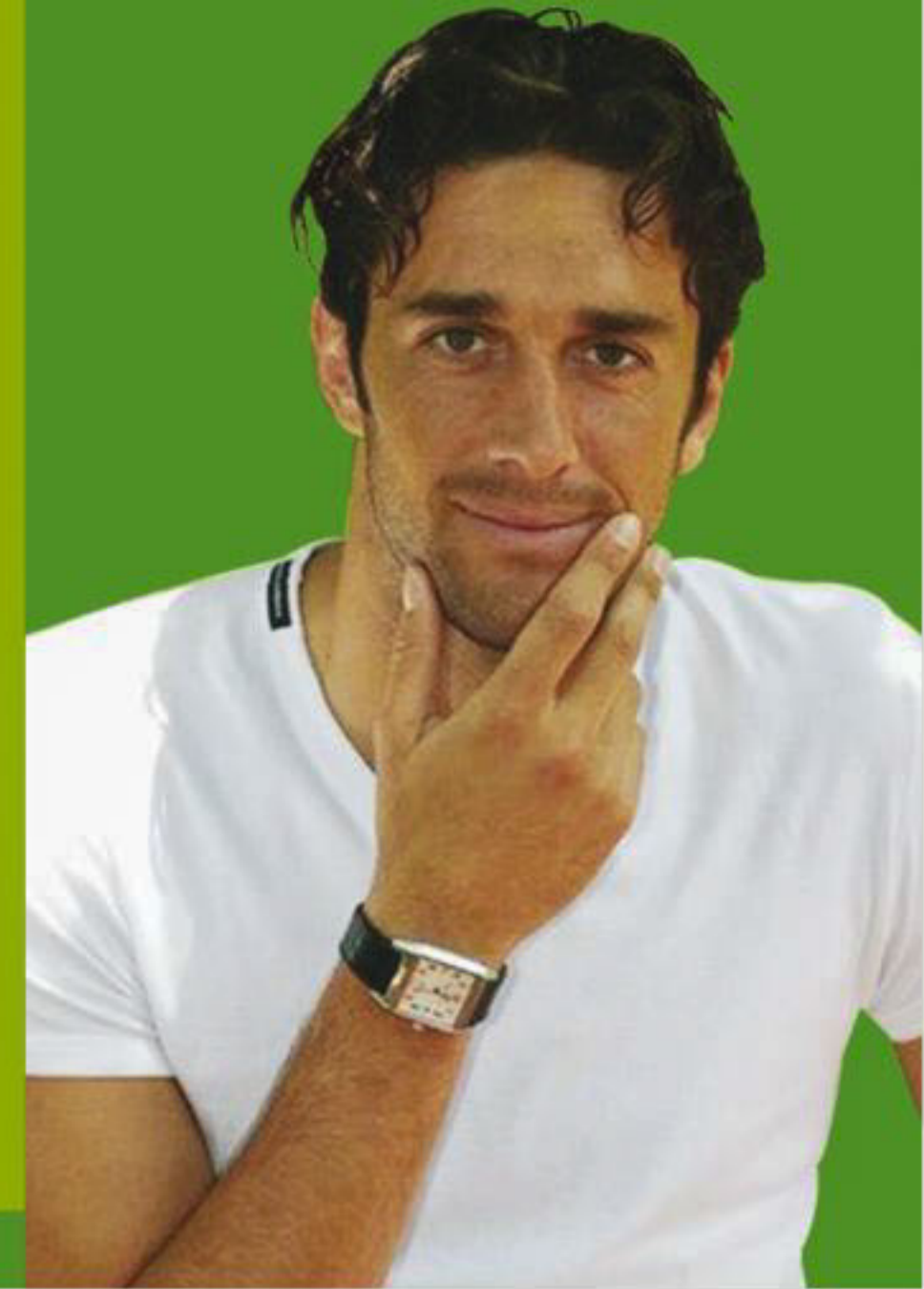


Star SPORT

DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 3, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Toni struck by tragedy

Former Italy striker Luca Toni was struck by tragedy on Friday as his child was stillborn, Italian media reported. Toni, who now plays in Dubai, and model girlfriend Marta Cecchetto were expecting their first child. "What should have been the best day of our lives has become the worst," said Toni in a brief statement. "Our child has left us before seeing the light of day. We ask everyone for understanding and silence during this great pain, which should be only mine and Marta's."



Pybus in town

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket team's new head coach Richard Pybus arrived yesterday to take over the reins of the Tigers for the next two years.

Pybus arrived in the capital within three days of being confirmed as the new Bangladesh coach for a two-year term to spend some time with his charges before the Zimbabwe tour, which will be his first assignment.

The 47-year old Englishman told the reporters upon his arrival at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport that he is excited to take on the new challenge. He also said that his main target would be to ensure that the Tigers maintain their consistency in performance.

