

## 23 sign for Muktiyoddha

SPORTS REPORTER

Last season's professional football league runners-up Muktiyoddha Sangsad formed a mediocre squad as the freedom fighters' side completed their registration formalities by signing up 23 players at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday.

Muktiyoddha Sangsad were forced into forming a mediocre side after most of their last season's star players like Zahid Hasan Emily, Mithun Chowdhury, Mamunul Islam, Ariful Islam, Shakil Ahmed, Rezaul Karim, Mustakur Rahman and Maruf Ahmmed left to join the big-budgeted Sheikh Russel and Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club.

Zahid Parvez Chowdhury, Mohammad Yusuf, Faisal Mahmud, Ziaur Rahman and Rokonzaman were the only remarkable signings this season for the All Red outfit. Mukti had formed star-studded teams in the past but they have had to be content with two runners-up trophies of Bangladesh Premier League in a row.

"We will say it is not a bad squad which is comprised of young players and we hope to do better at our home ground in Gopalganj," said coach Shafiqul Islam Manik during the players' transfer formalities.

**Squad:** Zahed Parvez Chowdhury, Prodig Barua, Shahed Azam, Jahirul Islam, Mohammad Biplob, Jewel Rana, Mohammad Yusuf, Faisal Mahmud, Ziaur Rahman, Akramuzzaman, Rokonzaman, Azmal Hossain Biddut, Mohammad Rony, Shihab, Aminur Rahman Shohag, Sohel, Mohammad Ali, Rashed Mahmud Liton, Shaymal Ahmed Rony, Mostafizur Rahman Saikat, Tanmoy Hossain Taru, Didarul Haque and Paul Emmanuel Damy.

## Driven by

FROM PAGE 16

and we also got some extra runs which helped us lot. I was starved for strike initially but I didn't panic and all of our batsmen just used a bit of power to get all the boundaries," he added.

Gayle however also gave credit to their bowlers. "Australia also has some good players who can change the game but the early wickets helped us to earn this comfortable victory."

It was a battle between Gayle and Shane Watson but the Australian all-rounder did not find his feet at any point. Instead, Australia's only solace was captain George Bailey's 63 off 29 balls that contained four sixes and six fours.

"We were absolutely outplayed. Gayle was subdued for a while but while he's at the crease he's always in your mind. But we set ourselves to get to the semi-finals and I don't think there's one area specifically where we can improve on. But from tonight you can probably say all three!" said Bailey.

"We did what we had to do, everybody turned up. Chris and Marlon [Samuels] set it up for us and then the bowling turned up too. If you look at the quality in the dressing room, if we go out on the field and execute we can beat any team," Darren Sammy said with a smile.

In the afternoon there had been a forlorn story for the West Indian fans as their women's team lost to Australia in the semifinal but Darren Sammy's men took adequate revenge.

## Akmal fined

FROM PAGE 16

Umar finished the game at the Premadasa stadium unbeaten on 29 as his team failed to chase down a 140-run victory target.

Sri Lanka will face either Australia or West Indies in Sunday's final.

