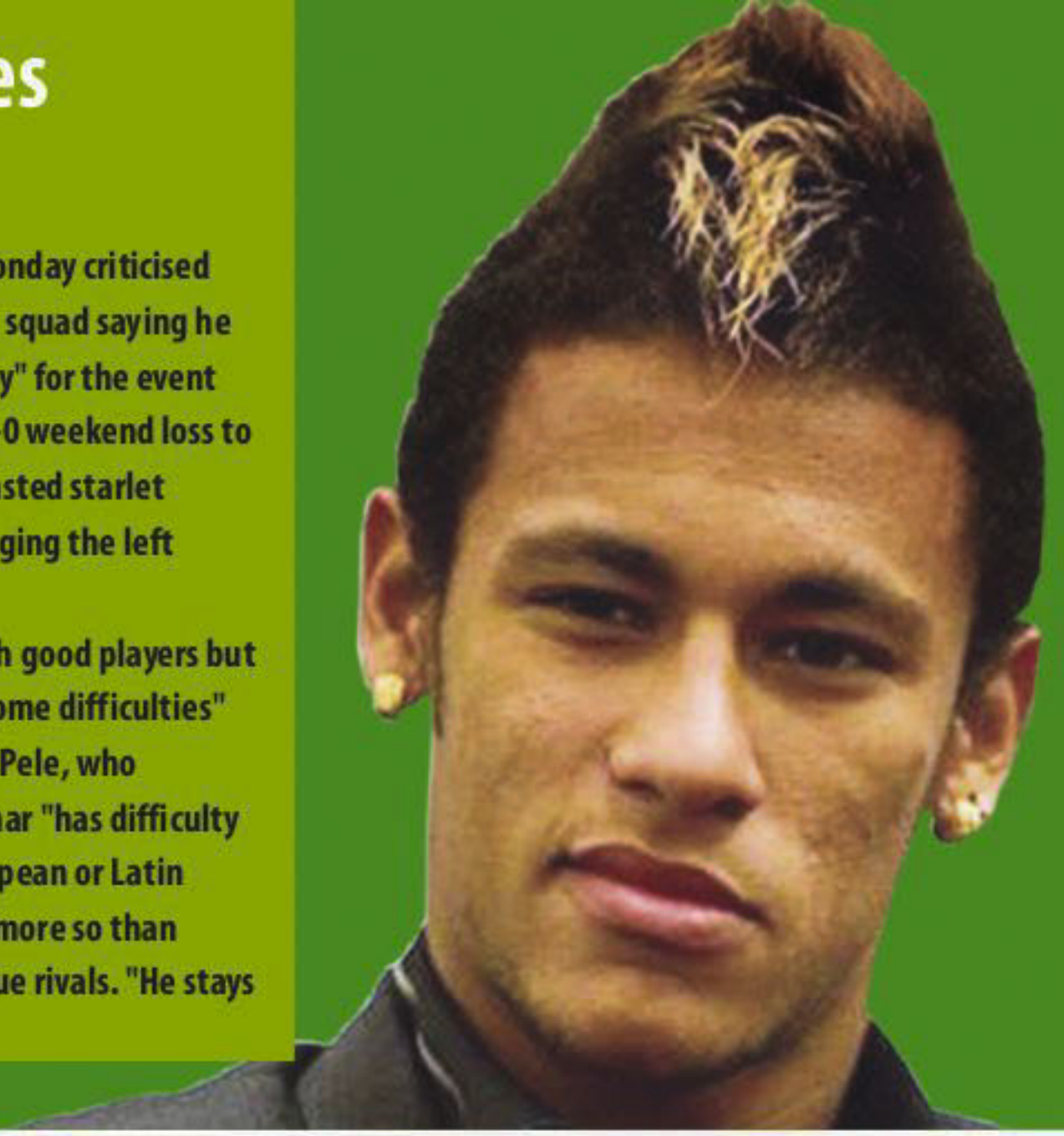


Pele slates Neymar

Former star Pele on Monday criticised the Brazilian Olympics squad saying he felt they "are not ready" for the event on the evidence of a 2-0 weekend loss to Mexico and also lambasted starlet Neymar for overly hugging the left wing.

