

# Bayern Factor

THE UNTOLD STORY



Kaushik Moulik

# **Bayern Factor**



THE UNTOLD STORY

**Kaushik Moulik**

**RESHAM DAS**  
Research & Development,  
Content Analysis and Compilation

**PANCHALI GANGULY**  
Coordination

**UTPAAL SORKKAR**  
Photo Courtesy

**ARCHAN DEB**  
Content Editing

**TUSHAR KANTI JANA**  
Design and Layout

First Edition 2017

*Published by :*  
**BRAND NEXT**  
LB-1, Silpangan, Module - V  
Common Facility Building, 3rd Floor  
Sector - III, Salt Lake City, Kolkata - 700 098  
West Bengal, India  
[www.brandnext.in](http://www.brandnext.in), e-mail : brandnext.web@gmail.com

Copyright © Kaushik Moulik 2017

The views and opinions expressed in this book are the author's own and the facts are as reported by him, which have been verified to the extend possible, and the publishers are not in any way liable for the same.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written consent of the publisher.

*Printed by :*  
**CAPS MICROGRAPHICS PVT. LTD.**  
3/C, LA Block, Salt Lake, Sector - III  
Kolkata - 700 098

*Project Supported by :*  
**FOOTBALL NEXT FOUNDATION**

To my little son Prattay and all the  
passionate football fans of the World



## *About The Author*

# WHAT THEY SAY

‘Bayern München opened interest for Soccer in India. Kaushik Moulik was instrumental about it. Now we have growing interest for Soccer in India. Hopefully in the next decade Indian national team will Qualify for world’s championship for Soccer’

— Volker Ruehe, Former Defence Minister of Germany

‘Kaushik is a very creative and connected person. I have seldom seen anyone similar who is so engaged in things he is doing as he is. He would turn every stone before giving up. He is a great human character, with lots of passion and dedication. He is always available and full with love to serve and to help. He has many connctions in India to leading people in commerical and political fields. They are all of vital importance. Wish that with this book he can open hearts and eyes’

— Christian Bremicker, Chairman & CEO August Bremicker Söhne KG Germany

‘India has shown to the world that the next destination for football to rise is India! In such exciting times, it’s people like Mr. Koushik who keep pushing the game to newer heights with their passion’

— Aaditya Thackeray , President Mumbai District Football Association, India

‘The country, where football is a craze, needs a person (individual) like Kaushik who is always trying to discover and impart the thrills of football in this great country of India’

— S.K Ghosh, C.O.O, Bengal Tennis Association

‘Grt organizer to cultivate German football, we again starts dreaming to see the foreign football team playing in on our stadium. Best wishes’

— Utpaal Sorkkar, Principal Photographer ABP

‘Mr. Kaushik Moulik is always very dynamic in his thoughts and actions on various fields. I really appreciate his contribution towards development of Football in India which has been beautifully penned down in this book. I wish him all the best for his future’

— Dipankar Mahato, Deputy Jute Commissioner, Government of India

‘The way Kaushik formed the access with the top level of F.C. Bayern Munich, including Rummenigge, Haegele, and Kahn was just amazing! He used to stand every day there at the FC Bayern bearing the cold weather, just to convince the management about the initiative to bring them in India’

— Amritangshu Bhattacharya, Sports Head, 24 Ghanta

‘Kaushik Moulik is closely associated with the promotional activities of West Bengal Handicrafts Dev Corporation. Extremely intelligent full of innovative concepts. Keep shining’

— Amit Dutta *Managing Director, WBHDCL*

‘It was a pleasant experience to be with the German players at Kolkata in 2008. Kaushik Moulik’s Initiative was just the right one at the right time to bring the best Club team of European Football to India’

— Nazmun Nesa Piari, *Author & Journalist, President, Bengalzentrum e. V., Berlin*

‘The concern shown by Kaushik Moulik for the promotion of Indian football is really laudable! His book ‘Bayern Factor -The Untold Story’ is the next move in his tireless effort to bring back the glory of Indian football. May it help to attract the Indian youth back to the sport that is loved the world over!’

— Wolfgang Müller, *Social Worker*

‘A man with the football loving heart. True talent Promoter. Always ready to do anything for Football’

— Arindam Chatterjee, *Music Composor, India*

‘Definetively India has a huge opportunity, through its excitement and love for the game, to bring back the glory of Indian football. Mr. Kausik Moulik's vision, strength and effort will enable this to become real very soon’

— Professor F. Javier Ramírez Perdiguero, *EUDE Business School. Madrid. Spain*

‘The easy to read book makes recommendations and puts effort to elevate Football standards in India. The emphasis is to bridge the gap of football between Europe and India. Shri Kaushik Moulik deserves appreciation to initiate such an effort to boost Indian Football into world platform’

— Prof. BC Ghosh, *IIT Kharagpur, India*

‘I met Kaushik in Madrid, in the T2 of Barajas airport. Behind his dark glasses I discovered a soul with true passion for Football. His ideas and approach towards the game and it's development really moved me’

— Ruben Hidalgo, *CEO Soccernauts, Spain*

‘What really, is encouraging and fascinating about Koushik is that he has put his whole mind into football. This book relays the beauty of his thoughts and fancies with Indian football in general and Bengal in particular. He is an active player off the field and is yet within the field. Until now, there are not many persons I am aware or know of who had taken football as an intellectual exercise and a ‘way of life’ simultaneously. The book is sure to titillate those dabbling and dribbling into future football issues as it holds the author's key to the door what I may call as ‘Passion In Football ’’

— Sanjay Kajaria, *Industrialist*

## CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b>	viii	<b>THE PRELUDE</b>	46
<b>PREFACE</b>	ix	<b>THE MATCH</b>	49
<b>DANKE OLI</b>	01	<b>THE REACTIONS</b>	50
❑ THE INITIATIVE	02	<b>THE AFTERMATH</b>	52
❑ THE APPROACH	03		
❑ THE SET-UP	05		
❑ THE FAREWELL	07	<b>BAYERN IMPACT</b>	53
❑ THE EVENTS	09	❑ FC BAYERN MUNCHEN	55
❑ THE MATCH	12	❑ THE BAYERN VISITS TO INDIA	57
❑ MATCH STATS	15	❑ FROM INDIA TO BAYERN MUNICH	59
❑ THE RECEPTION	16	❑ INDIAN FOOTBALLERS AT OVERSEAS	65
<b>WINTER CAMP</b>	24	❑ EUROPEAN INTERESTS IN INDIA	68
❑ THE OPPOSITIONS	25	❑ INTERNATIONAL GREATS IN INDIA	70
❑ THE TIMELINE: KOLKATA	26	❑ VIEWERSHIP DRIVES	71
❑ THE TIMELINE: SILIGURI	28	❑ CORPORATE CLUBS	74
❑ THE RESPONSE	30	❑ INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE	75
❑ THE CONTROVERSY	33	❑ INDIAN NATIONAL TEAM	77
<b>LEGEND'S VISIT</b>	35	❑ U-17 WORLD CUP 2017	79
❑ THE BAYERN 'ALL STAR'	36	❑ THE ADDITIONAL EVENTS	83
❑ THE EAST BENGAL 'ALL STAR'	37	❑ THE ACADEMY EPISODE	86
❑ THE CAUSE	41	❑ THE VIEWS	89
❑ THE THEME SONG	43	❑ THE CONCLUSION	92
❑ THE EVENTS	44		

## Foreword

The “Bayern Factor” is a fascinating story of how the Farewell Game of Oliver Kahn played in Kolkata in front of a packed stadium in 2008 has contributed to further popularizing the great game of Football in India. Written by Kaushik Moulik who was instrumental in getting Oliver Kahn to India and was primarily responsible for increasing the association with FC Bayern Munich, the book is full of interesting anecdotes and insights than only an insider can share. Oliver Kahn and the Bayern Munich Officials were truly overwhelmed by their Kolkata experience.

The book also carries the stamp of Kaushik’s passion and love for football. He has always been a dreamer, full of ideas ranging from promoting jute products and handicrafts to providing a technological platform for preserving the fine arts and the heritage. One of his unique qualities is bringing together the right kind of people to propel his innovative ideas and turning them to reality. It was with his initiative that the deserving young football talent from the strife-torn Jammu & Kashmir and the disturbed under developed areas of West Bengal got the chance to train and play in the prestigious Football Clubs of Europe. His humane qualities and passion for the game are central to all his endeavours.

I am glad he has taken the time out to put on record the role he has played in furthering the cause of Football in India. Football is not new to India but how from near oblivion it has come up to capture the imagination of the youth again makes an absorbing account and Kaushik has put it together honestly in his simple style. I do hope the readers will find it interesting and appreciate the efforts made by an unassuming and passionate promoter of the game.

Siddharth  
24-10-2017

## Preface

FIFA World Cup Under 17, ISL, International Standard Stadiums, Scouts and Coaches from all over the world, youngsters seeking trial from all big football clubs in India is almost going through a New Era. But situations were not same a decade ago.

From very young age Football has been my passion. Observing the status of Indian Football during those days I felt that our country with a plethora of Football lovers needs a platform to show the same to the world. Oliver Kahn's Farewell match was my first step towards it.

Oliver Kahn's Farewell match was not just a match for me. It was a point of initiation where I found a perfect platform to showcase the true Football madness in India which was yet to get its revelation. Hence it was a right moment for expansion of Football in our country.

Bayern's visit to India had opened a new door to the overall development and advancement of Football. It helped the country to prove that Football is not only confined to a section of sports lover or game experts but does affect one's day to day life. The moments I mentioned in this book were very emotional for me.

I had to face lot of challenges, yet there were few hands that held me tight and pushed me to pursue my thoughts. But my dreams wouldn't have taken a shape without those football enthusiasts who kept motivating me throughout this journey. I am really thankful to Late Sri Kumar Shankar Bagchi, the then Managing Director, Bengal Peerless Housing Development Company, Sri S K Roy, Managing Director Peerless Group for supporting me throughout Oliver Kahn's Farewell match.

I also express my gratitude towards Martin Haegele, Head of Foreign Affairs for FC Bayern Munich and Mirjam Eisele, Investment in Bavaria. Without their support Bayern In India would not have been possible. I cannot forget sharing moments with Karl-Henz- Rummenigge, Chairman and CEO,

FC Bayern who had the faith that one day India will occupy a place in World Football. I still remember Football Legend Gerd Muller and his warm greetings whenever we met in Munich . I also witnessed Uli Hoeness, President, FC Bayern Munich who had the true eagerness to develop Indian Football.

My attempt was to portray their contribution towards opening a new dimension in Football in India which has been divided into four Chapters in this Book - “Danke Oli”, Winter Camp, Legends’ Visit and Bayern Impact.

Today I really feel proud seeing the Indian Government and our Hon’ble Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi being proactive towards building cooperation with various leading Football playing nations.

The entire world is appreciating the new developments at Salt Lake Stadium. I would like to thank Mamata Banerjee, Hon’ble Chief Minister of West Bengal for giving us an international infrastructure and supporting the sport, sportsmen as well as football fans to the fullest.

I have also witnessed young minds like Aditya Thackeray , Hon’ble President Mumbai District Football Association (MDFA) for contributing intensely towards the development of Football in a city like Mumbai where cricket has always played a lead role. It is my strong belief after meeting him, he can guide Indian Football towards a new height.

I would also like to thank my colleagues Resham Das who have helped me to organise the facts and moments I went through this ‘Bayern Factor’ into a proper framework.

Lastly, I would like to say my objective to write this book is not to flourish my Football love but to make readers believe that “Yes- Football Can Change Life”

# DANKE OLI

“Danke Oli”, “Oli Kahn, der Titan” – slogans were pouring in like the waves of Bay of Bengal, from all corners of the gigantic galleries! The large Kolkata stadium was dancing in resonance formed by around 1,25,000 crazy fans. Colourful banners, festoons bore testimony to the unstinted love for football from a nation almost invisible in the international circuit. All these happenings had one single person at the centre – Oliver Kahn!

One of the most celebrated goalkeepers ever in football history, the German legend, Kahn chose India to play the last professional match of his illustrious career. It was a historical moment especially for the football-crazy city of Kolkata, when Kahn took his position under the goalpost for one last time, at the Salt Lake stadium, on 27th May 2008.

Kahn was representing the F.C. Bayern Munich, a worldwide famous football club from Munich, the capital of Bavaria, Germany. Undoubtedly, the most successful club in German football history, Bayern Munich created a history in the timeline of Indian football through their participation in this match.

The popular Indian football club from Kolkata, Mohun Bagan Athletic Club had the privilege to play opposite to Bayern in this exhibition match. Famous for scoring a 2-2 draw against Pele’s New York Cosmos in 1977, Bagan impressed in this game too despite they ended up in the losing side. Bayern Munich beat Mohun Bagan 3-0, with Jan Schlaudraff (2) and Ze Roberto (1) netting for the visitors.

The world watched the magical keeping skills of Kahn for the final time in this game. Emotions knew no bounds for the 1,25,000 frenzied crowd at the stadium, when Kahn was substituted at the 54th minute of the match by his successor Mark Rensing. Tears rolled down the cheeks of the fans while witnessing the match of the gala evening live.

Kahn later revealed how overwhelmed he was at such a grand reception in Kolkata. Next morning he said, “For last few days I’m hearing a lot about the football craziness of this city. We received a warm welcome at the airport and other places. Especially I won’t forget last evening’s experience. We enjoyed a lot.”

Not only for Kahn, but also it proved to be a momentous moment for Indian football as well. Growth of football in India post-2008 owes a lot to that evening!

## THE INITIATIVE

It was not an easy task to bring such a European football giant in India. First of all, Germany is a conservative nation. F.C. Bayern Munich, the most successful German domestic club also were not familiar about involvement in the initiative of football development in another nation at that point of time.

Although India had great records in the sport of football in the 1950s and 1960s, a broad decline affected it later on. It took down the presence of India in the international level close to nil by the year 2000. The ranks continued to drop down even below the small, sparsely populated nations. So, it was really challenging to convince the Bayern management about our offer.

Till 2007, Indian football was revolving around just two clubs of Kolkata – Mohun Bagan A.C. and East Bengal F.C. All the emotions in India were then centralized around these clubs and few others in Goa.

The prime idea behind hosting a top European football team in India was deeply related to my emotion about football and my State West Bengal. In India, West Bengal was earlier regarded as a lagging state. We were eager to brighten the lost image as regards its promotion in the football arena.

As we were passionate about football from the heart, we found no better option than this. Our objective was to change the contemporary scenario of football

in India. The sport was stuck at some portions of the nation at that time, but we aimed to motivate the youths in whole of India.

Around that juncture during his visit to Germany in 2006, the then Hon'ble Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh mention that, football can play a pivotal role for Indo-German co-operation. It was surely a source of inspiration for us.

We approached two of the most prominent European clubs – F.C. Bayern Munich and Manchester United. At that time, international club football followers in India were mostly fond of the English Premier League. So, we wanted ‘Man U’ here in India, as it could trigger a revolution here among its fans. On the other hand, Bundesliga was not much popular in India. But, F.C. Bayern achieved great success in that season. They were the Bundesliga 2007-08 champions, and they won the German Cup (DFB-Pokal).

However, we did not receive any response from the Manchester United administration. But, Bayern Munich was ready to have a chat with us, and they invited us there.

## THE APPROACH

In March 2008, we visited the FC Bayern office with our proposal. F.C. Bayern Munich is unique in the way that this club is administered by its former footballers only.

We had the opportunity to talk to Martin Haegele, the head of Foreign Affairs of Bayern Munich in presence of the club CEO, Karl-Henz Rummenigge. His first question was, ‘Why India?’ For a club with an unprecedented record in the football history, it was really challenging for us to get their nod about playing in India. However, we had enough reasons to convince them.

- First of all, Indian football had a great record in the past. India qualified for the 1950 Brazil FIFA World Cup event (Although, India could not take part due to excess travel cost). India won the 1951 and 1962 Asian Games titles beating prime Asian teams who were regulars in the international circuit. They finished fourth in the 1956 Melbourne



*Meeting with Karl-Henz Rummenigge at FC Bayern Munich Office*

Olympic Games. Even Mohun Bagan A.C. held a star-studded New York Cosmos to a gritty 2-2 draw during an exhibition match at Kolkata in 1977. Despite such a great performance, the odds could not be capitalized at that time. But despite the poor condition of Indian football, this nation still pinpointed its potentials to make a comeback in the global circuit.

- Football is a globally popular sport. It is also a great medium of diplomacy between two nations. By hosting Bayern in Kolkata, the citadel of friendship has been strengthened.
- Previously India was not internationally visible as a football-playing nation. But now this country held the highest viewership statistics regarding international football! Indian football fans are very emotional

and passionate about their likes as well. Kolkata rooted for Mario Kempes when he helped Argentina lift the 1978 FIFA World Cup scoring two goals in the final, at a time even when colour television was unavailable. So, the market was strong in India. Bayern could invest and earn a great sum just from the fan following!

- Not a single big club visited India in the recent past. So, it was an opportunity for Bayern to exercise mass influence on both viewership and on the game of football in India.
- Earlier, German companies had achieved success working in Kolkata. E.g. Siemens laid the world's first ever undersea cable from London to Kolkata (then, Calcutta) in 1870.
- Bengalis in Germany are noted for their bright minds. Several Germans of Bengali origin are prominent personalities there. This had been a factor that impressed the Bayern management.

It was not desired that Bayern would just play a match here and return forever. The aim was to get them involved in the development of Indian football too. Just one exhibition match could raise a fountain of emotional upsurge, but that was not capable enough to meet this target.