## A team outplay

FROM PAGE 16

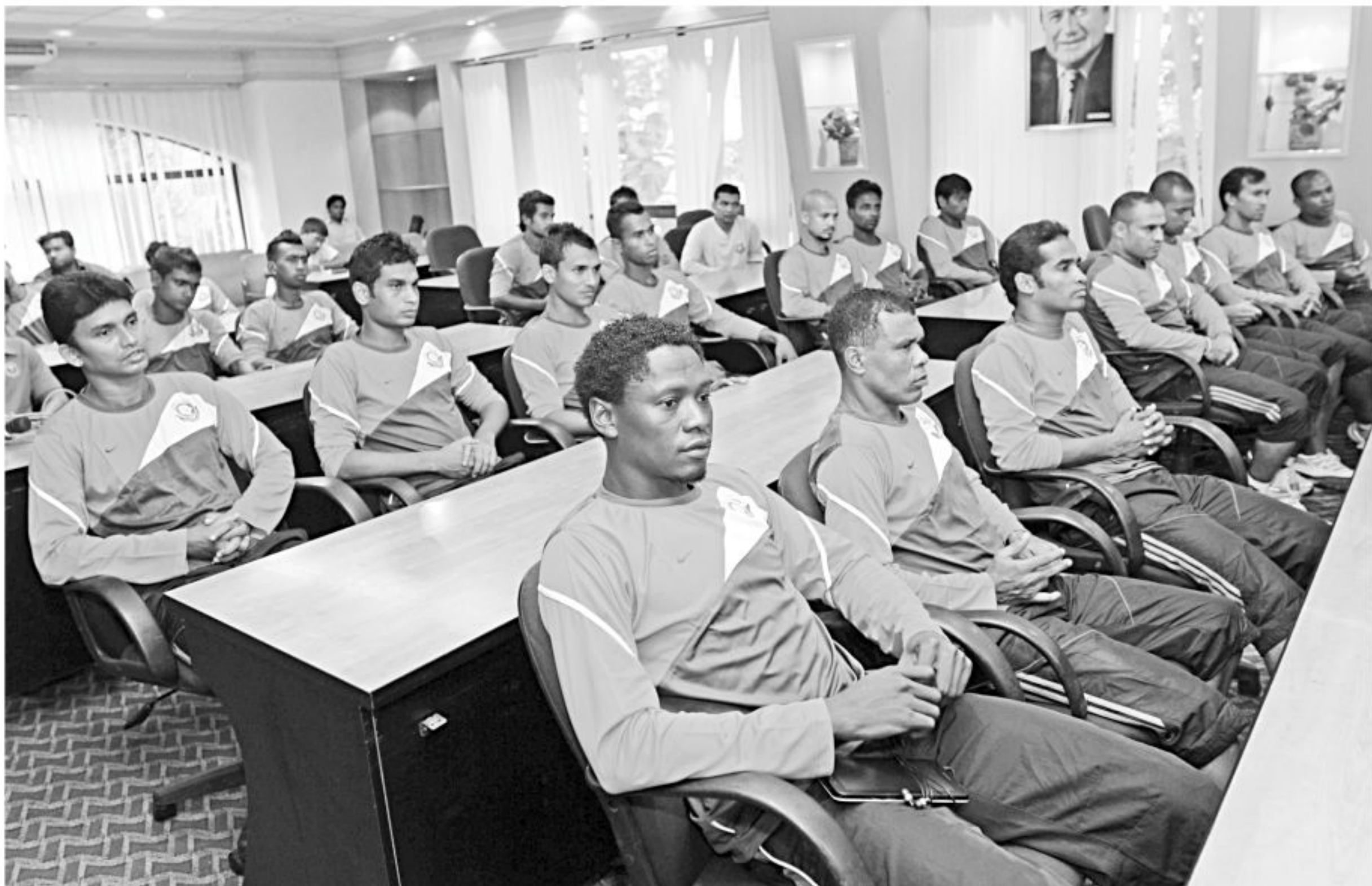
Nazmul Apu received the man of the match award for his bowling figures of 3 for 19 in 4 overs.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**WEST INDIES HP:** 105 all out in 19.4 overs (Kyle Hope 30, Kjohn Ottley 20; Nazmul 3-19, Enamul 3-27)

**BANGLADESH A:** 106 for 6 in 19.4 overs (Shamsur Rahman 29, Ziaur Rahman 20; Jason 2-20)

**Result:** Bangladesh A won by 4 wickets



Muktiyoddha Sangsad's 23 new recruits sit before completing their registration at the Bangladesh Football Federation House yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Pakistan sad at T20 exit

AFP, Karachi

Former players spoke for millions of disappointed fans Friday after Pakistan crashed out of the World Twenty20 semifinals, blaming defeat on poor planning and lacklustre batting.

Pakistan lost to hosts Sri Lanka by 16 runs in the first semifinal Thursday, having failed to beat a modest 140-run target.

"Our openers looked in a panic," former captain Asif Iqbal told AFP.

"The target was not easy on a slow turning pitch, but had the planning been there it could have been chased, but batsmen did not try to stay at the wicket."

Left-arm spinner Rangana Herath (3-25) and Ajantha Mendis (2-27) derailed Pakistan, who were eventually restricted to 123-7 in 20 overs.

Other former Pakistani stars blamed poor selection for the batting collapse.

"We should have played Asad Shafiq. He is our most composed and technically sound player and he should have been in the team," said former captain Aamir Sohail.

