

Star SPORT

DHAKA FRIDAY MARCH 4, 2011, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Guardiola in hospital

Barcelona coach Pep Guardiola entered hospital Thursday for severe back pain and it is unclear yet when he will be discharged, the club said. The coach had been in obvious discomfort when he attended Barcelona's 1-0 away victory over Valencia the previous evening and the pain later forced him to seek hospital treatment, it said. "Guardiola was admitted in the early morning to a Barcelona hospital centre to treat back pain that has afflicted him for two weeks," the club said a statement on its web site.

- AFP



TIGERS planning for WI lefties



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh brain trust has included Mahmudullah Riyad in the twelve-man team for today's World Cup group B match in a bid to tackle the barrage of left-handers from the West Indies.

When asked of possible changes from the team that played against Ireland on February 25, Tigers captain Shakib Al Hasan confirmed that Riyad's inclusion would be solely to equip the team in the off-spinning front. If picked, the 25-year-old all-rounder who played against India in the World Cup opener before being left out to accommodate Mohammad Ashraful will be expected to bowl his off-spin in the early Powerplay overs as well as provide batting support down the order.

"(Mahmudullah) Riyad has been included in the twelve. They have four left-handers and he could be used in the Powerplay overs," said Shakib during yesterday's official press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

"We have enough spinners to bowl up to 40 overs," he said, adding that if Ashraful is included, a batting promotion

for the 26-year-old has not been discussed.

Shakib would make the final call on the morning of the game but it is likely that an unchanged line-up would be continued, despite the batting flaws in the win over Ireland.

"There were mistakes in the last game and we will rectify those. I think our batsmen are capable of achieving the targets they set themselves," he added.

Having defeated the West Indies quite comprehensively the last time the two sides met in 2009, albeit under altered circumstances, Shakib was evidently not very concerned about his team's chances, though he also pointed out that this is a far different proposition.

"They have some senior players, a good mix of experience and youth. We have to play our best to beat them. We have to play good cricket to win and if we do, it will be a step forward towards qualification to the next round.

"We are not banking too much on tomorrow's (Friday's) game but we are looking forward to the whole tournament," explained Shakib.

Shakib's heroics against West Indies



HIT THE GROUND RUNNING: Bangladesh cricketers warm up for practice at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, ahead of today's crucial World Cup tie against the West Indies.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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during that milestone series in the Caribbean was topped off by his six to seal the victory at St George's, but the all-rounder prefers looking forward.

"The memory of that series definitely comes back sometimes and yes, it was a turning point. But I wouldn't like to dwell on it too much," commented Shakib.

The 23-year-old also didn't want to talk about the toss or the wicket but said that the Mirpur track would not be offering

Bangalore-esque scores (338, 338, 327 and 328). "It is a different wicket," said Shakib. "I don't think we should talk much about the wicket and neither about the toss."

Shakib also made a strong statement about the implementation of the Umpires Decision Review System (UDRS), endorsing the new law. "I think the UDRS is good for the lower-ranked sides. I don't have any complaints and I think it should be used," he said.

BANGLADESH-WEST INDIES ENCOUNTERS

Matches	Bangladesh won	WI won
16	3	11
Most fifties: Shivnarine Chanderpaul (4)		
Most matches: Mohammad Ashraful (13)		
<i>The first ODI between the two sides was played in Dublin</i>		

Sammy cautious but confident



ADVANCE UNITED: The West Indies players start their training session with a sprint at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. They will have to be at their best to topple an improving Bangladesh on home turf.

PHOTO: STAR

ANISUR RAHMAN

The West Indies will not particularly worry about Bangladesh spinners when the Caribbean team take on co-host Bangladesh in the crucial ICC World Cup Group B match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today.

"I think every aspect of Bangladesh's bowling, whether its spin or pace, we have to take seriously as they rely heavily on their spinners and will want them to do well but our intention is to play them well to get runs on the board," said Darren Sammy at a pre-match press briefing yesterday just before their second day's training

session in Mirpur.

Bangladesh spinners struggled against the Indian batsmen in the tournament opener but they played to potential in their next match, picking up six wickets and combining with pacer Shafiqul Islam, who took four wickets, to defend a moderate total of 205 well against Ireland.

Sammy informed that they watched both games Bangladesh played in the World Cup and they were now focused on Bangladesh and executing the plans they have to vanquish the home side.

"Obviously they are a very competitive side and they are rated high than us, we have to watch them seriously.

Obviously they rely on their spin and are quite confident about their batting, so we have taken both things into consideration and are looking to play accordingly.

"Every team is charged up to give an account of themselves and all the matches are very important ones as every team is out there to win the matches and we are looking forward to play Bangladesh," said the all-rounder, who was also a member of West Indies' second string side that were whitewashed by Bangladesh in both Test and ODI series on their home soil in 2009.

However, the Calypso cricketers have a hundred percent success rate against Bangladesh in the World Cup and in the sub-continent, and this time too they look confident after a moral boosting 215-run triumph against Netherlands, which followed a 7-wicket defeat to South Africa in their tournament opener.

Despite that, Sammy wants to learn from the match Ireland played against England and doesn't want to take Bangladesh lightly.

"It (Ireland-England encounter) shows that you can't take any team for granted. With this upset it proves that cricket is played on the day. Whoever play better cricket on that day will come out victorious; that we saw last night (Wednesday). In the last game it was shown by the Irish team so obviously it is a lesson for every team in the tournament that you can't take any team for granted,"

said Sammy. "We will come out against Bangladesh full of confidence and will not take them lightly or be complacent as we know we have to play good cricket against them."

Bangladesh have an enviable record of having won half of their matches played at Mirpur, with eight wins in the last 10 matches they played there. Meanwhile, the West Indies broke their eight-match losing streak by defeating Netherlands, thanks to a superb performance by pacer Kemar Roach, and a whirlwind batting display by Kieron Pollard and Chris Gayle, who however was absent from yesterday's training session because, according to the team's media manager, of having caught a cold.

Match	Time	Venue
New Zealand v Zimbabwe	10:00am	Ahmedabad
Bangladesh v West Indies	2:30pm	Dhaka

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Bangladesh - West Indies

Being a very important match for both the sides, the teams will try to secure a good position in their group to qualify for the quarter finals, by winning it. West Indies with their key players like Gayle, Sarwan, Chanderpaul and Kemar Roach, who played an outstanding match against Netherlands, will be a tough opponent for the Bangla Tigers. But it is also not unlikely to hope Bangladesh defeating the Indies in their home ground, who played 2 innings of 283 and 205 against India and Ireland respectively in this tournament. So it will definitely be an interesting match watching both the teams giving their level best in the Mirpur stadium.

Shams Arefeen

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