



Shaheen Shah Afridi Joins Vijay Shankar, Moeen Ali at Kandy Royals; Set to Train Under Sri Lanka Great Chaminda Vaas

Former Pakistan T20 captain and Cricketer of the Year opens up about learning the art of left-arm swing from Sri Lankan legend Chaminda Vaas during his maiden Lanka Premier League campaign

National, July 18, 2026: Pakistan ODI captain and one of world cricket's premier fast bowlers, Shaheen Shah Afridi, is set to make his Lanka Premier League debut after signing for Kandy Royals ahead of the 2026 season. The former Men's Cricketer of the Year becomes the latest global star to join the league, strengthening a Kandy squad that already features India's Vijay Shankar, England all-rounder Moeen Ali and Sri Lankan greats Angelo Mathews and Wanindu Hasaranga.

Afridi's arrival further underlines the growing global stature of the Lanka Premier League, which has attracted significant international interest ahead of its sixth edition. Organised by Sri Lanka Cricket and with commercial rights managed by IPG Group, the tournament received more than 650 overseas player registrations from 21 countries—over 200 more than the previous edition—reflecting its rising appeal among the world's leading cricketers.

Afridi's signing is the latest example of the Lanka Premier League's growing ability to attract elite international talent while continuing to showcase Sri Lanka's next generation of cricketers. This year's competition features a strong blend of global stars and homegrown talent across five franchises, reinforcing the league's position as one of Asia's fastest-growing T20 tournaments.

Afridi's arrival also presents one of the most compelling cricketing storylines of the season, as the Pakistan left-arm quick begins working under Sri Lankan pace legend Chaminda Vaas, head coach of the Kandy Royals. Widely regarded as one of the greatest left-arm fast bowlers in cricket history, Vaas has already begun sharing his experience with the former Pakistan captain during the team's pre-season preparations.

Speaking about the opportunity, Afridi said, *"This is my first LPL, and it's a great tournament to play in and learn from. Chaminda Vaas has done wonders for international cricket. Along with Wasim Akram, he will go down as one of the greatest left-arm fast bowlers. I was really keen to work with him. We were discussing wrist position and how to hold the seam while running in. Those are the small things that can make a big difference."*

Vaas, who first watched Afridi during the Pakistan pacer's Under-19 days, believes the partnership will benefit both the player and the Kandy Royals. *"I first saw Shaheen playing at the Under-19 level, and it has been remarkable to watch his journey. He came to me asking about the inswinger and the grip, and those conversations are what coaching is all about. He is a*



world-class bowler and a leader of the attack, and I'm confident he will have a major impact for Kandy this season."

Anil Mohan Sankhdhar, Founder and CEO of IPG Group, the official rights holder of the Lanka Premier League, said: *"The Lanka Premier League has consistently grown in both quality and stature over the last six seasons. The continued interest from leading international cricketers, alongside the record number of overseas registrations this year, reflects the league's position as one of Asia's premier T20 competitions. At the same time, LPL remains committed to creating opportunities for Sri Lankan talent to compete, learn and develop alongside some of the finest players in world cricket."*

One of the most established bowlers of his generation, Afridi captains Pakistan's ODI side and has previously led the national T20 team. Formerly the Men's Cricketer of the Year, Afridi has also enjoyed remarkable success in franchise cricket, leading the Lahore franchise to three titles in Pakistan's premier domestic T20 league, making him the competition's most successful captain. Renowned for his ability to strike with the new ball and deliver under pressure at the death, he brings championship-winning pedigree to an already formidable Kandy lineup.

Welcoming the Pakistan star, Optimum Healthcare Director Rishikumar Nadarajah, Owner, Kandy Royals said, *"Shaheen is one of the world's premier fast bowlers and a proven leader whose record speaks for itself. Bringing a player of his calibre into our squad is a huge statement of intent. We have assembled a squad capable of challenging for the title. We look forward to seeing Shaheen in Royals' colours."*

Instagram Link:

https://www.instagram.com/reel/Da7kN80EQsP/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==

The sixth edition of the Lanka Premier League got off to an exciting start on July 17, with Galle Gallants registering a victory over defending champions SC Jaffna Kings in the opening match at the Sinhalese Sports Club Ground in Colombo. Kandy Royals will open their campaign against Dambulla Sixers on July 18 at the same venue.

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About Lanka Premier League

The Lanka Premier League (LPL) has established itself as one of the region's most dynamic and widely followed T20 tournaments, bringing together top Sri Lankan cricketers and leading international stars in an electrifying showcase of the game. The league is owned and operated by the IPG Group, its official rights holder. The sixth edition of the LPL will be staged from December 1 to December 23, 2025, across three premier venues – Colombo, Dambulla, and Kandy. Fans can look forward to 24 high-octane matches over 24 days, featuring marquee overseas players



alongside Sri Lankan cricketing stalwarts. The league comprising five competing franchises will vie for the coveted trophy this edition.

About IPG

The IPG Group, founded by Anil Mohan Sankhdhar, is a global leader in sports marketing, event management, sponsorship rights, and production, with deep expertise in international cricket properties and sports media. As the rights holder for major cricket leagues, IPG has consistently delivered world-class sporting experiences, pioneering innovations in fan engagement, ground sponsorships, and league management. With its strong global footprint, the group continues to shape and elevate the sports and entertainment landscape.