## THE SETUP

As we described what benefits Bayern would receive if they visit India, as well as how they could make an impact in Indian football, they asked us to wait for a week.

After we returned to India, we got the much-awaited confirmation from them. It was a great moment for us, because our dreams seemed to be adorned anew.

For this, I must mention the name of late Kumar Shankar Bagchi. The then Managing Director of Bengal Peerless Housing Development

Company Ltd and Vice President of Mohun Bagan, Mr. Bagchi inspired us a lot in implementing this initiative. He had a large contribution in this project. When some people termed our initiative as ‘absurd’, he gave us his full support.

We discussed with him about the possible opponents of Bayern here. Mohun Bagan is a heritage Indian club, located at Kolkata, which created history beating the British East Yorkshire in the 1911 I.F.A. Shield final, that too barefoot. When one of the greatest footballer of all time, Pele, visited the city in 1977, Mohun Bagan was able to hold his team New York Cosmos to a 2-all draw. They were one of the most successful Indian domestic clubs too, so they were the automatic choice as the home side of this match. It is the oldest active football club of Asia too!

The match was then scheduled to take place in the world’s second largest football stadium – Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (Salt Lake Stadium). It had a seating capacity of 120,000 by then. Currently, it is reduced to 85,000, due to the ongoing renovation ahead of the FIFA Under-17 World Cup tournament.



*Announcement of Olivar Kahn's farewell match from Munich, in presence of Karl-Henz Rummenigge*

Although we announced here about the visit of Bayern Munich yet, people were busy checking the authenticity of this information. No offense from their side, as it was almost next to unbelievable then to even think of watching a German giant such as Bayern Munich play live in front.

Anyways, all confusions were cleared when the match was announced from Munich, in March 2008. The CEO of Bayern, Karl-Henz Rummenigge himself made the announcement in a press conference from the media centre.

Finally, as the match was fixed to happen, it was time for us to draw the attention of the world to this match.

## THE FAREWELL

We had the long-term vision of development of Indian football through grabbing undeniable global attention. And we had this match as the exclusive opportunity to set so. We are happy that we did not miss the rare chance.

The match was scheduled to take place at Kolkata on 27th May 2008. The Euro Cup was set to start from 7th June that year. So, the majority of the Bayern star footballers were not available for this match in India.

Eventually, the Bayern coach, Ottmar Hitzfeld was set to leave the German club, to join the coaching duty of Switzerland national team just after Euro. On the other hand, the German star goalkeeper, Oliver Rolf Kahn was set to play his testimonial farewell match for the Bayern at Jakarta, Indonesia that season.



*Unveiling Oliver Kahn's jersey along with Martin Haegele at Kolkata*

We focussed on Kahn, since he had a great fan following in India. When I approached Mr. Haegele and requested a swap in the venue of his farewell match, he said that it's all up to Kahn himself.



*Presenting Oliver Kahn with 500,000 signatures from Kolkata*

At this point, we considered to conduct a signature campaign in and around West Bengal which would contain some thousand appeals inviting Kahn here to play his last match instead of Jakarta. It was a 7-day campaign, and you won't believe that almost 5,00,000 signatures were collected in a very short time!

Also, Kahn was informed about the significant difference in terms of television viewership and the capacity of stadiums between India and Indonesia. Honestly speaking,



*Meeting with Oliver Kahn at Munich*

Indonesia does not come so close to India when one talks about love and emotion of countrymen towards the ballgame. Moreover, the stadium (National stadium) where Kahn was scheduled to take retirement at Jakarta, had merely a capacity of 80,000. But, the Salt Lake stadium could hold a grand mass of 120,000 people inside it, and we were confident that people in greater numbers will be watching the match with same intensity on broadcasting mediums too!

At that instant, Kahn finally agreed to our request, which was a great boost for us. We knew that the football world would now focus on India more than they used to do, since Oliver Kahn decided to retire from in India!

The media would be curious worldwide, to cover what is in India, how football is treated in India, what were our history in the sport, and most importantly, why Kahn chose India for the grand ending of his vibrant career.

## THE EVENTS

We visited the Allianz Arena, the home ground of Bayern Munich on 13th April 2008, where the then state Industry Minister of West Bengal, Nirupam Sen handed over the 5,00,000 strong signature collection to Oliver Kahn. The event was hosted in the middle of the gigantic stadium just ahead of the start of a Bundesliga match involving Bayern. It was being shown in the giant screens around the ground, hence it was an unforgettable moment for us as representatives of India. This experience was something unique for Indian football.

Bayern Munich had of co-operation with the Kolkata Police, assisting them in organizing the Kolkata Police Friendship Cup. This football tournament was included in the Limca book of world records, as a record 450 teams participated in it.

In partnership with Burdwan District Sports Association, and a technology

and management education providers group, Bayern announced a plan to build a football academy in Burdwan. It would have been the only academy of Bayern Munich in Asia! However, it could not be implemented in reality.

Bayern team managed by Ottmar Hitzfeld set their first foot in India on 25th May 2008. India was the last stop of their Asian tour. They played their previous match versus the Indonesian national team at Jakarta. As their following game against the Chinese Olympic football team was cancelled, they enjoyed a short holiday at Bali before catching the flight to India.

In the afternoon, they visited the Alipore Bodyguard Lines, to inaugurate a street football tournament. Then they visited the Millennium Park to enjoy a launch trip on the Hooghly River. On the second day, they visited C.C.F.C. (Calcutta Cricket and Football Club) for participating in a ‘football clinic’ organized for the young footballers of Bengal and Goa. Bayern stars could



*Grand reception ceremony for Kahn during his visit to Kolkata*

not resist themselves and started playing along with these kids. Kahn even had fun enacting a dive in attempt to tackle a boy who swarmed past him. Six of the best among these teenagers were awarded an opportunity to train at the prestigious Bayern academy in Munich.

Bayern played the much-awaited match against Mohun Bagan on 27th May under a remarkable environment integrating love from all portions of India. After beating the home team by a margin of 3 goals, the Dutch defensive midfielder of Bayern, Mark van Bommel stated, “I have played in Barcelona, but the spectators here are more emotional. I’ve never seen such an atmosphere.”

This emotional attachment of Indians to this sport appeared as a catalyst in

the process of the improvement of Indian football, through direct and indirect involvement of Bayern Munich.

Oliver Kahn voted for the local talents before leaving the arena for one last time. He said, “You see, these young kids are as talented as our boys, but they need proper training and infrastructure. If they are given that, who knows one day they can shine in international football.”

Apart from football, this particular game reverberated the Indo-Bavarian relationship as well. Indian Consul General in Munich, J S Mukul and the head of India desk, Invest-in-Bavaria, Mirjen Eisle helped us a lot in building



*Kahn along with Bayern Munich team inaugurated Kolkata Police Friendship Cup in Kolkata*

it. The Bavarian businessmen and investors got the idea about a potential market in India. They also bridged a path for cultural collaborations between India and Germany. We organized ‘Poila Boisakh’ (Bengali New Year) festival Munich.

As a whole, the match had unlocked many ways in favour of both the parties involved. But, the impact was visible in football at a greater extent than any other sector.

## THE MATCH

India was the last stop of the Asian tour of Bayern Munich. As the match between them and the local favourites Mohun Bagan was declared as the farewell match of Oliver Kahn, the fans of both the clubs across the state of West Bengal were excited a lot.

On the match day, long queues were spotted in front of the Salt Lake Stadium, from at least three hours ahead of the kick-off! The large arena was packed with around 125,000 people, including a majority of Mohun Bagan fans, as well as a good number of Bayern fanatics from different parts of India.

Bayern missed their important members in this tour due to their respective Euro Cup duties. However, they reached here after thrashing the Indonesian national team 5-1.

On the other hand, Bagan looked a bit feeble as their star footballers were indulged away in national duty (Indian national team was playing an international friendly against Chinese Taipei at the same time that night). However, the young team was well led from the front by goalkeeper Sangram Mukherjee. The chief coach of Bagan, Karim Bencharifa was as well unable to attend this game, so the reserve coach Satyajit Chattopadhyay was managing the home team on that night.



*Uli Hoeneß, Ottmer Hitzfeld and other Bayern officials see the intensity of emotion for football fans in Kolkata*

Bayern were running fast from the start, and their star forward Jan Schlaudraff tried to push the ball inside at the 10th minute, only to be refused by Sangram. Bagan suddenly looked impressive, and they created a rally of chances in the next few minutes. Unfortunately, Sanglosem Joseph Singh and Lalkamal Bhowmick missed some easy chances to shoot past Kahn.

Bayern did not waste an opportunity thereafter, with Schlaudraff scoring the first goal of the night for them at the 18th minute. They continued to charge in, as Sangram and Rakesh Masih blocked back-to-back efforts from Ze Roberto and Schlaudraff in the next few minutes. However, at the 37th minute, Sangram handled the ball outside the box, causing him face a yellow card, and Bayern received a free-kick.

Ze Roberto produced an absolute stunner from it, as the ball swerved into the goal, keeping the line of defence and the keeper unmoved! Bayern reached 2-0, with almost 8 minutes left of the first half itself. Lalam Puia took a chance for Bagan thereafter, but Kahn, the veteran keeper saved it with ease.



*Glimpse of the match*

During the half-time break, Oliver Kahn was felicitated by the organizing authorities. Bengal Peerless presented him a diamond-studded gold-plated replica of football. It contained 8,640 diamonds and it was placed on a silver pedestal. Mohun Bagan secretary Anjan Mitra awarded him honorary life membership of the club, and also gifted a replica of a silver boat

which represents the logo of the club. Ultra Motors gifted him a scooter. I.F.A. (Indian Football Association) Secretary Utpal Ganguly and A.I.F.F. (All India Football Federation) Vice President Subrata Mitra also felicitated Kahn. Also, S K Roy, Managing Director of Peerless Group was present on the occasion. The whole stadium stood and clapped together for him while all these were going on.

When the play resumed, at the 51st minute, Schlaudraff received the ball from Tony Kroos (who would eventually become a star German footballer in the

coming years) via Christian Lell. He instantly beat three defenders to score his second goal of the night. Bayern, already leading 3-0, were looking for a perfect finish to the tour.

At the 55th minute, when Bayern was pretty sure about a victory, the historic moment arrived. Oliver Kahn was substituted on ground by his deputy at Bayern, Michael Rensing. Once again, everyone at the huge cirque rose up and gave him a standing ovation, to which a spellbound Kahn clapped back in gratitude.

Bagan thereafter showed some valour to test Rensing, but Habibur Rahman Mondal shot one over the crossbar. Branco, the debutant striker for Bagan, was also intercepted by the final defender within few seconds of his attack. On the 75th minute, Schlaudraff missed his well-deserved hat-trick, as he side-netted a not-so-tough chance. Lal Kamal Bhowmick shot the easiest chance of the evening for Bagan yet again on top of the crossbar.

The match went fine until a desperate Bagan striker Branco tackled the Brazilian Bayern defender Breno illegally at the final part of this encounter. Breno took revenge, kicking in the calves of Branco in return. Both were sent off with red cards to their names instantaneously.

\*The bout ended soon with the final whistle, but the audience present surely went home with unforgettable memories of this testimonial match. Even after the end of the match, there were around 50,000 people who were eagerly waiting outside the stadium for a long time just to catch a glimpse of their favourite Bayern stars! They were looking very emotional and some of them were crying in joy. The happy crowd continued to wave at the FC Bayern Munich team-bus until it reached the hotel from the stadium. It took almost an hour for the bus to travel its way back in the midst of this incessant festivity.\*

This contest apparently reversed the face of Indian football towards the progressive way again, which India had in its hands some 50 years ago before losing it mainly due to lack of infrastructure and international exposure.

A new sunlight could be clearly seen in the welkin of football in India.

## MATCH STATS

### **Mohun Bagan AC 0-3 FC Bayern Munich**

#### **GOALS**

Jan Schlaudraff (18'), Ze Roberto (37'), Jan Schlaudraff (51').

#### **LINE-UPS**

- Mohun Bagan AC

Sangram Mukherjee (90' Chirodeep Chattopadhyay), Rahul Kumar, Rakesh Masih, Anand Vasum, Habibur Rehman Mondal (71' S Naveen Kumar), Lalkamal Bhowmick, Sielphaw Henry Gangte (60' Tapan Maity), Saglosem James Singh, James Lukram Singh, Ishfaq Ahmed, Pachau Lalam Puia (64' Branco Vincent Cardozo).

- FC Bayern Munich

Oliver Kahn (56' Michael Rensing), Christian Lell, Andreas Ottl, Breno, Uwe Schlottner (82' Diego Pizarro), Mark van Bommel, Ze Roberto (77' Taygun Kuru), Viktor Bopp (68' Gianluca Simari), Toni Kroos (74' Dominik Rohracker), Jose Ernesto Sosa (Diego Contento), Jan Schlaudraff.

#### **BOOKINGS**

- Ø Yellow Cards - 36' Sangram Mukherjee (Mohun Bagan AC), 76' Jan Schlaudraff (FC Bayern Munich).
- Ø Red Cards - 84' Branco Vincent Cardozo (Mohun Bagan AC), 84' Breno (FC Bayern Munich).

#### **ATTENDANCE**

125,000

## MATCH OFFICIALS

- Referee - Subrata Sarkar (India)
- Assistant Referees - Kashi Nath Sen (India), Rathin Mukherjee (India)
- Fourth Official - Minangshu Bhattacharya (India)
- Match Commissioner - Sumanta Ghosh (India)

## THE RECEPTION

The press conference at the Allianz Arena, where this match was announced for the first time, saw a wide range of glee and determination flowing among the personalities involved in the tie-up.

“It is a dream come true for us”, said late Kumar Shankar Bagchi, the then Managing Director of Bengal Peerless, without whose contribution this match would not have been possible.

“We’re delighted that Bayern will play in Kolkata”, told JS Mukul, the then Indian Consul General at Munich. Further he added, “The match will give a new dimension to the Indo-German relationship.”

At the event, secretary of Indian Football Association (I.F.A.), Utpal Ganguli stated, “We consider it as an honour for us to be a part of the farewell match of Oliver Kahn which will be hosted in Kolkata. Watching players of Oliver Kahn’s calibre is a rare privilege. We really look forward to make this match one of the greatest ever played in the entire Football history.”

Bayern C.E.O. Karl-Henz Rummenigge mentioned, “Our objective is not to simply play an exhibition match and collect our fee. We want to contribute to the development of the game.” He also said, “We want to fly the flag abroad. The Asian market is very important, if not the most important in the world. We want to advertise both Bundesliga and Bayern Munich on the world stage.”

Later on an exclusive interview at Freiburg with the media partners 24 Ghanta, Rummenigge explained the ideology of Bayern Munich clearly. He said, “We don’t believe in the theory that our territory is confined within the city of

Munich just because the name is Bayern Munich. We eye globalization, and a prime part of this aim has India as its target.”

According to him, the business structure of the club is more important than the number of trophies it wins per season. A member of Bayern club does not fly in any other flight rather than a Lufthansa one. The member uses only Sony Ericsson mobile phones, drives cars manufactured only by Audi, and drinks only Adelholzener in case of water and Paulaner for beer. Basically, Bayern has linked with the sponsors who provides everything needed in the basic lifestyle of its supporters. In this way, a consortium of sponsors are built, which provides mutual benefits to themselves as well as the Bayern members. So, they knew as the market is big in India, the concept would flourish here in the same way too!



*Karl-Heniz Rummenigge along with the then Managing Director Bengal Peerless, Kumar Shankar Bagchi in Munich*

Hermann Hummels, the father of current German star footballer Mats Hummels, and the youth coach of Bayern at that time, said, “In whole Germany, we have got a complete databank containing information about the boys who are playing well and who have great prospect in the game. Our scouts maintain this databank over the whole year.”

Hummels also slammed the notion that the physique of an Indian is not suitable

for football. He gave the example of Philip Lahm, another star German footballer who was underweight when he started playing football as a kid. He said, “We have separate age groups in our academies. You need to perform well in your group to earn a promotion to the next stage. Lahm went on to play in these groups one by one, but we never allowed him to play in any tournament for a certain period. As he was underweight and the other boys in his group were stouter than him, Lahm would have sustained grave injuries if he played in these tournaments. But we were sure that this boy has the potential, so we provided special care and treatment for him. But once this same boy debuted at the age of 16 after the treatment was successful, the rest is history!”

So he made it clear that scouting is the most important matter in the process of improvement of Indian football, because the ‘physical structure does not suit’ stuff is just an excuse.

Head of International Relations of F.C. Bayern Munich, Mr. Martin Haegle, during his visit to the city prior to the match explained, “I have heard Kolkata is the Mecca of football in India. I can feel it. I am willing to accompany some of the rich cultures of this country on my way back to Germany. Bayern will visit this city to experience the warmth for the sport here. Oliver Kahn cannot get a better farewell location than this.”

Former Bagan icon Chuni Goswami regarded the event as a ‘pleasant surprise’. He added, “It’s a great honour for Indian football and Kolkata. I can’t wait to watch such a great club play here. It also gives us the opportunity to give one of modern football’s great stars a memorable send-off.”

The then A.I.F.F. President, Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi exclaimed, “There could not be a better stage than this for the farewell of a star like Oliver Kahn!”

Former Indian goalkeeper Tarun Bose asserted, “It is a matter of pride that Kahn would end his career in Kolkata.”

Olympian P.K. Banerjee, a noteworthy Indian footballer, and former coach of Mohun Bagan during the visit of Pele’s Cosmos, were nostalgic when he was talking about this game. “The arrival of Bayern Munich reminded me of the

Mohun Bagan-Cosmos match at the Eden Gardens in 1977. Cosmos weren't as popular as this German side is, but they still had players like Pele and Carlos Alberto in their team." The hosts were able to hold the star-studded visitors into a 2-2 draw in that historic contest about 31 years ago.

