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## Ctg Abahani want to surprise

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Abahani look forward to bury their wretched performance in the inaugural B. League and make an impression in the second edition which is scheduled to start after the monsoon.

The port city outfit, who finished a frustrating tenth among 11 teams last year, eye a place among the top four by giving a surprise like the inaugural National Football League where they had finished third.

"We have signed 20 players and I believe we have a mix of experience and youth that will make us a fighting team. We want to fight against all the big names," said club official Shamsul Haque Chowdhury yesterday.

The club submitted transfer documents of 20 footballers to the B. League authority in Dhaka yesterday. The list includes two Nepalese internationals -- striker Santosh Sahukal and goalkeeper Kiran Kumar -- who put on a decent show last year. The other foreign recruits Liberia's Aka Olembe.

Dhaka Abahani fullback Jahangir Alam Mintu will lead the side who have retained six of their last season's players in Sohel (vice-captain), Monir, Mintu, Farid, Jahangir and Towhid.

Their latest catches are promising Victoria striker Mithun Chowdhury, Najir (Dhaka Mohammedan), Emon (Rahmatganj), Rony (Fakirpool), Jibon (Victoria) and Dipu and Zahed from port city rivals Mohammedan.

Shamsul Haque informed that the club will start camp on July 1 at the Sagarika sea beach under a trio of coaches, Mohammed Kasem, Mohammed Ali and Khalilur Rahman.

"We will play a tournament in Sikkim and also expected to visit Nepal for another event. I hope these two tournaments in addition to the Federation Cup after a one and half months training would provide us a good preparation for the professional league," he said.



## Did U Know?

The Henri Delaunay Trophy, which is awarded to the winner of the Euro Football Championship, is named in honour of Henri Delaunay, the first general secretary of UEFA, who came up with the idea of a European Championship but died five years prior to the first tournament in 1960.



**What to Watch**  
**ESPN**  
Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm  
Euro 2008  
France v Italy  
Live from 12:45am (Wednesday)  
**STAR Sports**  
Euro 2008  
Netherlands v Romania  
Live from 12:45am (Wednesday)



**Shoaib Akhtar**  
(Pakistan speed star)  
"How many diamonds can you retrieve from one single mine; there has to be an end somewhere. I don't see any natural fast bowler (in Pakistan) after me."

# Ballack leads Germany

AFP, Vienna



Co-hosts Austria toiled and probed but Germany's class told in a 1-0 Euro 2008 Group B victory here on Monday that put the European powerhouses into the quarterfinals.

Captain Michael Ballack's scorching second-half freekick separated the two sides to set a quarterfinal meeting for three-times champions Germany, who finished runners-up behind Croatia, with Portugal.

Austria needed to win to keep their participation alive but while they produced an energetic performance, they never showed the quality needed to beat their favoured opponents, although on their last two showings few teams will fear Germany.

In an intriguing contest both Austria coach Josef Hickersberger and his German counterpart Joachim Loew were comically sent off following a furious row with the fourth official.

Germany came flying out of the traps as Austria began somewhat nervously and after four minutes haphazard defending allowed

Germany a three-on-one but Lukas Podolski dallied on the ball and the Austria defence got back to clear.

A minute later, though, and Germany striker Mario Gomez was guilty of a shocking miss, spooning a shot from three yards out off his shin and high into the air before Gorgy Garics got back to head it off the line.

Germany were all over Austria in those early moments and Gomez got clear down the left before shooting straight at Jurgen Macho in Austria's goal.

The co-hosts gradually settled and a mixture of bad luck and worse control prevented them from taking the lead.

On 18 minutes Christoph Metzelder was lucky to get away without conceding a penalty after dragging down Erwin Hoffer in the box.

A minute later and Hoffer was put clean through by Martin Harnik but an appalling first touch

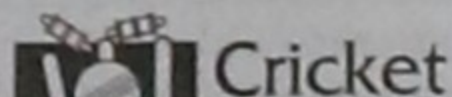
GROUP B TABLE									
(Played, won, drawn, lost, for, against, points)									
Croatia	3	3	0	0	4	1	9		
Germany	3	2	0	1	4	2	6		
Austria	3	0	1	2	1	3	1		
Poland	3	0	1	2	1	4	1		

SEE PAGE 18 COL 3



German defender Arne Friedrich celebrates skipper Michael Ballack's (L) stunning goal from a freekick against Austria during their Euro 2008 Group B match at the Ernst Happel Stadium in Vienna on Monday.

# Ash turns another stone



SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Ashraf will leave no stone unturned to become a consistent performer in international cricket.

The Bangladesh captain's focus is on how he would manage to stay in the wicket as much as possible. And to achieve the target he has been trying to take assistance from all corners.

In addition to the 'team rules' and 'process' the right-hander himself completed a four-day meditation programme yesterday. And that was the reason he did not turn out at the Tigers' first practice session for the coming Asia Cup to begin in the last week of this month in Pakistan.

Pacer Shahadat Hossain could not attend the first-day's session

after losing his grandmother yesterday.

