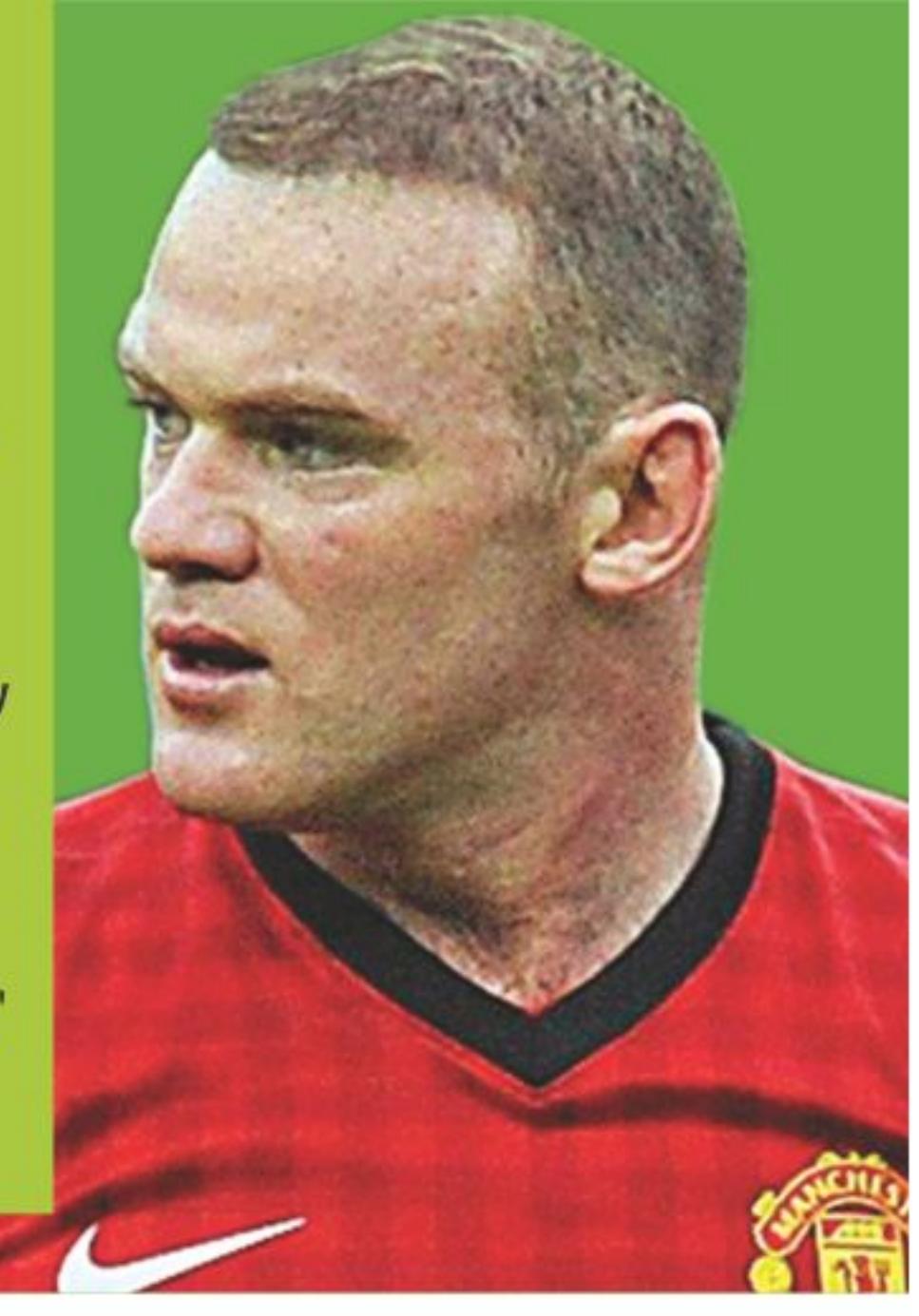


Star SPORT

DHAKA FRIDAY DECEMBER 28, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thelaststar.net

Rooney out for several weeks

Wayne Rooney faces two or three weeks on the sidelines after the Manchester United striker injured his knee in training ahead of Wednesday's Premier League clash with Newcastle United. Rooney did not start in the 4-3 victory at Old Trafford and manager Alex Ferguson said the striker would miss the rest of the busy holiday fixtures. "Wayne did it in training yesterday, he could be out for two, three weeks," Ferguson told United's website (www.manutd.com) on Wednesday.



BCL starts with a Zia bang

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Ziaur Rahman's near record-equalling effort got the newly-designed Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) off to an explosive start yesterday as the hard-hitting Prime Bank South Zone batsman hogged the

SCORES IN BRIEF

PRIME BANK SOUTH ZONE: First innings 343 all out in 73 overs (Imrul 42, Mithun 37, Tushar 30, Rabbi 25, Ziaur 152 not out, Gazi 15, Rubel 15, extras 11; Shahadat 2-68, Talha 1-31, Sunny 1-76, Mosharraf 5-52, Mehrab 1-23) **BCB NORTH ZONE:** First innings 294-4 in 86.1 overs (Jahurul 79, Junaed 3, Forhad 60, Naeem 58 not out, Mushfiqur 48, Nasir 22 not out, extras 24; Taposh 3-

spotlight by smashing a furious, unbeaten hundred at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The right-hander fell only one short of matching the first-class world record of 16 sixes, earlier set by Andrew Symonds (for Gloucestershire against Glamorgan, Abergavenny, 1995), Graham Napier (for Essex against Surrey, Whitgift School, 2011) and Jesse Ryder (for New Zealand against Australia A, Brisbane, 2011).