"It is a good team, with good players but not yet ready to overcome difficulties" when they arise," said Pele, who indicated he felt Neymar "has difficulty playing against a European or Latin American" defender - more so than against Brazilian league rivals. "He stays



Gazi save Victoria

SPORTS REPORTER

Old DOHS could have clinched the Dhaka Premier League title yesterday, but the dramatic afternoon turned anti-climatic after they lost to Gazi Tank by 20 runs to keep the title-race wide open.

Gazi Tank's win at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium pushed them to 20 points, level with second placed Victoria Sporting Club, whose shocking 66-run loss to Mohammedan Sporting Club opened up possibilities for Old DOHS to win it with a game in hand. Victoria should thank Gazi's efficient bowling attack, particularly the Pakistani leg-spinner Danish Kaneria, handsomely as it kept them in the race till Friday.

So it will be on the last day of matches in this prolonged domestic competition that a new champion will be crowned. DOHS remain on 22 points but if Victoria defeats them in Fatullah, it will be the Motijheel-based club that will be the champions. In another angle to the scenario, Gazi Tank could end up in second place if they can beat Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Victoria beat DOHS. Otherwise, a win for DOHS would give them their third Premier League title.

Back to the day's action and it was all going according to the script but Mohammedan (213-8 in 50 overs) put the cat amongst the pigeons by bowling splendidly to shock a star-studded Victoria (147 all out in 41.3 overs) at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium. Away at the Narayanjan venue however, Old DOHS (239-8 in 50 overs) could not put the finishing

touches on Gazi Tank's total (259-6 in 50 overs), stuttering in the last few overs.

MOHAMMEDAN-VICTORIA
Syed Rasel breached Tamim Iqbal's defences off the fourth ball of Victoria's 214-run chase to give Mohammedan an early lifeline. Two balls later, Sri Lankan left-arm pacesman Chathura Peiris knocked off Saikat Ali.

Jahurul Islam, Soumya Sarkar and captain Shakib Al Hasan resurrected the innings somewhat when it literally imploded on their faces. From 72-3, Victoria slipped to 76 for seven threatening their title aspirations.

Sharifullah, a bits-and-pieces cricketer at best, kept Victoria on course through a 38-run eighth wicket stand with Mosharraf Hossain Rubel but they were soon bowled out for 147 runs with Peiris picking up four wickets.

Earlier a last-gasp unbeaten 49 off 30 balls from Noor Hossain Munna gave Mohammedan at least a respectable score against their richer neighbours. The No 9 batsman struck five boundaries and three sixes and put on a 65-run eighth wicket stand with Peiris.

GAZITANK-OLD DOHS

Nasir Hossain was the hero for Gazi Tank after the national all-rounder hammered a century, his first of the season in club cricket.

During his score of 101, the right-hander struck seven boundaries in his 108-ball innings. He shared an important 152-run third wicket stand with Alok Kapali who made 76 off 112 balls, that had three sixes.

Nazmul Hossain Milon then struck his customary meaty blows, hammering two fours and sixes during a 29-ball 37.



Gazi Tank batsman Nasir Hossain cuts the ball during his century against Old DOHS in their Dhaka Premier League match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Abahani in semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani confirmed their semifinal berth with a third consecutive victory in the Walton Club Cup Hockey Tournament yesterday. The Sky Blues defeated Ajax SC 6-1 at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium. The Dhanmondi outfit opened the scoring in the fourth minute with Iqbal Nadir Prince getting in on the act. But Ajax levelled the score through Rahat Sarwar in the 26th minute. Hasan Jubayer Niloy then struck a hat-trick scoring in the 30th, 31st and 44th minutes to give the Sky Blues some breathing space. Hasan Ahmed added one in the 64th minute while skipper Asaduzzaman Chandan scored the sixth one minute before the end.

All the goals except for the last one came from open play.

In the day's other match, Usha KC trounced Wari Club by 11-0 goals at the

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Abahani gunned down by Mushy

SPORTS REPORTER



Mushfiqur Rahim again led from the front in Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club's 127-run rout of Abahani during their Super League match of the Dhaka Premier League at the BKSP yesterday.

The 23-year-old fell just ten runs short of a fifth century when he was caught behind for 90, as his side made 251 runs in 49.3 overs. Later, he plotted Abahani's downfall by bowling them out for just 124 runs in 37.4 overs.

