

DESPERATELY SEEKING AMINUL (1) A club boy arranges the furniture of a room after police allegedly ransacked the Abahani premises in the early hours of Wednesday. (2) A furious Abahani football committee secretary Ashrafuddin Chunnun addresses the press during a hurriedly called media briefing yesterday afternoon. (3) Aminul is suddenly brought to the Muktiyoddha Sangsad central office in Moghbazar. (4) Muktiyoddha coach Shafiqul Islam Manik follows Aminul to the president's room. (5) A sombre Aminul sits in front of Muktiyoddha Sangsad president Kabir Ahmed Khan.

PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

Abahani raided

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The sports fraternity experienced a sad episode in the early hours of Thursday when Police, accompanied by a Muktiyoddha Sangsad Kira Chakra official, stormed the Abahani club at Dhanmondi.

The late-night development was a continuation of the drama that began with Brothers Union's coup of assembling ten national players to their tent on Wednesday afternoon.

Although fascinating incidents in the football arena ahead of the inter-club players' transfer was not unexpected, however, the presence of

muscle-power has given this year's event an ugly look with the bourse only nine days away.

The uncalculated action of the police was prompted by the news of country's number one goalkeeper Aminul Haq's disappearance without a trace.

Muktiyoddha was quick to blame Abahani accusing the popular Dhanmondi outfit of kidnapping the goalkeeper who has played for the all-reds in the last three seasons. Following a complaint from Aminul's brother Moin Haq with the Ramna police station, the law enforcers showed amazing urgency in searching for Aminul who was rumoured to have been in Abahani's custody.

"About a two hundred-strong contingent of police including

plainclothes members entered the club by jumping over the security fencing at around 2.30am last night and started ransacking the rooms of players and officials. They didn't even bother to show any search warrant," said Abahani's office secretary Subash. Some at an impromptu press briefing yesterday.

He also claimed that Muktiyoddha Sangsad manager Abdus Sattar was with the policemen during the raid.

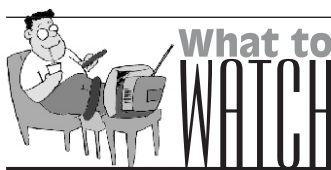
Abahani's football secretary Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chunnun was fuming at the police tirade. "The club has experienced many untoward incidents in the past. But what happened last night was simply unthinkable. This was the first time

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Did U Know?

Allan Border, the former Australian captain not only holds the record for having the scored the maximum number of runs in Test cricket (11,574 runs), but he also has made the highest number of Test appearances (156), and has even taken the most catches as an out-fielder (156 again)



What to WATCH

BTB
Bangladesh vs Pakistan
Second ODI
Live at 10:30 am

TEN Sports
Bangladesh vs Pakistan
Second ODI
Live at 10:30 am

ESPN
Football Focus
Repeat at 11:00 am
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports
Football Mundial
Repeat at 2:00 pm
Sportsline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm



TALK TURKEY



Rameez Raja
(PCB chief executive)
"I am now more hopeful that India's senior team will tour Pakistan next year. We still have six months and will progress more in the days to come."

Time to show character

Cricket

HASAN MASOOD from Faisalabad

Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore thinks that his boys are ready to start afresh in the second one-day match at the Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad today.

The Sri-Lankan-born Australian also hoped that the team would show more fighting qualities after a less than impressive performance in Multan.

"We have four matches left to prove ourselves. We didn't play very well in the last game. So, the boys have to work very hard," Whatmore said after his team's final practice session yesterday morning.

He blamed the Tigers' wayward bowling in the first match.

"They didn't particularly bowl well and the Pakistanis got away to a

good start. The bowlers have to maintain more discipline if they want to get a wicket or two in the early stages.

"I feel that the batting side of the team is stronger. That's why we have to pay more attention to bowling. But again, you can't win doing well in just one department. And that is what I'm trying to inject in the team," he said.

Whatmore was also wary of Pakistan's batting strength.

"If you give them a good start on a good wicket then they will punish you especially as their middle-order batsmen are in good form."

Reflecting on where Bangladesh went wrong, Whatmore thought the game in Multan was lost when they were faced with a chase of more than 300 runs.

