

Football superstar David Beckham flew into Australia Thursday for an exhibition game with his team LA Galaxy, but minus his popstar wife Victoria who opted to stay at home. The former England captain said he was "honoured" to be in Australia for this weekend's game against former A-League champions Newcastle Jets at their 26,000-capacity stadium north of Sydney. "We're honoured to be here, this is something the players have talked about and are excited about," said Beckham, 35. "We're here to enjoy ourselves but also here to perform as well and hopefully win."



SPORT

DHAKA FRIDAY NOVEMBER 26, 2010, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Nat'l cycling starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

The NCC Bank National Cycling Championship gets underway today amidst disagreement about holding the 34th edition of the meet on the athletic turf at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"It is nothing new to hold a cycling competition on the athletic turf as we had earlier staged the competitions on turfs at the Mirpur Stadium and Army Stadium. We hope the turf will face no damage during the competition, but it will be exceptional if any incident happens there," said Bangladesh Cycling Federation general secretary SM Imtiaz Khan Babul at a press conference at the Bangladesh Olympic Association yesterday.

The renovation and modernization work ahead of the ICC World Cup is being carried on at the BNS and the cycling meet will probably be staged in front of empty galleries.

"Considering the traffic jams in the city as well as security for the women cyclists, we have chosen this venue and the authority concerned told us that a portion of the gallery will be open for the spectators," said Babul.

Some 250 cyclists from 19 teams from numerous districts, service teams and one university are expected to take part in the meet, which was last

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U-17 booters start with a win

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh U-17 football team began their Subroto Mukherjee Cup Football campaign on a winning note when they handed a lone goal defeat to Lagaland in their Group H opener in Delhi, India yesterday.

Masud Rana struck the all-important goal on 50 minutes. Bangladesh will take on Arunachal Pradesh today.



Bangladesh left-arm spinner Sohrawardi Shuvo (C), who has just taken another Sri Lankan wicket, is the toast of his teammates during the second semifinal of the 16th Asian Games in Guangzhou on Thursday. Shuvo took four wickets for six runs to lay the platform of an easy five-wicket win and a clash in today's gold decider against surprise package Afghanistan.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Bangladesh on cusp of history

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh rode on some excellent spin bowling to romp into the final of the Asian Games cricket with a comfortable five-wicket victory over Sri Lanka at the Guangzhou International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Mohammad Ashraf's boys, who are now on the brink of making history by clinching the first gold medal for the country, set up today's final clash with high-flying Afghanistan, who had stunned Pakistan in the first semifinal by 22 runs.

Bangladesh's slow bowlers led by Sohrawardi Shuvo, who claimed four wickets conceding only six runs in his 4-over spell, rattled the Sri Lankan batting to wrap them up for only 101.

Recovering from the early loss of Mohammad Mithun for just one run, Bangladesh reached the target of 102 runs for five wickets with 4.4 overs to spare thanks to Faisal Hossain who scored the team highest 24-ball 33 that contained three fours and a six.

Naem Islam made the second best of 25 runs that came from 34 balls with two boundaries while captain Ashraf contributed 18 off 15 balls hitting one four and a six.

Earlier, Nazmul Hossain provided the first breakthrough by removing 30 Test veteran Nuwan Zoysa after Sri Lanka had decided to bat first upon winning the toss.

Then pacer Shahadat Hossain rocked the Lankan top order with double strikes as the lanky right-arm paceman dismissed Jeevantha Kulatunga (25) and Indika de Saram (2) in quick succession.

Sri Lanka, who brought eleven internationals to Guangzhou, then succumbed to the Bangladeshi slow bowlers and failed to recover from the early damage.

Number six batsman Chinthaka Jayasinghe salvaged some pride as the 32-year-old right-hander clobbered two sixes and a

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Zimbabwe arrive today

Tigers team may be given tomorrow



SPORTS REPORTER

The Zimbabwe cricket team, led by Elton Chigumbura, will arrive in Dhaka today to take part in a five-match one-day series against the hosts who are buoyant after their recent 4-0 drubbing of New Zealand.

The Zimbabweans will play a limited-overs warm-up match against a BCB XI at BKSP on November 29 before playing the first one-day international at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on December 1.

The second (December 3) and third one-dayers (December 6), which will be

day-nighters, will also be held at Mirpur and after that the teams will travel to Chittagong to play the remaining two games scheduled for December 10 and 12 at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

Experienced batsman Grant Flower, who made a surprising return to international cricket during the recent ODI series in South Africa, will also accompany the team not as a player but as the batting coach for the series.

Zimbabwe have included uncapped Ryan Butterworth after his impressive performances in the recent domestic T20 series while spinner Ray Price returns after missing the tour of South Africa for personal reasons.

Sean Williams missed out on the tour

after sustaining a hamstring injury during the T20 series but Zimbabwe have recalled medium-pace Keegan Meth, who has not played for the national side since 2006.

Meanwhile, the three-member Bangladesh selection panel led by Rafiqul Alam will submit its choice to the board today, but the team is likely to be announced tomorrow. There is a chance of two changes from the squad that played against the Black Caps.

Dashing opener Tamim Iqbal is all set to return to international cricket after missing the recently concluded home series against the Kiwis due to surgery on his left wrist.

And the left-hander's return gave the

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ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP HISTORY

Coney steals one

In the previous World Cup, New Zealand hearts were broken as they went down fighting against England in the semifinal, taking the match to the last over.

In the 1983 World Cup, another thriller was in store for the crowd who assembled to watch the match at Edgbaston and the participants were the same as before.

New Zealand were under more pressure, as a loss here would seriously hamper their chances of progression to the semis, while England started the match having won their first three games.