Sudhir Karmakar and Bidesh Bose, who played for Bagan in that encounter against Pele's Cosmos, advised, "If Mohun Bagan can give everything on-field as we did in 1977, there may achieve success against Bayern Munich too!" They also requested the fans of East Bengal F.C. and Mohammedan F.C., the other giants of the Kolkata football scenario, to be present at the stadium and support Bagan.

Renowned magician P.C. Sorcar Junior said, "I use to show magic on stage, and a player like Oliver Kahn shows magic on field."

Sandip Nandy, a goalkeeper from the current generation stated, "Kahn took Germany to World Cup final almost on his own during the 2002 World Cup. It is a thing to study how he manages to get out of the tough situations for his team."



*Oliver Kahn being felicitated in the ground in presence of S. K. Roy Managing Director Peerless Group, Subra Dutta, Utpal Ganguly and other dignitaries*

Shilton Paul, another

Bagan keeper, who was out of the team due to injury, noted, "In football, attack starts from the goalkeeper! I would like to be present in the stadium to learn how Kahn does that, how he charges the whole team with his approach and how he positions himself during the one-on-ones."

Bagan defender Habibur Rehman Mondal said while practicing ahead of the match, "It's a tough game. But if we do well in it, we will have great confidence for the full season. We may create history if we can perform fine here."

Bagan striker Lalam Puia smilingly informed that he would try his best to score against Bayern, although there would be Kahn in front of him.

Subrata Pal, the Indian national team keeper missed the chance to observe Kahn from the front due to national duty. He said, “Goalkeepers also lead their team on field. If I’d have been present there, I’d have watched how Kahn executes that job.”

Former Bagan star footballer Subrata Bhattacharya urged the home team to play tactfully, because it’s a stage to show what Indian footballers can do in front of the world.



*Oliver Kahn expressing about his experience in India  
at a press conference*

Ex India captain, Bhaskar Ganguly wrote in his column, “Not only for his excellent goalkeeping capabilities, but also for his personality and proficiency in leading his team, Kahn is the most talked-about goalkeeper in the world. He has secured a place in the heart of the lovers of this game, thanks to his

outstanding consistency in last few years. His name will be in the top bracket with legends like Lev Yasin, Gordon Banks or Dino Zoff. I’d advice the emerging footballers to watch the movements of Kahn throughout the game. He gaits within the 18 yard box like a lion!”

Former India and East Bengal goalkeeper Debasish Mukherjee said he would want to watch what exactly Kahn does before stepping into the ground.

F.C. Bayern Munich displayed their anticipation ahead of the event on their official website. It read - “The reason for the tumult gripping the East Indian metropolis of 15 million is Tuesday’s friendly between Mohun Bagan AC,

Asia's oldest club, and the touring Bayern team. The match is the last of Kahn's illustrious 20-year career as a professional footballer."

The match was themed on the German superstar goalkeeper, Oliver Kahn. Believe us, his reactions post the game had a sense of heartfelt delight. He was enthralled at the way his 1,25,000 Indian fans in stadium together chanted his name that day. Oliver told, "Thank you to everyone for this great moment in my career. Thank you India. This is very special. I feel honoured to be here and play my final match in front of this large turn-up."

His teammate, and former Netherlands skipper, Mark van Bommel, who earlier used to play for Barcelona F.C., rated the environment of Salt Lake Stadium more stirring than the Nou Camp!

According to him, "This wasn't the best weather to show your skill. But, then, it was a great experience to play in Calcutta. I thank all the football fans here to come and support us with such great enthusiasm."

Uli Hoeness confessed that he did not expect this much involvement of Indian public in football. He said, "I've never expected this in India! The excitement was incredible." Also he suffixed, "I think Kahn will remember this day for a very long time."

The referee who was in-charge of this match, Subrata Sarkar, was also conducting his last match in the role. He expressed, "I ended my career as a FIFA international referee presiding over a match involving Bayern Munich, that too in my own city! It was an unbelievable moment. I am unable to enunciate my feelings in words. I am grateful to I.F.A. and Bengal Peerless for giving me such an opportunity. It was a perfect ending to my job as a referee."

The Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld, who eventually managed Bayern for one last time in that match, expressed how impressed he was about the ambience. Here is what he said in his own words – "I'm very happy for Oliver that he got the farewell he deserved, here in Kolkata. It was really a great finish!"

He also upvoted Bagan over the Indonesian national team which Bayern

hammered 5-1 prior to their visit to Kolkata. “Bagan tried to play vivaciously. Their defence is well organized. Lalam Puia and Ishfaq Ahmed are technically good players”, he added, “It was my last match as the coach of Bayern as well. I am overwhelmed to end it in front of more than a 1,25,000 viewers. I had no idea there are such a huge fan following for football in this country.”

Ex-German footballer of Indian origin, and a trainer of F.C. Freiburg at that time, Robin Dutt spoke, “It is not always the result, but the quality of the game that counts in such an exhibition match. Mohun Bagan indeed has one or two players who could find a place in the second division of the German football league.”

P.K. Banerjee applauded the performance of Bagan in this game, and urged that Indian football from now on would have to move forward faster.

Bagan striker Jose Ramirez Barreto, who missed the match due to an injury, reflected, “The loss of Bagan at a margin of just three goals to such a great team like Bayern was not at all a thing of disgrace. As the top Bagan players like Bhaichung Bhutia, N.S. Manju, Nalappan Mohanraj or Deepak Mondal could not play this match due to national duty, the juniors fought bravely against the likes of van Bommel, Roberto or Breno. It was indeed a positive move for Indian football.”

Popular former Indian football personality, Shri Sainlen Manna mentioned, “Football is nowadays modernized compared to the era we used to play. Our young players played well against Bayern.”

Veteran Bengal and Indian winger, Surajit Sengupta praised the young Bagan squad for their unbelievable performance in the match. In his column he wrote, “No accolade is enough for the junior players of the home side who dared to break through the defence of a team like Bayern Munich!” He also regarded the 1,25,000 crowd who turned up as the ‘man of the match’.

The Bagan coach Satyajit Chattopadhyay claimed that the scoreline even could have been 2-2 or 2-3 instead of 0-3 for the hosts. “Winning was our prime objective. We dreamt it even we knew it would be next to impossible. We have at least come near the target.”

The Bagan goalkeeper Sangram Mukherjee was also eulogized for his performance in the match. He revealed, “I was deeply charged up seeing a legend like Kahn at the opposite post! The save off the shot of Ze Roberto is the best one of my life. This match would be an evergreen treasure for me.”

German public international broadcaster DW mentioned, “Banners Tuesday in Kolkata's Salt Lake arena read ‘Kahn't get any better’ and the match itself was dubbed ‘Oliver Kahn's Farewell Match.’ The stadium was sold out for the first time in more than a decade to mark the special occasion.”

The Bayern official website reported, “Kahn frenzy has hit a new zenith in the West Bengal capital, where his every public appearance has prompted the formation of a mighty scrum of well-wishers and media representatives. Mohun Bagan normally attract an average attendance of around 20,000, but the giant keeper's last outing is a different matter altogether.”

Later, Mohun Bagan player Ishfaq Ahmed recollected from his memory, “For the first time in my life, I was playing against such a big team like the Bayern Munich! It was full of star players like Kahn or Ze Roberto. I couldn't believe such a large crowd in the gallery. The stadium was filled up completely. It would be a lifetime memory for me.”

Defender Habibur Rehman Mondal described himself ‘lucky’ to be part of the game. “We have grown up watching these legends, and we were playing with them on that day”, he exclaimed!

The then A.I.F.F. secretary Alberto Colaco commented, “No doubt we need huge money for bringing the top European clubs in India but that can be raised through sponsorships. The successful hosting of Bayern Munich match in India has proved that there are companies, who are willing to come forward for staging such exhibition matches.”

## WINTER CAMP

The new era of Indian football began in 2008 with welcoming Bayern Munich at the south Asian nation for the first time. On 2009, the path was revealed for some more fresh opportunities thanks to the top German club.

There is a custom prevalent among the European clubs that they visit different countries away from their base camps in the winter season for exclusive training, practice matches or friendly tournaments. Dubai in the Emirates is one such location famous for these activities. The tropical desert climate around the city which keeps the temperature range during winter within 12°C to 25°C is the main reason why Dubai attracts these clubs for off-season camps.

Even India could have been a probable location for its tropical climate but the reputation of our country was not conducive to hosting an international event of this stature till 2008. So, Bayern was approached this time so that they put their tent at this nation that winter.

The game between Bayern and Mohun Bagan in May 2008 which was also very significant because it was the farewell match of German legend goalkeeper Oliver Kahn, experienced huge response from all over the world. It also extensively reflected the love India has in store for the sport of football.

Therefore, Bayern accepted the proposal and announced that they would visit the city of Kolkata for playing three practice matches over a span of one week. It was their second visit to the ‘City of Joy’, and this time they sent the FC Bayern-II consisting of the future stars of German football. The team is a regular in the third division of Bundesliga. It contained a young Thomas Müller, who would be the star for both Bayern and Germany within few months of this visit!

But the cynosure in the guest list was the iconic assistant coach of the team - Gerd Müller, one of the greatest strikers of all-time! The German living legend, Müller is 12th in the list of highest international goal-scorers (68 goals in 62 matches), with the highest strike rate (1.10) among the top 25 in the list. Müller, the former Bayern star was accompanying the second team of Bayern Munich during their visit to India in January 2009.

The importance of the game was compounded by the fact that the emerging stars of German football come to know more about football in India. The FC Bayern II, the second team of Bayern which plays in the 3. Liga confirmed to reach Kolkata on 15th January, and play three matches here. Werner Kern, the chief coach of the junior side said, “It’s a fantastic occasion. The lads can work hard and build up their fitness.” They were also scheduled to visit Siliguri, a city situated at North Bengal in the foothill of Himalayas.

## THE OPPOSITIONS

During their visit in 2008, Bayern Munich met Mohun Bagan A.C., the oldest active football club in Asia. This time, it was turn for their arch-rivals to face off against the German giants.

First, FCB II was set to meet the Kolkata Police Commissioner's XI on 18th January, but it was cancelled due to some unavoidable circumstances. Instead, they met the East Bengal club, one of the oldest heritage clubs of India which hails from the city of Kolkata, on 17th January at the Barasat Stadium. They met once again in the ‘return leg’ match at East Bengal Ground in Maidan.

East Bengal club was the greatest supporter of the whole initiative, and they helped heartily in making the tour of Bayern second team a memorable one.

Later they visited Siliguri, a city in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, to play the third game of the tour against the Siliguri Mayor's XI. This team fielded some the young local football players including a handful of kids from the indigenous communities of the region.

The Siliguri football community too lent their hands to receive the Europeans guests with warm hospitality. In this context, the names of Munsi Nurul Islam, the then Mayor of Siliguri Municipal Corporation and Ashok Bhattacharya, the then local M.L.A. cum state Urban Development Minister should be mentioned. Without their contributions, and without the support from half a million Siliguri population, the event could not be as successful as it happened to be.

## THE TIMELINE : KOLKATA

The guests reached the city late on 15th January after an exasperating 26-hour fog-affected plane journey. But within four hours of landing, the team showed sincere professionalism when they came down for a practice session at the East Bengal ground. The squad contained four players who were part of the Under-19 Bayern Munich team that won the 2005 I.F.A. Shield here.

Gerd Müller reached the city on the next day. He was felicitated on the match day at Barasat stadium. The East Bengal club greeted him with shawls, famous sweets



*Gerd Müller along with Bayern second team visits Mother House, Kolkata*

of Bengal, a no. 13 East Bengal jersey and a red-and-gold scarf resembling their official club colours. Furthermore, the North 24 Parganas District Staff Recreation Club, the Barasat Veterans Club, the Sports Management Committee of Barasat Stadium and the Press Club Kolkata also felicitated him in order.

In the first match of the one-week tour, the Bayern II took the field at the Barasat stadium against the reserve team of East Bengal FC on 17th January. It had the former Indian international footballer Subhas Bhowmick as the manager.

In the second minute of the game itself, Deniz Yilmaz netted a beauty for the visitors from the right side of the penalty box. Later on, he and Stefan Schurf created a few opportunities before missing each of those in the second half.

The young Bayern players enthralled the visitors with better passing, speed, co-ordination, anticipation and distribution. A 19-year-old Thomas Müller had been outstanding throughout the game. Playing as a right midfielder, he didn't manage to score himself but was responsible for most of his team's attacks. The left flank of East Bengal spent a real harrowing time just due to the megistic presence of Muller.

Midway through the second half, Goutam Kujur missed the easiest chance for East Bengal. Although they lost the game at a margin of 1-0, the youthful East



*Gerd Müller and Thomas Müller at a social event in Kolkata*

Bengal players caught eyes throughout the game. Especially, the Bayern coaching staffs appreciated Sanju Pradhan of East Bengal for his good performance.

The teams once again faced each other on 19th January, this time at the East Bengal ground. Bhowmick fielded the first team of East Bengal, but Bayern this time did not repeat the mistakes which they committed in the last game at Barasat.

In the fourth minute, the star from the last game, Yilmaz opened the account for the visitors with a grounder from the right of the penalty box. In the 26th minute, he netted his second of the day, and then Thomas Müller made his mark scoring the third goal of the team in the 27th. From a header at the 41st minute, Yilmaz defeated the East Bengal keeper Subrata Paul to complete his hat-trick! Bayern was cruising at 4-0 during the half-time.

Once the game resumed, Yilmaz was substituted, opening a ray of hope for the hosts. Sanju Pradhan once again showed his class when he sent a cross to Sunil Chhetri, who performed a perfect header to deceive and edge past the Bayern goalkeeper Maximilian Riedmuller at the 50th minute. At 4-1, Sunil took a similar attempt from a cross off Alvito D'Cunha, but this time it was defended early.

But at the 68th minute, Stieer scored from a brilliant back-volley to complete the 5-1 victory in favour of the visitors.

## THE TIMELINE : SILIGURI

After completing the Kolkata episode, the Bayern II team reached Siliguri, the third largest city in the state of West Bengal after Kolkata and Howrah. Situated at the foothills of the Himalayas on the banks of Mahananda River, it is also called the ‘Gateway of North-East India’.

The city has a football-crazy population. The Kanchenjunga stadium is situated in the city, which has hosted a significant number of FIFA international friendlies.

Bayern II team was scheduled to play the third practice match of the tour on 21st January evening against the Siliguri Mayor's XI. This team had Jayabrata Ghosh as its coach.

In the morning, a trial was organized in presence of the Bayern Munich team and the coaching staff, for the kids under the age of 13. From this selection try-out, six kids were shortlisted and provided



*FC Bayern-II footballers with Siliguri Mayor's XI team at Kanchanjangha Stadium*

sponsored trips to the Bayern Munich academy at Germany. Among the six kids named Dipu Burman, Amit Thakuri, Litan Shil, Abhishek Chhetri, Sanjib Kerketta and Nishant Toppo, the last two hailed from the underprivileged aboriginal colonies of the Kamala Tea Estate in Naxalbari.

This event evoked an overwhelming response from all corners of the town. The boys who participated, returned home with substantial motivation earned from the Bayern Munich coaching staffs. The environment echoed with that of any festival in India.

The Bayern II team also visited a local tea estate ahead of the match and spent some time there in the middle of the fields that produce the globally famous Darjeeling tea.

In the chilly afternoon, the guests took the field along with the home side Siliguri Mayor's XI at the Kangchenjunga stadium in front of more than 25,000 heads. Just ahead of the start of the game, several organisations including the Siliguri Mahakuma Krira Parishad, the Siliguri Municipal Corporation and the Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority felicitated the former World Cupper Gerd Müller.

The teams were not evenly matched in capability, therefore Bayern II just outplayed the Mayor's XI. They scored a total of 6 goals, 3 each in the both halves. The goal scorers were Yilmaz Deniz (2), Stephan Fuerstner (2), Badstuber Holger (1) and Thomas Müller (1). The only man in defence was the Siliguri goalkeeper Biman Ghosh, who saved many goals and did not allow the scoreline to step beyond 6 goals. The Bayern coaching staff were all praise for his action on the field.

The spectators at the stadium did not only come from Siliguri, but also there were many football fans present from Darjeeling and North-east India. They cheered for the home team continuously as well as applauded each goal of the visiting side. As a whole, Siliguri created an atmosphere which is unforgettable to both the sides confronting against each other.

Hermann Gerland, the chief coach of German team, and Martin Haegele, the international director of the outfit, appreciated the organisers for the excellent arrangement. "This is the best ground we have seen in our tour over the past one week," Hermann said at the post-match media conference.



*East Bengal and FC Bayern-II footballers shaking hands with each other*

Some memoirs of the Bayern Munich club including a jersey of 2006 FIFA World Cup Golden Boot winner Miroslav Klose were auctioned in that evening. Around 3.91 lac rupees were collected from the function, which was later utilized for helping underprivileged footballers.

## **THE RESPONSE**

After successfully hosting the historic farewell match of Oliver Kahn at the

Salt Lake Stadium, Kolkata, it was turn for the second team of Bayern Munich to visit the city. The young German club side had another legendary German footballer Gerd Müller as its assistant coach!

Martin Haegele, the international relations head of the German club also visited India with the young team. He showed determination when he said, “We know that India was the best footballing nation in Asia in the 50s and 60s. We are here to help Indian football regain its glory, and we offer full co-operation for this.”

