

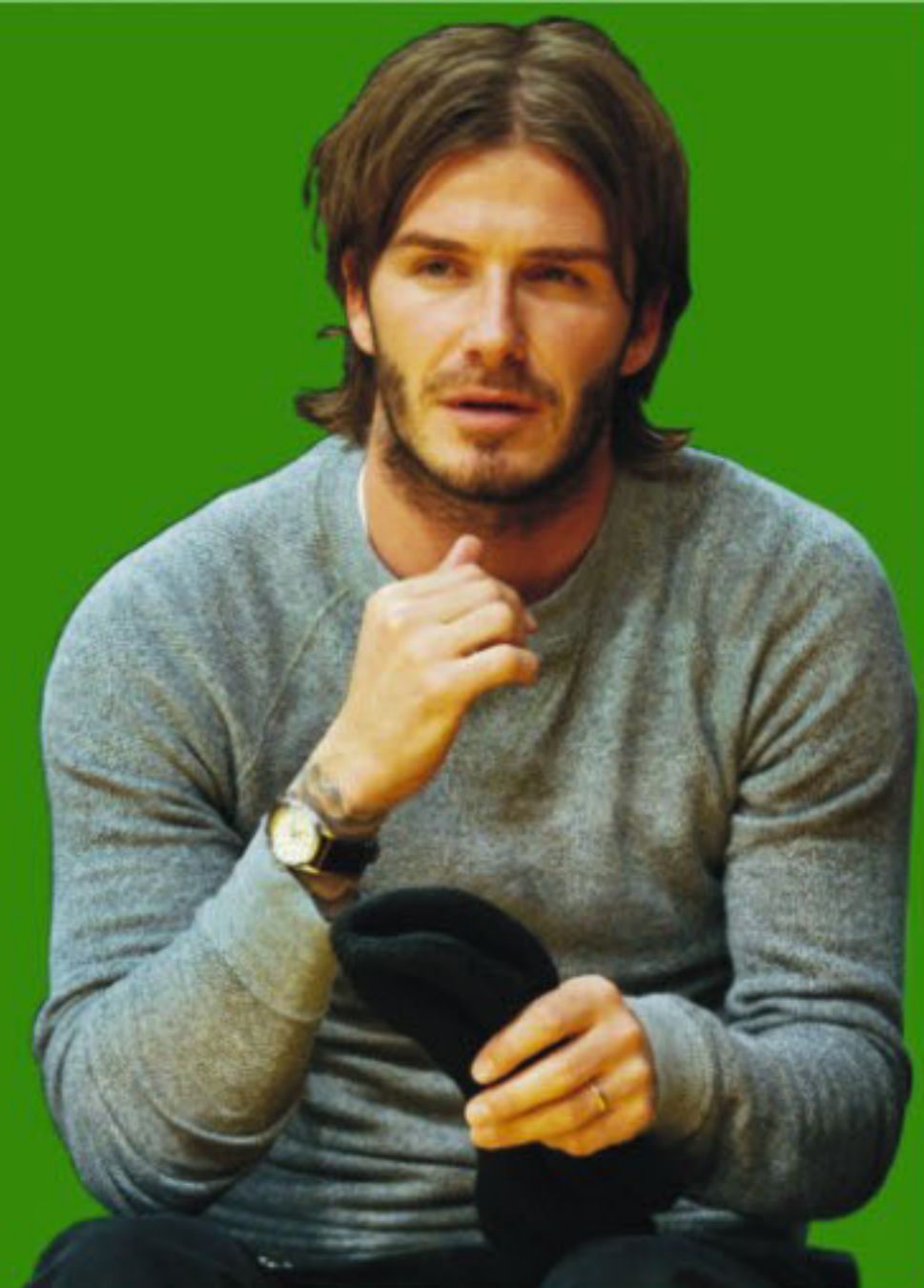
SPORT

DHAKA, MONDAY JANUARY 10, 2011, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Beckham's Spurs move off

David Beckham is unlikely to join Tottenham Hotspur on loan but may train with the English Premier League club instead, Spurs manager Harry Redknapp said on Sunday. "I don't think it will happen—there's a big problem with the insurance," he told Sky Sports television. "David is welcome to come and train with us for a month, which I think he would like to do. But as for him playing—it's looking like a no-goer."

-REUTERS



ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP TALK

'Windies knock my finest'

Mehrab Hossain was the most exciting batsman of his generation. In the 1999 World Cup, the stylish right-hander cracked 64 against West Indies and 42 against Australia. He relives his World Cup experience with *The Daily Star Sport*.

