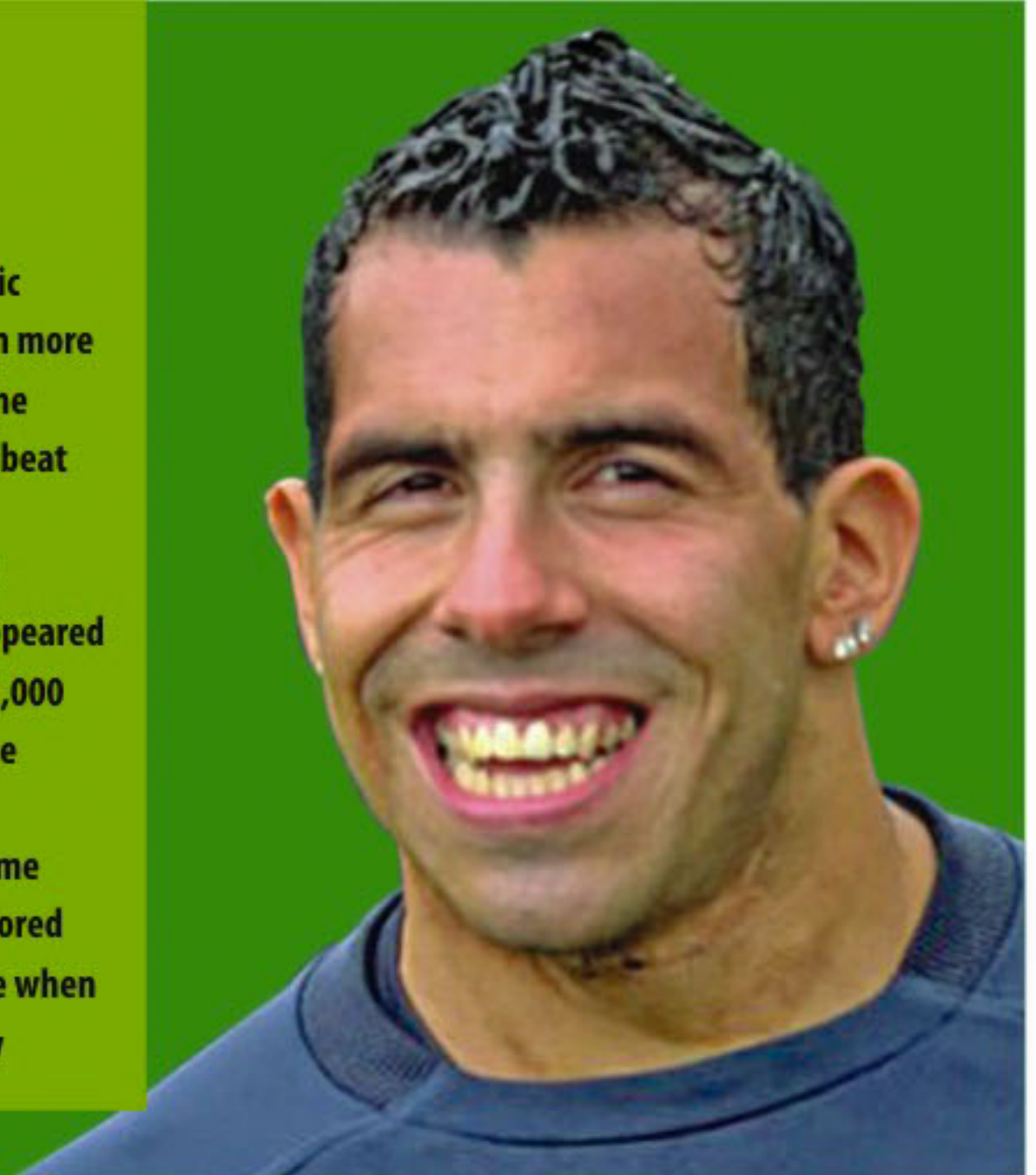


# Star SPORT

DHAKA THURSDAY MARCH 8, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

## Tevez scores for reserves

Carlos Tevez marked his first public appearance for Manchester City in more than five months with a goal as the Premier League leaders' reserves beat Bolton 3-1 on Tuesday. Tevez, who played for 45 minutes behind closed doors last week, appeared in front of a crowd of more than 1,000 boosted by media personnel in the Manchester district of Hyde. The Argentina striker who had come close with a first half free-kick, scored City's equaliser in the 51st minute when he finished off a cross from fellow