England took first strike after winning the toss, and the innings progressed serenely as the openers Graeme Fowler and Chris Tavare put on 63 for the first wicket, before Tavare was dismissed by the medium pace of Jeremy Coney.

England then experimented with the big-hitting Ian Botham at three, an experiment that failed as Botham was caught and bowled by John Bracewell after hitting a four and a six in his 12.

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Dhaka Sports Carnival from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Prime Bank-Dhaka Sports Carnival begins today at different venues in the city with amateur athletes from 35 social clubs from India, Pakistan, Thailand and Bangladesh taking part in the three-day meet.

The country's seven premium social clubs: Dhaka Club, Gulshan Club, Uttara Club, Officers' Club, Kurmitola Golf Club, Cadet College Club and the All Community Club in association with Prime Bank is organizing the carnival for the sixth time since the inaugural meet in 2004, said speakers at a press conference at the Dhaka Club yesterday.

The carnival consists of eight disciplines -- bridge, badminton, golf, six-a-side cricket, tennis, snooker, squash and swimming as 180 athletes from 13 Indian clubs, two from Pakistan, six from Thailand and 283 athletes from Bangladesh's 19 clubs will fight for medals, informed organizing committee chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelly.

Apart from different sport events, each of host clubs will also organise cultural show every evening.

The concluding ceremony will be held on November 28 at the Dhaka Club with Commerce Minister Faruk Khan expected to distribute prizes as chief guest. Dhaka Club president Sadat Hossain Salim was also present on the occasion.

Serena skips Aussie Open

AP, Melbourne

Serena Williams has withdrawn from the Australian Open because of a foot injury after winning the Grand Slam event the last two years.

Tournament director Craig Tiley released a statement Thursday saying Williams had withdrawn from the Hopman Cup international mixed teams competition in Perth and the Australian Open in January.

Williams had surgery after cutting her foot on broken glass at a restaurant following her title win at Wimbledon. She returned to practice in September but twice put off her comeback.

She said she had more surgery last month and couldn't risk returning before the injury had properly healed.

"As I recently learned, pushing myself back into my intense training too early only caused me further injury and damage," Williams was quoted as saying.



REACHING FOR THE SKY: Anna Alyabyeva of Kazakhstan performs during the rhythmic gymnastics individual all-around qualification & team final at the 16th Asian Games on Thursday. Kazakhstan won the gold. (Story on Page 18)

PHOTO: AFP

Another poor showing

SPORTS REPORTER



Asian Games in Guangzhou, China yesterday.

The national hockey team suffered a 6-5 defeat to Oman in a place-deciding match to finish eighth, their lowest ever finish, while the women's kabaddi team's hope of moving into the final evaporated when they conceded a 34-23 defeat to Thailand in the semifinals.

Karakas Zahirul Islam also faced an early elimination when he lost to Uzbekistanis Mukhsimov Uluqbek by straight 4-0 points in a 60kg 1/8 final match.

It was not an unexpected result from the national hockey team, who qualified

for the Asian Games as the last team after finishing fifth on home soil in May.

Peter Gerhard and company, though, had still promised to go one step ahead of the seventh they had achieved in the Doha Asian Games in 2006.

But it is evident that Bangladesh hockey is going through their worst ever patch after German coach Peter Gerhard took charge ahead of the SA Games early this year. Equally, the Khondokar Jamiluddin-led committee could not avert the responsibility for their lack of foresightedness as they retained the service of Gerhard despite Bangladesh's consistently poor showings.

Bangladesh could beat Oman in their last match of the qualifiers, but this time they could not avoid a defeat to them. Yesterday, the middle-east side first took a second-minute lead before Bangladesh bounced back to hold a commendable lead of 5-2 after 45 minutes.

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Siddle rocks England



AFP, Brisbane

Peter Siddle celebrated a hat-trick and career-best Test figures on his birthday to bowl Australia into a commanding position against England after the opening day of the first Ashes Test at the Gabba Thursday.

The stout-hearted Victorian paceman sent England reeling with the first Ashes hat-trick in 11 years, as he captured six for 54 to help dismiss the tourists for 260.

At the close, Australia had negotiated seven overs in fading light to be 25 without loss and trail England by 235 runs, with Shane Watson on nine and Simon Katich not out 15.

The Test match exploded into life in Siddle's 12th over late in the day when he dismissed Alastair Cook, Matt Prior and Stuart Broad with consecutive deliveries to rip the heart out of the England innings after skipper Andrew Strauss had won the toss.

It was the 11th time an Australian bowler has captured a Test hat-trick and the first in an Ashes encounter by either side since English bowler Darren Gough struck in Sydney in 1999, and came as Siddle marked his 26th birthday.

Siddle more than justified his selection ahead of Doug Bollinger when he followed up the significant scalps of Kevin Pietersen and Paul Collingwood in the space of nine balls in the middle session with four wickets in the post-tea period.

The England innings collapsed spectacularly with the Siddle show, sending them spinning from 197 for four to 197 for seven in the space of three spell-binding deliveries.

Siddle brought the crowd roaring to its feet when he dismissed Broad leg before wicket to bring up his hat-trick after having Cook caught by Watson at first slip and bowling wicketkeeper Prior.

It was an electric atmosphere as Siddle charged in on the hat-trick ball and hit Broad directly on his boot in front of leg-stump, prompting umpire Aleem Dar to raise his finger to send the ground into uproar.

Only Ian Bell, Cook and Pietersen, yet again fleetingly, offered any great resistance on an easy playing pitch.

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PHOTO: AFP

SIZZLING SIDDLE: Australia paceman Peter Siddle roars after dismissing England opener Alastair Cook, his first of hat-trick wickets, on the opening day of the first Ashes Test in Brisbane on Thursday.