Mushfiqur came to the crease with his side on 35-2 in the tenth over. Mehrab Hossain Jr fell at the other end and from 35 for three, the skipper added 155 runs for the fourth wicket with Mahmudul Hasan, who made 70 off 86 balls. The national skipper's 90 came off 94 balls with the help of two sixes and four boundaries.

Abul Hasan, included in the Bangladesh squad for the Zimbabwe tour later this month, took four wickets.

When Abahani chased the 252-run target, they lost openers Fazle Rabbi and Anamaul Haque to Tapash Baisya by the fifth over. Medium-pace Rubayat Haq then picked up three wickets while off-spinner Mahmudul took two more as Abahani slipped to a new low.

There was one slightly sour note for the Mushfiqur who was fined Tk 10,000 by the match referee following an outburst on an umpire while he was keeping wickets.

The defending champions are now in sixth place, bottom

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

Foreigners in basketball

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Gladiators, formerly known as Europa Youth, has hired three foreign players for the ongoing City Cell Premier Division Basketball League, said a press release from the club.

The players are USA's Cheyenne Moore and Daniel Tavares and Puerto Rico's Ricardo Catala. This is the first time any American basketball player will be playing in the country's basketball league, informed the club. Although none of the players have played in the National Basketball League (NBA), they are all good players, the club informed.

Cheyenne Moore played in his school and college teams before turning pro in 2010 when he played in the Venezuelan league. The 6'7" 28-year old player from Connecticut plays in the small forward position.

Daniel Tavares is a 28-year

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Booters on the move

The fifth edition of the Bangladesh Premier League still has five rounds left, but there are whispers in the footballing circuit that few clubs have already enticed big players to join their ranks for the next season. This is a violation of the league bylaws, which is weak in its definition.

SPORTS REPORTER



It has become a common phenomenon in the country's football that clubs and players reach an agreement through internal negotiation, either in written form or verbal, much before the start of the transfer season and during an ongoing league. This virtually breaks the focus of the players and harmony within the club which ultimately derails the club from their title push or relegation battle.

The system of player ownership in our football is a chief cause for this kind of frail relationship between the club and the players. Since clubs own a player for a single season here, and after that the player becomes a free agent and negotiations begin between interested clubs and the players instead of a club-to-club affair, both interested clubs and players take advantage of it.

To avert this scenario, the Bangladesh Football Federation inserted a clause in the bylaws which states that after the completion of the season, the players must discuss

with their respective clubs about their intention of switching to another club. However, because there is no written agreement required which makes it very difficult to prove whether any discussion took place, clubs keep on enticing players and the bylaws keep getting violated.

Sheikh Russel KC, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, Mohammedan SC and Abahani are reportedly in discussion about forming stronger squads for the next season, even though they have denied approaching any players thus far.

"We have a plan of forming a champion side by signing a few star players but we are yet to make any contacts with the players. We may however contact players after the two crucial matches of our club in the ongoing league," said Sheikh Russel president Nurul Alam Chowdhury.

However, it has been learnt that Sheikh Russel have already confirmed midfielder Mamunul Islam, defender Rezaul Karim, striking duo Mithun Chowdhury and Zahid Hasan Emily from Muktijoddha Sangsad and are in contact with Abahani midfielder Arman Aziz and defender Nasir Chowdhury.

Eagles defeat Bakshi Bazar

SPORTS REPORTER

Eagles defeated Bakshi Bazar by 74-56 points in their Citycell Premier Division Basketball League match at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday. The winning side led the keenly contested first half by 34-27 points before extending their lead after the break.

Shahin and Emilyn caged 21 and 20 points respectively for Eagles while Asif and Mahin netted 19 and 16 points respectively for Bakshi Bazar.

In the late match on Monday night, Dhumketu outplayed Flame Boys by 97-60 points after taking a 47-40 point lead in the first half. Rumel scored 21 points for Dhumketu while Sadman of Flame Boys caged highest 28 points of the match for Flame Boys.



PHOTO: STAR

Abahani striker Pushkor Khisha Mimo moves the ball upfield during their Club Cup match against Ajax Sporting Club at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

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