**TYPING THE RESIGNATION LETTER OR THAT IS ALREADY DONE? Outgoing chief selector Akram Khan works on his computer while co-selectors Habibul Bashar (C) and Minhazul Abedin (R) look on at the selectors' office of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. Akram resigned from his post yesterday morning following a dispute regarding the selection of the Asia Cup squad.**

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Akram's heroic decision

**Cricket**

SPORTS REPORTER

Akram Khan doesn't have to look too far for support after taking such a bold decision.

As he submitted the resignation letter to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Wednesday morning, messages from former teammates poured in; his family and friends have backed him fully. More importantly, Akram has won the respect of almost everyone interested in Bangladesh cricket, be it the former and current players, fans as well as some officials.

As a man who has broken the mould by becoming the first chief selector to resign his post, Akram definitely had a mighty decision to take but after a wait of a day and a half, he came to the conclusion that his exit would be the dignified choice.

But it was a decision that had to be taken by someone at some stage. Akram, with all his playing experience and time as a selector, thought long and hard and resisted persuasion from his colleagues Habibul Bashar and Minhazul Abedin.

"We had a long discussion yesterday and whatever Nannu bhai and Sumon told me were logical," said Akram yesterday. "But ever since I became a selector 4-5 years ago, there

were a lot of things that happened with regards to selection which made me unhappy."

"After I became the chief selector last year, there were problems from the beginning which I tried to settle and sometimes succeeded in doing so. I had to bear the brunt of such issues, so I decided that it is better to step down," added the man who led Bangladesh to the seminal ICC Trophy triumph in 1997.

"The ACC tells us to give a 15-man team for the Asia Cup but Tamim was removed and made a standby. We took the decision on his inclusion after seeing physio Vibhav Singh and Dr Debashish Roy's report," said Akram.

"I wasn't even informed of the change; I got to know like you did which really hurt me. I have a piece of paper to prove it but I don't know what Nannu bhai is saying," he said when told that the other former captain has said that there was no interference.

But Tamim's isn't the first name to be slashed at the whim of the board president and directors who are members of the technical committee.

"One incident happened with Ashrafal, when he was picked against Pakistan last year. We had Rokibul Hasan and Shuvogoto Hom as middle-order candidates but they weren't scoring big. Ashrafal was scoring at

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## BD TOUR OF PAKISTAN CEC backs non-neutral match officials

SPORTS REPORTER

The International Cricket Council (ICC) board of directors will ultimately decide whether to approve non-neutral match officials for the proposed Bangladesh tour of Pakistan in April.

The ICC Chief Executives' Committee (CEC) agreed during its just-concluded two-day meeting in Dubai to recommend to the ICC Board that, from a solely cricketing perspective, the granting of the special dispensation of non-neutral match officials to officiate in the matches would be justified.

The CEC noted that in the event of the participating countries deciding that the

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## Club shooting from today

*Compressed air rifles to be introduced*

SPORTS REPORTER

Compressed air rifles are going to be introduced for the first time when the Sonali Bank 18th Inter-Club Shooting Championship gets underway at the National Shooting Complex in Gulshan today.

Thus far these sort of tournaments only used open sight rifles which are lighter in weight, but can only be used in practice. However, the compressed air rifles, which are heavier than open sight rifles, are the ones which are used in national and international level tournaments. And in order to get the shooters accustomed with the match rifles from the club level, the compressed air rifles are being introduced.

"The Inter-Club Shooting Championship was introduced with the aim of finding future stars. But the reality is we have hardly been able to get any stars as there is huge difference between the ones we use in club-competitions and the ones used in national and international tournaments.

The newcomers find it hard to set their target with the match rifle once they have got

used to train with the open sight rifles.

