

DAVIES IS GAY Eng behind him: Bell

AFP, Bangalore

England wicketkeeper Steven Davies will have the full support of his teammates after publicly announcing he is gay, batsman Ian Bell told reporters on Monday.

Surrey gloveman Davies, 24, is believed to be the first active professional cricketer to out himself and he explained why to Britain's Daily Telegraph newspaper by saying: "I just felt it was the right time for me."

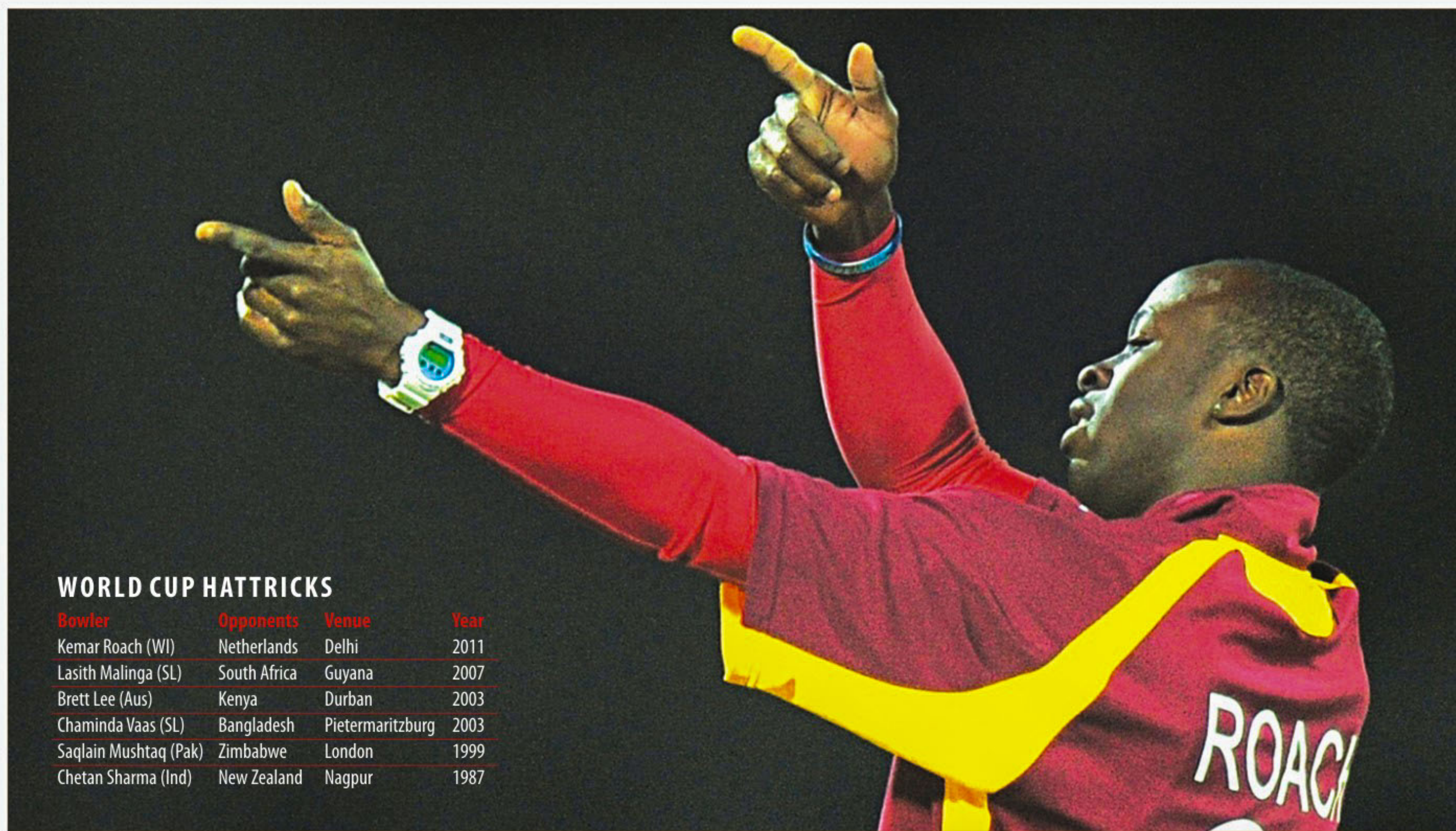
"It's something that I've obviously wanted to do for a long time. I've probably been comfortable with it now for a couple of years."

"The reason why I've decided to make it public is simply because I think the more people who do it, the more acceptable it becomes."

Davies, who was a member of England's victorious Ashes squad but did not play in the Tests, said he decided to reveal his sexuality to his teammates before the tour of Australia and received the full support of his colleagues.

He was in England's provisional 30-man squad for the World Cup but did not make the cut.

"To speak out is a massive relief for me, but if I can just help one person to deal with their sexuality then that's all I care about," Davies said.



