

# SPORT

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## Beautiful new BNS

REAZUR RAHMAN ROHAN

As you approach gate No.1 of the Bangabandhu National Stadium, you'll get to see beautiful murals depicting figures of a cricketer in bowling action, a weight lifter, a swimmer and many more different athletes.

Once covered with dust and garbage with a public toilet in place, the space now boasts such art pieces as well as a fountain. Any one who hasn't had a look at the arena for about a month will definitely be surprised by the changes.

With performers rehearsing inside the venue for the grand opening of the World Cup on February 17 and with heavy security all around the area, it is quite impossible for a local to get the view of the arena.

The stadium is now surrounded by flower plants and the outer field or a desert as one might have called it, is now covered by grass with a big car parking facility adjoining it.

Inside the venue, the hospitality and media boxes have been newly constructed. The walls are freshly painted. Additionally, there are two new entrances being made, one beside Baitul Mukarram and the other by the side of Shilpa Bhaban.



**TOSSING AND TURNING:** Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan deep in thought as he plots strategies during practice at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, ahead of today's warm-up match against Pakistan.

PHOTO: STAR

## We can win: Colly

SAKIB SUBHAN

 Paul Collingwood is England's most capped player, and stands as an example of a man who has squeezed every ounce of talent that he has been blessed with. The jovial former ODI captain took part in a press meet yesterday at Dhaka's Hotel Sheraton, where he answered questions ranging from England's chances in the World Cup and the team's confidence levels following their recent 6-1 reversal against Australia in a one-day series down under.

"Obviously we have come here to win. We have been in good form. Other than the 6-1 loss to Australia in the ODI series, we played some good one-day cricket leading up to that," Collingwood said about England's chances in the World Cup. When asked if the drubbing at the hands of their archrivals was demoralising, he replied, "Demoralising is too strong a word. We are disappointed in our defeat against Australia, but hopefully it

PAUL COLLINGWOOD

doesn't affect our chances during this World Cup.

"It's a different set of conditions altogether. We've played a lot of tough series and won them, in South Africa and at home against the Aussies, so that gives us the belief that we can go on and win this World Cup."

Collingwood thinks that the team can draw on previous experiences of playing in the subcontinent in order to acclimatise to the conditions here. "We need to adapt, every single player needs to adapt, and I feel we have the skills to play on these pitches. If we do that as a team, all eleven members, then I think we have got a good chance."

A lot will hinge on what many consider to be England's trump card, the highest ranked spinner in the world, Graeme Swann. "Yeah, obviously spin will play a big part in the subcontinent, but also the skills of the faster bowlers in bowling cutters comes into play. We've got one of the best spinners in world cricket in Graeme Swann, and I am sure he

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## Mosquitoes keep away

AFP, Dhaka

Bangladesh has launched an all-out war on mosquitoes in and around cricket stadiums to ensure a bite-free World Cup for spectators and players, an official said Monday.

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has deployed spray teams to wipe out mosquitoes at the city's two stadiums, which will host the opening ceremony and six World Cup matches, health chief Brigadier General Nasir Uddin said.

"Mosquitoes have been breeding alarmingly in recent months so we have taken special measures to kill mosquitoes in the stadiums and for three kilometres (two miles) around them," he told AFP.

"Our special teams headed by DCC officers have been spraying extensively in

WARM-UP GAME AGAINST PAKISTAN TODAY

## Shakib looks to event proper

BISHWAJIT ROY

There might be a lot of hype among cricket fans about today's day-night warm-up match between Bangladesh and Pakistan, but the Tigers think-tank played down the significance of the match.

Fresh from a nine-wicket drubbing of Canada in the first lead-up match at Chittagong, Shakib Al Hasan's men play their last practice game before the World Cup at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur against a far better opposition, so a win can be a big morale boost for the home side ahead of their first challenge in the tournament proper against hot favourites India at the same venue on February 19.

But a nonchalant Bangladesh captain Shakib was not ready to go with the excitement of the common people, rather he was looking forward to the tournament proper although his deputy Tamim Iqbal emphasised on 'win' after their success against Canada.

"It's just a practice match, so the result doesn't matter. I think everything is fine with the team and we need to play our own game and take full opportunity of a practice match. To be honest, I am not thinking too much about this game," said Shakib.

"It will be nice if we win the game but it will not be the end of the world if we lose. I

am looking forward to the first game against India and as well as the other games in the tournament. I'm happy with the way the players took the opportunity in the first warm-up match and I believe the team is on the right track," added the world's number one one-day all-rounder.

Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons also echoed his captain's sentiment while talking with the reporters after the practice session at the indoor facility in Mirpur yesterday.

"Pakistan is a good team, but I'm not worried about them, I'm worried about us. They will play 14 and we'll play 13, so it's not

a real match, just a practice match. We want to do the things right, it's a really good challenge, a great practice game.

"Win is important for momentum, but it's not a real game," said Siddons.

Pakistan however rated Bangladesh highly and confirmed that they were taking the match seriously because they want to win all matches.

"Bangladesh have beaten New Zealand few months ago and we all know what Bangladesh are capable of and I predict that Bangladesh are going to be in the semifinals or in the quarters for sure. They are one of the best teams and improving every day," said fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar after the practice session yesterday.

"We are going to take this match very seriously and we will like to beat every team that we play and we will like to win comprehensively," he added.

*Wanna watch today's game?*

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday confirmed that almost five thousand tickets for the practice match between Bangladesh and Pakistan remained unsold till yesterday.

So, good news for the fans that these tickets will be available today at the booths of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur from 9am.

"Nearly 5,000 tickets are still unsold and these will be available in the booths of the stadium tomorrow [Tuesday]," informed GS Hasan Tamim, chairman of the BCB's Ticket and Seating Committee.

There was however no good news for the TV and radio audiences as the match would not be broadcast live.

Sources said that state-run Bangladesh Television didn't even show any interest to telecast the match live while Bangladesh Betar did show their interest, but backed off after hearing the high demand.



Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi kicks a football during the team's practice session at Mirpur's Sher-e-bangla national Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Nurul Islam's son is busy making bats inside the shop at Keraniganj as demand for the product rises with the onset of the World Cup.

PHOTO: STAR

## World Cup brings business to Nurul Islam

ATIQUE ANAM

Nurul Islam, a 50-year-old carpenter, is piling on the extra hours in his small shop at the outpost of Keraniganj to meet the rising demand for cricket bats. While it is already well into the cricket season in the country, the advent of a World Cup at home has only fuelled the demand. Hence, Islam is now calling in two of his school-going sons to work with him in his shop after school.

While on an average day, Islam would generally have produced 20 cricket bats, now he has to make almost twice as many. Islam specializes in making bats that are used by kids and adults alike around the country. These are models fit only for tape-tennis cricket; an innovative variety of cricket that is practiced in alley-ways around the city.

The bats are mostly made of Gewa wood, coming from the Sundarbans, before being processed in their factory in Swarupkathi where more than 50 percent of the work is done.

"The bats come in its basic form. Then we apply the finishing like bringing the bat in shape, polishing, adding grip, stickers, injury tape while at the same time adding thread to the handles and pressurizing the bat to make it more durable," said Islam.

His bats range from Tk 150 to Tk 500 and on average each bat fetches him a Tk 50 margin at the retail level while at the wholesale level the margin shrinks to around Tk 20.

Starting about 36 years ago for a big sports-wear manufacturer in Paltan, Islam applied his own expertise to set up his business about 15 years ago with a capital of 50,000 Taka. Now, his busi-

ness is profitable enough to support his family and send his children to school.

The first to set up his business here, Islam's shop is now clustered by many more shops that support the living of the carpenter families.

A few kilometers up north in a market at the centre of the capital, Abdur Razzaq is spending a busy time in his store dealing with the upper-end customers of cricket bats and other cricketing equipments. Bats sold here are for the big boys, usually professional cricketers who need it for practice and for matches. These bats are not made locally, rather they are imported from India and Pakistan and sell between Tk. 1000 to Tk. 15,000.

The ones made by Islam and their like however have no entry in these markets, rather they sell on the street-sides and groceries.



## Abramovich slips down rich list

Chelsea Football Club owner Roman Abramovich is no longer one of Russia's three richest men a report said Monday. The 2011 rich list compiled by Moscow's Finans magazine put Abramovich's wealth at \$17.1 billion, up only \$100 million.

Vladimir Lisin, the publicity-shy owner of the Novolipetsk Steel giant, retained his position as Russia's wealthiest man, seeing his fortune soar to \$28.3 billion from \$18.8 billion in 2010. He was followed by Onexim investment fund owner Mikhail Prokhorov at \$22.7 billion and Alisher Usmanov, the part-owner of Arsenal Football Club, whose wealth was estimated by Finans at