

## Titoo doesn't know it!

**Cricket**

**BISHWAIJIT ROY**

Marketing committee chairman Aziz Al Kaiser Titoo on Tuesday put the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on a spot of bother by saying that he was not fully informed about the National Cricket League's sponsorship deal between the board and ATN Records.

ATN Records won the marketing and broadcasting rights as an event partner of the National Cricket League for one season but surprisingly Titoo, a BCB director who heads the marketing committee, made it clear that he was not involved in the deal although he holds the responsibility to look after this matter.

"I have little knowledge about the deal. It's better you ask Mahubul bhai (BCB's senior vice-president Mahubul Anam) or someone else if you want to know about the details of the deal," said an apparently frustrated Titoo when asked about the deal over telephone last evening.

The board is yet to disclose the details of the deal that was signed four months ago, giving birth to a lot of unanswered questions. And the man who was supposed to be the official spokesman broke his silence in a most frustrating manner.

"I don't know... maybe it's my failure. I don't want to blame anybody. Maybe it's better to say that I failed to deliver," proclaimed Titoo.

It was also hard for the long-serving BCB official to hold his emotions with the recent activities of the board where professionalism seems to be vanishing from all activities.

"I think something is wrong there. Board should find out someone capable for my post",

said the businessman clearly expressing his desire to quit.

"But you have to have professionals to do the work properly because it's quite impossible for me to work fulltime at the board. We can act as policymakers and give the guidelines only. And the job is for the professionals to execute the plans," he added.

"The board president is very positive and working very hard to get certain things done. But it is also the responsibility of the directors to rally around him, especially with the most important event -- the World Cup -- knocking at the door," he said.

There was every reason for Titoo to be frustrated as the BCB is yet to appoint a permanent CEO, a post which has been vacant for almost three years and recently two professionals employed in the marketing committee have resigned, only to fuel the notion that professionals are not feeling comfortable to work in a place once regarded as very lucrative for them.

The question of BCB's lack of professionalism was exposed crudely after the country's richest board failed to take the full financial advantage from the National Cricket League (NCL)'s sponsorship deal, especially with the introduction of NCL T20 under franchises exposed the BCB's poor marketing.

It was a good idea to arrange the T20 under franchises but frustratingly BCB could not understand the value of their commodity.

It's often told that the sponsors showed hardly any interest in the domestic events but ATN Records, as a professional group not only won a good financial bargain but also exposed the board's inability to understand the value of professionals.



Robiul Islam of Bangladesh goes airborne to shoot during the IHF handball U-21 challenge match against Afghanistan at the Shaheed Suhrawardi National Indoor Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Sania-Shoaib wedding might be postponed?

**STAR SPORT DESK**

As events around the wedding between Pakistani cricketer Shoaib Malik and tennis ace Sania Mirza get murkier by the day, the Indian sports icon's family was "keeping all options open", including postponing the wedding, indicated a close family friend.

Andhra Cricket Association's former secretary V Chamundeswaranath, a close friend of Sania's family, told reporters late Monday that "while no decision was taken to postpone the marriage, the family was keeping all options open".

Chamundeswaranath has been regularly visiting the Mirza family ever since Shoaib arrived here Friday for his wedding scheduled for April 15. With Ayesha Siddiqui, who claims to be Shoaib's first wife, launching a legal fight to prove her claim and the police not ruling out the Pakistani cricketer's arrest, the two families are seriously considering delaying the marriage, it is learnt.

Police Monday grilled Shoaib at Sania's house at posh Jubilee Hills in Hyderabad after booking a criminal case of cheating, harassment and criminal intimidation against him following a complaint by Ayesha, who is also a resident of this city.

Though both Shoaib and Sania, during their interaction with the media Monday, asserted that the marriage would take place April 15, the family is visibly worried over the impact the controversy may have on the celebrations.

Sania was tense and irritated while answering media queries Monday. "Of course I am upset but we are happy that we are together and we are happy that we are getting married, Inshallah. We want to remember this as a happy occasion in our life and not as bad thing or negative thing," she said.

Police officers, who took away Shoaib's passport and mobile phone, said he may be

questioned again and may also be arrested on the basis of evidence they may come across during the course of investigations.

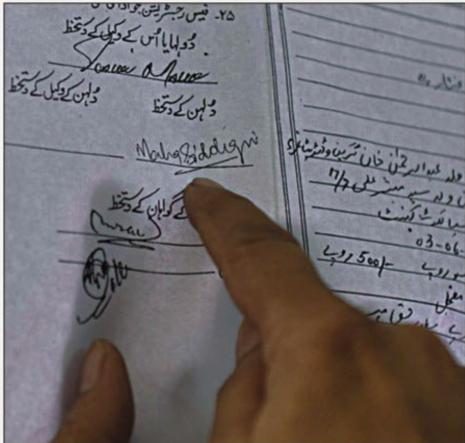
### WHAT DO THE STARS SAY?

