

# Star SPORT

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## Csorba powers Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER



Hungarian forward Szabolcs Csorba made his mark in his very first competitive game in Bangladesh, scoring twice in a 2-0 victory for Abahani against Farashganj SC in their opening fixture of the Federation Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The new recruit of George Kottan, who had scored both goals in a 2-0 victory against Bangladesh national team prior to the Bangabandhu Gold Cup last month, scored in injury time of either half to ensure all three points for the Sky Blues in Group-3.

The Hungarian unsettled the Farashganj defence with his slick movements and struck the opening goal in the 47th minute with a dink over onrushing goalkeeper Sujan Chowdhury, having collected a deflected attempt from Abdul Baten Komol, inside the box.

Komol almost doubled Abahani's lead seven minutes into the second half, but his left-footed volley hit the woodwork.

Csorba then sealed the fate of the match deep into injury time with a powerful attempt from the middle of the box after being set up by midfielder Emon Mahmud.

Meanwhile, Muktijoddha skipper Enamul Haque scored a brace as the All Reds romped to a 4-0 win over Championship League outfit Uttar Baridhara in the second match of the day.

The former Bangladeshi international broke the deadlock with a seventh-minute strike to give his side a 1-0 lead, going into the break. Baridhara managed to keep the All Reds quiet for most part of the second half, but Mohammad Biplob's 84th-minute strike opened the floodgates as Enamul followed up with a second in the 88th minute and Anwar put the icing on the cake with a stoppage-time strike.



Szabolcs Csorba (C) shoots to score one of his two goals against Farashganj SC in their opening fixture of the Federation Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## EPL stars face tax probe

AFP, Brussels

Belgian tax authorities are investigating Luxembourg bank accounts held by English Premier League stars Eden Hazard, Thibaut Courtois and Kevin Mirallas, De Morgan newspaper reported Tuesday.

The Flemish daily said the Belgian internationals have Luxembourg based companies they use to transfer money. Luxembourg taxes are considerably lower than in Belgium.

Teenager Divock Origi, who Liverpool have loaned to French side Lille was also named in the report.

Hazard and Courtois are teammates at Chelsea while Mirallas turns out for Everton.

Such practices are legal if the players can "prove that the company is run from Luxembourg, which is naturally difficult (to prove)", according to an expert quoted by De Morgan who added that the players involved risk penalties.

Last November the 'Lux Leaks' scandal revealed secret structures used by international clients, including major multinationals, to avoid taxes with tax avoidance schemes in Luxembourg.

## Good luck

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have had a forgettable build up to the World Cup, but a victory against Afghanistan will ease all the pressure and tension that has been creeping up on the players and fans alike for the last week,

"What's great about this team is that it's able to pick itself up from the tough situations," said the 22-year-old who scored against Deportivo.

"I think that having been brought down to earth is going to do us good and now we're going to move forward.

"Now we have to go to Germany, to a difficult ground, but we're Real Madrid and we go for it.

"This week will be an important step for what's ahead."

Fourth-placed Schalke stumbled to a 1-0 defeat at mid-table Eintracht Frankfurt in the Bundesliga on Saturday.

It was the Royal Blues first defeat in six league games, but nevertheless they are relishing the challenge.

Real Madrid's Spanish league leaders are struggling for form after being hammered 4-0 at Atletico Madrid ten days ago and laboured to a 2-0 home win over Deportivo La Coruna on Saturday.

"You don't win anything by going through the motions, that also goes for Real Madrid," said their Germany midfielder Kroos.

"If we have two good days, we can go very far, but only then."

Real defender Pepe is rated as doubtful as he recovers from a rib injury.

Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo is struggling with the patella tendon injury in his left knee that affected him towards the end of last season and at the World Cup.

The Ballon d'Or winner has not scored in the last three games and has come under fire since being sent off last month in the narrow win at Cordoba.

He was heavily criticised for hosting his 30th birthday party hours after Real were thrashed by Atletico.

But attacking midfielder Isco says Real are at their best when under pressure.

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## Sacchi causes a stir

AFP, Milan

The agent of Mario Balotelli led the growing criticism of former Italy and AC Milan coach Arrigo Sacchi following remarks criticising the number of "blacks" playing at youth level in Italy.

Sacchi, a renowned football coach and innovator who notably helped Milan to back-to-back European Cups in 1989 and 1990, has claimed he is "not racist".

But comments made on Monday, when he said "too many blacks" played in Italy's under-20 leagues, have attracted widespread criticism on social media.

"Italy now has no dignity or pride, because we have too many foreigners playing in the under-20 leagues: in our youth sectors there are too many blacks," Sacchi said during an awards ceremony in Montecatini Terme late on Monday.

A growing number of sports personalities, including former England international Gary Lineker, hit out at the comments.

But the agent of Italy star Balotelli, born to Ghanaian parents but adopted by white Italians, called Sacchi "ignorant" and, in ironic tones, said the comments had given a

bad impression of Italians.

"Italian Football too many ignorant people in power so we're in the s... Ashamed to be Italian when I hear Sacchi's declaration. Bella figura (great impression)," said Raiola.

Lineker posted a Twitter comment on Tuesday which said: "There are too many racists in Italian football."

Sacchi, a former director of Italy's national team at under-21 level, claimed he was not racist because he signed a player like Frank Rijkaard, a Dutchman of Surinamese origin, when he was coach at Milan.