The chief coach of the Bayern Munich second team, Hermann Gerland said, “It is winter at Munich, so we have come here for training. We will play three practice matches here. This team contains some talented players who will play for the first team of Bayern in near future. We signify youth level football very much in Germany.”

The visitors planned to play two matches against local favourites East Bengal F.C., before visiting Siliguri for a game against the Mayor’s XI. The East Bengal coach, Subhash Bhowmick commented after watching a practice



*Felicitation of Gerd Müller at Barasat Stadium*

session of the Bayern squad, “I have learnt a lot from this session. Germans don’t explore a nation just for business. A brave race like them always go to contribute something. I want to build a permanent link between my East Bengal club and Bayern Munich.”



*Gerd Müller felicitated by Indian Cricket legend Sourav Ganguly along with Sri Gautam Mohan Chakraborty, IPS the then Commissioner of Police, Kolkata Police*

Although East Bengal lost the first game at the Barasat stadium at a 1-0 margin, the all-Indian side impressed the Bayern coaching staff. Bhowmick said, “The basic play, the touch with the ball and positioning of a professional team like Bayern is always better. I wanted to see how my boys fare against them. They have done satisfactory

enough on field which will definitely encourage them for the rest of the season.”

In the return leg, Bayern beat East Bengal 5-1 at the East Bengal ground in Kolkata. Bhowmick was not unhappy with it, as he said, “The Bayern second team is five times stronger than ours. No team in India can match their speed, breathe, positioning, body weight or goal-scoring skills. So we don’t feel any pressure at this loss.”

Bhowmick did not field any foreigner in both the matches. He wanted the Indian footballers of the team to have the full exposure.

The Bayern II chief coach, Werner Kern too praised the home team. He said, “The team has good speed.”

On the felicitation event, Gerd Müller unveiled the stories of his prolific career. When asked about the difference between strikers in his era and the strikers in the current era, he answered, “The fight was more inclined towards one-on-one in our time. So, scoring goals were easier compared to the current era of tactical football. The task is harder these days.”

When someone demanded his opinion about who was better among Pele and Maradona, his response was “Gerd Müller”! He also disclosed the reasons behind his discomfort with late Manchester United winger George Best.

“The 1974 FIFA World Cup victory, then the triumph within few days over England through my goal, and being the best footballer of Bundesliga competing with Franz Beckenbauer would be the best three moments of my life”, he added, “I liked Nirmal Chhetri the most among the East Bengal players. He is a dynamic defender.”

Nirmal Chhetri was delighted to receive such a compliment from someone like Gerd Müller. He later said, “It is an extra source of inspiration for me. I started as a midfielder, but then I shifted to the role of stopper while playing at Sikkim. I have the aim to play for the national team soon.”

Bayern visited the last stop Siliguri, where they beat the Mayor’s XI at a margin of 6-0. The state Minister of Municipal Affairs, Ashok Bhattacharya said, “It has been an historical day for the city of Siliguri.”

Two years later, Thomas Müller during his second visit to India, this time as a member of the Bayern Munich first XI recounted the memories of his first outing here. “I am excited to come back after the visit to Kolkata and Siliguri in January 2009. Football is the best team sport in the world. I’m happy that more and more kids are playing the game in India,” said Müller.

## THE CONTROVERSY

The whole programme as a whole was a success. After the senior team in 2008, the second team also came to know about the contemporary scenario of Indian football within this one week. India exclusively watched the future stars of German football live on its soil. The players who played against the Bayern II had the opportunity to learn a lot of things about modern football.

However, the matter was not completely free from some controversial circumstances. The Indian Football Association (I.F.A.) was the main body responsible for those cases.

The actual aim in bringing the German side in India for a winter camp was to allow Indian clubs and players to work with them within their tenure here. Some great football personalities were present among the coaching staffs of the visiting squad, and they were ready to sit with the Indian coaches to discuss and explore about the modern day training procedures which may have helped in the revival process of Indian football in near future.

For all these, a green signal was required from the I.F.A., i.e. the governing body of football in West Bengal. But they did not provide that co-operation, causing all these plans go in vain. I.F.A. missed a great opportunity to cash in on the benefits out of this tour of Bayern Munich II. Had the support been extended, the young Indian footballers could have learnt some important lessons and experience from the touring coaches, as well as India could have established itself as a permanent location for hosting winter camps not only for Bayern Munich, but also for the other reputed international football clubs.

I.F.A. resisted declaring both the matches between FC Bayern II and the East Bengal F.C. as official ones. As a result, the East Bengal team had to play the match wearing bib instead of their official kits.



*Glimpse of the mach Eas Bengal vs FC Bayern - II*

## LEGEND'S VISIT

The concept of an ‘All Star’ football match was something that India was not familiar about before 2010. An All Star football squad is a regular feature in case of the top tier European clubs. It comprises those retired players of the club who delivered to the best of their abilities during their stint as professional footballers!

F.C. Bayern Munich established its All Star team on 7th July 2006. It was formed with the objective to raise popularity of the brand Bayern within and outside Germany. It has brought to the fore some of the greatest pros of the club, such as World Cup winners Klaus Augenthaler, Raimond Aumann, Andreas Brehme, Paul Breitner, Hans Pflügler, Stefan Reuter, Paulo Sérgio and Olaf Thon.

The All Star team of Bayern generally plays limited number of matches over a year. In 2010, it was the turn for India to host this gang on its soil.

In the previous two years, the first team and the second team of the German club visited India to play exhibition and practice matches here against some of the popular Indian clubs. Oliver Kahn took retirement from his superlative professional football career after playing his last match at Kolkata on May 2008. The youth team of F.C. Bayern had a winter camp on 2009 January, where future stars like Thomas Müller and coaches like the great Gerd Müller participated.

This time, it was the turn for the F.C. Bayern ‘All Stars’ to set their foot at the city of Kolkata, to play a charity match against the All Stars of the local favourites East Bengal Football Club. The match was scheduled to happen once again at the Mecca of Indian football – the Salt Lake Stadium, on the glittering evening of 17th November 2010.

The match was dedicated to the have-nots and undernourished street children of Kolkata. The funds raised from the match were donated to a Non-Government

Organization named ‘Towards Life Foundation of India’, who later utilized it for the education of these underprivileged children.

## THE BAYERN ‘ALL STAR’

As the name indicated, literally F.C. Bayern Munich was bringing all their best former recruits, who had been bestowed with honour from all the legions of football lovers around the world in their respective eras.

The 16-member team contained six world cup champion team members! The first of all was Andreas Brehme, the German defender whose penalty goal catapulted Germany to become the 1990 FIFA World Cup champions. The next big name was Paul Breitner, member of the spearhead 1974 West Germany FIFA World Cup champion German side. His partnerships with Karl-Henz Rummenigge in the midfield, and with Franz Beckenbauer at defence for Bayern as well as for the German national team were indelible. Breitner also led Bayern to the Bundesliga championship title on 1980.

Apart from these two legends, the 1990 World Champion German team members Raimond Aumann, Hans Pflügler, Stefan Reuter and the 1994 World Champion Brazil striker Paulo Sergio also featured in the visiting team.

1980 Euro champion German goalkeeper Walter Junghans, 2001 UEFA Champions League winners Bayern Munich defender Michael Tarnat were some other big names in the side.

The team was also blessed with the 1982 FIFA World Cup runners German team coach Wolfgang Dremmler. The full squad is given below:

### F.C. Bayern Munich All Stars

***Goalkeepers :*** Raimond Aumann, Walter Junghans.

***Defenders :*** Andreas Brehme, Oliver Kreuzer, Markus Münch, Hans Pflügler, Stefan Reuter, Michael Tarnat.

**Midfielders :** Paul Breitner, Harald Cerny, Armin Eck, Ludwig Kögl, Matthias Zimmermann.

**Forwards :** Carsten Lakies, Paulo Sergio, Marcel Witeczek.

**Coach :** Wolfgang Dremmler.



*The FC Bayern All-Star squad at Salt Lake Stadium*

India has never seen such a range of celebrated former football characters together live! So, it was a big treat for all the football lovers residing here. That's why once again an atmosphere of huge craze was formed, which became stratospheric as the countdown closed in.

The fans of the local side East Bengal F.C. were never frightened at the hefty team list of the visitors! Their favourite side also featured some of the best formers who have been elegant in their time, who had been expressive and aggressive for their magnificent deliveries, which goes well with the nature of football fans in Bengal.

## THE EAST BENGAL ‘ALL STAR’

East Bengal has always been successful when they met the foreign contingents.

One of the most successful football clubs in the country, East Bengal had defeated PAS Club of Iran in the 1970 I.F.A. Shield. It was a historic moment in Indian football, as PAS was one of the top Asian clubs of that era. In 1986 I.F.A. Shield, they beat the Nigerian club Levantis United, who were the African Cup Winners' Cup runners of its previous year!

At the 1993-94 Asian Club Cup, East Bengal defeated Al-Zawra's S.C. of Iraq at a margin of 4 goals. It was a milestone in Indian football as the Iraq's national league and F.A. Cup champions were outplayed by the East Bengal side totally. Later on a 1997-98 Asian Cup Winner's Cup tie, East Bengal beat the Japanese Tokyo Verdy club, who were the former A.F.C. Champions' League triumphant.

On way to clinch the 2003 ASEAN Cup title, they beat BEC Tero Sasana F.C. of Thailand in the final.

So, the expectation from the East Bengal All Star side was sky high this time too. The fans wanted the red-and-gold side to be jubilant once again against the German side.

The All Star concept was a new thing to the Indian side, who were waiting for the encounter versus the Bayern legends. Still they constructed a strong team, which was shining at the inclusion of some former Indian international players, who have made East Bengal proud often in the domestic platform as well as in the Asian football arena.

### **East Bengal F.C. All Stars**

**Goalkeepers:** Debasish Mukherjee, Atanu Bhattacharyya, Arpan Dey, Tarun Bose, Bhaskar Ganguly.

**Defenders:** Sudhir Karmakar (Captain), Tarun Dey, Swarup Das, Aloke Mukherjee, Shyamal Banerjee, Krishnendu Roy, Shyamal Ghosh, Balai Mukherjee.

**Midfielders:** Tushar Rakshit, Chinmoy Chatterjee, Maidul Islam, Gautam Sarkar (vice-Captain), Debjit Ghosh, Kabir Bose, Bikash Panji, Mihir Bose,

Amit Das, Ranjan Chowdhury, Abhijit Roy Chowdhury, Gautam Ghosh, Jamshed Nassiri, Kartik Sett, Sanjoy Majhi, Monojit Das, Dulal Biswas, Basudeb Mondal.

**Forwards :** Sishir Ghosh, Shyam Thapa, Swapan Sengupta, Subhash Bhownick, Ranjit Mukherjee, Chandan Banerjee, Sukumar Samajpati.

**Managers :** Surajit Sengupta, Manaranjan Bhattacharya.

**Coach :** Samaresh Chowdhury.

In his time, the skipper Karmakar was synonymous to nightmare for the fans of Mohun Bagan A.C., renowned as the arch-rivals of East Bengal. Under his leadership, East Bengal almost dominated any Kolkata Derby match they played against the later. The Arjuna awardee Sudhir Karmakar was also named the ‘Best Defender of the Millennium’ at East Bengal club.



*The East Bengal All-Stars at press meet*

The goalkeeper Atanu Bhattacharya is a renowned name in Indian football history. He played for the Indian national team for 12 years, and he was selected in the Asia All Star XI as well. Tarun Bose is another famous name in the side. He is considered as one of the best goalkeepers India has ever produced. A Kolkata Maidan football fans can never fail to remember the heroics of Bose for the East Bengal club. Bhaskar Ganguly, another keeper well-known for his dominance over the 18 yard box, also led the Indian national team in 1982 Asian Games.

1964 Asiad Indian team member Sukumar Samajpati, 1971 Merdeka Cup Indian squad member Swapan Sengupta, 1974 Asiad Indian squadron member Gautam Sarkar, 1975 Calcutta Division 1 League champion East Bengal captain Shyamal Ghosh, 1978 Asiad Indian midfielder Chinmoy Chatterjee,

1982 Asiad Indian team defender Tarun Dey, 1982 Nehru Cup Indian side member Mihir Bose, 1984 Asiad Indian squad members Aloke Mukherjee, Bikash Panji, 2003 S.A.F.F. Gold Cup Indian skipper Debjit Ghosh, 2003 ASEAN club championship winners East Bengal forward Subhas Bhowmick, 9 times Kolkata league champion midfielder Tushar Rakshit were the other big names in the East Bengal All Star squad.

Shyam Thapa, a living legend, had been extraordinary as a striker for both the East Bengal and the Mohun Bagan club. He helped East Bengal win the epic 1975 I.F.A. Shield final, where his team trounced Bagan at a humiliating margin of 5-0. Two years later, he was bought by Bagan at a record fee of Rs. 50,000, which made him the highest paid Indian footballer of that period. He helped Bagan conquer many trophies in the next few seasons.

Jamshed Nassiri was the only foreigner to feature in the East Bengal All Star squad for Bayern match. The Iranian footballer was included in the ‘Hall of Fame’ of the Red-and-Gold brigade for his contributions back in the eighties.

Surajit Sengupta, the chief manager of the home side was one of the finest right wingers of the club. Monoranjan Bhattacharya, his colleague at the role was a powerful defender who represented the national team in 1978-89.

Mr. Sengupta recounted on his column, “I was honoured that East Bengal asked me to build the team for this game. But it was really difficult for me alone to decide the team for a match of such an intensity. So, I requested for some more senior players in the selection committee.

“After long discussion among this panel, we have made a list of 37 former East Bengal players who would play this game. The prime factors upon which they were selected, include that they should be able to take the field for at least thirty minutes. Upon request from the organizers, we selected some of the famous names of 70s and 80s, as their inclusion would help in raising a greater amount for charity.

“When the players received the East Bengal jersey from the children at the press meet, they looked very emotional. I guess this emotion would result into

a high turnout at the stadium, who would like to relive the good old days of the club!"

According to him, "whoever wins the game, the red-and-gold colours would fly at the stadium."

As this team contained some of the awesome goalkeepers, some of the ferocious defenders, some of the prolific midfielders, some of the lethal strikers and some of the prodigious managers, the East Bengal fans were ecstatic about the clash of the titans – the much-longed All Star match on the soil of Kolkata.

The team took their preparation very seriously to perform their best against the German stars. They were eager to show the opponents that Indians too are efficient in the game of football. Under the strict surveillance of the coach Samaresh Chowdhury, the group participated in some extensive practice sessions. In a practice match against the F.C.I., they registered a comfortable victory at a margin of 1-0. Tushar Rakshit's sole goal marked the watershed of the game.

## THE CAUSE

The All Star match was given the status of a 'charity match'. The fund raised from the attendance were donated to Towards Life Foundation of India, who used that sum to provide a thousand street children better education and life ahead.

In a press interview, the director of Towards Life Foundation of India, Dr. R.P. Banerjee who is also the director of Eastern Institute for Integrated Learning in Management (E.I.I.L.M.), said, "This N.G.O. was set up



*Annoucment of the All Star Match*

at Kidderpore three years ago with an aim for betterment of the condition of the street children of Kolkata. We also established a school for these kids. In these three years, we have developed eight centres across the city, where the E.I.I.L.M. students teach these kids on a regular basis. Classes are held every week there, where the kids are provided with food packets.

We have hosted an auction of paintings compiled by these kids. The money collected from it was used for their comfort.”

He added, “When we went to talk to the Bayern officials about our proposal, they demanded a champion team whom they would play with. As East Bengal was the Federation Cup champions of that season, we approached them first. The secretary Kalyan Majumdar instantly agreed as the match had noble intentions attached to it.”

But why an All Star match? Dr. Banerjee replied, “We could not have brought 7 world cuppers together if it was not the Bayern All Star team! East Bengal too would field the greats against them. We cannot ignore the fact that these retired footballers are old but still they are fit enough. Both the teams are practicing hard for the game.”

He mentioned that separate squads of the F.C. Bayern Munich had already come to play at Kolkata in the previous years, so a bonding grew up between the German club and this city. “That is the prime reason why Bayern was ready to send their All Star team here”, told Dr. Banerjee.

Apart from the social causes associated with the game, there were some other significance of this event too. All the big Europeans clubs had their All Star squad, a concept which could be brought to India as well. East Bengal started the tradition here through this November 2009 battle versus Bayern Munich. Also, bringing the Bayern squad to the city for three years in-a-row strengthened the consistency of the revamp of Indian football through their involvement.

The Bayern legends who were coming, were well aware about the craze for football in Kolkata. So, they were eager to perform their best out here in front of the large crowd.

## THE THEME SONG

The football fans all over the world await a FIFA World Cup for various reasons. Some wait to watch their favourite footballer at the podium finish, some wait to explore the host nation through the supplementary programs on the broadcasting channel. The international music fans long for a fresh soothing theme song and anthem designed for that World Cup tournament.



*Launching of theme song for the East Bengal legends vs FC Brayen All-Star match*

Indian football lovers are no exceptions in that case! ‘The Time of Our Lives’ performed by II Divo and Tony Braxton in 2006, or the viral ‘Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)’ by Shakira in 2010 scintillated the hearts of the Indian fans.

But surprisingly, there was no sign of theme song in the context of Indian football. A nation which bears a long history in the sport, it is really unfortunate that none ever thought of introducing such a thing.

The 2010 All Star match not only introduced the concept of All Star squads, but also started the tradition of theme songs in India, which was later taken to a greater level by the I.S.L. franchises.

'Kaya', a band based on Kolkata was given the opportunity to compose a theme song for the match which would host several popular legends in both the teams, and which would be dedicated to the poor street children of the city.