Pybus, who last coached a national team in Pakistan in 2003, also said that he will let the press know in detail about his plans and visions after putting pen to paper.

The Tigers will leave on June 12 for Harare to play an unofficial tri-nation tournament with Zimbabwe and

SEE PAGE 17 COL 8



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh's new cricket coach Richard Pybus makes his way out of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport after his arrival yesterday.

Muktijoddha keep title hopes alive

SPORTS REPORTER



Muktijoddha Sangsad kept their hopes of a maiden professional league title alive with a 3-0 victory over a hapless Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The All Reds, who finished runners-up in the last edition of the top tier league, cut Abahani's lead at the top of the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League table to two points with their fourth win in five matches.

The victory, which was revenge for their 2-1 defeat in the first leg, put Muktijoddha on 34 points from 16 matches, two behind leaders Abahani who have 36 points from 15 matches. Brothers Union, on the other hand, have now lost four matches in a row and are facing relegation at seventh place. The Oranges have 15 points from 16 matches but they have played two matches more than the other teams below them in the table.

The first half of the match was a cagey affair when both sides pressed for domination but neither came close to breaking the deadlock. The first shot on target came in the sixth minute from Muktijoddha midfielder Shakil Ahmed, whose grounder hit the post before it rebounded off Sunday Chizoba into the net. But the Nigerian striker

was standing in an offside position and hence the goal was disallowed. Borthers' first serious attempt came in the 21st minute when Mohammad Javed's lob was headed strongly by Kingsley Chigozie but the Muktijoddha keeper Maksudur Rahman cleared with a diving save.

Brothers came close to finding the net when a corner in the 40th minute slipped through the grasp of Maksudur before Ariful Islam stepped in to clear the ball, and the rebound from Jamal Hossain was punched away by the keeper. The clearance fell to Sunday who raced to the Brothers danger zone before being pulled back by defender Samuel Jankasa. Sunday's dipping kick missed the target by inches.

Muktijoddha came back roaring after the breather and broke the deadlock in the 46th minute, thanks to gigantic Brazilian defender Rafael de Andrade who headed in Ariful Islam's throw. Three minutes later Brothers replied with an excellent counter-attack and should have got the equaliser, but Muktijoddha keeper Maksudur Rahman made two brilliant saves to thwart attempts from Kingsley Chigozie and Victory Antony.

But that was the last serious attack from the Oranges as they chased shadows thereafter. Muktijoddha expectedly made it 2-0 in the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 6

Sonali Bank, Mariner win

SPORTS REPORTER

Sonali Bank and Mariner Youngs Club registered victories in the Club Cup Hockey competition yesterday. Sonali Bank defeated Azad Sporting Club 3-1 in the first match before Mariner Youngs Club outplayed Bangladesh Police SC 3-0 at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

Sonali Bank scored in the third minute thanks to a penalty corner converted by Samsul Alam Sujon. The same player then scored the second from another penalty corner in the 27th minute. Mohammad Rubel made it 3-0 three minutes later with a field goal. Mohammad Salauddin scored a consolation goal in the 47th minute, converting a penalty corner.

In the second match, Mariner Youngs scored all three goals in the first half. Syed Al Masum scored the opening goal in the 13th minute before Mostafizur Rahman scored twice in the first half to complete a comfortable victory.

There are two matches today with Abahani taking on Bangladesh SC and Ajax SC locking horns with Wari Club.

DOHS, Victoria on collision course

SPORTS REPORTER



Old DOHS and Victoria Sporting Club are heading towards a June 8 showdown for the Dhaka Premier League title after they won their respective matches yesterday. Both have two Super League games in hand and although DOHS are leading the table on 22 points, their game against challengers Victoria on the last day of the league, by all measures, will decide the winners, but none can afford to drop points in the next round of matches.

At the BKSP in Savar, Old DOHS demolished Abahani in a 74-run victory thanks mainly to Uday Kaul's century, while Victoria's six-wicket win over Gazi Tank Cricketers went into the last over in a shortened game at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

Away at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club beat Mohammedan Sporting Club by

four wickets through the Duckworth-Lewis method.

OLD DOHS-ABAHANI

In the only uninterrupted game of the day, DOHS began poorly after being put into bat. But the left-handed Kaul took charge from the fourth over as they made their way to 294-5 in 50 overs. Abahani, minus skipper Mahmudullah Riyad who was ill, never threatened the target and were bowled out for 220 runs in 49.5 overs.

DOHS's Indian recruit let Shuvagata Hom Chowdhury take command in their 110-run third wicket stand with the right-hander from Mymensingh cracking nine fours in his 62-ball 63. In the fourth wicket stand of 118 runs with Adnan Raza, Kaul got to his century off 105 balls before falling to left-arm spinner Saqlain Sajib for a match-altering 105 off 112 balls with the help of a dozen boundaries.