It's a rocky way ahead for Sania and Shoaib if the predictions of leading astrologers are anything to go by. They predict that the future is not at all rosy for Sania and the current controversy is just the 'tip of the iceberg of troubles' for her.

Tarot card reader Sunita Menon says, "It's a very rocky way ahead for her. I get an indication that it is going to be troublesome and stormy. But I would not like to comment on things like divorce or separation [from Shoaib] because I don't believe in saying negative things."

Numerologist Sanjay Jumaani is even more forthright in his predictions. "Sania Mirza spells trouble," he says. "Her name adds up to 26 which is an octave of number eight of Saturn."

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A United Women Front official points to what she claimed the signatures of Pakistani cricketer Shoaib Malik and Ayesha Siddiqui on a photocopy of the nikhanama (marriage certificate) in front of the Siquiduis' residence in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## BANGLADESH LEAGUE Brothers, Arambagh in dire draw

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Brothers Union and Arambagh KS once again shared points in the Bangladesh League when they played out a goalless draw in their second meeting at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

They also played out a goalless draw in their first meeting and the sixth draw of both sides in 15 matches meant they are now neck to neck with 15 points each.

Our Chittagong corresponded adds: Two regional rivals Abahani and Mohammedan also shared the honour as Chittagong Abahani came from one goal down to hold 10-man Chittagong Mohammedan to a 1-1 draw at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong.

Akbar Hossain Ridon put Mohammedan ahead through a free kick taken from outside the box in the 36th minute, but the Black and Whites lost the tempo when Manjurul Islam was sent off in the 57th minute and four minutes later Abahani, who beat their rivals 1-0 in their first meeting, bit back to equal the margin through Mithun Chowdhury, who struck his fifth league goal through a low drive.

Chittagong Abahani have now 16 points from 14 outings while Chittagong Mohammedan have 13 points from 14 matches.



**Max & SuperSport2**  
Indian Premier League  
Rajasthan Royals v Kings XI Punjab  
Live from 4:30pm  
Kolkata Knight Riders v Delhi Daredevils  
Live from 8:30pm

**SuperSport3**  
UEFA Champions League  
Man United v Bayern Munich  
Live from 12:45am (Thursday)

**SuperSport7**  
UEFA Champions League  
Bordeaux v Olympique Lyonnais  
Live from 12:45am (Thursday)

**DAY'S EVENT**

**Bangladesh League**  
Shuktara v Abahani  
Time: 3:30pm  
Venue: Nrayanganj Stadium  
Muktijoddha v Mohammedan  
Time: 5:00pm  
Venue: BNS

**Club Cup Hockey**  
Sonali Bank v Usha KC  
Time: 4:00pm  
Venue: Maulana Bhasani Stadium

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## IHF U-21 HANDBALL Hosts off to a flyer

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Hosts Bangladesh got off to a flying start in the IHF Handball (U-21) Challenge Trophy handing a massive 46-2 defeat to Afghanistan in one of two opening day's matches at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor National Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh dominated from the start to take a comfortable 5-0 lead and never looked back till the last whistle of the game. They went into the breather with a 21-10 lead against a comparatively weak side, whose senior side suffered a 43-17 defeat to Bangladesh during the South Asian Games handball event.

After resumption, Bangladesh then scored 25 more goals to finish the game with 46 against Afghanistan's 20 goals though the Afghan players looked better both physically and technically.

However, Bangladesh coach Kamrul

Islam Kiron said that it was easy to beat Afghanistan because of good team combination as they have been preparing for the tournament since the end of the SA Games in February.

Kiron said that the match against Yemen today is the vital game for them on way to the semifinals as he has no idea about Yemen, a side who for the first time came out of their country to take part in an international handball tournament.

Kiron, however, could not ensure whether his charges would be able to play in the six-nation tournament's final as India and Pakistan are both in the other group.

Yemen coach Khaled Al Barac said that the Yemen squad is comprised of students of higher secondary school with a three-month preparation and they had set their sight on the last four.

Kiron counterpart Afghanistan coach Abdur Rahim admitted that the home

side is far better than them and they have come here with a youthful side to have gained experience as well as give them international exposure. He also informed that some 12 to 14 players, who were also a part of Afghanistan's SA Games squad, had come with the youth side.

In the day's first match, Pakistan thumped Nepal 49-14 after leading the first half 23-5 at the same venue. Meanwhile, Pakistan's senior side grabbed the SA Games handball gold beating India two month before.

Pakistan assistant coach Taher Hamid said that they have come here to clinch the title following their success in the SA Games and two players of the SA Games squad are in this team.

