

# SPORT

DHAKA THURSDAY FEBRUARY 10, 2011, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

## Alves a victim of racism

Brazil right back Daniel Alves has been the victim of racism throughout his time in Spain with Barcelona, he said in an interview published on Tuesday. The 27-year-old described how he had been called a 'monkey' by fans of Barca's rivals at many grounds in Spain. "Sadly, I've learnt to live with it," he told the Brazilian daily Folha de Sao Paulo. "The fans do it, the players are against it... My family are unhappy, they complain but I try to distance myself from it. I consider those people uneducated and don't give them importance."

- REUTERS



## BATTLE PLAN

# A real Tiger at home

REAZUR RAHMAN ROHAN

Abdur Razzak, at the age of 28, is a changed man with a shy smile and a deadly arm-ball. Despite all his hardships, in the form of questions about his bowling action, the left-arm spinner (who made his debut in 2004) has become the country's most successful ODI bowler and is No 3 in the ICC rankings.

One of the reasons for Bangladesh's spin attack to be rated so highly, particularly in one-day cricket, is this man's ascent as the key wicket-taker. Shakib Al Hasan does a holding job at times and picks up the wickets while Sohrawardi Shuvo is supplementary to the Tigers' requirement but it is Razzak who matters, sometimes with the new ball.

But it hasn't been a smooth ride for the man from Bagerhat. Video technology was used to help iron out anything suspicious in 2005 when his action was first questioned. He did come back in 2005 playing only one ODI that year, but was recalled in 2006 for the home series against Sri Lanka. Razzak played 50 ODIs by 2007 and took his wicket tally to 76. In the 2007 World Cup he picked up 13 wickets in nine matches. Against India where Mashrafe was awarded the man-of-the-match, Razzak bowled brilliantly, picking up three vital wickets including Sachin Tendulkar and Yuvraj Singh.

He was becoming a concern for the opponents, and just then there was another threat to his career: he was, for the

second time, suspended for his bowling action in 2008.

Many thought it was the end of his career but his eagerness to play brought him back in the international scenario, with major help from coach Mohammad Salahuddin. In 2009 he was back with a re-constructed action, and that probably made him more threatening to the batsmen though it didn't start to well.

His new slick action was helping him to turn the ball more than before and Razzak has picked 29 wickets in his last 15 matches.

Recently in the home series win against Zimbabwe, Razzak bagged 13 wickets in just four matches including a hat-trick (Bangladesh's first in the one-day arena). Whenever he was given the ball, he brought breakthroughs and also kept the scoring rate under control.

When the pacers go for runs in the first few over, without

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## CAREER IN NUMBERS

	M	W	Best	Ave	RPO	SR	5-wkt
Overall	111	162	5/29	26.90	4.44	36.3	3
At home	49	86	5/29	21.10	4.11	30.8	3
2010	22	29	5/30	32.00	4.51	42.4	1
World Cup	9	13	3/20	26.46	4.66	34.0	0
With new ball	11	15	4/39	29.40	4.42	39.8	0



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh cricketers (from L) Mahmudullah Riyad, Abdur Razzak, Tamim Iqbal and Mohammad Ashraful line up for photos during the Tigers' open media session at hotel Sheraton yesterday.

# Goals differ, dreams remain the same

SPORTS REPORTER

There couldn't be any starker contrast between two batsmen who have a similar game, are in the same team and have the big tournament temperament.

Tamim Iqbal and Mohammad Ashraful have done batting look easy when on song but while the former sounds every bit confident as his bat flourishes, the latter is almost grateful for just being in the squad and looks back to the bygone days to seek inspiration. They were part of a four-man group, including Abdur Razzak and Mahmudullah Riyad, who met the reporters in an official open media session of the ICC at Sheraton yesterday, as part of the build-up to the World Cup.

Tamim, who rocked world cricket with his audacious half-century against India four years ago, is now an established opener and the vice-captain while Ashraful would find it hard to get a spot in the middle-order. "My target is simple: To be the highest run-scorer in the World Cup," said Tamim, donning the new Bangladesh jersey.

"If it's my day, I can play well against any bowler in the world. But if it's not my day, even (Mahendra Singh) Dhoni can get me out," said the plucky left-hander from Chittagong.

In the 2007 World Cup, after striking a blow to India, Tamim didn't do too well, scoring only 172 runs at an average of 19.11 and 62.5 as his strike-rate.

"I always say to myself that I will have to improve with each series, each tournament and each game. I will have to turn my weak points into strong ones, and I work on that end. For example, four years ago I had two run-scoring shots, now I have five or six," he added.

But at the other end of the scale, Ashraful was simply happy to be there, and not sweating too much on the people's expectations. "Being in the squad is itself an achievement, so I'm glad in the fifteen," was the right-handed batsman's defensive reaction.

"But then again, I'm just a good innings away from getting back to good form," added the gifted stroke-maker who championed the Tigers' cause on numerous occasions in the past.

Add despite his fall in the pecking order, Ashraful remains Bangladesh's most successful batsman in World Cups, having played in the two previous editions. In 14 games, he has scored 287 runs with two half-centuries at an average of 28.7 and a strike-rate that is a shade below 80.

"I played two match-winning knocks in the last World Cup, contributed in a couple of others. I would like

to play a few match-winning knocks here in the first round as well.

And I am feeling pretty confident about it since I have usually done well in big matches in the past," said Ashraful.

But for their personal goals to take shape, the Tigers need to do well (and vice versa), Tamim stating that the team is good enough to reach the quarterfinals.

"I believe, given our potential, we can beat any side in the world. We have the same game-plan for every team, be it India or Australia. I also think that every team thinks twice now before they take on Bangladesh.