Raza, the 24-year-old batsman from Lahore, made 57 off 76 balls while South African all-rounder Roelof van der Merwe breezed to a 24-ball 31 with

the help of two sixes and a boundary, as DOHS ended their 50 overs on 294-5.

Saqlain was the most successful Abahani bowler, picking up three wickets.

The Dhanmondi giants made a terrible start with the bat as they lost their top five for just 55 runs in the 17th over. Stand-in captain Forhad Hossain was the only major contributor with a half-century that had four boundaries and two sixes. van der Merwe took two wickets in a disciplined spell of nine overs while Shuvagata Hom, who opened the bowling with his occasional off-spin, also picked up two victims.

VICTORIA-GAZI TANK

In a game that began four hours late due to early morning rain in Bogra, Victoria managed a tricky 152-run chase in 23.1 overs much later in the day despite the loss of Shakib Al Hasan at a crucial juncture.

After Tamim Iqbal gave them a brisk start through his 40-ball 42, Sabbir Rahman and Soumya Sarkar shepherded the chase with two important knocks but the main point of interest in the game remained the innings by young Mominul Haque.

The left-handed batsman smashed five boundaries and four sixes in a superb and unbeaten 49-ball 71 that helped Gazi Tank to 151-7 in 24 overs.

For Victoria, Al-Amin Hossain, Shakib and Iqbal Abdullah took two wickets each.

MOHAMMEDAN-SHEIKH JAMAL

Mushfiqur Rahim continued his purple patch, hammering an unbeaten 92 as Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club reached 226-6 in 37.2 overs after being set 223 to win in 38 overs. The match was shortened to 38-overs-a-side because of a prolonged rain break during the Mohammedan innings, which eventually ended on 38 overs with the Motijheel outfit making 224-7.

The national skipper hit eight fours

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

Old DOHS's Indian recruit Uday Kaul places the ball on the on-side during his 105 against Abahani in the Super League of the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League at the BKSP in Savar yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



PHOTO: STAR

Muktijoddha Sangsad forward Nasiruddin Chowdhury (C) celebrates after scoring the second goal in their 3-0 rout of Brothers Union in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Play like a man, Basit tells Umar

ANI, Karachi

A former Pakistan cricketer has hit out at the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for promoting cricketer Umar Akmal to a Category A contract, despite the batsman's inexperience and inability to deliver a consistent performance.

Akmal, despite being omitted from the Test squad that will take on Sri Lanka later this month, was elevated from Category B when the central contracts were announced last week, reports The Express Tribune.

"Umar is an exceptional talent but he has failed to do justice to it and that's why I think the PCB shouldn't have given him a Category A contract," said Basit Ali, who was Umar's coach at Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL).

"He shouldn't be given

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

Li, Maria progress

Spanish men's train rumbles on



AFP, Paris

Spain's claycourt masters tightened their stranglehold on one half of the French Open draw on Saturday as both David Ferrer and Nicolas Almagro reached the last 16 with straight sets wins.

On the women's side, defending champion Li Na battled back to defeat America's Christina McHale 3-6, 6-2, 6-1 and reach the French Open last 16 Saturday, but 2010 winner Francesca Schiavone crashed out of the event and the world top 20.

Sixth-seeded Ferrer flattened Russia's Mikhail Youzhny 6-0, 6-2, 6-2 in just 101 minutes, whilst Almagro saw off the challenge of Argentina's Leonardo Mayer 6-4, 6-1, 6-2.

With six-times defending champion Rafael Nadal and Marcel Granollers in action later in the day, there was the distinct possibility that half of the qualifiers for the last 16 in the bottom half of the draw could come from Spain.

In contrast, there were no Spaniards through into the last 16 in the top half of the draw.

Fourth seed Andy Murray meanwhile

made smooth progress into the fourth round and, more importantly, appeared to be injury-free in a 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 demolition of Colombia's Santiago Giraldo.

The 30-year-old Ferrer, who has yet to make it past the quarterfinals at Roland Garros despite being one of the best players on clay for the last few years, had Youzhny by the throat from the start, winning the first set 6-0 and leading 2-0 in the second before the Russian got off the mark.

Also through to the last 16 in early play was eighth seed Janko Tipsarevic of Serbia who worked his way past Frenchman Julien Benneteau 6-3, 7-5, 6-4.

Tipsarevic won the last five games of the match after being 4-1 down in the third set to reach the last 16 at Roland Garros for the first time and will next take on Almagro.

Women's second seed Maria Sharapova reached the last 16 with a 6-2, 6-1 win over Chinese 28th seed Peng Shuai.

Russian Sharapova will take on unseeded Klara Zakopalova of the Czech Republic for a place in the quarterfinals.

The 30-year-old Li had to draw upon her 10-year age gap to prevail over the 36th-ranked American, who had fallen in the first

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

