 but that was not enough to save Sylhet Strikers from a six-wicket defeat to Sylhet Strikers in their first match of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) today at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium. Thanks to Shakib's ultra-aggressive knock, studded with seven fours and four sixes, Barishal, the current runners-up of the tournament posted a daunting 194-7 after electing to bat first. However Sylhet which crushed Chattogram by eight wickets in the first game, cantered to the victory with an over to spare, making 196-4 with Mushfiqur Rahim fittingly sealing the deal with a towering six.

Sylhet's consecutive second victory came thanks to a combined batting performance with Towhid Hridoy smashing highest 55 off 34, with seven fours and one sixes. Opener Najmul Hossain Shanto made 40 ball-48, hitting five fours and one six, Zakir Hasan smacked 18 ball-43, laced with four fours and three sixes. Mushfiqur Rahim who finished the game in style, was not out on 23 off 11 after clobbering three fours and one six. Thisara Perera also contributed in winning cause with late blitz -a 9 ball-20 not out, featured with one four and two sixes. Shanto and Hridoy set the platform after Sylhet lost the opener Colin Ackerman for just 1 as he was trapped run out in the second ball of the innings.

The duo brought the chase back in track with 102 off just 68 deliveries and made the side heavily favourite to win the game. The partnership was broken after Shanto was run out due to a mix-up with Hridoy. Barishal's Afghan recruit Karim Janat gave the side a ray hope of, dismissing Hridoy via leg-before but Zakir unleashed an aggressive brand of cricket, much to the despair of Shakib and his side. Shakib though didn't lead the side as Barishal gave the responsibility to Mehidy Hasan Miraz. Chaturanga de Silva though removed Zakir with a return catch, Sylhet were just 21 runs away from the victory with 14 balls left. However Mushfiqur and Perera's further assault made sure the game wouldn't go to the last over.

Barishal also made a good start with Anamul Haque Bijoy (29) and Chaturanga de Silva (36) sharing 67 runs. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza struck twice as Barishal faced a mini collapse but Shakib counterattacked in style, leaving Sylhet bowlers in disarray. Mashrafe dismissed Shakib in the last over to finish with 3-48 in four overs but beforehand the ace allrounder ensured that Barishal would end on a high. However it mattered little against a team whose batters later came up with spirited show.