Defeated Nepal coach Arun Karn said that they had little time for preparation following the fund constraints back

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## Chayan suffices MSC

**Hockey**

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Mamunur Rahman Chayan struck four times including a hattrick in Mohammedan Sporting Club's 5-0 drubbing of Mariner Youngs Club in the Dhaka Bank Club Cup Hockey Tournament at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday.

The Motijheel big guns were not the only big winners of the day as their arch-rivals, Abahani, also posted a huge 5-2 win over Ajax Sporting Club in the second match. The two giants square off in the Group A decider on April 9.

The expert penalty-corner converter showed off his prowess with four pinpoint shots at the target as the traditional Mohammedan-Mariners rivalry fizzled out as early as the 27th minute.

That's when Chayan, the national defender, opened the scoring with Mohammedan's third penalty corner of the sultry afternoon. Three minutes later, it was 2-0 and just five minutes after the lemon break, Chayan completed the tournament's third hattrick. Mohammedan got into

cruise control by then, finding opportunities and before the game closed, Chayan got his fourth consecutive goal, through Mohammedan's ninth penalty corner in the 63rd minute.

Russell Mahmud Jimmy, the star attacking midfielder, got on the scoresheet with a field goal in the 66th minute as Mohammedan made it 5-0 in a strong display.

In the day's second game, Abahani found the back of the net in the 10th minute when their captain Asaduzzaman Chandan converted a penalty corner. Soon, in fact seven minutes later, Chandan doubled the margin with his and the team's second in another successful penalty corner effort.

In the 27th minute, Hasan Zubair Niloy gave the Dhanmondi-based giants a 3-0 lead through a field goal.

Ajax pulled one back two minutes before the breather when Shahidullah Khokon converted a penalty corner but soon after, in the second half, normal service resumed.

Abahani scored two more goals after that to close off a day where the giants fully dominated proceedings.

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## Chennai knock over Mumbai

**CRICINFO, undated**

Chennai Super Kings completed a sweep of their three-match home leg after the Mumbai Indians' batting fell apart in a rash of poor strokes following Sachin Tendulkar's retirement due to dehydration.

Tendulkar was on his haunches and breathing heavily as early as the fourth over of the chase. However, he and Shikhar Dhawan provided their customary solid start, hitting a four over in the Powerplays to take Mumbai to 46 for 0. Dhawan chopped on Thilan Thushara's first delivery, but Mumbai progressed smoothly, if slowly, to 62 after nine overs when

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## NCL T20s launch today Mashrafe up for grabs

**Cricket**

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The launching ceremony of the National Cricket League's Twenty20 tournament will be held today.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will sign the agreement between them and the six franchises although the Barisal team hasn't yet been sold.

Yesterday, ATN Bangla chairman Mahfuzur Rahman bought the Khulna franchise to make the other southern division the only team left out.

The marketing powers behind the event, ATN Records, and BCB were still looking for a last-minute bidder for the sixth division last night. The organisers will wait till this afternoon to find a taker.

Beximco bought the Dhaka franchise, IFIC acquired Chittagong, NM Group had Rajshahi and Riz Biz Events purchased the Sylhet franchise earlier.

Players were divided into five groups; Grade A+ players will get Tk 4 lakh each and the lowest-ranked, Grade D, getting Tk 1 lakh.

(Rajshahi), Shakib Al Hasan (Khulna), Mohammad Ashraf (Dhaka), Tamim Iqbal (Chittagong) and Shahriar Nafees (Barisal) were named the Icon Players for their respective divisions while Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, also a Grade A+ pick, will be up for grabs.

Nafees, Rokibul Hasan, Nazimuddin and Ziaur Rahman were given to Barisal, Tamim, Aftab Ahmed, Rubel Hossain and Faisal Hossain to Chittagong, Ashraf, Mahmudullah Riyad, Jahurul Islam and Mahubul Alam to Dhaka and Dollar Shakib, Abdur Razzak, Imrul Kayes and Dollar Mahmud were given to the Khulna franchise.

Rajshahi will get Naeem, Junaed Siddiqui, Shaiful Islam and Sohrwardi Shuvo as their Icon Players while Kapali, Forhad Reza, Nazmul Hossain and Musharrif Rubel will go to Sylhet.

While the four icon players will play for each division, the rest of the squad will be chosen by the franchises through a lottery that will fully shape the team formation.

The sequence of the teams to choose their respective players will be decided by lottery. The first team decided by drawing lots will make the first pick and the rest will follow in order and the second pick will be done in the reverse fashion.



An Abahani player (C) dribbles past an Ajax Sporting Club defender during their Club Cup Hockey Tournament encounter at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday. However it was Mohammedan defender Mamunur Rahman Chayan (inset) who was the star of the day. Here he raises his stick after scoring four successive goals against Mariner Youngs Club.

PHOTOS: STAR