The song was sent to the Bayern authority, and they gladly approved the song.

In my little heart  
Burning desire runs high  
Through my little eyes  
I dare to dream  
The world is my stage  
Football is my passion/  
Yes, yes, yes! I'll do my best  
Oh aye oh, here comes the Bayern brothers...

The bassist of the band, Arindam Chatterjee said, "It's been done from the point of view of the street children. But the projection is far from being a cliché. Certain international films try to cash in on 'poverty' that the country is so famous for. But here, we've tried to be different. The idea is to stress on the happiness aspect. Those living on streets too can be happy. Where we live might not exactly be a comfort zone for the Richie Rich. But we are happy in our space. Likewise, street children too can be happy in theirs. That's what the song is all about."

The music video was launched at the Park Hotel in presence of all members of the band, Andre Fischbaek from the German Consulate in Kolkata, East Bengal F.C. secretary Kalyan Majumdar, and Towards Life Foundation of India director Dr. R.P. Banerjee. It is the first ever theme music song in Indian football.

## THE EVENTS

On 14th November, three days ahead of the match, two rallies were organized in two different points of the city of Kolkata, in order to raise awareness about the event.

In an early Sunday morning, East Bengal All Star managers Sukumar Samajpati, Surajit Sengupta, East Bengal secretary Kalyan Majumdar, Dr. R.P. Banerjee, Kaya band members and the street children associated with 'Towards Life Foundation of India' walked from Dakshinapan to Prince Anwar

Shah Road in South Kolkata with a decorated tableau. Another troop was present at Shyam Bazar crossing in North Kolkata where the assistant secretary of the club, Dr. Santiranjan Dasgupta and football secretary Santosh Bhattacharya conveyed the message about this match to the surrounding locality.



*Promotional Rally for All-Star match*



*FC Bayern Legend Paul Breitner at Kolkata Police event*

The Bayern All Star team reached the city on Monday midnight. On Tuesday morning, after a press conference, the Bayern stars reached the Alipore Bodyguard's Line to attend the final of a school football competition along with Indian football legends like P. K. Banerjee and Syed Naeemuddin.



*Fashion Show featuring the FC Bayern and East Bengal All-Stars along with fashion designer Agnimitra Paul*

They also visited the Audi football clinic at the Calcutta Cricket and Football Club. As it happened during Kahn's tour in 2008, 96 young talents this time too played in front of the German guests Brehme and Breitner. The best six footballers named Ram Chhetri, Lalbang, Suman Rai, Don, Sanchayan Samaddar and Simanta Murmu were chosen among these bunch who later visited Munich for an exclusive training program.



*Launching of Commemorative Mokabari Tea pack for celebration for the legends match*

Towards Life Foundation of India hosted a special dinner for the German club that night, where both the clashing team members were present. A fashion show was included in the event in supervision of fashion designer Agnimitra Paul. The Bayern All Stars appeared in Bavarian lederhosen getup, whereas the East Bengal line-up turned up in traditional Dhoti-Punjabi!

## THE PRELUDE

Memories and emotions flew at the press conference where the Bayern superstars Andreas Brehme and Paul Breitner addressed the journalists.

Breitner regarded Gerd Müller of his nationality as the best footballer ever. In the current era, he declared Lionel Messi as the one who's much ahead of his contemporary youngsters.

When asked about his controversial goal at the 1990 FIFA World Cup final against Argentina, Andreas Brehme said, "I don't care about it. Penalty goals are not something new. The history will always remember that Germany became world champion for that goal. Although Maradona and Argentina fought hard in the match, we won it ultimately."

“I was determined to score the goal from that penalty. I generally used to shoot the ball hard using left feet, but to lessen the chance of a miss, I shot with the right feet.”

Who was the most impressive player in the 2010 World Cup? Brietner voted for Thomas Müller, the young German boy who visited India one year ago to play three practice matches in Kolkata and Siliguri.

“Before this World Cup, none knew much about this boy, and now he is a superstar! In overall, Messi was the most impressive, and the Spanish footballers Xavi, Puyol and Iniesta also grabbed admiration”, said the German defender who is one of the four footballers to have scored goals in two different World Cup finals.



*FC Bayern Legends interacting with media*

He rated Bundesliga as the toughest football league in the world. “In other countries, only 2-3 teams are marked as favourites. But in Germany, there are almost 6 favourites including Bayern”, described Brietner.

When asked about the loss of Germany to Italy in the 1982 World Cup final, he said, “A professional footballer should have an ideal that they should move ahead from every bad thing that happens. I have also forgot on the next morning what happened in that final.”

Brietner started his career as a defender, but later became successful as a midfielder. He said, “I can be regarded as Philip Lahm of that generation.

I also used to play as an attacking defender such as Lahm, Maicon and Dani Alves play these days.”

Diego Maradona, the Argentinian legend visited Kolkata just two months before this match. Talking about him, Brehme asserted, “He was a big footballer in terms of technique and skill. But we cannot judge him much as a coach, as Argentina did not keep him long in the role.”

However, when the discussion focussed on the much anticipated All Star match between East Bengal and Bayern, Brietner was serious enough. He said, “Be it an exhibition match, we aren’t taking this as fun. We are here to win. Bayern players don’t have the right to lose!”

As the Germans never cease to display their self-esteem, their Indian counterparts also did not remain silent. Surajit Sengupta replied, “Although we are older now, still we share the same furore, the same mindset even today! We are hungry to show what we can do on the ground.”



*Paul Brietner encouraging the future talents of Indian football*

The East Bengal All Star side coach Samares Choudhary said, “We are not only playing for East Bengal, but also we are also representing India. We are practicing seriously for a long time. Few players are aged now, but still we have four-five players who can play full 90 minutes.”

As per the request of East Bengal, Bayern management agreed to disable the traditional restrictions regarding substitution rules.

The captain Sudhir Karmakar said, “If this game happened ten years ago, we would have stopped any team, be it Bayern or any other top one.”

Gautam Sarkar, the East Bengal midfielder commented, “Bayern is much advanced than us in all aspects. But we won’t lag behind mentally! And one must not think there won’t be any fight as this is just an exhibition match. We

won't set our foot on the field to lose. We'll show them even Indians can play the game well enough."

So, the stage for an exciting battle was set already. The fans of both the teams in the country was waiting eagerly to watch the colours that would flow at the Salt Lake Stadium on 17th November evening.

## THE MATCH

The match saw a flurry of goals scored by both the sides, but the German guests outplayed the home team completely. Not many fans would have expected the opposite result, as the Bayern All Star side had better players in terms of match practice, skills and experience compared to the East Bengal All Stars.

Bayern was dominating the game from the very beginning, as they opened their account at the 4th minute, thanks to the very first goal of striker Paulo Sergio, from a pass off Brehme. Harald Cerny added to the pain of East Bengal when he scored in the 19th minute to give Bayern a 2-0 lead. Marcus Munch netted his first of the night on 27th, while Sergio doubled on the 30th.



*Glimpses from the FC Bayern versus East Bengal All-Stars*

East Bengal showed a brief resilience ahead of the half time, helping them gain a goal, when Kabir Bose scored on the 44th minute.

But when the play resumed, Bayern did not waste any time, and tightened the neck of their opposition through attacking football. Sergio completed his hat-trick at the 54th minute, and made it 4 besides his name at the 60th minute. Marcus and Dremler then scored back-to-back in the 63rd and 66th minute, and repeated the feat again in the 74th and 77th minute.

Trailing at 1-10, East Bengal was allowed two late strikes, as Amit Das put one into the goal at 81st and Sanjoy Majhi on the 89th minute.

The game ended at 10-3 margin in favour of the Bayern team, but the scores did not matter much to the players, as they were playing for a noble cause.

Present in the gallery were 5,000 street children in the gallery, to whom the



*Paul Brietner lifts the trophy after beating the hosts to 10-3*



*EB captain Sudhir Karmakar shares smile with rival side skipper Brietner*

match was dedicated. An auction was held later where the money collected from the bids on three special Bayern outfits and five jerseys signed by different Bayern legends from different eras were donated to Towards Life Foundation of India, so that they can utilize it for the betterment of these kids.

## THE REACTIONS

After the East Bengal All Star lost to the Bayern All Stars at a wide margin, former East Bengal captain Santo Mitra expressed his grief, “I’m sad though it was an exhibition game. We got to know how much they are ahead of us.”

East Bengal manager Surajit Sengupta told, “Of course there’s much difference between them and us. They are playing throughout the year. They are well organized as a team. We didn’t have such opportunities.”

Midfielder Gautam Sarkar spoke, “They use their players even after retirement, an opportunity which we do not have here. Our clubs should think about it.”

Chinmay Chatterjee remarked playfully, “There is a tradition that foreign clubs are called for participation in I.F.A. Shield. If this All Star Bayern team is called up in some edition, they’ll be the champion even at this age!”



*EB captain Sudhir Karmakar shares smile with rival side skipper Brietner*

Captain Sudhir Karmakar was not very unhappy as “the initiative was noble. We played the match for a social cause.”

Bayern captain Paul Brietner was happy and fascinated with the love they received here. He said, “A bond of friendship has grown up between this city and my club. We need to carry on this relationship in the coming years. East Bengal is always welcome if they visit Germany for a rematch!”

About the All Star concept he added, “We do not often practice together. But we try to hold our fitness throughout the year. Because we know if we are fit enough, the mutual understanding will come automatically once we take the ground.”

As the game was meant for charity, Brietner said, “We don’t play football just for entertainment, we have some more commitments beyond that.”

Later on his column Surajit Sengupta recounted that Brietner advised him to ask East Bengal to set up its official All Star team. The humble warm-hearted man also invited the team to Germany for a rematch.

## THE AFTERMATH

East Bengal indeed was the first Indian club to set up an All Star team. The tradition which was nonexistent before, was built through this match.

Today, India have an official Legends XI, which the stars of the yesteryears represent. This team was formed on July 2017, in lines of the top Europeans clubs. Their line-up for their first official match contained the former greats of Indian national team, which is followed by –

### Indian Legends XI

Sandip Nandy (Goalkeeper), Deepak Mondal, Basudeb Mondal, Naushad Moosa, Godfreid Pereira, Abdul Khalique, Bhaichung Bhutia, IM Vijayan, Bruno Coutinho, Yusuf Ansari (Goalkeeper), Clifford Miranda, Alvito D'cunha, Renedy Singh, Bijen Singh, Tomba Singh, Somtai Shazia, Carlton Chapman, Bhaskar Ganguly, Micheal Chopra, Sanju Pradhan, Nirmal Chhetri.

The platform was set already by one game that happened seven years ago at Kolkata when Bayern Munich All Stars met the East Bengal All Stars, the first legends' team in Indian football.

So this one particular event set a new horizon in the game of football in India, as lot of fresh staffs set its first foot during this - be it All Star football involving the former stars, or be it theme song. Besides that, it helped many penurious children gain right education, opportunities, and obtain a new lease of life for themselves as well as their families.



*East Bengal Legend's Jersey Launch*

## BAYERN IMPACT

The game of football has a long history in India. India was under the colonial rule of The Great Britain. But they introduced the sport to this country in the mid-nineteenth century. It was originally a source of entertainment for the British on-duty uniformed service officers in their leisure.

However, some Indian enthusiasts played a major role in popularizing this game across the nation. One of them was a teenager named Nagendra Prasad Sarbadhikari, a student of the Hare School, Calcutta. He popularized the game among his classmates in the school ground, which moved the European faculty members. They encouraged Nagendra Prasad and his friends to promote the game around the city. He will be remembered in history as the ‘father of Indian football’. Calcutta soon became the principle hub of football, which may be considered as a perk of being the capital of British India back then.

In 1888, the Durand Cup was introduced at Shimla, North India as the first Indian national football tournament. It is considered as the third oldest football competition in the world, behind the Football Association Challenge Cup of England and the Scottish Cup. Durand Cup is today 129 years old, and it is still in action as an annual event.

Thereafter in 1893, the I.F.A. Shield was founded, which is the fourth oldest football tournament in the world! It is one of the most famous football contests in India till date, and it has a great historical significance. Some top famous clubs around the globe also participated in it – Bayern Munich (reserve team) in 2005, Pas Club from Iran, Penarol FC of Uruguay, and Shakhtar Donetsk of Russia etc.

Mohun Bagan A.C., India’s currently in-action oldest club was founded in the year 1889. They are bearing the torch of Indian football for the last 128 years.

Bagan created history by beating East Yorkshire Regiment 2-1 in the 1911

I.F.A. Shield final. They were the first native team to win an Indian national level tournament, that too with bare foot.

Indian national football team first participated in an Olympic match during the 1948 London edition. They also qualified in the main round of 1950 FIFA World Cup to be hosted in Brazil. Unfortunately, the governing body of A.I.F.F. decided to withdraw its name from this competition, on account of the skyrocketing travel expense to the South American nation. Indian football hence missed a grand chance to set its identity in front of the world.

However in the 1950s, Indian football team continued to reach greater heights, as they had an edge over every other opponent in Asia. Under the tutelage of Syed Abdul Rahim, regarded as the architect of modern football in this nation, India lifted the 1951 Asian Games trophy. They won many other Asian tournaments, of which some powerful teams were part of. India played exceptionally well in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, before losing to Yugoslavia in the semi-final. They lost the Bronze play-off as well to finish as 4th, the best ever result for the Indian football team in any Olympics.

India also won the 1962 Asian Games, but thereafter faced a fall in quality, which stayed with them for a long, long time. The interval of 1951-1962 is considered as the ‘Golden Era’ of Indian football. India was called the ‘Brazil of Asia’ during that tenure, as they exhibited some skilful short-passing football with fluent body swerves and dribbling on those years. But, after that, India lost its dominance over Asian football gradually.



*Participants of World Cup quiz at the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)*

In the next 40 years, India almost disappeared from the international circuit, as a result of prolonged failures. They earned some attention, following good performances in the S.A.A.F. Cup, Afro Asian Games, Nehru Cup, A.F.C. Challenge Cup but these were not enough for them to earn back their old reputation.

It was in this dull stage of Indian football in the Internaitonal scenario, we decided to invite Bayern Munich, the acclaimed German domestic club, in India for a friendly match, with an intention to get them involved in the grassroots development of the game here. A refinement drive was inevitable at that moment to revive Indian football as soon as possible, and we had no better option than the ‘FC Hollywood’ to help us in this process.

The exhibition match, framed in the cover of Oliver Kahn’s farewell match, saw a prodigious response from both the football fans in India as well as the young talents around the country who collected inspiration watching the game.

This single match in 2008 helped Indian football reach a new height, at least in bringing the best of this century gradually in the coming years, in the form of better quality of the game, improvement of performance in the international level, fresh reputation, global identity, new craze among the football enthusiasts, extended international and club-level tournament viewership, non-native club visits to India, revised improved football leagues, foreign trips of young underprivileged talents, introduction of corporate professionalism, better infrastructure, globally accomplished coaches, investments, partnerships and academies of renowned foreign clubs, increased significance of India in FIFA, beginning of world-level tournaments and many more.

In one word, the initiative which we took almost 10 years ago, proved to be revolutionary in bringing back Indian football in the global arena!

## **FC BAYERN MUNCHEN**

FC Bayern München, commonly called as FC Bayern Munich is a German sports club situated at Munich in Bavaria. It is the most successful football

team in Germany, which have won a record 27 Bundesliga titles, plus 18 national cups.

It was formed on 27th February 1900, when several members of MTV 1879 club led by Franz John came out of the club as the footballers in this club were not allowed to join the German Football Association.

The team won its first national championship in 1932, but it was not allowed to participate in the first edition of Bundesliga in 1963. Bayern saw its golden era from 1970 onwards under the captaincy of Franz Beckenbauer. Since then, they have won 5 U.E.F.A. Champions League titles, 1 U.E.F.A. Europa League, 1 U.E.F.A. Cup Winners' Cup, 1 U.E.F.A. Super Cup, 2 Intercontinental Cup titles and one FIFA Club World Cup. Undoubtedly, this record is something envious for any European clubs, that's what makes Bayern one of most successful among them.

Bayern is the biggest sports club in Germany and third highest in the world currently in terms of revenue collection. The Allianz Arena in Munich is its home-ground, and it sports red and white colours in its jersey.

Bayern is the only European football powerhouse which is managed only by its retired footballers. Uli Hoeness is its current president, and Karl-Henz Rummenigge is its CEO.

Some of the notable football players who were part of Bayern Munich squad were – Conrad Heidkamp, Franz Beckenbauer, Gerd Müller, Uli Hoeness, Paul Breitner, Andreas Brehme, Sepp Maier, George Schwarzenbeck, Franz Roth, Rummenigge, Dieter Hoeness, Klaus Augenthaler, Lothar Matthaus, Stefan Effenberg, Oliver Kahn, Mehmet Scholl, Roland Wohlfarth, Jurgen Klinsmann, Bixente Lizarazu, Lucio, Giovane Elbar, Paulo Sergio, Philipp Lahm, Michael Ballack, Miroslav Klose, Mario Mandzukic, Claudio Pizzaro, Lucas Podolski, Tony Kroos, Mario Gomez, Mario Gotze, Bastian Schweinsteiger, amongst many others!

The current squad also features the superstars of modern football, who have large fanbase around the world. The fan favourites amongst them are Manuel Neuer, Mats Hummels, Franck Ribery, Robert Lewandowski, Arjen Robben,

James Rodriguez, Rafinha, Jerome Boateng, Arturo Vidal, Thomas Müller and David Alaba.