Former leg-spinner Abdul Qadir said veteran all-rounder Abdul Razzaq should not have been dropped. He was replaced by paceman Sohail Tanveer.

# Death-threats & Djokovic

## Tennis

AFP, Shanghai

Roger Federer will have to shrug off a bizarre death threat as he returns to action at the Shanghai Masters from Sunday to combat Novak Djokovic's attempt on his world number one crown.

Security precautions are in place for the Swiss player and his family in the teeming Chinese city, after a unknown blogger made the outlandish threat to "assassinate" the 17-time Grand Slam champion.

"On October 6, I plan to assassinate Federer for the purpose of tennis extermination," read the message, posted under the name 'Blue Cat Polytheistic Religion Founder 07' on baidu.com.

The user also posted a doctored image showing a decapitated Federer on his knees on a tennis court, with an axe-wielding executioner posing next to him.

While the credibility of the threat was unknown, organisers were taking no chances.

"We are fully aware of the comments that have been made and we take all such issues seriously," a tournament official told AFP.

The incident has provided an unwelcome distraction ahead of the Shanghai Masters, where Federer and Djokovic will take centre-stage along with Britain's defending champion Andy Murray, fresh from his US Open success.

## Plain sailing for big guns

FROM PAGE 16

Bangladesh international Zahid was also not far behind and impressed after earning a spot kick. Zahid was brought down by Police defender Ashraful inside the box and Emily sent the goalkeeper the wrong way to put Sheikh Russel ahead in the tenth minute. Sony doubled the lead with a powerful shot from outside of the box two minutes from the break.

Zahid, the former Abahani winger, made it 3-0 in the 62nd minute with a brilliant over-head flick before defender Linkon collected a low-cross from Sony to widen the margin in the 76th minute. Substitute striker Anwar Hossain sealed the match scoring the fifth goal two minutes from time.

Back to the first match at the BNS, Mohammedan, who last season failed to qualify for the Federation Cup semifinals, got off to a

flying start, riding on tournament's second hattrick by Olekan after Jessore DFA's Ekadosh's Titu had slotted the first hattrick in the qualifying round.

Olekan last season joined the Black and Whites in the middle of the professional football league to help them finish third in the league and the Benin man managed to enter Bangladesh due to his dual citizenship of France and marked his start with a treble.

He put Mohammedan ahead in the very sixth with a close-range header before doubling the lead in the 41st minute with a flick and completed his hattrick with a tap-in from close range in the 45th minute.

Substitute striker Mohammad Robin, who returned the Black & Whites from archrivals Abahani, sealed the match in the 85st minute to leave the field with heads held high.

## WOMEN'S WORLD T20 Aussies to face Eng in final

AFP, Colombo

Defending champions Australia will face England in the women's World Twenty20 final after cruising past the West Indies by 28 runs on Friday.

Seamer Julie Hunter claimed 5-22 as Australia, restricted to 115-7 after electing to bat, shot the West Indies out for 87 in the semifinal at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo.

Lisa Shalekar marked her 50th T20 international with a top score of 23 and then conceded just six runs in her four overs to help Hunter fashion Australia's emphatic win.

Australia take on main rivals England in Sunday's final looking to avenge a seven-wicket defeat during the league phase in Galle.

Australia began the match on the wrong foot when Alyssa Healy was dismissed off the second ball and Jess Cameron fell in the third over, both wickets going to left-arm spinner Shanel Daley.

Shalekar was supported in the recovery by Alex Blackwell (21), while Fields boosted the total with an unbeaten 19.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**AUSTRALIA:** 115-7 in 20 overs (Lisa 23, Alex 21, Jodie 19 not out, Shanel 2-23, Shaquana 2-23)

**WEST INDIES:** 87 all out in 19.2 overs (Shanel 25, Juliana 31, Hunter 5-22)

**Result:** Australia won by 28 runs.

## Retirement

FROM PAGE 16

said last month it was time for him to hang up his bat after he made a series of low scores against New Zealand in a home Test series.

Tendulkar has scored a record 51 Test centuries but he has now gone 25 innings without a hundred in the five-day format since making 146 against South Africa in Cape Town in January, 2011.

England are to play four Tests against India in November and December and Tendulkar made clear he expected to be playing.

"I need not take a (retirement) call right now. When I play in November, I will reassess things," he said.