But the 68-year-old insisted that 'too many coloured players' featured for Italian youth sides at the famous Viareggio tournament, known in footballing circles as the Viareggio Cup World Football Tournament.

"I'm certainly not racist, as my coaching history demonstrates with Rijkaard," added Sacchi.

"But look at the Viareggio tournament. I would say that there are too many coloured players, also in the under-20 teams in Italy."

He later claimed his comments were misinterpreted, adding: "I've been misinterpreted, you think I'm really racist? All I said was I saw a game featuring a team who fielded four coloured players."

## Real wary of complacency

AFP, Gelsenkirchen



Having routed Schalke on their last Gelsenkirchen visit, Real Madrid return to Germany for Wednesday's

Champions League last 16, first-leg, clash with Toni Kroos warning the Spanish giants against complacency.

Real ran riot at Schalke's Veltins Arena at exactly the same stage of the competition last February when Karim Benzema, Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale each scored two goals in a 6-1 thrashing as part of a 9-2 aggregate victory.

It was Schalke's heaviest European home defeat until the margin was matched when Chelsea drubbed the hosts 5-0 in Gelsenkirchen in the group stages last November.

Madrid have won only three of their 27 trips to Germany, but two of victories came last year when they smashed Schalke, then routed Bayern Munich 4-

0 at home in the semi-final, second-leg.

Holders Real will arrive in Germany with a lengthy walking-wounded list with Sergio Ramos, Luka Modric, James Rodriguez, Sami Khedira and Fabio Coentrao all out injured.

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## NEW US 'STYLISH' KIT

On Monday, U.S. Soccer unveiled its new Nike away uniforms – or "kit," and, as expected, the Twitter had a thing or two to say about them. The uniform, which had been leaked a while ago when Alex Morgan was somehow photographed in it, is kind of whitish at the top, then becomes blue, and then goes sort of white again at the bottom of the socks. The official press release said it "features stylish gradient design." We don't know what that means. We didn't go to fashion school. We're not even really sure what "gradient" means in this context.

– INTERNET



PHOTO: AFP

Manchester United star Wayne Rooney (L) celebrates scoring the third goal against Preston North End during their FA Cup fifth round clash at the Deepdale Stadium on Monday.

## Van Gaal relishing Arsenal showdown

AFP, Preston



Louis van Gaal says he is relishing the chance to face Arsenal at Old Trafford after Manchester United earned a showdown with the holders in the FA Cup quarterfinals.

Goals from Ander Herrera, Marouane Fellaini and Wayne Rooney booked United's place in the last eight with a 3-1 win at Preston North End in the fifth round on Monday.

The third tier team took the lead early in the second half through Scott Laird but van Gaal's side ultimately proved too strong.

Their reward is a potentially classic home tie against Arsenal on the weekend of March 7 and 8 after three successive away ties against lower-league opponents.

"We have a draw at home, which is important in FA Cup matches," van Gaal said. "I am pleased we can play against Arsenal and at home."

"Every game in the FA Cup is difficult to

win because every team is giving everything.

"You have seen it also in this round, how many better situated teams have lost so I don't think that of course when you play against a lower team then the chance to win is always bigger."

"I am very happy we can play now against Arsenal and for the first time we play at home."

United and Arsenal have both won the FA Cup on 11 occasions, with their last meeting in the tournament won by United in the last eight in 2011.

Arsenal's most recent triumph came last season against Hull City, while United have not lifted the trophy since 2004.

Van Gaal admitted he feared for his side's place in this season's competition when Simon Grayson's men went ahead through Laird.

Van Gaal's response was to introduce Ashley Young and switch formation and it paid off.

"Of course, when we conceded a goal, we have to fight again for the victory," he said.

## Kiwis survive Scottish scare

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They appeared set for a crushing win in perfect conditions at Dunedin's University Oval, claiming early wickets to leave Scotland reeling at 12 for four.

Matt Machan (56) and Richie Berrington (50) were the standouts with a 97-run fifth-wicket partnership in a Scottish innings that featured five ducks -- four of them golden.

McCullum (15), Martin Guptill (17) and Ross Taylor (9) all went cheaply, leaving New Zealand 66 for three early in the innings.

Kane Williamson made a good start and reached 38 before he too suffered a rush of blood to the head.

New Zealand made hard

work of chasing 143 on pitch were they scored 360 against Sri Lanka last month, with Iain Wardlaw and Josh Davey both taking three wickets for Scotland.

The win was not pretty but man-of-the-match Boulton said New Zealand "got the job done".

McCullum (15), Martin Guptill (17) and Ross Taylor (9) all went cheaply, leaving New Zealand 66 for three early in the innings.

Their next match is against England in Christchurch on Monday.

## Canberra, cricket's retreat!

FROM PAGE S1

many terming it as a big match in the pool.

Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza expects a similar scenario to the one the Tigers generally receive at home. "You guys [media] will be surprised. We will be receiving plenty of support tomorrow," he said ecstatically.

However that excitement was diluted to a certain extent after the skipper was bombarded with uncomfortable questions in the press conference. "Have you justified the euphoria and

support of your people...? Is it a bit unfair to be compared to the ICC associate nation?" These were stemmed from the fact that Afghanistan beat Bangladesh in the Asia Cup last year and also that the Tigers went down to Ireland in the warm-up.

ICC chief executive Dave Richardson is also in the city and he aims to keep a keen eye on the progress of the qualifiers. The world won't end for the Tigers if they lose the match but a win will definitely uplift their mood.

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