## THE BAYERN VISITS TO INDIA

F.C. Hollywood, as its fans regard Bayern Munich dearly, did not just appear once in India and then forgot this not-so-famous nation in the international football circuit. The emotional attachment of the general public to the game here has been instrumental in bringing them back time and again.



*Karl-Henz Rummenigge presented with 'Friends of Police' cap by Mr. R K Pachananda, IPS, the then Special Commissioner of Police, Kolkata Police*

- Bayern's first visit to Kolkata was during the 2005 I.F.A. Shield tournament. Their second team, coached by Herman Garland participated in this contest. They got a direct entry in the semi-final, where they beat Mohammedan Sporting 2-0, then made the other finalists EverReady

S.A. slump to their power football. Bayern won the final with a whopping 5-1 margin, and clinched the fourth oldest football tournament title of the world in order.



*Fans in Kolkata participating in a signature campaign to welcome Oliver Kahn*

- In 2008, we were involved in the process of bringing the senior team to Kolkata, which had been a memorable event, thanks to the colossal response it received for being the ‘farewell match’ of German legend goalkeeper Oliver Kahn. Bayern, consisting of future stars like Tony Kroos, defeated home team Mohun Bagan A.C. 3-0 in that friendly. Kahn was provided with a fitting farewell from both the organizers and the 125,000 spectators present at the stadium.
- In the year 2009, the second team of Bayern Munich visited India once again, to take part in three friendlies in the state of West Bengal. At the Vidyasagar Krirangan, Barasat, they beat the reserve team of East Bengal F.C. 1-0, before crushing them to 5-1 in the return leg, played at the East Bengal ground. Their last game of the tour was against the Siliguri Mayor’s XI at the



*Gerd Müller visited Kolkata in 2009 with FC Bayern II team*

Kanchenjunga stadium, Siliguri, where they dominated completely with registering a professional 6-0 win! Interestingly, this team had Thomas Müller as a member, who would become a star footballer for the club and the Germany national team within few years.

- Bayern Munich once again called on Kolkata, when their legends like Paulo Sergio, Andreas Brehme, Paul Breitner, Markus Munich, Wolfgang Dremmler and Harald Cerny formed an All-Star squad, and confronted East Bengal All-Star team in November 2010. The home team was no match compared to the visitors; hence the scoreboards read 10-3 in favour of Bayern All-Stars. The funds raised from the tickets sold during this game were utilized for charity.

This match was a milestone in Indian football, as previously the idea of ‘All Star’ team or ‘Legends’ team was absent here. This one was the first ever such match that took place in India! Following it, the concept was established and today Indian All Star team takes the field often.

- In 2012, one of the most successful footballers in Indian sports history, Bhaichung Bhutia, decided to call it a day from the international level. To make his farewell game noteworthy, once again Bayern Munich was invited for a friendly tie against the Indian national team. This time, the visitors came with full strength, and fielded their first eleven in front of a 35,000 strong crowd at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi. Mario Gomez (14’), Thomas Müller (29’, 37’) and Bastian Schweinsteiger (43’) found the net for the German side, as India lost the game 4-0.

## FROM INDIA TO BAYERN MUNICH

In November 2008, the Bayern Governing Council President, Karl-Henz Rummenigge announced that they would be building their first ever academy

outside Germany, in the district of Burdwan in West Bengal. He said, "India is among the biggest countries in the world and I believe it is a good time now that such a country is ready to participate in a World cup."

But unfortunately the project could not see the light of the day due to some internal problems in West Bengal.

But, Bayern kept its word of indulging in the process of betterment of Indian football, as they expressed their willingness to train the underprivileged youngsters of India at their academy to Nirupam Sen, the state Commerce and Industry minister of West Bengal, when he visited Munich in 2008.

A bunch of young talents from the rural locations have already grabbed the opportunities to train at the Bayern Munich academy. Among them, the stories of Dasharath Singh of Lalgarh and Chandan Nayak of Bhubaneswar were exceptional.



*Indian young players with Gerd Müller at FC Bayern*

- 1) A 'football clinic' was organized at the Calcutta Cricket and Football Club (C.C.F.C.) on the second day of the visit of Bayern Munich team in Kolkata during the farewell match of Oliver Kahn. Among 48 boys who had a 90-minute session with Kahn and the other Bayern stars, Yohan Confectioner of La Martiniere for Boys, Vedanth Jaiswal of St Xavier's Collegiate School, Subham Sarkar from Kalna, Jiyarat Ali from Burdwan and Joel Fernandez from Goa were chosen for exclusive training program at the Bayern academy at Munich.

Later when the Bayern youth and All Star teams visited in 2009 and 2010, such similar clinics were organized at the same venue, as well as at Siliguri. Two kids from a rural tea garden at Naxalbari named

Nishant Toppo and Sanjib Kerketta were chosen from the Siliguri camp and taken to Munich.

- 2) Lalgarh, situated in the West Midnapore district (currently, Jhargram district), was infamously known for being one of the most disturbed areas in West Bengal. It was the land of origination of the violent ‘Lalgarh movement’, which involved the Maoists who initiated retaliation against the state in 2009, in form of an armed tribal crusade.



*Dasharath Singh at a training session at Bayern Munich*

The situation was so harsh that almost every day a policemen or an innocent villager died in the hands of the militants.

The state government, aided by the central government launched an armed operation led by the C.R.P.F. (Central Reserve Police Force) and C.O.B.R.A. (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) to bring back the area under state control and to abolish the Maoist rulers.

Besides this, the Government was intended to bring back the local

youths to the mainstream, who were brainwashed by the militant organizations. Football was of course the best method to implement it. At that point of time, Bengal Police, in association with Brand Next, organized a goodwill football match at the Sajeev Sangha ground close to the Lalgarh police station. The local youths were invited for participation, and it got a huge response in return.

In that match, Dasharath Singh, an 18-year old boy from the troubled areas of Tarlilata village adjacent to the Maoist bastion of Jhitka forest, played exceptionally as the goalkeeper, and was adjudged the player of the match. As a result, Bengal Police awarded him a dream opportunity to receive training at the glorious Bayern Munich academy for one week, in front of and by the German legends!

Manoj Verma, the then Superintendent of Police of the district of West Midnapore said, “Dasharath is a very bright boy. We are helping him to build confidence in himself so that he can shine in future.”

Nirupam Sen, the then State Commerce and Industry minister, who visited Munich to strengthen the relationship between Bayern Munich and the football community of West Bengal commented, “It is such good news that someone from the troubled areas of Lalgarh has made it to Bayern Munich. It’s really good news.”

The young boy, who faced the horrible environment in his locality for a long time, and the boy who had never been to even the capital of the state, Kolkata, visited Munich to fulfil his dream in August 2010.

Later, similar kind of goodwill tournaments were organized at the perturbed areas of Dantewada, Chhattisgarh.

- 3) Allianz S.E., a German financial services company headquartered in Munich, are the official partners of the Bayern Munich football club. A joint venture between them and Bajaj Auto, an Indian automobile manufacturing company in 2001 formed the Bajaj Alliance General Insurance Company. In 2010, it instigated a selection process for its

annual Junior Football camp at Munich. Through its operational period, 5 dexterous teenagers were shortlisted among 45,000 students from about 700 schools across 120 Indian cities every year, and were

sent to Munich to partake in the camp at Munich. There they met and took training too from the eminent coaches of Bayern Munich at their official training ground.

- 4) From the season 2010-11, FC Bayern Munich initiated the annual F.C. Bayern Youth Cup tournament in Mumbai. It is an under-16 seven-a-side school level football tournament. The winners of this contest



*Indian talents practicing hard at the  
FC Bayern*



*Indian kids meet Bayern stars Mark van Bommel, Thomas Müller, Bastian Schweinsteiger, Franck Ribery at Allianz Arena*

represents India at the international F.C. Bayern Munich Cup held at Munich. They are also given an opportunity to watch a Bundesliga match live from the Allianz Arena.

- 5) Coming from the Sabar Sahi slum, one of the most impoverished areas of Bhubaneswar, an 11-year-old Chandan Nayak, fulfilled his dream of training at the Germany's most iconic club. Nayak's father left his family in his childhood. His mother used to work as a maid around the city. They did not even have a television set in their 10 feet by 12 feet dwelling.

A trial for 14-16 year old footballers was organized last year across India, from which the best players were sent to the state-of-the-art academy of the Bayern Munich. But this 11-year-old stunned the selectors with his dribbling and shooting skills at Odisha, then in the final trials at Pune. Even the captain of Indian national team, Sunil Chhetri was delighted with his performance.

So, despite being out of the age-group criteria, Chandan was selected and was sent to Munich in an all-expenses-paid trip in August 2016.

The young talent, an ardent fan of Lionel Messi, Nayak had expressed his wish to play for the Indian football team one day. This story is one prime example of the changing scenario of Indian football, which was covered in darkness even 15-20 years ago, but prevalently it is on the verge of a new summit!



*Young footballers from India watches Bundesliga match at Allianz Arena*

These initiatives not only provided some privileges to these kids with potential future as footballers, Bayern also benefitted from it. These events were part of the 'social responsibility' program of the German club, so they enhanced their image and reputation in India. It contributed well in lifting up their business in this nation also.

With already numerous young Indian footballers reaching the door of European giant Bayern Munich, the other exalted clubs from our neighbour continent also invested money and time in doing the same.

## INDIAN FOOTBALLERS AT OVERSEAS

Following the gambits of Bayern Munich in the involvement in Indian football, in no more time the other fellow European clubs joined in. Several Indian footballers and young talents were called up by these overseas clubs in the later years, for training purpose or even for playing in the team colours.



*Dasharath Singh meeting the then Hon'ble Governor, Shri M. K. Narayanan*

- 1) Sunil Chhetri, one of the most prolific Indian strikers ever, landed at the U.S.A. in 2010, for a trial at the Kansas City Wizards. He thereby entered into a contract with the Major League Soccer team, as the 3rd Indian contracted to an overseas club, and as the 1st Indian to represent a MLS team. Later, he also represented the 'B' team of Portuguese club Sporting C.P.
- 2) On 2014, Subrata Paul, the Indian national team goalkeeper, signed a contract with Danish team F.C. Vestsjaelland.
- 3) The current captain of the Indian national team, goalkeeper Gurpreet

Singh Sandhu made history in the same year through signing with the Norwegian club Stabaek. He was the first Indian ever to represent a first division club in Europe. He was also the first Indian to have appeared in a U.E.F.A. Europa League.

- 4) Rajib Roy, the son of a sex worker in Kolkata received a two-week training at the Manchester United academy.
- 5) Another talent hailing from the cruel paws of poverty, Pratik Shinde has enriched his living through football. The Mumbai slum-boy is the youngest Indian to sign with an overseas club. He represented the American club Galveston Pirates, and is currently playing for the Houston Hurricanes.
- 6) Ishan Pandita, a Bengaluru boy, caught the eyes of Swedish club I.F. Brommapojkarna during the 2013 Gothia Cup. Later, Ishan represented Alcobendas F.C., a club directed linked to the Spanish giants Atletico Madrid.
- 7) Ashique Kuruniyan from Malappuram, Kerala was given a chance by the Pune F.C. Academy, to involve with the Villarreal club, the La Liga regulars. He played his first game there for the F.C. Roda, a development club of Villarreal. The management was so impressed with his performance that he was made the captain of the side from his second game itself!
- 8) Kashmir is one of most controversial landmasses in the world, situated at the northernmost part of India. A valley polluted with unending socio-political disputes could provide only least quality environment for any sporting event. Central Reserve Police Force (C.R.P.F.), in collaboration with Footballnext Foundation, initiated a football camp at Srinagar on 2016, with a vision to connect with the local youth, a large number of whom would else have been brainwashed to join the enrage ment.



*Basit Ahmed and Md. Asrar Rehbar met the then President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, before leaving for Spain*

Basit Ahmed, a centre-forward, and Mohammed Asrar Rehbar, a right winger, both hailing from Srinagar were shortlisted from this camp, and were given the opportunity to play in the third division of prestigious Spanish La Liga. They represented the Sociedad Deportiva Lenense Proinastur club there, with whom the paramilitary force had contract. All expenses of these two boys would be paid by the club itself.

- 9) The Tata Trust U Dream Football made an association lately with the German superpower Borussia Dortmund. Selected footballers of age group 12-14 will be sent there for training by their youth coaches.

Before 2008, just two Indian footballers had the distinction of having exposure in a club outside India. The scenario has drastically changed after that following the revamp of Indian football, to which the exhibition matches of Bayern Munich acted as an accelerating catalyst.

The series of initiatives taken by the Indian sports organizations, in partnership with the European and American clubs, has successfully formed the international identity of India hence in this way.

## EUROPEAN INTERESTS IN INDIA

Long back in 2012, during his tour to India, the then FIFA president, Sepp Blatter reckoned India as the ‘sleeping giants’ in the field of international football. He further added, "To wake up a sleeping giant you need more than one alarm clock. We have to put different alarm clocks here. And I have to say the giant is not any longer sleeping, it's already starting to wake up."

It's really not easy to fulfil his wish, but at least few of those alarm clocks are put across India. Fortunately, some of the top European clubs showed interest in bringing up academies and sports schools, intended for training the potential Indian youth in India itself, but with a better infrastructure than what was available earlier.

- Manchester United – Followed by the ostentatious success of the farewell match of Oliver Kahn at India, Manchester United decided to focus on the Indian market. They launched +91 Europe in 2010, a consortium of Indian CEOs, in an aim to emphasize the brand of United in front of its prospective Indian members.

Rakesh Rawal, its founder remarked, “Until 10 years ago, everybody returning to India from the UK would be asked to take one thing home to his friends and family – a bottle of Johnnie Walker Black Label whisky. Now, the first request is for a red Manchester United shirt, then a bottle of Johnnie Walker Black Label whisky! It will be fascinating to see which Indian companies embrace global sports like football to enhance their global brand recognition.”

Casper Stylsvig, the then sponsorship manager of the British club said, “In Europe, 86% of all sponsorship goes to sport. In India, that figure is just 10%. We expect that to change. Football is the second most popular sport behind cricket in India and there is a huge English-speaking audience who actively watch football.”

The red devils put up the Manchester United Soccer School at Cooperage, Mumbai in November 2011. They partnered with the Western India

Football Association in establishing this football training school for young kids.

- Liverpool – D.S.K. Shivajians, a Pune-based corporate football club collaborated with the popular E.P.L. club, Liverpool F.C. to build up a world-class academy at D.S.K. Dream City inside Pune.
- Paris Saint-German – The luminary club of France, P.S.G. has already built three football academies, one each at Gurgaon, at Delhi and at Bangalore. International coaches are appointed here to train talents of the age group 6-16.
- FC Barcelona – The Catalan club, and one of the most popular European clubs among Indian football followers, had opened FCBEscola football academy in Delhi. They follow the Barca culture in training, and only a few number of players are selected to receive training here.
- Boca Juniors – The Argentine club, although not as popular here as the European ones, has academies at Bangalore and Mumbai. They have a partnership with Bangalore F.C., a successful modern Indian corporate football club. They are also linked with some European clubs, such as Hoffenheim from Germany.
- Arsenal – The Gunners having a huge fan base are also involved are also involved in the development of young footballers here. They have academies at Delhi, Punjab, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana and Maharashtra.

The small contributions from these established clubs can result in producing new blooms in the garden of Indian football. In a country containing more than 1.2 billion population, the probabilities of building a 30-odd strong football team is not an unachievable staff.

The facilities provided by these academies are of completely outstanding level, compared to the traditional Indian system. The sooner the young footballers from all over the country adapt with it, the better would be their chances to represent the Indian team in a FIFA World Cup soon.

## INTERNATIONAL GREATS IN INDIA

Post-2008 many international stars have visited this country for exhibition matches, friendlies or promotional events. The scope of football as a growing sport in present-day India attracted them, and most of them praised this changing attitude over football here. The football fans who skip sleeping at night just to watch the European league matches, could enjoy their heroes dribbling the ball in front of their eyes.

- Diego Maradona – The Argentine maestro, Diego Maradona visited Kolkata in December 2008, to inaugurate the project of constructing the Maradona Sports Complex and Indian Football School at Maheshtala, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. He will come back here in September 2017, to play a seven-a-side match at Barasat.
- Diego Forlan – The Uruguayan legend, Diego Forlan visited India for the first time in 2010, to support an exhibition match between a reality show football team and Mohun Bagan XI. He later played in the Indian Super League.
- Lionel Messi – The Prince of Argentine Football, Lionel Messi visited Kolkata in September 2011 along with his full-strength Argentina team, to play a historical FIFA international friendly against Venezuela. India hosted such an intense international team for the first time during this game. It was also the first ever official international friendly game between two foreign teams that was played in India.

Argentina beat Venezuela at the Yuba Bharati Stadium, Salt Lake with a scoreline of 1-0, thanks to the goal of defender Nicolas Otamendi, from a corner at the 68th minute brilliantly taken by Messi! Along with Messi, Angel Di Maria showed their dazzling skills throughout the game, which received loud cheers from the packed stadium. Goalkeeper Sergio Romero also caught the eyes with some scintillating saves off a late Venezuelan attack.

The response that this game obtained was marvellous. It showed that the Indian football market is ready.