WORLD CUP HATTRICKS

Bowler	Opponents	Venue	Year
Kumar Roach (WI)	Netherlands	Delhi	2011
Lasith Malinga (SL)	South Africa	Guyana	2007
Brett Lee (Aus)	Kenya	Durban	2003
Chaminda Vaas (SL)	Bangladesh	Pietermaritzburg	2003
Sajjad Mushtaq (Pak)	Zimbabwe	London	1999
Chetan Sharma (Ind)	New Zealand	Nagpur	1987

A LA BOLT: West Indies fast bowler Kumar Roach celebrates after dismissing Netherlands batsman Wesley Baressi during their encounter at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium in New Delhi yesterday. The dismissal was one of his six scalps in the match that included the first hattrick of this World Cup.

PHOTO: AFP

Fielding worries Dhoni

AFP, Bangalore

India's sloppy fielding nearly cost them defeat against England but skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni admitted it would be difficult to lift standards in his ageing side.

India racked up a huge score of 338 in their clash of Sunday in Bangalore, helped by a century from Sachin Tendulkar, but the match ended in a dramatic tie after England skipper Andrew Strauss hit 158.

The host nation's powerful batting line-up has fired in both World Cup matches so far but there are growing concerns about their bowling and fielding after conceding 283 in their win against Bangladesh and 338 against England.

Dhoni said it would be tough to boost fielding standards due to the make-up of the squad after a cumbersome fielding performance.

"I don't think we can improve the fielding very much because we have got quite a few slow fielders in the side," he said.

"But as far as the bowling department is concerned I think we have got a talented group so hopefully in the coming games we can improve a lot."



Press call India to wake up

AFP, New Delhi

World Cup favourites India came under fire from a demanding media Monday after their dramatic tie with England as fallen giants West Indies looked for their first win against the Netherlands. In a gripping contest on Sunday that injected life into a tournament that has seen a series of lopsided matches, the home side scored 338 all out in Bangalore thanks to a crowd-pleasing century from Sachin Tendulkar.

But in dramatic scenes under the floodlights at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, England, led by skipper Andrew Strauss with 158, levelled the scores off the final ball of their innings.

Despite the excitement, India's media said the match should serve as a wake-up call, bemoaning the hosts' failure to beat England and lamenting lacklustre fielding and a bowling lineup that lacked penetration.

"Top-rated India get wake-up call from England", said the front page of the Daily Mail, which relegated news of the government's impending budget onto an inside page.

"It must be said that the collective failure of the frail Indian bowling attack allowed the visitors to come

back into the match several times," the newspaper said.

The Hindustan Times asked: "Will just putting runs on the board be good enough to win the World Cup?"

"It could happen, but will require a lot of luck. When compared to most champion teams of any era, this team suffers in terms of all-round balance."

The Times of India blasted the Indian attack as one of the worst in the Test world but said there was time to rectify weaknesses.

Strauss, whose century earned him the man-of-the-match award, said his side had put down a serious World Cup marker.

"Coming into this game after the Holland performance, it was a great bounce-back and showed everyone around the tournament that we're going to be a force to be reckoned with," said Strauss, whose side had a major scare against the Dutch in their opener.

India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni praised left-arm quick Zaheer Khan for a burst of three wickets for one run in six balls, including two in two to get rid of Ian Bell (69) and Strauss, that swung the match back India's way.

But he said it was India's fielding, long their Achilles heel, that had cost them a second victory of this tourna-

ment to set alongside their 87-run opening win over co-hosts Bangladesh.

"I don't think we can improve the fielding very much because we have got quite a few slow fielders in the side," he said.

"But as far as the bowling department is concerned I think we have got a talented group so hopefully in the coming games we can improve a lot."

In the first match of the day, Canada were playing Zimbabwe in Nagpur where 16-year-old Ontario schoolboy Nitish Kumar made history by becoming the youngest ever World Cup player.

Zimbabwe scored 298 in their 50 overs with Tatenda Taibu (98) and Craig Ervine (85) putting on 181 for the third wicket.

"We're quite happy. That was our target in the morning, to get around 290/300 and anything past that was a bonus so I back the bowlers to come out and do the job," said Taibu.

The West Indies were due to play the big-hitting Netherlands in New Delhi in the day/night match.

The Caribbean side were well beaten by South Africa in their first Group B clash, a result that saw the former undisputed kings of the one-day game slumped to ninth in the one-day rankings.

Rehman out of Canada match

AFP, Colombo

Pakistan will be without left-arm spinner Abdur Rehman in their World Cup match against Canada on Thursday after suffering a left leg muscle injury in the 11-run over Sri Lanka.

Team manager Intikhab Alam said Rehman's injury will take five days to heal.

"Rehman sprained his leg while fielding in the match against Sri Lanka and had to put on a strapping in order to bowl. It's an adductor muscle rupture," Alam told AFP.

Rehman, who will be 31 on Tuesday, took one wicket in Pakistan's win against the 1996 champions in Colombo on Saturday.

"We don't want to risk Rehman and will wait for him to recover," said Alam, of the spinner who has 13 wickets in 17 one-day internationals.

Alam said Rehman's place is likely to be taken by off-spinner Saeed Ajmal, who has yet to play in the tournament.

Senior batsman Misbahul Haq, who hurt his hamstring, may be rested, said Alam.

Want man or machine?

AFP, New Delhi



In a whirl of high-definition graphics, the Umpire Decision Review System (UDRS) is drawing flak at the World Cup as the men in the middle endure trial by TV.

The system, which allows teams to question an official's on-field decision, is being used for the first time in a World Cup after making its debut during the first Test between New Zealand and Pakistan in November 2009.

But India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni believes the system is flawed and was furious that his side were denied a wicket following a review in their epic tie with England on Sunday.

India spinner Yuvraj Singh thought he had Ian Bell lbw on review when the batsman had made just 17, with replays showing the ball would have hit the stumps.

Bell was given not out by New Zealand umpire Billy Bowden but had started to walk off. However, the decision was returned to Bowden by Australian replay official Rod Tucker and the Kiwi deemed Bell to be too far down the pitch to be dismissed.

"The adulteration of technology with human thinking meant we didn't get that [Bell] wicket," said Dhoni, whose country refuses to use the system in home series.

He was unhappy with the instruction to umpires that says if a batsman is more than 2.5 metres down the pitch he should be given not out, unless the ball would have hit middle stump.

It was not certain if Bell's middle stump would have been knocked over but Dhoni said: "If Hawk-Eye says it's good and going to hit middle stump, I see no reason why the distance matters."

Bell went on to make 69 and shared a crucial third-wicket partnership of 170 with captain Andrew Strauss.

At the World Cup, the UDRS is missing two of its vital aids -- the Hot Spot and the Snickometer.

The Hot Spot is an infra-red imaging system used to determine whether the ball has struck the batsman's bat or pad while Snickometer is used to ascertain if the ball touched the bat on its way to the wicketkeeper.

The unavailability of the Hot Spot and Snickometer means the third umpire only has the ball-tracker or Hawk-Eye, slow-motion replays and the stump microphone at his disposal.

The review system came under early scrutiny during Sri Lanka's World Cup opener with Canada.

Mahela Jayawardene, who scored a match-winning century, was the focus of two referrals from Canada for caught behind decisions, both of which went against the minnows.

TV replays in both cases were inconclusive and the benefit of doubt was given to the batsman.

"For us, this was the first time we were playing under that rule and our guys were not experienced with it," said Canada coach Pubudu Dassanayake. "Definitely without

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Russel down MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

Grameenphone Bangladesh League 2010
Mohammedan SC lost more ground in the title race of the Grameenphone Bangladesh League when they suffered a single-goal defeat at the hands of Sheikh Russel KC at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Sheikh Russel's substitute striker Wahed Ahmed separated the two sides in the 69th minute with an easy finish. The win takes Sheikh Russel to the third position in the 12-team table with 18 points from nine matches while the Black and Whites remain sixth with 13 points from nine outings.

It was Mohammedan's first defeat at the hands of Sheikh Russel since the Dhanmondi club's entrance to the top-tier competition of now-defunct Premier Division League in season of 2003-04.

Back to the game, Mohammedan should have opened the account in the third minute, but striker Anwar Hossain miserably failed to beat goalkeeper Mamun Khan from a one-on-one situation after the keeper failed to grip a long-range shot from Emeka Christian.

Having survived the initial attacks, Sheikh Russel bounced back and put up an equal fight in the rest of the half.

After resumption, both sides came with a couple of substitutions. Changes in personnel paid dividends for Sheikh Russel as they the lead from a counter-attack when Moro ran down the right to cut it back to Wahed, who just tapped the ball home from inside the six-yard box to give Sheikh Russel three valuable points.

In the other match of the day, Arambagh KS came away with a 2-1 victory over Chittagong Abahani at the Cox's Bazar Stadium.

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Sheikh Russel's substitute striker Wahed Ahmed is ecstatic after his first strike in the top-flight football sank giants Mohammedan eventually in their Bangladesh League encounter at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAFF

SPORTS POLL
WEEKLY QUESTION
Do you think the Tigers can reach the quarterfinals?
Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote
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What to WATCH

STAR Sports/STAR Cricket
ICC Cricket World Cup
Sri Lanka v Kenya
Live from 3:00pm
ESPN
English Premiership
Chelsea v Man United
Live from 2:00am (Wednesday)

DAY'S EVENT
Bangladesh League
Ctg Mohammedan v Brothers Union
Time: 2:45pm
Venue: Cox's Bazar Stadium
Farashganj v Muktiyoddha
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium