

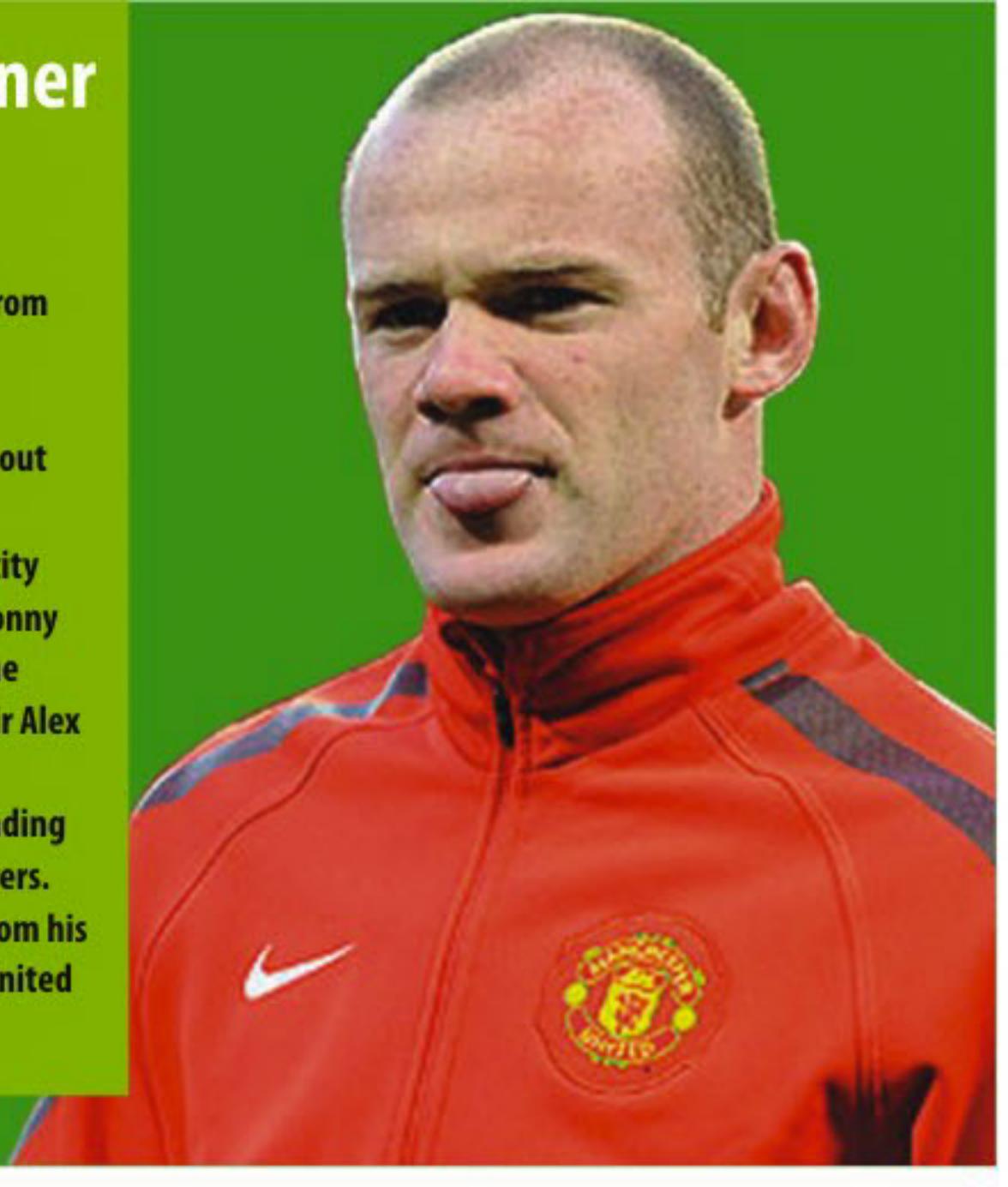
Star

SPORT

DHAKA MONDAY JANUARY 2, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thecitizenstar.net

Dropped for dinner with wife

Manchester United boss Sir Alex Ferguson dropped Wayne Rooney from his squad for Saturday's defeat to Blackburn after the striker was discovered to have enjoyed a night out on Boxing Day. Rooney visited a restaurant in the city with wife Coleen and teammates Jonny Evans and Darren Gibson. During the following day's training sessions, Sir Alex is understood to have overheard conversations about the dinner, leading to a furious exchange with the players. He then axed Rooney and Gibson from his squad for the Rovers clash, which United went on to lose 3-2.



ENG LIONS SERIES
Local parties set to suffer

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced a 13-member Bangladesh A squad for the first three one-dayers and the practice match against England Lions.

Mahmudullah Riyad was named skipper of the second-string side which will play a five-match series against their English counterparts.

The selectors have also named Nafees Iqbal, Alauddin Babu and Sohrawardi Shuvo as the replacements after the first one-dayer. The warm-up game and the first three games of the series will be played at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong while the two remaining one-dayers will be held at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium.

As the series clashes with the ongoing Dhaka Premier League, both of the local parties will be sufferers. The clubs will indeed miss their players, but more importantly, the A team's composition would be compromised as the announced squad would go through several changes during the five matches to make sure no club is hurt too badly.

From the current squad, two players each play for Abahani, Mohammedan and Gazi Tank.

SQUAD

Mahmudullah Riyad (captain), Imrul Kayes, Mominul Haque, Shuvagata Hom Chowdhury, Asif Ahmed, Elias Sunny, Dollar Mahmud, Jahurul Islam, Kazi Kamrul Islam, Dhaman Ghosh, Noor Hossain, Abu Jayed, Tasamul Haque.

Biggies prevail

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Parity was restored in the Dhaka Premier League yesterday as the giants won their respective games, though life was made difficult for both Abahani and Mohammedan Sporting Club.

Defending champions Abahani had to withstand a strong Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club charge after they made 225-8 in 50 overs, and hostile "home" supporters to win by two wickets in 47.4 overs at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Mohammedan, who made a modest 215 in 49.4 overs, defeated Prime Doleswar by 33 runs after they were bowled out for 182 runs in 47.4 overs at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, despite Qaiser Abbas's six-wicket haul.

Away at the BKSP, Gazi Tank (229-9 in 50 overs) completed a day without any upsets after they recovered from a poor position to crush Surjo Tarun (147-9 in

46.4 overs) by 82 runs.

ABAHANI-SHEIKH JAMAL

It all came down to Nazmul Islam and Mahmudullah Riyad facing a dim situation in the last three overs. Abahani had just two wickets in hand, needing 17 to win, but all of a sudden, the little-known Nazmul began carting Mahmudullah Hasan through the on-side boundary, clinching the game for a relieved bunch. Nazmul struck a boundary, a six and two consecutive boundaries to complete the victory which had looked unlikely after the eighth wicket fell in the previous over.

Riyad however held the Abahani innings together with his measured half-century after Abahani had lost a flurry of wickets despite Peter Trego's aggressive 42. At one stage, the captain was stuck in single figures having faced 46 balls but he gathered speed during the 68-run fifth wicket stand with Elias Sunny, ending up with an unbeaten 51 with the help of a four and two sixes.

Earlier, the Abahani seamers Forhad Reza

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Abahani skipper Mahmudullah Riyad plays a reverse sweep during his match-winning unbeaten half-century against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club in the Dhaka Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Trego the odd man out

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Peter Trego is most definitely the archetypal odd man out in the Dhaka Premier League but the all-rounder made sure he stood out through performance as well in his second game for Abahani yesterday.

The Somerset man struck a breezy 42 off 35 balls after picking up two wickets with his medium-pace in the defending champions' faltering win over Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, and in the process learned that even the team's supporters have a go at the players after every mistake.

