

## MSC sew up formalities

### Rope in Tamim, Ashraful

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Following the footsteps of their traditional rivals, Mohammedan went for a showdown yesterday to confirm the cricketers for the upcoming Premier Division Cricket League battle.

The Black and White's pulled off the biggest surprise for their supporters as they made a coup by alluring national opener Tamim Iqbal from hattrick champions Abahani. The Sky Blues had set a new trend when they brought two big stars Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shakib Al Hasan into their club tent few days back and then made it public - a move which is something new in the domestic cricket scene.

Abahani officials had also confirmed the service of Tamim during the occasion but the Chittagonian put pen to paper for Mohammedan yesterday along with former Bangladesh skipper Mohammad

Ashraful, who returned to the Motijheel tent from Gazi Tank, in front of the exultant club officials.

The Motijheel outfit may have been a bit late but they made a bold statement that they are all set to put aside their disappointment of the last few seasons and served a jolt to their archrivals by roping in Tamim, who has changed his mind after getting a better offer from the Black and Whites.

Though the full team was expected to appear yesterday to confirm their service, only two national stars Ashraful and Tamim turned up. Lutfur Rahman Badal, the chairman of the Mohammedan cricket committee, however announced the names of 12 other cricketers and said that all of them already made a contract with the Black and Whites.

Badal confirmed the names of Nafis Iqbal, elder brother of Tamim, Shamsur Rahman, Aftab Ahmed, Khaled Mashud, Mohammad Shahajada, Delwar Hossain, Emon Hossain, Nabil Samad, Saqlain

Sajib, Mahmudullah Riyad, Marshal Ayub and Faisal Hossain.

"Everybody made their contracts with us. It's something new that we announced the names well before the opening of the transfer window and I think there is a lack of confidence about the players," said Badal.

"We had talked with Tamim long ago and we confirmed him after his returning from Malaysia. What we believe that one can only claim that he is their player only after this player put pen on paper," he responded when asked about Tamim's return.

He also informed that Sri Lanka all-rounder Farveez Mahroof all but confirmed to play the whole season for Mohammedan and they may come up with more surprise for everybody to make sure that they would not leave any stones unturned to regain the glory.

Without elaborating, Badal demanded that Tamim and Ashraful would be the highest paid players in this season

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## BCB's CEO candidates short-listed

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has received the short-list of candidates for the post of its chief executive officer (CEO), a position lying vacant for nearly one-and-a-half years.

The BCB gave the responsibility to the Institute of Business Administration of the Dhaka University and they proposed five names after scrutinising over 60 applications.

According to sources the short-listed candidates are Mahmudur Rahman, the immediate past CEO of the BCB, Intekhab Mahmud, Mainul Haque Chowdhury, Imdad Ehsan and Rizwan Bin Faruq.

The BCB will discuss the issue in Wednesday's crucial board meeting.

The new national selection panel, the names of national team captain and vice-captain, Under-19 team captain and vice-captain will also be finalised during the meeting.

The selection evaluation committee will meet tomorrow to take a final decision on the selection panel. The tenure of the Rafiqul Alam-led selection panel expired last month and there is little chance to see any change in the committee but change is on the cards in terms and condition.

The board is worried with the injuries of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shakib Al Hasan, but both are likely to get extension as captain and vice-captain respectively. Mashrafe could not lead the team in West Indies and Zimbabwe and in his absence Shakib successfully led the team to secure the historic success, but the BCB is likely to stick to its earlier decision.

The board will also discuss on the team management and there are proposals to change the name of tour operations

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PHOTO: AFP

Former women's world number one Kim Clijsters of Belgium is ecstatic after clinching a point on way to ousting favourite Venus Williams of the United States in their fourth round tie of US Open at the Flushing Meadows in New York on Sunday.

## Mubeen to start Sep 15

SPORTS REPORTER

General Abdul Mubeen, new president of the Bangladesh Olympic Association, is all set to take over on September 15 after being elected uncontested last month.

The army chief will also preside over the executive committee meeting and will be introduced to the members the same day.

BOA secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed and CEO retired Col Wali Ullah met the president yesterday. It was learnt that the key point of discussion of the meeting would be the preparation of the upcoming 11th SA Games to be held in Dhaka in 2010.

The BOA president may also visit different venues and see for himself preparations of the athletes.