"Obviously the task becomes very psychological when you have to

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Proctor cautions BD manager

SPORTS REPORTER from Faisalabad

Bangladesh manager MA Latif was cautioned by match referee Mike Proctor yesterday for commenting on the way the South African handled the Rashid Latif episode.

Proctor summoned both him and captain Khaled Mahmud to tell Latif not make any remarks in future.

On Monday the Bangladesh manager told Reuters that the Pakistan captain deserved the punishment for cheating and unfair play.

His comments irked his Pakistani counterpart Haroon Rasheed who said that it was very unfortunate that the Bangladesh manager made a comment on an ICC match referee verdict, which clearly he was not supposed to.

Pakistan captain Latif was handed a five-match one-day ban on Sunday for cheating in the third Test.

Batting coach for Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER from Faisalabad

Sri Lanka-born Australian batting coach Owen Mottau is expected to come in January to work with Bangladesh's bowlers. Bangladesh coach revealed this yesterday.

Whatmore suggested during the Test series in order for his bowlers to score more runs, they needed batting tips from experts.

Mottau is working as a batting coach of the Sri Lanka Cricket Academy.

Central contracts for English trio

CRICINFO, London

Eight players have been awarded central contracts by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) in a deal which could net each of them as much as 400,000 pounds over the next year. The days of top cricketers being the poor relations of international sports appear to be long gone.

For five of the eight -- Michael Vaughan, Nasser Hussain, Mark Butcher, Ashley Giles and Marcus Trescothick -- the contracts were just a renewal of the existing situation, but three -- James Anderson, Paul Collingwood and Andrew Flintoff -- receive one for the first time.

Given that the original purpose of central contracts was to try and protect players from the daily grind of county cricket and ensure that they are at their peak when playing for England, it is a little surprising that only two -- Flintoff and Anderson -- are fast bowlers. The only other bowler on the list is Giles, a selection which owes more to his role as a utility Test and ODI player than any outstanding performances over the last 12 months.

Aminul speaks

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

After a twenty-four hour disgraceful drama, country's premier custodian Aminul Haq finally appeared at Muktiyoddha Sangsad office at Eskaton Road last night triggering a lot of questions behind his vanishing act.

"I was a victim of the circumstances. But I can only say at the moment whatever I did I have done for the safety of my elder brother," said a visibly rattled Aminul while talking to reporters with the Muktiyoddha president Kabir Ahmed Khan proudly sitting beside him.

Aminul, who has been the hottest property in the local football over the last five seasons, disappeared on Wednesday afternoon leaving Muktiyoddha officials to declare a virtual war to recapture their prized possession. His brother Moin Haq was reportedly remained in Muktiyoddha's custody since Aminul was whisked away by some unknown people from Doyel Chatter of Dhaka University.

"How are you Bhaia," was the first thing Aminul uttered after he entered the Muktiyoddha office with coach Shafiqul Islam Manik. The tall custodian, who was instrumental in Muktiyoddha's National Football

League triumph earlier this month, explained his disappearing act in front of an excited audience.

"A group comprising five or six young men caught me from Doyel Chatter when my brother and I were on way to Nawabpur to supervise house repairs. Those youths took me straight to the Abahani club office and I had to stay there until 11pm. Then they pushed me into a car and drove to a place I could not recognise because it was dark. When I woke up in the morning I realised that I had been confined at a house in Iqbal Road, Mohammadpur. At around 4pm I decided that I would make my escape and so I jumped from the first floor and ran straight to Hasan-al Mamun's house at Balur Ghat in Cantonment area. From there I went to Muktiyoddha club in Gulistan," Aminul said while narrating his mysterious disappearance episode.

Replying to a query whether his abductors had harmed him in any way Aminul replied in the negative. He even disclosed during the whole time he spent at Mohammadpur there were no guards around him.

"Everybody showed their respect during the period," he said without specifying.

He also denied disclosing the names of his abductors. He also refused to make any comment on whether he would take any legal action against the kidnappers.

"I think you are all intelligent enough to understand what really happened. I can only say this much at the moment," said Aminul brother.

"Definitely, I am a Muktiyoddha player," Aminul said replying in another question. He however said that the incident would not hamper his career.