"It's very tense. I'm starting to realise the passion that everyone has for the Abahani and how important it is to get results for the club," Trego told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Trego is well-known in the English county circuit as an aggressive top-order batsman and he was showing

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Navy, BKSP winners

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Navy beat Bangladesh Police by 88-65 points in the Citycell 25th National Basketball Championship at the Dhanmondi Indoor Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

Navy led the closely-contested first half by 37-34 points. Mithun caged highest 33 points and Sagar caged 16 points for Navy while Emilon scored 20 points for Police.

In the second match of the day, Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protishthan (BKSP) outplayed Bangladesh Air Force by 50-29 points after leading the first half by 24-8 points.

Fed Cup finals from today

SPORTS REPORTER

Grameenphone Federation Cup 2011 The local football season begins in earnest today as the final round of the Grameenphone Federation Cup kicks off at two separate venues with no clear favourites among the 16 participating teams.

A star-studded Mukti Joddha Sangsad will take on Cox's City FC at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur while fallen giants Mohammedan SC will face newcomers Team BJMC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Apart from Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, who started their training camp in September, all the title contenders and the minnows have been gearing up for the last six weeks and the coaches of the respective sides are happy with the time they got to prepare their sides.

They believe their charges are mentally and physically prepared to take the challenge and push their opponents hard on the field.

But, one thing everyone admitted is that winning the Federation Cup would not be an easy task as Abahani, Mukti Joddha Sangsad, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russell KC are very close in terms of strength on paper.

Mohammedan, newcomers Team BJMC and Brothers Union may spring a few surprises as Mohammedan and Brothers Union are inspired by the arrival of Nigerian coach Emeka and Indian coach Syed Naimuddin respectively while Team BJMC formed a squad which features experienced players like Alfaz Ahmed, Abul Hossain and Abdullah Parvez.

With a lack of practice matches before the tournament, the title contenders will be looking forward to making their right combination play-

ing in the group-stage matches.

"Finishing second best is not an option for us as we have no alternative but to defend the title," said Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu adding that this time Abahani have a better squad compared to last season.

Abahani will rely on long-serving Ghanaian recruits Awudu Ibrahim, Twum Frank, Aminu, Samad Yousuf and new Nigerian recruit Lucky Paul while the inclusion of defenders Wali Faisal, Mohammad Sujan, Nasirul Islam, striker Enamul Haque and winger Zahid Hossain will sharpen their attack.

Last year's Bangladesh League champions Sheikh Jamal lost much of their strength as 10 national players left for other clubs, but new coach Saiful Bari Titu is optimistic about delivering something good in the tournament.

"The strength of Sheikh Jamal has surely decreased this year but those

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LEFT-RIGHT COMBINATION? The legendary Sachin Tendulkar watches India's nets with son Arjun at the Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday. Junior Tendulkar is a left-handed batsman who plays for his school.

Whatmore quits KKR

PTI, Kolkata

Tipped to take over as the coach of the Pakistan national team, Dav Whatmore on Sunday resigned from the post of chief coach of the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) citing his inability to continue with the job.

Whatmore who replaced John Buchanan before the third edition of Indian Premier League (IPL) coached the team for two seasons. In the first season, they finished sixth but a revamped team under Gautam Gambhir reached the knock-outs during the last edition thereby qualifying for the Champions League.

In his parting statement, Whatmore said, "the team has progressed in the right direction... I wish the team continued success and look forward to them progressing to silverware in 2012. Many thanks to those who have supported and believed in me."

It is learnt that the Pakistan Cricket Board has invited Whatmore in the second week of January to discuss his appointment.

The KKR CEO, Venky Mysore in his statement also indicated that Whatmore won't be around as he wants to pursue an international coaching role.

"We have been most supportive of Dav's keen interest in pursuing an international coaching role and wish him the very best. His decision to resign is to ensure that KKR is able to plan for the transition and we thank him for that," Mysore said.