"This idea came from my elder brother and he has encouraged me to attend a four-day meditation programme conducted by Shahid Al Bukhari. I had almost ten hours sessions everyday," informed Ashraf.

"It may help me to concentrate more on my batting. Actually I have to wait till the next one or two assignments to see how it works. The Indian players regularly follow it and I hope it will also work for me. No doubt I have to work hard in practice and in the field but this kind of activities may also help," he added.

And the Tigers skipper will encourage his colleagues if he benefited from this.

It has already been proved that anything can happen in favour of the Tigers if the right-hander's bat speaks. But the problem is that nobody knows when he would

make a day memorable for Bangladesh because his 24.64 average in 42 Tests and 22.84 in 120 one-day internationals hardly reflect the potential.

Many eyebrows were raised after watching his recent batting approach -- 56 not out against Pakistan and 36 against India -- in the just concluded Kiply Cup but Ashraf found nothing wrong in his batting.

"I am really concerned about my inconsistency and I have to find a way to improve my average. I restricted my shots during the tri-series and scored a few runs. I think we are in the right direction under our new coach (Jamie Siddons) and we just need time to get the result," explained Ashraf.

"What's wrong if this process makes me a better batsman than what I am now? One can't claim himself as a good batsman with

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



Bangladesh cricket team's new South African trainer Grant Trafford Luden (R) attends Alok Kapali during the Tigers' first day's training as part of their preparation for the Asia Cup, which starts in Pakistan on June 24.

## Akhtar to appeal his ban again

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar will appeal again for a further reduction to his ban for indiscipline, his lawyer said on Monday.

Shoaib, 32, had his five-year ban reduced to 18 months by a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) appeals tribunal on Saturday.

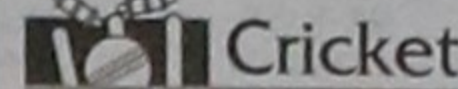
"We feel the tribunal's decision is still harsh and minimizes Shoaib's chances of playing for Pakistan again. He is very keen to resume his career as soon as possible," said Abid Hasan Mintu, legal counsel for Akhtar.

"But where we will file the appeal -- in the high court or the tribunal itself -- will only be known once we go through the full judgement copy of the tribunal."

Shoaib, who has played 46 Tests and 138 one-day internationals, was banned for five years by the PCB in April for several incidents of indiscipline and violating the conditions of a two-year probation.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

## Mashud, Javed out



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) excluded Khaled Mashud and Javed Omar along with four other players from its six-month players' contract.

In its executive meeting yesterday, BCB decided not to extend the contract, which expired on May 30, of Mashud, Javed, Tushar Imran, Enamul Haque, Rajin Saleh and Nazmul Hossain.

A number of issues were including the long-term agreement with Nimbus were also discussed in the meeting.

The contracts of Tamim Iqbal, Shahriar Nafees, Forhad Reza and Mehrab Hossain, however, have been extended up to November 30.

The board also brought some new faces in the rookie contract as they approved inclusions of Nazimuddin, Rokibul Hasan, Dhiman Ghosh, Mosharraf Hossain and Sajedul Islam in addition to Mahmudullah Riyad and Zunaed Siddiqui.

Meanwhile, left-handed opener

Zunaed has been named captain of Bangladesh A team's tour of Ireland and England starting this month while Naem Islam was named his deputy.

Former Bangladesh batsman Selim Shaheed has been named manager while Oman Khan head coach for the trip. Former Bangladesh skipper Minhajul Abedin will tour as assistant coach.

Grant Trafford Luden has been appointed national team's strength and conditioning coach. The 32-year-old South African had been the head coach and manager of the cricket team of Thane University of Technology, South Africa before joining the BCB.

"The point regarding the long-term agreement with Nimbus was also discussed in the meeting. There were two teams to discuss with Nimbus about some specific issues and they had a prolonged discussion with them. The outcome looks encouraging," informed Ahmed Sajjadul Alam, BCB's media committee chairman.

"We are hopeful to reach in a stage within few weeks time," he added.

# Full marks for Croatia

AFP, Klagenfurt



only goal in Croatia's 1-0 win over Poland in their Euro 2008 Group B match here on Monday.

Victory ensured that Croatia finished with a perfect nine points in the group and set them fair for their quarterfinal with Turkey in Vienna on Friday -- for the Poles -- who co-host the next finals with Ukraine -- it means they leave for home with a just a point.

It also leaves their veteran Dutch coach Leo Beenhakker without a win at a European Championships

or World Cup finals.

Poland pressed early on desperately in search of an early goal to give them some hope, but it was the Croats who had the better and sharper chances.

First to rattle the cage of the nervous Poles was Danijel Pranjić, who was put clear on the left but his curling effort drifted wide of Polish keeper Artur Boruc's far post.

The Croats then went even closer in the 19th minute as Ivan Rakitic once again showed how dangerous a crosser of the ball he is -- his deflected cross against the Germans had led to Jens Lehmann fumbling the ball and gifting the Croats a goal -- as his freekick was met by central defender Hrvoje Vojcic, though his header went narrowly past the post.