"If anything, India will be the side under pressure, not us, because they will have that loss at the back of their head when they get to the field," reminded Tamim, whose additional role as the deputy could keep him busy during the mega event, a huge difference from his time at the 2007 edition.

"During that World Cup, I was thinking the pictures I'd take with the big players," he joked, before adding, "The vice-captain's role is on and off the field. It would depend on the captain if I have to do anything on the field and since Shakib is my best friend, I know that he likes to take decisions on his own. But if the need arises, of course I'm very much prepared to help him out."

## Opening tickets now from Feb 13

SPORTS REPORTER

Tickets for the opening ceremony of the World Cup will now be available for the general public from Sunday, February 13, informed a BCB media release.

The tickets will be sold through ten branches of Dhaka Bank. The list of the branches will be made known on Saturday through advertisements in the daily newspapers.

Earlier, it was known that the opening ceremony tickets would be sold from Feb 10.

Meanwhile, the Local Organising Committee (LOC) cancelled a scheduled rehearsal showcase at the Army Stadium yesterday. Members of the media were gathered outside the venue when the cancellation was made.

Emran Mahbub, senior executive of Asiatic, the local support of Wizcraft, said, "The media will only be shown the rehearsals after the ICC has made their inspection."

## Willes into semifinals

SPORTS REPORTER

Willes Little Flower will face Dhaka Ideal School in the first semifinal of the Mini World Cup today, while Residential Model School will be playing against Incidin in the other semifinal.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Ideal School won by six wickets against Mirpur Bangla School, Willes defeated Rayer Bazar High School by 63 runs, Residential Model defeated European Standard School by six wickets and City Corporation Ideal School lost to Incidin by three wickets.

Two semifinals and the final, also today, will take place at the same venue and BCB president AHM Mustafa Kamal will be present as the chief guest.

A same tournament has been organised in Chittagong as well and the matches will be played at the MA Aziz Stadium.

Kids from the two finalists will be given the chance to carry flags of the World Cup teams before every match of the World Cup in the venues.

# Abahani take lead for now

SPORTS REPORTER

Holders Abahani returned to the winning way but runners-up Mohammedan received a jolt in the eighth round of games of the Grameenphone Bangladesh League at different venues yesterday.

A brace from Ghanaian midfielder Twum Frank helped Abahani edge Arambagh 2-1 at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalpur while Mohammedan stumbled against 10-man Feni Soccer Club playing out a 2-2 draw at the Feni Stadium.

The fifth win in eight matches meant Abahani topped leaders Muktiyoddha Sangsad to reach 17 points, even though the Reds played a match less than Abahani's eight.

Abahani's bitter rivals Mohammedan, with their first draw in eight games, joined Rahmatganj MFS in third place on 13 points each while Arambagh and Feni Soccer have six and four points respectively.

Twum has become synonymous with success for the Sky Blues as the Ghanaian midfielder has found the back of net in all five matches Abahani has won and with yesterday's brace Frank joined Muktiyoddha Sangsad striker Mithun Chowdhury on the top of the soccer list with six goals.

After playing out a goalless draw against Muktiyoddha Sangsad in the previous game, Abahani were expected to overcome lowly Arambagh easily and expectedly took a 20th-minute lead through Frank.

But it lasted only 16 minutes before Ismael Bangura levelled the margin.

However, Frank himself proved enough for Arambagh after striking the winner two minutes into stoppage time of the first half.

Away at the Feni Stadium, Feni Soccer were reduced to 10 men after Nadir was sent off for a second bookable offence in the 18th minute, but the Black and Whites failed to cash in on a one-man shortage and conceded the lead four minutes into the second half when Towhidul Alam put the hosts ahead.

Nigerian striker Emeka pulled off the goal in the 71st minute before his striking partner Anwar Hossain scored the

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## Bangladesh prepared: Kamal

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh is fully prepared to host eight matches of the ICC Cricket World Cup as well as the opening ceremony, said Bangladesh Cricket Board president AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday.

The announcement came at a Meet the Press session, organised by Dhaka Reporters Unity at their office and Kamal said that Bangladesh has already gained the confidence of the International Cricket Council through its overall preparation, unlike the incident of Eden Gardens in Kolkata where a scheduled World Cup match was cancelled due to unpreparedness.

"We are fully prepared for the World Cup and are way ahead of the other co-hosts. Nothing like what happened at Eden Gardens took place here and that shows our sincerity," said Kamal.

Dedicating Bangladesh's part of the World Cup to the martyrs of the language movement, Kamal said, "This World Cup will be the defining moment in the history of our cricket."

In the program the BCB president said that they are planning to bring 100 players under payroll and working to have a separate Test team.

## Nat'l tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

The semifinal line-up of men's singles in the Sony National Tennis Competition is completed with the four top seeds qualifying for the last four at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

Top seed Amol Roy beat Delwar Hossain 6-3, 6-2, second seed Alamgir Hossain defeated Dipu Lal 7-5, 6-4, Laxman Lal beat Munir Hossain 6-2, 4-6 and 6-1 and Ranjan Ram beat Anwar Hossain 6-1, 3-6 and 6-2 to move into the men's singles semifinals.

In the women's singles semifinal, Sathi Sarkar beat Ishita Afroz 6-3, 3-6 and 6-3 to confirm the final berth while Rustom Ali, Jamil Bhuiyan, Biplob Ram and Wai Mong Marma moved into the semifinals of the boy's U-16 singles.



The Canada cricket team arrive at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport last evening. The North Americans became the first World Cup team to arrive in Bangladesh.

PHOTO: STAR

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