"In order to overcome this barrier, we have this time provided compressed air rifles (match rifle) to different clubs so that the youngsters can get used to them from the inter-club competitions," said the general secretary of National Shooting Federation of Bangladesh, AN Istiaque Ahmed at a press conference at the conference room of Sonali Bank principle office yesterday.

Istiaque also informed that they have been collecting the old match rifles from different sources and distributing them to different clubs in a bid to give the new shooters an early introduction to the match rifles.

Some 550 shooters from 55 clubs across the country will battle for 10 gold -- five in boys and five in girls group as each of the participating clubs are bound to send at least 10 shooters.

Of the estimated budget of Tk 10.95 lakh, sponsors Sonali Bank will provide Tk 5 lakh while the rest will be borne by the shooting federation.

Chairman of Sonali Bank's board of

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## BFF fines clubs, officials

SPORTS REPORTER

Officials and players of Muktijoddha Sangsad were warned not to breach the code of conduct again in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League after they were found guilty in their encounter against Mohammedan Sporting Club last month.

The decision was taken at a BFF disciplinary committee meeting recently as the committee found that Muktijoddha Sangsad manager Abus Sattar violently protested a referee's decision and their foreign recruit Sunday Chizoba repeatedly alleged the referee of allowing less time than the added minutes and ruling out a goal.

In another decision, the

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

**FIFA president Sepp Blatter (L), while waiting at the VIP Lounge of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday morning, skims through the sports pages of The Daily Star. The FIFA boss left for Bhutan after a 21-hour stay in Dhaka.**

## Blatter off to Bhutan

*Apologises for Valcke's remarks*

**Football**

SPORT DESK

FIFA president Sepp Blatter left Bangladesh for Bhutan yesterday morning after a 21-hour whistle-stop trip here. The FIFA boss, who inaugurated an Astroturf adjacent to the BFF House as part FIFA's Goal Project II and the Sylhet Football Academy as part of Goal Project III, promised to keep the long-standing association with BFF to grow further.

Sepp Blatter was presented with souvenirs as the executive committee members of the BFF saw him off at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. Earlier on Tuesday night, the FIFA boss celebrated his birthday (March 10) in advance by cutting a cake during an official dinner at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel.

However, it has not been all rosy in the last few days for the head of world football's governing body as his organisation got embroiled in an unwanted controversy as the Jerome Valcke recently made a disparaging remark about the Brazilian organisers of the 2014 World Cup by saying they needed a "kick up the backside."

AFP adds: The FIFA boss apologised to the Brazilian authority through a letter on Tuesday. In the letter sent to Brazilian Sports Minister Aldo Rebelo, Blatter said: "Both as FIFA President and personally, I would like to apologise to all those -- above all the Brazilian government and President Dilma Rousseff -- who feel that their honour and

pride has been injured."

"We have a common goal -- the organisation of an extraordinary World Cup in the land of football, in the land of champions," he added. "Brazil deserves to host the World Cup and the entire world is looking forward to it."

Blatter also said he would like to meet Rousseff and Rebelo "as soon as possible, ideally next week" to defuse the blazing row.

FIFA has for months expressed varying degrees of concern over the extent to which preparations -- renovation or construction of stadiums as well as infrastructure projects -- are on track for the first World Cup in Brazil since 1950.

Earlier, Valcke himself offered his own apology in a letter to Rebelo, saying he "profoundly regretted that an incorrect interpretation" of his comments had triggered such an angry response from the host country.

"I would like to present my apologies to everyone who was offended by my comments," said Valcke, a French national.

He explained that in French, the phrase "se donner un coup de pied aux fesses" (to give someone a kick up the backside) only meant "to pick up the pace." The translation into Portuguese used a stronger expression, he added.

"I don't understand why things are not moving. The stadiums are not on schedule anymore and why are a lot of things late?" Valcke said Friday.

These comments drew a sharp rebuke from Brazil, with Rebelo saying Valcke would no longer be welcome as a FIFA spokesman.



PHOTO: STAR

**Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim (L) kicks a football while star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan (R) and Elias Sunny run alongside during the first day's practice for the Asia Cup at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.**