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## IOC confirms Iraq ban

AFP, Baghdad

The International Olympic Committee has confirmed a ban on Iraq from competing in the Beijing Games in a major blow to seven Iraqi athletes who had hoped to travel to China this August, an IOC letter said.

In the letter dated July 23 and addressed to the Iraqi Minister of Youth and Sports Jassim Mohammed Jafer, the IOC said it was moving ahead with a ban first imposed on Iraq's athletes last month.

In spite of all the joint efforts of IOC and OCA (Olympic Council of Asia), over the last months to find a positive solution with the Iraqi government authorities, we regretfully inform you that the decision of the IOC executive board dated 4 June 2008 to suspend the National Olympic Committee of Iraq is confirmed," said the letter, a copy of which was obtained by AFP on Thursday.

"We deeply regret this outcome which severely harms the Iraqi Olympic and Sports Movement and the Iraqi athletes but which is unfortunately imposed by the circumstances."

The IOC suspended Iraq for "political interference" in its national Olympic committee which was sacked last month and replaced by a new panel headed by Jaafar.

The IOC had warned of sanctions after Iraq disbanded its Olympic committee and other sports bodies on May 21, 2008.

After the initial suspension it was believed that up to seven Iraqi athletes would still participate in the Games beginning on August 8.

However the IOC made clear in Thursday's letter that the chance for Iraqi athletes to compete under the Olympic flag in lieu of the national flag was over.

"The quota places obtained through the qualification systems and the invitation places offered by the Tripartite Commission to Iraqi athletes have been withdrawn and re-allocated to other NCOs," the letters said.



## Did U Know?

The slogan for the 2008 Beijing Olympics is 'One World, One Dream'.



## Niranjan Shah

(BCCI secretary)  
"Our Indian team had taken part in the Asia Cup without any incident. Besides, the report of the International Cricket Council's security consultants, which was presented during the briefing in Dubai (on Sunday last) was positive. So the Board of Control for Cricket in India sees no harm in Pakistan hosting the tournament." While supporting Pakistan as the venue of the Champions Trophy.



## TEN Sports

Sri Lanka v India  
First Test, Day Three  
Live from 10.45am



PHOTO: AFP

**FLYING SAUCER?** A bird's eye view shows the Beijing University of Technology Gymnasium which will host badminton and rhythmic gymnastics for the Olympics next month.

## Mahela touches The Don

### Triple ton gives Lanka pile of runs

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Mahela Jayawardene equalled former Australian legend Don Bradman's record of nine centuries at one venue to put Sri Lanka in a commanding position in the opening Test against India here on Thursday.

Skipper Jayawardene cracked a stylish 136 to help his side post 422-4 in the first innings at stumps on the second day.

The Sri Lankan captain's ton at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground equalled Bradman's nine at one venue -- the Australian great's coming at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

But Jayawardene was not the lone batsman to feast on the Indian bowling on a placid track as opener Malinda Warnapura (115) and Thilan Samaraweera (111 not out) also contributed handsomely to their team's total.

Tillakaratne Dilshan was unbeaten on 20 after earning a reprieve under a new experimental rule allowing players to seek a second opinion on umpiring decisions.

He was on one when given out caught behind off left-arm fast bowler Zaheer Khan by umpire Mark Benson of England, but asked the official to review the decision.

Benson consulted TV umpire Rudi Koertzen of South Africa before changing his decision as the ball had not made contact with the bat.

Jayawardene earlier added 155 for the third wicket with Warnapura and 148 for the next with Samaraweera to put his team on course for a big total. He hit one six and 10 fours in his 23rd hundred in 96 Tests.

Left-hander Warnapura, 50 overnight, smashed 14 fours in his second Test century in five matches.

India's seamers and spinners failed to put pressure on Jayawardene, Warnapura and Samaraweera, who were quick to punish errors in line and length during their knocks.

The visitors took just two wickets in the day after the hosts resumed at 85-2, with off-spinner Harbhajan Singh and fast bowler Ishant Sharma the successful

bowlers. Harbhajan struck in the afternoon when he had Warnapura caught by former captain Rahul Dravid in the slips, but before the batsman had strengthened the team's position.

There was no respite for India as Samaraweera also gathered runs comfortably against the Indian

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PHOTO: AFP

**LEADING LIKE A CAPTAIN:** Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene raises his bat on reaching his century against India on the second day of the first Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground yesterday.