Daily Star Sport (DSS): How did it feel when you heard that you would play the 1999 World Cup?

Mehrab Hossain (MH): Actually I knew that I would be playing the World Cup of 1999 because I was performing well with the bat. I scored a century in the Meril Cup in Dhaka against Zimbabwe just prior to the World Cup, for which I was kind of sure to be in the squad.

DSS: How excited were you to play in your country's first World Cup?

MH: I really can't express the feeling I had at that time. World Cup is the highest level of respect one can get in any sport. It was a dream come true to play alongside world-class players like Steve Waugh, Wasim Akram, etc.

DSS: Which was your favorite innings, Australia or West Indies?

MH: Scoring 64 against the West Indies was difficult given the low temperature and difficult conditions.

I really had to struggle to score against bowlers like [Courtney] Walsh and [Curtly] Ambrose, who totally used the cold and windy conditions. Overall, I would say I played well and that would be my favorite innings.

DSS: How different was the atmosphere?

MH: The atmosphere was excellent! England is known as the "home of cricket". To play a World Cup in England was a totally superb experience for us.

DSS: Recall your sweetest memory.

MH: The victory against Pakistan is the sweetest memory ahead of everything. We worked hard and had the desire to win.

DSS: What are your expectations for the 2011 World Cup...

MH: We played the first World Cup for our country, and now Bangladesh is one of the hosts. It is a big achievement for Bangladesh cricket. The crowds will be behind the team. I wish the Bangladesh cricket team good luck.



MEHRAB HOSSAIN



I HAVE A STRONG POINT: Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan (L) shows something to a stone-faced coach Jamie Siddons (C) during a practice session at Academy ground adjacent to the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Shakib places his demand

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan stressed upon the need for a spin bowling coach in the team, especially with the World Cup less than two months away, though head coach Jamie Siddons felt that there should be a limit to the number of coaches a team can have.

"We really need a specialist coach, given that spin is our main weapon. We have 5-6 spinners in the side, so it would be good if we had someone," said Shakib after first day of an early camp ahead of the mega event that begins on February 19.

The No 1 all-rounder in the

world, who was acquired by the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Kolkata Knight Riders on Saturday, also explained his points after a relaxed practice session yesterday at the newly-laid Academy ground.

"He could at least work with us, help us and offer us a word of advice. These little things support us a lot," said the left-handed all-rounder.

"It would be good if someone is given the job permanently. It could be anyone, a foreign or a local coach. But I think, 40 days ahead of the World Cup, we could do with one," he added.

Shakib confirmed that he has discussed the matter with Siddons and will take it up with the board. "I

have talked to the coach and I think we can talk to the board about this. We need someone, particularly when spin is such an important part of our attack."

But whatever the discussion between the captain and the coach took they did not reach a consensus. Siddons observed that the current line-up of coaches is good enough to handle the spin bowling department.

"Ian (Pont) is a spin bowling coach as well. He is a bowling coach and so is Julien (Fountain). We are not just batting, bowling and fielding coaches, we are all level 3 and 4 qualified coaches and we can work with the spinners as well," said the 46-year-old Australian.

"It would be nice if someone can focus on spinners with Ian (Pont) working with the fast bowlers."

"It would be nice if we can have ten coaches but you have got to draw the line somewhere. It doesn't work getting more and more coaches," said Siddons, who was spotted working on Shakib's bowling pivot and follow-through during Sunday's brief session.

The left-arm spinner reiterated his loss of bowling form, also adding that the 23 players called up for the camp would need dual focus. "I haven't been bowling well in the last two series. Even in the Premier League, I think I haven't done justice to my bowling skills."

"I'm working on it with him

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India win Ntini's farewell match

AFF, Durban

Late replacement Morne van Wyk upstaged the millionaires of the Indian Premier League but couldn't stop India beating South Africa by 21 runs in a one-off Twenty20 international at the Moses Mabhida Stadium on Sunday.

Van Wyk hit the fastest half-century by a South African in a 20-overs international but when he was out for 67 his team-mates subsided on a low, slow pitch.

India, spurred by an innings of 53 off 34 balls by Rohit Sharma, made 168 for six. South Africa, with black icon Makhaya Ntini playing his last international, could only manage 147 for nine.

Van Wyk, 31, who played the most recent of his previous six one-day internationals and two T20 internationals three seasons ago, was called up when Test captain Graeme Smith was ruled out by a heel injury.