Muktiyoddha Sangsad president Kabir, who finally emerged the winner after the kidnap drama, said that his club only acted at the request of Aminul's elder brother.

"Aminul is our player. We paid him in advance two months ago, so it was our duty to do everything to ensure his safety."

The Muktiyoddha boss also denied allegations that the club was involved in the police raid at rival camp Abahani.

"Aminul's brother filed the case that's why the police raided the Abahani premises. It was not illegal," said the all smiling Kabir.

Muktiyoddha manager Abdus Sattar however denied that he was present during the late-night police operation at the Abahani club in Dhanmondi.

The country's number one goalkeeper did admit receiving a cheque for Taka nine lakh from Abahani.

"They gave me a cheque worth nine lakh taka on Wednesday night which I will return."

Friendship tennis, squash Sept 18

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The S Alam Friendship Tennis and Squash Tournament will begin at the Chittagong Club's tennis complex on September 18.

In ten tennis and four squash players of Army, Navy, Air Force and hosts Chittagong Club will compete in the two-week tournament.

Chief coordinator and tournament director MM Rahman briefed journalists yesterday about the tournament. He said the budget for the tournament was Taka six lakh.

U-19 booters go down

SPORTS REPORTER

The visiting Bangladesh Under-19 team got off to a poor start in the JRD Tata Cup Football Championship when they suffered a 1-2 defeat to Tata Football Academy at Jamshedpur, India yesterday.

Anwar reduced the margin for the visitors.

Bangladesh play India B in their second match against tomorrow.

ECB to tempt Fletcher

AFP, London

England cricket bosses will hold talks with coach Duncan Fletcher about extending his current contract before he sets off on the tour of Bangladesh next month.

England and Wales Cricket Board's (ECB) chief executive Tim Lamb said Tuesday he is planning a meeting with Fletcher as soon as possible to get him to extend his deal beyond September 2004.

"He hasn't given us any indication in the past that he is not willing to continue but we need to speak to him to determine what he wants," said Lamb.

"We would like to sort this out before the start of England's tour."

"But if not I will be in Dhaka for the first Test against Bangladesh if we need to dot the i's or cross the t's on anything."

There had been increased speculation that after four years in charge, Fletcher would have been ready to return to coach at domestic level, after making his name when taking Glamorgan to the championship in 1997.

But Fletcher said he was ready to talk about staying on.

"It's up to the England and Wales Cricket Board," he said.

"There's probably only been two sentences passed between us when they've turned around and asked what I wanted to do."

"I feel confident in the side that's here and what I've got to offer."

"There's a lot of work to be done and I can contribute to helping those cricketers in that side."



PHOTO: AFP

THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT: Bangladesh skipper Khaled Mahmud drives in the nets while watched by coach Dav Whatmore at the Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad yesterday. Bangladesh play Pakistan in the second one-day international today.

Gough feels hurt

Cricket

AFP, London

Fast bowler Darren Gough said he was an "easy target" after being omitted Wednesday from England's one-day squad to tour Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

"I'm bitterly disappointed. They've picked that many bowlers this summer they had to fit them in somewhere so they've shared them out and I was the easy target to miss out," Yorkshire's Gough told Sky Sports.

Gough, 32, was a mainstay of England's home one-day successes against Pakistan and in the following triangular tournament with South Africa and Zimbabwe earlier this season.

In all he took 14 wickets at 22.42 having missed most of the previous two years of international cricket with a knee injury.

Later in the season he retired from Test cricket but insisted he was still fit enough for one-day internationals where bowlers are restricted to a maximum of 10 overs-per-match.

In his last limited-overs international appearance, against South Africa in July, Gough was named man-of-the-match after taking two wickets for nine runs in seven overs during England's triangular series

final win at Lord's.

"In one-day cricket in the last game I was man-of-the-match and I think a lot of people expected me to be still in the one-day squad because I'm still a good one-day bowler," added Gough who in 121 limited-overs internationals has taken 188 wickets at 24.96.

"I expected to be picked," admit-



DARREN GOUGH

ted Gough who did not sound convinced by the telephone call he had received from England's chairman of selectors, David Graveney.

"He told me I'm not out of the West Indies (where England play seven one-day internationals in April and