Zia might have missed the record but what he did in the chilly afternoon was without any doubt a rare batting achievement on the domestic scene and it is hard to imagine a new tournament getting off to a more auspicious start. His explosive maiden first-class hundred, a 118-ball 152 that contained 15 big sixes and seven boundaries, helped Prime Bank South Zone to recover from a dismal batting start to finish the day on a happy note against

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Big-hitting batsman Ziaur Rahman flays one of his fifteen sixes, a record equalling feat in any first-class competition, on the opening day of the newly launched Bangladesh Cricket League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Zia struck an unbeaten 152 for South Zone against Central Zone in the franchise-based four-day competition.

PHOTO: STAR

'I'm a hitter by nature'

SPORTS REPORTER

Ziaur Rahman was not disappointed at having missed the world record of 16 sixes in a first-class innings, but was instead happy that he could make his first hundred courtesy of valuable support from two tailenders.

"I have no regrets about missing the world record; rather I'm happy with my first hundred which was possible because of the support I got from the two tailenders," said Zia, who was not aware of the world record before the reporters informed him after the day's play.

"I always hit the ball hard if I get it in my zone and I have the confidence that I can clear it if I hit hard. The power I have is a gift but I feel that you have

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Sheikh Russel take lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League 2012-13 A stoppage-time strike from Haitian Sony Norde helped title contenders Sheikh Russel KC come from one goal down to beat Brothers Union 2-1 in their Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The fourth win in five matches put Sheikh Russel on the top of nine-team table with 12 points, two ahead of holders Abahani and Sheik

Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Mohammedian Sporting Club while Brothers Union, with five defeats in a row, stuck to the bottom.

Kingsley Chigozie gave Brothers a 34th minute lead with a header before Moroccan Tarik Marzouk, playing his first match, equalised for Sheikh Russel through a tap-in eight minutes later. While the match was heading for a draw, Sony dazzled the supporters with the winner in the stoppage-time of the second-half.

Sheikh Russel came into the game on the back of a morale-boosting 1-0 win over holders Abahani and faced tough challenge from Brothers who

looked determined to claim their first points after fourth straight defeat and both the sides put up an attacking football.

However Federation Cup champions Sheikh Russel launched the first attack through left flank with Sony advancing inside the box to provide a nice chip for Rezaul Karim, but the defender saw his header go just inches wide of the post in the 21st minute.

Four minutes later, Brothers came close to taking a lead when Samuel Adams put a through-pass for Toufiq Hasan but Sheikh Russel goalkeeper

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Sheikh Russel's Haitian striker Sony Norde (L) shrugs off his marker during his side's Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League match against Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. His stoppage-time goal gave Russel a 2-1 win and the solo lead.

PHOTO: STAR

Win and be the leaders

Crucial Abahani-Mohammedan encounter today

SPORTS REPORTER

Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League 2012-13 Taking solo lead in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League will be on

Mohammedan and Abahani's minds when the traditional foes clash in a crucial encounter of the competition at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

State-owned Bangladesh Television will telecast the match live from 4:30pm.

Both Abahani and Mohammedan, along with Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, are on the top of the nine-team table

with 10 points each though they played one match more than Sheikh Jamal's four.

Though the tie between the country's most popular sides is expected to create little enthusiasm among the spectators because of the game's poor standard these days, there will, for sure, be some tense, exciting and entertaining moments on the pitch since it is a match between the Black and Whites and the Sky Blues.

Holders Abahani proved their worth in the professional football league after winning four out of five championships

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

BFF renews coaches' contracts

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday renewed contracts of 15 coaches and offered two new contracts under the development programme financed by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), which allocates 6,000 dollars for coaches each year.

The two new coaches are

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Wait till Sunday, says Papon

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon appeared before the media two days after returning from London, but the BCB boss still kept everything close to his chest.

Everybody was eagerly awaiting Papon's take on two burning issues -- the controversy surrounding the amended board constitution and the Tigers' proposed tour of Pakistan -- which is why he was faced with questions as soon as the media got wind of his presence at the inauguration of the Bangladesh Cricket League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. But the BCB chief said a meeting with the media on Sunday will hopefully clear the air regarding the current issues.

He however said that there are still concerns about their tour to Pakistan next month. "We still have our concerns.

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India must win today

PTI, Ahmedabad

India will have to quickly plug their batting shortcomings and pick the right team composition when they go into the second and last Twenty20 International against archrivals Pakistan on Friday, hoping to level the two match series 1-1.

India suffered a five-wicket drubbing in the series opener in Bangalore after a middle-order collapse, which saw the hosts struggle to 130 for nine after being 90 for two at one stage.

The hosts desperately need to win the second game to level the series and the pressure will be on captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and his men to deliver the goods when it matters the most.

India would need the likes of Virat

Kohli, Dhoni, Yuvraj and Rohit Sharma to regroup and fire in unison against the traditional rivals who are also equally determined to clinch the T20 series.

The bowling also remains a persistent headache for the Indians. Except for Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who finished with impressive figures of three for nine in his debut game, none of the other bowlers could trouble the Pakistani batsmen.

Ashok Dinda, Ishant Sharma, Ravindra Jadeja all struggled to get wickets or even check the flow of runs.

The decision to leave out Ravichandran Ashwin in the last match was seen as a move that worked in Pakistan's favour and Dhoni might be tempted to play him in the must-win tie.

The Indians had opted to go in with three specialist seamers in the last match and it will be interesting to see whether

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