On the weekend of the IPL auction, when the low est-priced Indian player was signed up for 700,000 dollars and several of his South African teammates attracted substantial bids, Van Wyk was the only South African to master the pitch and the Indian bowlers. Van Wyk went to his half-century off 24 balls. He hit five sixes and five fours before being caught at deep square leg for 67, made off 39 deliveries.

Van Wyk and AB de Villiers (14) put on 57 off 29 balls for the third wicket but

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Beautification work in full swing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Repair and beautification work of Dhaka city ahead of the ICC Cricket World Cup is going in full swing and is expected to finish by scheduled date of February 5, informed Colonel Abu Sayed Mohammad Masud, project director of Hatirjheel development project at a press conference yesterday.

The 54 crore taka project entails repainting and beautification of 4.66 lakh square metre road, footpath and median and is being implemented by the Engineering Core of Army in association with Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and 42 construction firms.

The project which also includes road carpeting, footpath repairment, drainage and development of road dividers, started on December 26 last year and so far roughly 40 percent of it has been completed.

A total of 27 roads from Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla

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Dust bowl turns paradise



REAZUR RAHMAN ROHAN

It was once a dry, hard as rock outfield, complementing the bouncy matting wicket fitted on its grassless face. Cuts and bruises to the players were a very common incident. The so-called dressing rooms were long stools beneath the media box of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Commonly known as the Mirpur Outer Stadium, it was the figurative death-valley for cricketers, who played in the lower leagues (second, third and qualifying round).

When the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium became the home of cricket, matches stopped in this field and in

time, it became even more deserted.

But after more than two years when the Tigers began their World Cup training on that same meadow yesterday, it looked like a green heaven amidst a concrete jungle.

And for those used to seeing the dusty area, it was a huge surprise and certainly it caught everyone's eyes.

So what actually happened here?

It has been transformed into an excellent practice ground for the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy with headquarters next door. The ground was developed in the last six months.

Once you enter, the green carpet speaks for itself. The grassy outfield is as good as any international ground. Anyone who will see this ground for the first time, would not even know what

this ground was only two years ago.

A total of eleven wickets have been developed, four on two corners of the ground, with three in the centre. There are houses on two sides but the dwellers need not worry of a cricket ball hitting them as the fences surrounding the ground are high enough.

Till now the Academy, Under-15, the women's national cricket team and some Premier League clubs have used the ground. With the World Cup coming up, the Bangladesh cricket team practiced for the first time at that ground with a lot of satisfaction.

The only blemish was the height (or the lack of it) of the net structure that however can easily be solved.

"I came here earlier for some club

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MAKEOVER: This photograph of the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy was taken recently. The greenery is eye-catching and a surprise as it was in a barren state for many years.



Sheikh Russel's Moroccan striker Chahrouf Youssef (L) runs for joy after scoring the all-important goal against Rahmatganj in a Bangladesh League match at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Russel join MSC on top

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Russel KC joined leaders Mohammedan Sporting Club at the top of points table of Bangladesh League after handing a single-goal defeat on Rahmatganj MSF at Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Moroccan recruit Chahrouf Youssef separated the two sides with a sixth-minute strike and gave Rahmatganj their first defeat in the league. Sheikh Russel came under tremendous pressure after scoring the goal, but held on to the slender advantage for their third win in three matches. It was Rahmatganj's first defeat after their win against Arambagh KS and draw against Feni Soccer in their first two games.

Three successive victories mean Sheikh Russel and Mohammedan jointly hold the lead in the 12-team points table with nine points, five ahead of second-placed

Abahani, Rahmatganj and Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, who, however, played a matchless.

In absence of injured Moroccan striker Samir Omari, midfielder Chahrouf Youssef was given a chance to pair up with local striker Mohammad Yousuf. The Moroccan justified his inclusion by placing home an effortless left-footer from a Moroccan Mohammed cross to celebrate his first goal in Bangladesh.

After taking the lead, Sheikh Russel controlled the midfield with their foreign recruits as Moro Mohammed and Jimgou Guy Charles dominated the center of the field. Sheikh Russel came close to doubling the lead on the half-hour mark but Bappi saw his grounder off a Emu cross go narrowly wide of the target.

But the scenario changed as Moro picked up a back injury and the control of midfield went to Rahmatganj who apparently suffered from poor refereeing.

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SPORTS POLL WEEKLY QUESTION

Does Chelsea have enough time to win the Premiership title?

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