Croat coach Slaven Bilic had to make a change 25 minutes into the encounter as he was forced to take off the injured Dario Knezevic and

replace him with Manchester City's Vedran Corluka.

Croatia did not let up at all as Klasnic -- also the first player to appear at a major finals having had a kidney transplant -- was released. But with only Boruc to beat, he found like many before him that the Celtic goalkeeper was equal to the task.

Boruc must have seen his value in the market rise enormously here during the tournament and yet again he was Poland's saviour with 10 minutes remaining from the break he once again got down to deny the Croats, this time Pranjić.

Poland were not helping their cause by giving the ball away and Jerko Leko was just wide with a long range low effort from outside the penalty box after the ball was lazily given to him by Polish midfielder Mariusz Lewandowski.

Boruc might as well not have had

a defence as in time added on in the first-half Klasnic turned his marker and zeroed into the box but his shot was blocked by the Polish goalkeeper and Rakitic was unable to keep his follow-up down.

However, Boruc was like former English King Canute unable to keep the waves off permanently and Klasnic was too justifiably and emotionally slot home brilliantly from the left side of the box after the outstanding Pranjić pulled the ball back for him.

That seemed to spark some life from the Poles as first Marek Saganowski -- himself no stranger to health problems as he was told he would never walk again after a serious motorcycle accident in the 1990's -- had a firm header well saved by Vedran Runje and then Brazilian-born striker Roger Guerreiro turned brilliantly but saw his shot go wide of the post.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 3

## BFF seeks govt help

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has urged the government to take initiative to start football countrywide after the rainy season.

The BFF executive body, led by president Kazi Salahuddin, made the appeal to Mahbub Jamil, special assistant to the Chief Adviser who is also in charge of the sports ministry yesterday.

In a meeting at the sports ministry, the BFF officials asked Jamil to bring the newly formed district and divisional FAs (Football Association) active in a bid to start the district leagues and competitions in the divisions.

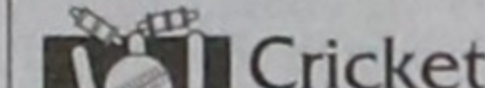
"It was a courtesy call but we discussed a lot about football and its condition in the country," informed Salahuddin after the meeting. "We have also told him how much we need sponsors to run the show and he has promised top help us in this regard."

BFF vice-president Badal Roy, who returned from Colombo Sunday night after the conclusion of the fifth SAFF Championship, told that Jamil has agreed to talk with government administrators in districts and divisions to activate the FAs.

"There had been hitches between the FAs and the district sports associations when the FAs were formed. We want the administration to hold the FAs and also prepare the grounds so that we can start competitions after the rainy season," said Badal.

Badal told that they have also informed the CA's special assistant about a huge amount of unused fund (Tk 300 crore) at the Education Ministry for sports purpose. "The education and sports ministries had signed an MoU during the last government. We wanted him to look into the matter and also take steps to make playing football compulsory at the schools."

# Aussies break Windies Clinch series 2-0



AFP, Bridgetown

Australia were made to fight all the way to the end, but they completed an 87-run victory in the third and final Test against West Indies on Monday.

West Indies, chasing 475 for victory, were dismissed for 387 in their second innings about 25 minutes before the tea break on the

fifth and final day of the Test at Kensington Oval.

Brett Lee formalised the result, when he had Daren Powell touch a short, rising ball to wicketkeeper Brad Haddin.

Australia win the three-Test series 2-0, after they also won the opening Test at Sabina Park in the Jamaica capital of Kingston by 95 runs.

The second Test at the Vivian Richards Cricket Ground in the Antigua village of North Sound was drawn.



Australian paceman Stuart Clark (L) celebrates after dismissing West Indies batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul on the last day of the third and final Test at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown on Monday.

The Aussies have already retained the Frank Worrell Trophy -- symbol of Test supremacy between the two sides.

The match was over as a genuine contest once Beau Casson and Stuart Clark swung the match Australia's way with two vital wickets before lunch.

Casson removed Dwayne Bravo for 69, and Clark got Shivnarine Chanderpaul for 50, as West Indies reached 316 for five in their second innings at the interval.

For just over 90 minutes, Australia had been kept at bay by Chanderpaul and Bravo, after West Indies continued from their bedtime total of 235 for three. The day started shakily for the Aussies, when Chanderpaul edged the first delivery from Clark through the slip cordon for a boundary. Unfortunately for the Aussies, Chanderpaul and Bravo took this as a sign, and knuckled down to play circumspectly, and a few milestones fell by the way during this period.

First, Bravo stabbed a delivery from Casson into the square cover region for a single to reach his 50. Then Chanderpaul reached 8,000 Test runs, when he glanced a delivery from Brett Lee to deep fine leg for a single.

Chanderpaul then tugged a full toss from Casson to mid-on for a single in the following over to reach his 50.

The Aussie bowlers would also suffer some punishment along the way, and an intriguing battle surfaced between Casson and Bravo which saw the young left-arm wrist spinner being carted three times over long-off for sixes.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4