## Marcus set for India trip

AFP, London

Former England opener Marcus Trescothick, whose international career was ended by a stress-related illness that prevented him from travelling abroad, has been included in Somerset's squad for the Champions League in India next month.

Presuming he does travel, it will be the first time the 33-year-old has returned to the sub-continent since his condition resulted in him leaving England's tour of India in 2006.

Announcing their 15-man squad, Somerset said they were looking at ways to ensure that Trescothick was able to make the trip.

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Yuvraj Singh

(Star India batsman)

"There is no doubt that Twenty20 has taken over a lot of cricket but 50 overs is here to stay."



### TEN Sports

Sri Lanka v New Zealand  
Tri-Series, First ODI  
Live from 4:00pm  
US Open Tennis  
Fourth Round  
Live from 12:15am (Wednesday)  
ESPN  
Sportscenter India  
Sports News  
Live at 9:30pm



PHOTO: STAR

Mohammad Ashraful, former captain of Bangladesh national team, pens his deal with Mohammedan for the upcoming Premier Division Cricket League at the club's Motijheel tent yesterday.

## Ponting quits T20Is

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia captain Ricky Ponting on Monday announced his retirement from international Twenty20 cricket to prolong his Test career as he bids to return the team to world supremacy.

Ponting, smarting from the Ashes defeat to England, will remain as Test and one-day captain and will also play Australia's domestic Twenty20 competition and the Indian Premier League.

"After much thought and careful consideration I have advised Cricket Australia of my decision to retire from international Twenty20 cricket," he said.

"I feel this decision provides me the opportunity to prolong my Australian Test and one-day career, an opportunity I am extremely determined about," he added.

Ponting, 34, is targeting revenge in the 2013 Ashes series in England after piloting Australia to a second successive away loss to their bitter rivals.

The defeat cost Australia their long-held top Test ranking and saw them plunge to fourth behind South Africa, Sri Lanka and India.

Ponting's Australia were also sent crashing out of the World Twenty20 group stages in June after suffering their fifth successive defeat in the high-tempo format.

"As I said after the fifth Test in London, I am hoping to continue playing Test cricket for as long as possible and retiring from the Twenty20 format gives me the best chance of doing this," he said.

"I will now have set periods of rest throughout the Australian summer and while touring

which I feel will be very beneficial."

Governing body Cricket Australia backed Ponting's decision and said a new Twenty20 captain would be announced later in the year, with Ponting's deputy Michael Clarke believed to be in the box seat.

"Needless to say he will be a huge loss to the Twenty20 side but it does present opportunities for the other players and leaders within Australian cricket to gain further experience," said CEO James Sutherland.

"While we have not seen much of Ricky in Australia's Twenty20 matches in recent times, his innings in the first ever Twenty20 International against New Zealand at Auckland was probably the best innings I have ever seen in the Twenty20 form of the game."

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RICKY PONTING

## SL tri-series from today

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

India, Sri Lanka and New Zealand hope to put in impressive performances in a tri-series starting from today to boost confidence ahead of the Champions Trophy.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's India side start as favourites despite missing injured opener Virender Sehwag and paceman Zaheer Khan, having beaten both New Zealand and Sri Lanka in their own backyards in their last one-day series.

India are seeking a hattrick of wins in Sri Lanka after clinching a pair of bilateral five-match series in August 2008 and in February this year.

Each team will play two league matches before the top two qualify for the final on September 14. The hosts clash with New Zealand in today's opening game.

Sri Lanka's record-breaking Muttiah Muralidaran believes the series will help the teams prepare for the eight-nation Champions Trophy which opens in South Africa on September 22.

"The tri-series will be good preparation for the upcoming Champions Trophy," said the off-spinner who is the world's leading wicket-taker in Tests (783) and one-day internationals (511).

"New Zealand have shown in the past few days how much more dangerous they are in the shorter version, winning both Twenty20 matches, and India have happy memories of Sri Lanka

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## Onus is on Maradona

FARAZ IHTESHAM



FIFA

Diego Maradona is obviously

not aware of the fact that how a defeat of Argentina against their bitter rivals Brazil is treated far away in Bangladesh where he is revered as an iconic image and his team the most loved one like Brazil.

Football fans here were split into two groups when Diego's Argentina hosted Brazil at home in a crucial World Cup qualifying match on Sunday morning with one section glued to TV sets with a hope that their idol would do something magical in his new role like he did as a player with his Midas left foot.