- Indian Super League – With the evolution of the annual corporate football league in India that initiated in the year 2014, Indian footballers acquired the golden opportunity to chant for their favourite globally accomplished stars at their nearest football stadium! Indian Super League, popularly known as I.S.L. has seen the participation of footballing superstars such as Alessandro Del Piero, Nicolas Anelka, Robert Pires, Marco Materazzi, David Trezeguet, David James, Fredrik Djungberg, Luis Garcia, Joan Capdevilla, Micheal Chopra, Mikael Silvestre, Elano, Zico, Lucio, Helder Postiga, Florent Malouda, Simao Sabrosa, Roberto Carlos, Adrian Mutu, Carlos Marchena, John Arne Riise, Diego Forlan and many more in the role of players or coaches. Pele, Thierry Henry and Koke polished the guest list of this league as well.
- Premier Futsal – Following the ballooning of football in India, an attempt was made in 2016 to popularize the game of futsal, a variant of football. Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Miguel Salgado, Ronaldinho, Cafu and Hernan Crespo took part in the promotional tournament termed as ‘Premier Futsal’. The presence of these international nonpareils in the Indian football circuit contributed to the growth of the game here significantly. On one hand, it helped the young sport enthusiasts to connect with the sport in greater numbers, while on the other, a number of fresh talents emerged in the numerous football academies across India at the other hand.

## **VIEWERSHIP DRIVE**

In the last 10 years, the craze for football in India has gone up remarkably. Cricket is still the ‘number one’ celebrated sport in the country, but football has emerged to be the second most popular game of this and the upcoming era.

The numerous connect initiatives from the vast international circuit into Indian football are responsible behind this encouraging situation. These have ensured the amelioration of followers of the sport around the country of a 1.3 billion population.

As fan-following continued to intensify, it had its direct impact on the television viewership statistics. Since this improvement was stimulated mostly by the European football clubs, the fan bases of the Europeans leagues, mainly English Premiere League, Spanish La Liga and the German Bundesliga kept on swelling with time.

As per T.A.M. Media Research, the Indian football audience saw a 60% rise in the figures during the period of 2005-2009, and by 2010, almost 47% of the large population of India started considering themselves ‘football fans’.

In the year 2011, about 83 million Indians watched the E.P.L. The figure reached 155 million by 2013, and currently around 857 million Indians watch this tournament on television.

In last few years, the fascination with Spanish La Liga a new level reached. Thanks to the rivalry between the Indian fans of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo. Realizing the rise in interest, La Liga opened an office at New Delhi in 2016. They came to a pact with the official broadcasters in India, Sony ESPN, that most of the matches would be hosted from 4:30 Spanish time, which means its Indian fans can watch the match from 8 pm live! 8 pm I.S.T. is the prime time for any sporting event broadcasted in India, and that’s how La Liga planned to make the best benefit out of it.

Such an extraordinary decision is only possible with the target audience size of convincingly large and still growing. La Liga actually showed the face of the football-loving nation of India in front of the whole world in this way! Almost 647 million Indian viewers enjoyed the La Liga battles this year.

The German Bundesliga as well, developed its fan base in India. The Bundesliga is broadcasted by Star India, one of the market leaders in the Indian sports

broadcasting industry. It attracts about 435 million TV viewership alone from India!

Empirical studies conducted by Facebook revealed that, India commands a comparable or even a bigger fan base of the top European football clubs compared to the established football-playing nations. The following table represents the statistics –

Country	Arsenal	Manchester United	Chelsea	Liverpool	Barcelona	Real Madrid
India	2.8M	5.4M	3.6M	2M	8.2M	8.2M
UK	2.9M	3.2M	1.9M	2.6M	2.3M	2.6M
USA	1.5M	2.9M	1.9M	.65M	7.3M	6.3M
France	2M	0.93M	0.85M	0.53M	2.5M	2.6M
Australia	0.28M	0.41M	0.29M	0.44M	0.43M	0.33M
Spain	0.3M	0.57M	0.91M	.41M	3.5M	3.3M

Source : <https://www.sportskeeda.com/football/why-the-is-l-franchise-system-is-flawed>

Aren't these records startling? Teams like Manchester United, F.C. Barcelona or Real Madrid enjoy greater support from India than they accrue even from their nations of origin! The case was not the same even ten years ago, but now these international clubs started to recognize this fan base, through organizing fan events in the megacities, or through supplying merchandizes.

FIFA World Cup is undoubtedly the most popular football event globally, and the same fact applies for the fans in India as well. Some of the streets get painted in yellow and green colours of Brazil, while the other lanes wear white and light blue stripes in support of Argentina. Fans of the arch-rival local clubs East Bengal and Mohun Bagan arrange special screenings of the World Cup matches around the city of Kolkata, where large crowds get emotionally attached with the game. Supporters in Kerala does not sleep in pain when Mario Gotze shatters Messi's dreams of winning the World Cup for his nation. Admirers of Ronaldo celebrate whole night when Portugal lifts the Euro Cup.

The 2002 South Korea and Japan World Cup attracted 35 million viewership from the Indian peninsula, while 2006 Germany World Cup saw involvement

of around 50 million. The 2010 South Africa World Cup had a very slight rise in the figures, but the 2014 Brazil World Cup absorbed more than 170 million Indian fans, despite most of the matches were played after midnight including the final!

The current sensation in Indian domestic football – the corporate franchise-based Indian Super League (I.S.L.) created a shockwave that surprised the whole football world. The tournament was inaugurated with fanfare in the august presence of distinguished celebrities from the field of Bollywood and Indian cricket, along with the footballing legends representing the 8 franchises. The whole tournament achieved great success in terms of both attendance and viewership! I.S.L. 2014 was marked as the fourth highest attended football league ever in the world, and it drew an overwhelming 429 million viewership, about 2.5 times greater than the viewership of FIFA World Cup 2014 in India. This tournament literally amplified the rejuvenation of Indian football in this decade.

## CORPORATE CLUBS

With an ever increasing level of interest in football in India post-2008, there was the demand of better football from the Indian national team in the international level. But, that could not be achieved overnight due to lack of modern infrastructure.

However, the corporate investments in Indian football eased the situation steadily minimizing all the difficulties. In this field, the most successful corporate club was the Bengaluru F.C., owned by the Mumbai-based company, J.S.W. Group.

This team was formed in 2013, and was given direct entry in the I-league in condition that they would build a modern stadium at Bengaluru with better infrastructure than the contemporary ones. They appointed Ashley Westwood, a former Manchester United youth player, as the head coach of the team, and Sunil Chhetri as the captain.

In its very first season, Bengaluru FC won the I-League, and subsequently won the Federation Cup trophy in 2014. In the season 2015-16, they clinched I-League title once again, as well as they significantly became the only Indian team to reach the finals of the A.F.C. Cup, a tournament comprising the best teams of Asia! They made the country proud beating the defending champions Johor Darul Ta'zim, a Malaysian club, with an aggregate of 4-2 on way to reach the final.

Hence, Bengaluru F.C. began a new era in Indian football, which was later enhanced by the introduction of the Indian Super League, a complete corporate franchise-based football league, which would later turn into the face of all Indian football leagues.

## **INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE**

The concept of franchise-based Indian Premier League, i.e. the I.P.L. has been a game-changer in Indian cricket. This cash-rich glamorous T20 league involves participation of almost all the big stars from all around the world, who rub their shoulders with young Indian cricketers during the 2-month tournament. It helped the Indian cricket board to take the top seat beating all other national boards in terms of cash revenue.

Following the success of I.P.L., and in order to improve the position of India in the international football circuit, the All India Football Federation (A.I.F.F.) in partnership with IMG-Reliance group, organized a football league of similar structure and duration. It eventually was named the ‘Indian Super League’ (I.S.L.). Its format resembles the Major Soccer League of U.S.A. or the A-League of Australia.

Eight franchises were involved in building eight city-based teams, and the international footballers along with the Indian local players were drafted into these teams. The tournament drew the popular footballing legends all over the world, and India got to watch them playing in front of their eyes through I.S.L.

The ownership of the teams was auctioned among the popular celebrities from

the fields of sports and entertainment, in order to form illuminative brands. All these contributed in gaining the attention of a large football-crazy population of India, and the tournament captured a thumping response over the social media.

The opening ceremony was hosted at the Salt Lake Stadium, Kolkata on 12th October 2014 in presence of the top eminent sports and film personalities of India. The ceremony changed the status of Indian football completely, as it lured notices from all parts of this world, thanks to the exquisite glamour it showcased. The program was followed by the inaugural match of the tournament, where the home team Atletico de Kolkata, owned by former Indian cricket team captain Sourav Ganguly, beat Mumbai City F.C., owned by the Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor, at a margin of 3 goals. This game recorded an attendance of 65,000 at the stadium, while about 75 million Indians watched it over television.

This franchise tournament had 170 million viewers in its very first week, and ended with 429 million overall viewers, two and a half times the number of Indians who watched the FIFA World Cup 2014. This figure kept rising with the newer seasons, thanks to the evolution of high definition graphics, the appointment of internationally acclaimed football experts in the commentary panel, and the fresh broadcasting platforms. In the year 2016, the statistic of I.S.L. live streaming viewership on mobile applications surged by 130% than the previous year. The viewer engagement received an overall 25% boost in that season.

The tournament set a global stage for Indian football, by providing young underprivileged football talents of the country a level playing field to face their global counterparts, under the guidance of former internationally acclaimed footballers or the professionally esteemed coaches.

In spite of that, I.S.L. received some criticism, following its conflict with another first level league of the country - the I-League. However, from the season 2017-18, I.S.L. is officially overtaking I-League under the Asian Football Confederation (A.F.C.) as the topmost national league of India. So,

the I.S.L. champions would get the prime opportunity to play in the intracontinental A.F.C. cup instead of the I-League toppers from now onwards.

## **INDIAN NATIONAL TEAM**

Although club football in India had never lost its popularity despite its abject show at the international circuit, the dismal state of India in the FIFA rankings were concerning the large football audience as well as the former Indian football legends very much. However, the picture did not change till 2008, the very year when Bayern Munich came to play at Kolkata.

India had their all-time best ranking of 94 in February 1996, but it did not reflect the real condition of Indian football back then. By 2008, India slipped to 143 in the FIFA rankings. However, the new era introduced through the involvement of the top European circuit added to the efficient coaching of Bob Houghton, they won the A.F.C. Challenge Cup that season beating better ranked teams such as Myanmar and Tajikistan. This win allowed India to qualify for the 2011 A.F.C. Asian Cup, an appearance in the prestigious tournament for the first time in 27 years! Although they lost to prodigious Asian teams like Australia, South Korea and Bahrain, their courageous performance was praised a lot by the football pundits. India also won the 2007 and 2009 edition of Nehru Cup during the term of Houghton. They also performed fine in the A.F.C. Challengers Cup qualifiers. A bunch of youngsters like Subrata Paul, Sunil Chhetri, Gourangi Moirangthem and Anwar Ali developed within this period, who proved to be the carrier of Indian football in the later spell.

The scenario of Indian football was changing followed by the appearances and the contributions of Europeans clubs in Indian football, still something was missing at that point which could implement its outcomes directly into the national football team. Due to this, Indian team again started to lose its hard-earned reputation after the dismissal of Houghton in October 2011. The next three years occurred to be terrible for the team, as they lost numerous

friendlies forcing its ranking go down to as low as 173. Such a position among a total of 211 football-playing nations in the world was very humiliating.

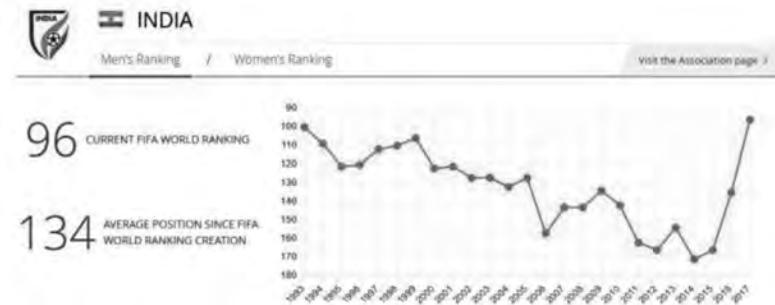
The activities regarding the improvement of Indian football however did not cease, as A.I.F.F. (All India Football Federation) in partnership with IMG-Reliance and Star Sports inaugurated the corporate Indian Super League in October 2014. On January 2015, Stephen Constantine was appointed the coach of the Indian national team for the second time after his sensational incumbency during 2002-05.

During I.S.L., the Indian youth experienced an outing with the best of the international footballers in same teams, learnt a lot from them and grabbed enormous eyeballs towards themselves. A pristine group of football followers emerged which constituted the Gen-Y who were earlier cricket-frenzy.

Constantine nurtured the fresh talents well, supported them a lot during their hard times, and the results were visible soon. His first assignment did not yield good results as India crushed out of the second round of the World Cup 2018 qualifiers. But a considerable ascend came in their performance on November 2015.

India beat Guam 1-0 on 12th November at Bangalore, and went on to beat Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Afghanistan, Laos and Bhutan in the next few months. They lost to Iran and Turkmenistan in the interval, but a victory over Puerto Rico on 3rd September 2016 at Mumbai remarked the furtherance of Indian football. India, then the 152nd ranked team, were trailing 0-1 below the visitors of rank 114th, but a superb comeback from the hosts resulted a victory with a margin of 4-1. Narayan Das, Sunil Chhetri, Jeje Lalpekhlua and Jackichand Singh were the goal scorers for India that night.

The momentum was carried on with conquests over Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Kyrgyzstan and Mauritius. This run of 14 wins in 17 consecutive games, including an unbeaten run of 10 international matches helped India achieve a giant leap in the FIFA rankings! India broke into the top 100 of FIFA world rankings first time in 21 years, as they grabbed the 96th position in July 2017!



*The surge in FIFA ranking of India owes a lot to Bayern's initiatives*

Source : <https://www.fifa.com/fifa-world-ranking/associations/association=ind/main/index.html>

Today, Indian football has secured its place at the trends of social media in India, which was earlier reserved for just cricket among all sporting events. Indian fans celebrate the fact that, Sunil Chhetri is the fourth highest international goal-scorer with 54 goals to his name among the active players, just behind the greats Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal with 73 goals, Lionel Messi of Argentina with 58 and Clint Dempsey of United States of America with 56! Even Chhetri is ahead of Wayne Rooney from England who has 53 goals for his nation!

It was possible only because the initiatives were taken at the right time. When Indian football team was saddling into the burdens of the continuous shameful outcomes, Bayern Munich chose this nation to invest in, in order to help in the process of tweaking the quality of football here. All their efforts here worked as a catalyst catapulting to the renaissance of Indian football. Bayern provided the trigger upon which football in India started watching the dream of returning into the mainstream of international football once again!

## U-17 WORLD CUP 2017

India has always been a suitable venue for hosting world-level sporting events, as the love for the sports industry proved to be profound here compared to the

other nations. In the past, India have hosted several world cup tournaments in the sport of cricket, field hockey and kabaddi, as well as successfully organized the 2010 Commonwealth Games, the 1951 and 1982 Asian Games, the 1987 and 1995 South Asian Games, the 2003 Afro-Asian Games, the Asian Table Tennis Championships, the Chennai Open (Lawn Tennis), the Indian Open (Badminton), the Indian Grand Prix (F1 Racing) and the 2017 Shooting World Cup.

In the current decade, followed by the mass involvement of foreign clubs in the grassroots development of the football here and through the evolution of corporate structured leagues, the audience for this game faced a huge tide here, who also regularly constitute a significant percentage of the global viewership of FIFA World Cup or the top European league matches.



*Sri Aaditya Thackeray, President MDFA along with England U-17 World Cup Team*

What could have been a better juncture of time for India to host a FIFA World Cup? The All India Football Federation submitted their bid for hosting the 17th edition of Under-17 FIFA World Cup on 2017, along with Azerbaijan, Ireland and Uzbekistan. On 5th December 2013, FIFA announced that India had been chosen as the host nation for this youth world cup event.

It was a glorious moment for Indian football. India was assigned the responsibility of hosting any form of FIFA World Cup tournament for the first time! Furthermore, India got the opportunity to participate in it as direct entrants by the virtue of being the host nation, which also allowed the country to appear in any form of FIFA World Cup for the first time as well. In 1950, despite they were qualified to take part in the FIFA World Cup tournament at Brazil, India did not participate citing several reasons. So, it was their first appearance in the prestigious tournament.

The matches took place at a refurbished Salt Lake Stadium, Kolkata as well

as at Kochi, New Delhi, Mumbai, Guwahati and Goa between 6th and 28th October 2017. A total of 24 teams from 6 continents participated in this event. An official volunteer program was launched by FIFA regarding this event. It recorded the highest ever number of applications received in case of a U-17 World Cup, with the tally touching 29,358! This particular tournament recorded an amazing response from the football fanatics from every corners of India.

The illustrious championship was inaugurated on 6th October 2017 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi in presence of Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India. In the pre-match ceremony, some golden names of Indian football from the past were felicitated including Bhaichung Bhutia, Bembem Devi, Bhaskar Ganguly, Chuni Goswami, IM Vijayan, PK Banerjee, Joaquim Abranches, Syed Naeemuddin, Samar Banerjee and Sunil Chhetri.



*Sri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister at the inauguration of FIFA World Cup U-17*

Then came the most-awaited moment in Indian football history! In front of over 50,000 spectators, the Indian national U-17 team showed up, for the first time in a FIFA World Cup. The whole nation had their tears rolling down the cheeks in emotion, standing up together for singing the national anthem.

Prior to the start of the tournament, the Indian U-17 team prepared hard and tough under the coaching of Luis Norton de Matos, a former manager of the Benfica reserve team. The team toured Europe this May, where they registered some convincing victories over some Italian XIs as well as registered draw against Serbia and Macedonia. The team contains some talented young players who were nurtured at the Indian academies set up by foreign clubs.