## TEAM FOCUS: ABAHANI

# Looking for more



AL MUSABBIR SADI

Abahani will look beyond their last year's success in the coming season as they feel they are better tuned for competitions than their rivals.

The sky-blues won the inaugural B. League -- the only tournament held in 2007 -- and are the only team that enjoyed more action having played a number of tournaments.

Apart from winning an invitational tournament at home earlier this year, they participated in two foreign tournaments, the Bordoloi Trophy in Assam and the AFC President's Cup in Malaysia,

although results were not noteworthy.

"We are prepared for the Federation Cup as the players have gained match fitness. Their strength and running looked good to me in the practice matches we have played recently," coach Amalesh Sen told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We want to play three or four more warm-up matches if the weather does not bother like the game in Sylhet two days earlier, where the ground was unplayable due to heavy rain," said the Abahani veteran.

Although training camp for long time hands Abahani the advantage, it has taken its toll too. Attacking midfielder Abul and Ghanaian striker Ibrahim have been nursing pains while centre-back Sujan, who missed an entire season due to injury, has been struck by a fresh

one. "The three will start full training from next week and I hope they would be able to play in the tournament," said the former Bangladesh international midfielder.

"I am confident about our chances to win more trophies this season because we have managed to retain almost the same team from last year and I don't have to work much on combination."

"Also we played very well in the President's Cup but sheer bad luck saw us losing the opener badly and miss the semifinals."

The Bangladesh professional league champions crashed 4-0 to Nepal's Police Club, gave up a lead to go down 2-1 to eventual group champions Regar-TadAZ of Tajikistan before beating Pakistan WAPDA by a solitary goal.

"Against Nepal, we conceded goals due to silly mistakes by the

## BHF draft voter list published

UNB, Dhaka

The election commission of Bangladesh Hockey Federation published a 73-member draft voter list yesterday for the executive committee polls.

The list, however, did not contain names of the five voters to be nominated later by the National Sports Council.

An NSC source said that the five nominees would be finalised on August 5.

The objections on the draft voter list will be received on July 30-31, while hearing on objections will be held August 3. The final voter list will be published on August 5.

## BDR win opener

SPORTS REPORTER

Sudhan scored nine goals and Khairuzzaman seven to steer Bangladesh Rifles to a comfortable 36-24 victory over Bangladesh Police in the opening match of the Design Zone 2nd Office handball League yesterday.

The winners led the first half 18-10 at the Outer Stadium handball ground.

Although Police lost, Pritee stole the limelight scoring a dozen goals for his team.

Mohammed Sanaul Haque, treasurer of Bangladesh Olympic Association, declared the meet open.

## Pioneer League

SPORTS REPORTER

A brace from Azizur Rahman Babu helped Golam Mostafa Lane Kishore Sangha come from behind to edge Jatrabari JS 3-2 in an exciting second phase match of the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League yesterday.

Mithun opened the account for Jatrabari but Babu struck either side of the half before Kayes sealed three points for the winners by the

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# A team snatch thriller

## Beat Derbyshire by one wicket

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Bangladesh A survived a fine comeback by Derbyshire's bowlers to record a thrilling one-wicket win on the final day of their three-day match at the County ground in Derby on Wednesday.

It was the first victory for the second-string Bangladesh side in the first-class fixture of their ongoing tour of Ireland and England after previous three games ended in draws.

Sajidul Islam, the Bangladesh No. 10, struck the winning run to squeeze his side over the line off the penultimate delivery.

A Bangladesh win seemed highly unlikely when Derbyshire declared shortly after midday on 176 for eight, setting the tourists a challenging target of 285.

However, Tamim Iqbal who scored just four in the first innings,

crashed 60 from 69 balls, lofting three sixes and hammering half-dozen fours in the process to give Bangladesh a terrific start. Iqbal and his captain, Zunaid Siddique (25), put on 84 for the opening wicket.

Derbyshire never gave up; in fact, momentum switched entirely to their favour when Greg Smith removed Nazimuddin (19) and Shakib Al Hasan (29) in quick succession. When Rokibul Hasan offered no stroke to Wayne White, Derbyshire were slight favourites needing another five wickets.

Like the home side, Bangladesh refused to give up hope even though they were struggling at 168-5, as Mushfiqur Rahim (36 off 57 balls) and Dhiman Ghosh (41 off 85 balls) put on another fifty partnership, while Musharraf Hossain clipped 31 from just 49 deliveries -- laced with four boundaries and a six -- to leave his side needing just 12.