But coach Diego turned out to be a total disappointment after Argentina suffered a 3-1 loss, their first home defeat in sixteen years. The painful defeat against Dunga's Brazil has left Argentine fans pondering with this question on their minds: 'Is Diego the right man for the job?'

Is Diego picking the right players? How does he want Argentina to play? Does he have a set goal? Will Argentina make it to South Africa?

When it comes to choosing his squad, Maradona's selection of players is totally

bizarre. He continues to ignore established Europe-based players in favour of inexperienced South American counterparts. And this policy has backfired in crucial moments.

If one takes a simple glance at Argentina's defence, it is evident that they are weak when it comes to counter quality attack. Yet Maradona overlooked his available top class centre-back in Inter Milan's Walter Samuel instead playing debutant Sebastian Dominguez of Velez Sarsfield against Brazil.

Dominguez had a forgettable night. He struggled throughout the match and was cruelly exposed by the speedy Brazilians.

Maradona's continued persistence with the slowing Gabriel Heinze instead of trying someone else is also baffling. If Diego cannot sort out his defence Argentina will continue to struggle against the likes of Brazil.

What about Maradona's gameplan? He said before the Brazil tie that he was planning an all-out attacking strategy. In the game itself, Argentina were so pre-occupied with attack that they did not bother to defend set-pieces properly and they paid a heavy price for their blunders.

After the game Maradona pointed out that he didn't like the fact that each time Brazil attacked Argentina they scored a goal. Diego

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PHOTO: AFP

Argentina coach Diego Maradona is about to grab a ball during their 2010 World Cup qualifier against Brazil at the Gigante de Arroyito Stadium in Rosario on Saturday.

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## Venus sent packing

AFP, New York



US OPEN

Comeback queen Kim Clijsters split the Williams sisters on Sunday when she sent Venus reeling out of the US Open.

The 26-year-old Belgian, who has been the talk of the tournament as she continues her return from two and a half years out of the game to marry and have a baby, won a roller-coaster of a match 6-0, 0-6, 6-4.

She will play China's Li Na in the last eight with a possible tilt at defending champion and tournament favourite Serena Williams awaiting in the semifinals should she win that.

"It was such a weird match especially the first two sets. When I lost the second set I said, 'Just start again and fight for every point,'" she said.

"I've been working really hard the last seven or eight months and I am enjoying it and that is important."

"Tennis is a great sport, but I am just happy that we have a family and I can balance both."

Serena, meanwhile, was all business as she dispatched Slovakia's Daniela Hantuchova 6-0, 6-2 in just 64 minutes and will next play Italy's Flavia Pennetta who saved six match points against Russian seventh seed Vera Zvonareva before winning 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-0.

The Clijsters-Venus Williams tie was a game of three distinct sets with Clijsters blanking Williams in the first and the American returning the favour in the second.

The decider finally saw both women playing well at the same time and it produced a high quality drama that turned on a dropped serve by Williams in the third game as she double-faulted on break point.

The Belgian, bidding to become just the

third mother to win a Grand Slam title after Australians Evonne Goolagong and Margaret Court, got to 5-3 ahead with Williams having to serve to stay in the match.

The American successfully did that but Clijsters served out for the match, erasing two break points in the process.

It was a routine win for tournament favourite Serena in stark contrast to the trials and tribulations of several of her main contenders, especially the Russian brigade of top seed Dinara Safina, Maria Sharapova and Elena Dementieva who were all upset.

The 27-year-old title-holder broke serve in the sixth and eighth games of the first set against the Slovak, a Grand Slam regular who struggles against the top players.

The second set was one-way traffic as the title-holder made it 10 games in a row to march into the semi-finals in just 64 minutes.

In four matches, she has yet to drop a set and has lost just a total of 17 games.

"I played well and stayed focussed," she said. "I traditionally play really well in fourth-round matches so I want to keep this level and stay focussed for my next match."

"Everyone is playing so well and some of the seeds have been struggling all summer and you can't underestimate anyone."

With the win, Williams took her Grand Slam record for the year to 22-1, her only loss being to Svetlana Kuznetsova in the French Open quarterfinals. She won both the Australian Open and Wimbledon crowns taking her career Grand Slam total to 11.

Li's comprehensive 6-2, 6-3 win over Italy's Francesca Schiavone is only the third time a Chinese player has reached the quarterfinals of

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