In their second match against Columbia at New Delhi on 9th October, Jeakson

Singh Thaunaojam created history at the 82nd minute as he became India's first ever goal-scorer in a World Cup. Although his team lost the game by a margin of 2-1, they looked to be promising enough as next-gen international stars.

This event achieved immense success thanks to all the fervid football-fanatics across the country who visited their nearest stadiums to watch history being written in Indian football through hosting a FIFA world-level tournament for the first time! Several records were broken in terms of attendance, as this edition of U17 World Cup emerged as the most attended U17 World Cup of all-time. A total of 1,347,133 pair of feet fell in the six stadiums hosting 52 matches in this edition, putting the average attendance to a mighty 26,000. It also surpassed the record of FIFA U20 World Cup's top attendance which in numbers was 1,309,929 set in 2011 at Columbia.

Not only that, this tournament surprised everyone as it recorded more turnout

compared to the 2011 ICC Cricket World Cup event, which is till now the grandest cricket tournament ever held in the country! Hosted jointly by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, that tournament recorded an attendance of 1,229,826 in an average of 25,098. India is globally renowned as a cricket-loving country, but it is indeed a great achievement when an



*Smt. Mamata Banerjee, Hon'ble Chief Minister along with FIFA President, Gianni Infantino at the Prize distribution ceremony of FIFA World Cup U-17 Final, Kolkata*

international football tournament attracts more people to the stadiums than a cricket one.

The fact that the footballing world has also showed confidence over the craze of football in this nation over the last ten years, was clear from the words of the current FIFA President, Gianni Infantino when he spoke to the reporters after the FIFA Governing Council meeting at Kolkata ahead of the final match.

The A.I.F.F. had already placed bid for the status of host nation for the 2019 edition of Under-20 FIFA World Cup, as well as announced that they have plans to place a bid for organizing a FIFA Club World Cup event soon. Regarding this, Infantino assured that India's successful hosting of this edition of U17 World Cup can be a defining factor in the governing body's decision regarding rights for the 2019 U20 World Cup.

The FIFA head added, "The idea is to embed the idea and culture of football into the minds of the people. If FIFA is serious about its idea of developing football around the world, we will have no other choice than to take into account and help the development of Indian football, which houses one-sixth of the population of the world."

A grand evening at the Salt Lake Stadium almost ten years ago showed the world what intensity of passion the locals contain in heart for football. That day, the stadium overflowed with the crowd chanting for Oliver Kahn. That occasion set the prelude for the arrangement of an international tournament of marvellous calibre such as a FIFA Club World Cup or the quadrennial FIFA World Cup itself in India!

## **THE ADDITIONAL EVENTS**

2010 was a resounding year in terms of the bond shared between Indian football and F.C. Bayern Munich. Apart from the All Star match that saw the best footballers of Bayern Munich and East Bengal club from the yesteryears competing each other for the cause of charity, two more attractive events were hosted earlier this year.

The 2010 U.E.F.A. Champions League was outstanding for Bayern Munich. By the virtue of being the Bundesliga 2009-10 champions, they qualified to the 2010 UEFA Champions' League Group stage directly.

Then they reached the knockout round as the second ranked team in its group, before defeating Fiorentina in the Round of 16, Manchester United in the quarter-final and Lyon in the semis successively.

Bayern Munich was scheduled to play the final match at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium of Madrid, against Internazionale of Italy.

As a fresh base of support was building in India for the German club, followed by its visits to the nation in 2008 and 2009, Brand Next took an initiative to display this support directly to the Bayern team before the final kick-off.

A Good Luck signature campaign was organized therefore with support from the Kolkata Police, Adidas and the popular Bengal football personalities. The aim of this event was to garner wishes for the Bayern Munich team ahead of the final match. A number of campaigns was arranged to involve the top footballers and celebrities to the event. Fashion designer Agnimitra Paul and renowned Tollywood actor Prasenjit Chatterjee stood beside us through thick and thin.

Tableaus were designed and were driven across the state of West Bengal to collect signatures from the football fans. Almost 200,000 Indians subscribed to this campaign making the initiative a unique one, as no other European football club ever received such massive support from any other nation in any continent even in the top 150 FIFA ranking.

The scrolls were unrolled at the Saebener Strasse, i.e. at the Bayern Munich



*Former Indian footballer P.K. Banerjee and Tollywood actor Prasenjit Chatterjee wishes luck to Bayern Munich ahead of Champion's League 2010 Final*

headquarters. Professor R.P. Banerjee, Deacon of E.I.I.L.M. College in Kolkata was present in the event, and reported, “Millions of Indian will be rooting for Bayern on Saturday – and many of the fans have put that promise in writing.”

This campaign was a testimony to unflinching love that India holds in its heart for F.C. Bayern Munich. It was a landmark for them as well, in terms of the highest number of warm wishes they received from just one nation!

Unfortunately, Bayern lost in the final to Internazionale at a margin of 2-0, but they had already won hearts of millions of Indians!!

Within less than a month on 26th June 2010, in association with Brand Next, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry (B.C.C.I.) hosted an exciting fun quiz show themed on the ongoing 2010 South Africa FIFA World Cup tournament. 16 corporate teams participated, and the whole quiz was broadcasted on several leading TV channels. It gained huge popularity among the quiz fraternity of Bengal.



*Scrolls subscribed to 2 lac Indians being unfolded at Sabener Strasse by Karl-Henz Rummenigge*



*P. K. Banerjee and Shaillen Manna the Indian football legends presented with F.C. Bayern Munich jersey*

The winners of this event, Sounak Chakrabarti and Abheek Maitra were awarded sponsored trips to the Allianz Arena. They watched a Bundesliga

game featuring Bayern Munich and Wolfsburg live from the stadium on 20th August evening.

Apart from all these, it must also be mentioned that we initiated the tradition of bestowing honour to the legends of Indian football here. We presented F.C. Bayern Munich jerseys to the former footballers Sailen Manna and P.K. Banerjee, with their names inscribed on it. The custom strengthened the emotional link between India and Bayern, and replicated during Diwali last year, when another jersey exchange took place between Bayern winger Arjen Robben and Indian cricket player Ajinkya Rahane.

## THE ACADEMY EPISODE

2008 will be an unforgettable year for Indian football, as Bayern Munich entered the Indian arena for the first time seriously.

Apart from playing the testimonial match of Oliver Kahn, as part of their community service, they had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government authorities in Burdwan, for setting up their first academy in Asia there.

The proposal was made from the organizer's side to Martin Haegele, the foreign affairs manager, and Uli Hoeness, the then manager of Bayern.

The response was positive from their side, as an element of their goodwill summit. Hoeness made successive visits to the academy site before committing that Bayern would provide technical support for this project. Haegele assured that they would nourish infrastructural development as well.

Thereafter, the then state Commerce and Industry minister of West Bengal, Nirupam Sen and the state industry secretary Sabyasachi Sen was contacted, who chose a site at Burdwan, a district in West Bengal, to be used for construction of the proposed academy.

The FC Bayern C.E.O. and a former football legend, Karl-Henz Rummenigge himself visited Kolkata on 12th November 2008 for signing the MoU. A



*Karl-Henz Rummenigge and P. K. Banerjee interacting with each other at the Social event in Kolkata*

knowledge management group based on the city also agreed to sponsor the project.

Later in an interview Rummenigge said about the visit, ‘It was always a pleasure for us coming to India. We enjoyed our stays there, it’s an important market, and we feel there is an obligation to help a country like India to develop its football. Of course, we understand and respect that cricket is more popular.’ ‘I met the Goverment Officials and he said football have been the no. 1 sport in the world, and that they had to believe and work hard to have a presence in the sport. From our side, we are ready to help India always.’

‘It is not easy for football in India, because the focus is always on cricket. I had the impression when I came to India that there was a huge interest in the game of football and that it would be good if they have a proper professional structure.’

That’s probably the start of the story. Almost every country now has a professional league of its own. India could recruit big names from Europe, so that it will help sell the game to the public.

Mr. Rummenigge also asserted that he was very eager to complete this project. He appreciated our initiative and intentions aimed at improving Indian football. He showed his deep trust on us regarding the assignment when he spoke about Indian football competing with the powerhouses of world football in near future. He expressed his hope that one day a player from the academy would play in the European football circuit.



*Karl-Henz Rummenigge waves to his fans in Kolkata*



*Karl-Henz Rummenigge handing over the best wishes jersey to Manis Jain, IAS the then District Magistrate of Bardwan*

The academy was set to start its activities from October 2009, but unfortunately it did not happen. The project never saw the light of the day, causing failure to a potential opportunity of developing footballers at the grassroots level.

The farewell match of Oliver Kahn was the initiation of this academy. Had this project been successful, India could have been in a better position in the world football map by now. This project could have brought out the best out of the numerous talents under the coaching of Bayern professionals.

The Bayern management proposed that they would be directly involved in the

training process in the academy, where the best coaches associated to the club would be preparing the future stars of Indian football. It would offer training for coaches as well, would organize tournaments and exchange programs with the top football clubs across the world along with the construction of artificial and natural football pitches.

But there existed some time-consuming bureaucratic procedures, some lack of goodwill, some disparity between visions of the officials involved, which formed firm obstacles in front of the dream project. A barricade tackled the intention and blocked the goal.

As a result, the land allotted for the proposed academy was never dug, and after many efforts, the plan was cancelled silently. A venture which could have brought revolutionary changes in the scenario of Indian football, ended up in a wrong note.

We being the torchbearers of this initiative, still lament the missed opportunity. We invested lot of time to set up this academy, but all our efforts went in vain due to lack of support from the stakeholders.

## **THE VIEWS**

How has Indian football changed in these ten years? Did the involvement of Bayern Munich in the sport here really affect the scenario? Some will definitely raise this question today, because India is still emerging nation in the map of international football.

It is true that the Indian team has not qualified in those in the recent past, but it is not surprising! Football in this country was on a downstream motion even just ten years ago, and it takes time for a large country like ours to incorporate with the initiatives which are undertaken with goals to improve the condition of football in its nook and corner. There is still time for Indian football to attain its best, but at least it is stronger than what it was during Bayern Munich's visit to Kolkata for the first time!

What was the impact of all these initiatives? Journalist Amritangshu Bhattacharya, Sports Head, 24 Ghanta responded, “The way Bayern started visiting India consistently, was essential for reversing the path of Indian football. They were even set to open an academy here, which could not be done due to some reasons later. All these actions also benefitted Bayern, as a brand new fan base generated here for them. There was no such thing here previously for the top German club. An acceptance to Bayern was formed in the city of Kolkata.”

Were there any long-term effects? He replied, “First of all, Bayern Munich was the first worldwide renowned football club to have thought of contributing in the improvement of the layout of Indian football. It was the first club to provide young Indian talents chances to train at Europe under best coaches. Following their footsteps, today Arsenal, Manchester United or Barcelona set up their schools in India.

“Secondly, they have brought India straightaway into the international circuit through that farewell match of Kahn. A legend like Oliver Kahn played his last match at Kolkata in India – this was enough to grab the attention of football world into this nation. Pele visited Kolkata long back in 1977, but it was the Kahn mania which helped India achieve international reputation as a football-playing nation.

“Thirdly, the principle factor which the world has never seen before – that was the hundred thousand crowd that attended that match! One lac people inside a stadium made the last match memorable for Kahn, as well as the



*Dasharath and other young footballers from Lalgarh visited Mohun Bagan, East Bengal and Mohammed Sporting Club*

world came to know about the amount of love India has in store for the game. In Europe, the average attendance in a football game revolves around 30,000, and maximum 45,000 in case of larger stadiums. But, the attendance of 1 lac 20 thousand was something unique, and that was the biggest ingredient for the advertisement of Indian football. This advertisement made the way clear for more international clubs and sponsors to invest here.

“Fourthly, all the tasks Bayern performed here were done in a step-by-step structured sequence. They were very sequential and systematic, traits which were unavailable in Indian football back then. They did not do all these just for business expansion, but it was a community service for them as well. In this way, they provided India the international platform which the ardent Indian football fans longed for.

“Last but not the least, Bayern established the earlier non-existent business structure in this country that revolves around football.”

None other than an active football player has more knowledge about the state of the sport in his respective nation. What changes can they feel in Indian football compared to the situation ten years ago?

Former Mohun Bagan midfielder Tapan Maity was elated about the introduction of the Indian Super League in 2014. He said, “Through I.S.L., we could get in touch with the star foreign players. I had David Trezeguet in my team, and we could share the dressing room with him. We came to know how these international stars prepare for a match, how they practice. India has achieved some good results in the international arena too.”

Ishfaq Ahmed, the I.S.L. debutant Jamshedpur franchise recruit said, “Lots of changes have come in case of infrastructure. Professionalism was introduced at a bigger extent. Today, even I-League clubs like Mohun Bagan or East Bengal have better dressing room and ground facilities. Mohun Bagan now often plays under the floodlights. The Indian U-17 team is also doing pretty well, like they recently held Chile for a 1-1 draw at Mexico. The I.S.L. authority made it compulsory that six Indians must feature in a playing XI, instead of

five as per the rules in the previous editions. Today, India have lots of football schools in different cities.”

## **THE CONCLUSION**

We had our emotions as the paramount capital whenever we invited F.C. Bayern Munich to come and play in India. It's those emotions with which the people of age group 8-80 worship football India. It's those emotions with which the tricolours fly whenever Mohun Bagan takes the field. It's those emotions with which the lamps light up the gallery whenever East Bengal scores a goal. It's those emotions which drive the spectators to rise in the form of Mexican waves when Atletico de Kolkata prepares for a corner kick!

Plenty of significant ventures has already pinpointed positive results. But that's not the end? India has already achieved remarkable success in the international football arena. Still the expertating of the club footballers as well as National Team memorable today in India one can easily find fanatics who believe that even an Indian club may compete with the best football clubs of the World at a FIFA Club World Cup someday in near future. This strong confidence was considered unrealistic even ten years ago. But with the sequential changes it does not appear as an unachievable dream any more!

The efficacious alteration of Indian football post the involvement of Brayan Munich does not stop with the passage of time. instead these impacts grew ceaselessly with the marching time. Today India has many dreams regarding the game of football. As the Country is eying for high level of consistencies and some getter levels of skills which will allow them to fulfill whishes in the future.

We fill proud that we have contributed a lot in the process of changing the situation vastly in last ten years. We also fill proud that everything has already made a grand start and surely the very speed of all-out improvement has been accelerated by FC Brayan Munich! A flowery future in the football scenario, we believe is not far off.

## THE AUTHOR



Kaushik Moulik , CEO of Brand Next is a highly energetic and dynamic young man who has already established his illuminating identity. His innovative concepts and various ventures in the realm of journalism, information technology, developing marketing capabilities, promotion of Indian art, culture, literature have been duly appreciated by the eminent personalities of the country and abroad.

Shri Moulik has also developed the first English news portal on Kolkata, Kolkatatoday.com. He has also proved his urge for creative activitieslike Swami Vivekananda, Durga Puja, Uttam Kumar, Suchitra Sen- The Legendary Celluloid stars.

All credits should go to him for developing the concepts of QR Code Smart Card (First of Its Kind in India) which has application in various fields like QR Code Smart Card of Raju Mukherjee's Book 'Eden Gardens-Legends and Romance'; QR Code Smart Music Card of Rupankar's First Ghazal Album 'Love Underlying'; Various Instrumental Albums by Santoor Maestro Pt. Tarun Bhattacharya, QR Code Smart card on History of Indian Football, DKS membership card, DKS member health profile, DKS-Manjusha Shoppe Card, and many more.'

He brought into limelight balucharisare.in, Baluchari Shirt, Baluchari Jacket, Baluchari Tie and many more.

Sri Moulik brought the internationally reputed football team Bayern Munich to Kolkata. He organised the match to bid farewell to football legend Oliver Kahn. All these things certainly added a sparkling feather to his winning cap. Under his initiative Rummenigge from Munich came to the city. He also sponsored Bayern Munich 2 including legendary footballers like Gut Muller, Thomas Muller in 2009.

Shri Moulik has taken in the very depth of his heart Swami Vivekananda's words: "Stop Not till the Goal Is Reached".

So he is on the Move to touch his dream destination. And that is to place India on the Golden Throne of Football.



'I've never expected this in India! The excitement was incredible.'

I think Kahn will remember this day for a very long time.'

**Uli Hoeneß, President, Bayern Munich, Germany**

'Oliver Kahn could not get a better farewell location than Kolkata.'

**Martin Haegele, Head of Foreign Affairs, Bayern Munich, Germany**

'Thank you India. This is very special. I feel honoured to be here and play my final match in front of this large turn-up.'

**Oliver Kahn, Legend, Bayern Munich, Germany**

'I am overwhelmed to end my stint as Bayern Munich coach in front of more than a lac viewers. I had no idea there are such a huge fan following for football in this country.'

**Ottmar Hitzfeld, Former Coach, Bayern Munich, Germany**

'Football is the best team sport in the world. I'm happy that more and more kids are playing the game in India.'

**Thomas Müller, Footballer, Bayern Munich, Germany**

'A bond of friendship has grown up between Kolkata and Bayern Munich. We need to carry on this relationship in the coming years.'

**Paul Breitner, Legend, Bayern Munich, Germany**

'India is among the biggest countries in the world and I believe it is a good time now that such a country is ready to participate in a World cup.'

**Karl-Henry Rummenigge, Executive Board Chairman, Bayern Munich, Germany**

'This trip was another step forward in our effort to help Indian football.

As for Indian football I wish them all the best in future and a big thank you for inviting us as guests for this trip.'

**Gerd Müller, Legend, Bayern Munich, Germany**

Scan the QR code



Download the theme song of  
FC Bayern All Stars vs East  
Bengal Legends Match