But further drama ensued when Dhiman, Dollar Mahmud and Musharraf all departed in the space

of six runs leaving the tourists' tail needing five from the last over.

A three flicked off his legs by Sajidul calmed their nerves before he glided the winning run to seal a remarkable one-wicket win.

Bangladesh's next match, their last first-class game before three limited-overs internationals that round off the trip, is against the South Africans at New Road from today.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**DERBYSHIRE:** 298-6 declared (Sadler 50, Rogers 101, Musharraf 3-69) and 176-8 declared (Smith 52, Rogers 39 not out, Rubel 2-46, Shakib 3-49)

**BANGLADESH A:** 190 (Shakib 33, Rahim 50, Dean 6-46) and 285-9 in 76.5 overs (Tamim 60, Zunaid 25, Nazim 19, Shakib 29, Rokibul 12, Rahim 36, Dhiman 41, Musharraf 31, Dollar 4, Sajidul 5 not out, Rubel 1 not out, extras 22, White 1-45, Needham 3-53, Doshi 3-84, Smith 2-53)

# The deal comes official

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Citycell has asked the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) to hold at least 16 tournaments each year during their three-year contract, which was finalised yesterday.

The cellular phone operator, BFF's 'partner in progress', will provide Tk 16.5 crore for the next three years.

The two organisations had signed an MoU on July 15 but the deal was officially sealed at an agreement signing ceremony at the BFF Bhaban yesterday.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin and Citycell's CEO Michael Seymour signed the agreement on behalf of the two parties.

The BFF also received Tk one crore, the first instalment of the payment, and will get a further one crore before the start of the 2nd B. League. The rest of the money will arrive step by step based on need of the federation.

"We have settled the details and conditions of the deals after face to face discussions. Now everything has become official," told a relieved BFF chief Salahuddin.

Among the 16 programmes to be organised by the football's

governing body, Citycell will be title sponsors of three tournaments -- Federation Cup, B. league and School Championship -- and partner of the remaining.

"We have already presented 12 programmes of our yearly calendar and Citycell will provide us the

money phase by phase. The deal of Tk 5.5 crore per annum is final and we hope for the best possible use of the money," he said.

"Most of the money would be used for development work and our focus will be on the districts

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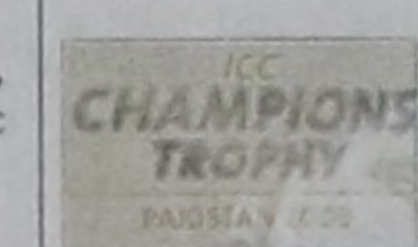


PHOTO: STAR

Citycell's CEO Michael Seymour (L) shakes hands with BFF president Kazi Salahuddin after an agreement signing ceremony at the BFF Bhaban yesterday.

# Pakistan it is

AFP, Lahore



The International Cricket Council (ICC) decided Thursday to keep September's Champions Trophy in troubled Pakistan but it will appoint a commission to ensure security, officials said.

The decision came after the ICC's executive board held a teleconference to discuss the possibility of moving the biennial tournament because of security fears raised by Australia, England and New Zealand.

"The Champions Trophy will stay in Pakistan and we thank all member countries for their kind support," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Naseem Ashraf

told a news conference.

"The ICC will be appointing a special task force to ensure that the implementation of the recommendations of the ICC-commissioned security report are indeed being met," Ashraf said.

The ICC confirmed the decision in a brief statement.

"The decision of the board is that the event remains in Pakistan," the ICC press release said, adding that further details would be released soon.

Ashraf said the security commission would comprise ICC president David Morgan, vice president Sharad Pawar, chief executive Haroon Logart, principal advisor Inderjeet Bindra and himself.

It would also feature a representative from the tournament's official broadcasters, ESPN-Star, and a mem-

ber of the Federation of International Cricketers Association, he said.

"Let me assure you that it was a correct decision by the ICC keeping in mind that there should be unity in cricket," he added.

The year's biggest one-day tournament, featuring the top eight one-day nations, is due to be held in Pakistan from September 11 to 28, with Australia as the defending champions.

Pakistan's fate as tournament host was left hanging in the balance on Sunday after a security briefing in Dubai featuring all participating nations decided to wait for a teleconference of the ICC executive board.

Players from Australia, England and New Zealand had raised security concerns with Australian

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PHOTO: STAR

Abahani coach Amalesh Sen (R) watches his charges warm up before their yesterday's training session at the club ground in Dhanmondi.

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