Questioned about suggestions from a number of former players that his reflexes had slowed, Tendulkar insisted that only he could determine whether he was still up to playing at the highest level.

"I am still the best judge of what happens to my mind and body. When I feel it is time, I will take a call," he said.

"It is going to be a tough call nevertheless. It is going to be tough because this is what I have been doing all my life. It is going to be difficult to suddenly hang (up) my boots one day."

## Farah again

FROM PAGE 16

Six weeks later, he captivated the 80,000 capacity crowd in the Olympic Stadium with two wins executed in spectacular fashion with blistering finishes over the last lap to become the first Briton to win Olympic titles in long distance running events.

## Wasim points at pitch

AGENCIES, Karachi



ICC WORLD TWENTY20 SRI LANKA 2012

Former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram has lashed out at the authorities for preparing an unsporting track for the ICC World Twenty20 semifinal between Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo.

Wasim, who is in Colombo as a commentator and expert, described the pitch on which Sri Lanka defeated Pakistan by 16 runs last night in a low scoring game as "impossible pitch to bat on".

"I should say that this pitch certainly was not in the spirit of the game. It was an impossible pitch to bat on and I am surprised they had such a surface for such a big match," Akram told Geo News channel.

The former left-arm pacer said the dry and turning pitch was a test for the batsmen and he always knew that even chasing 140 on it would be a challenging job for any side.

"On this pitch 140 was like chasing 180. I don't know how you can have such a pitch for such a big match, it was disappointing," he said.

The former skipper also pointed out that the pitch was not meant for T20 cricket.

Wasim said that before the men's semifinal the women's semifinal was already been played on the pitch, which was already assisting the bowlers.

## 'Proud of my team'

AFP, Colombo



ICC WORLD TWENTY20 SRI LANKA 2012

Pakistan captain Mohammad Hafeez said he was proud of his team's World Twenty20 campaign despite a semifinal defeat to Sri Lanka, adding the hosts deserved to be in the final.

Left-arm spinner Rangana Herath proved Sri Lanka's main weapon with 3-25 after the home side scored a modest 139 in their 20 overs at Premadasa Stadium on Thursday.

The defeat is the second successive exit at the semifinal stage of the World Twenty20 for Pakistan following their loss to Australia at the same stage of the 2010 event held in the West Indies.

Pakistan, among the pre-tournament favourites, finished runners-up to India in the inaugural event in 2007 in South Africa before winning the title in England two years later.

"We played positive cricket and I am proud of my team," Hafeez said. "Sri Lanka deserved to win and they are worthy finalists on the basis of what they have done in this tournament."

But the skipper admitted the target should have been well within his side's reach.

## Novak, Maria in semis

### Tennis

AFP, Beijing

World number two Novak Djokovic raced into the last four of the China Open in straight sets on Friday as home favourite Li Na set up a testing women's semifinal with Russian tennis queen Maria Sharapova.

The 25-year-old Serbian thumped Jurgen Melzer of Austria 6-1, 6-2 to maintain his unbeaten record at the Beijing tournament and continue his push to finish the year at number one in the rankings.

Djokovic, behind only Roger Federer in the ATP standings, has won the China Open on the two occasions he has entered -- in 2009 and 2010 -- but missed last year because of injury.

The number one seed made light work of Melzer, winning in just 53 minutes and hitting 12 aces -- four of which came in a single game.

"I think that's the first time," Djokovic said of his four-in-a-row. "It was one of the best serving matches I have had in my career."

"I have stepped up at least a level in each match that I have played here," he added, stressing that he was trying to be more aggressive.

Djokovic set up a semi-final clash with Germany's Florian Mayer, who beat wildcard Zhang Ze to bring the Chinese wildcard's fairytale run crashing to a halt.

The 22-year-old, ranked 165th in the world, made history in the last 16 when he became the first Chinese man ever to beat a top 20 player, dumping out France's Richard Gasquet.

His defeat of the Frenchman, ranked 14th, also meant Zhang was the first player from China to reach the quarter-final of an ATP event since Pan Bing made the semi-finals in Seoul in 1995.

But matching Pan's 17-year-old mark proved a step too far for the right-hander from Nanjing, with Mayer winning 6-3, 6-4.



Li Na of China reaches for a backhand during the women's singles quarterfinal against Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland at the China Open in Beijing yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP