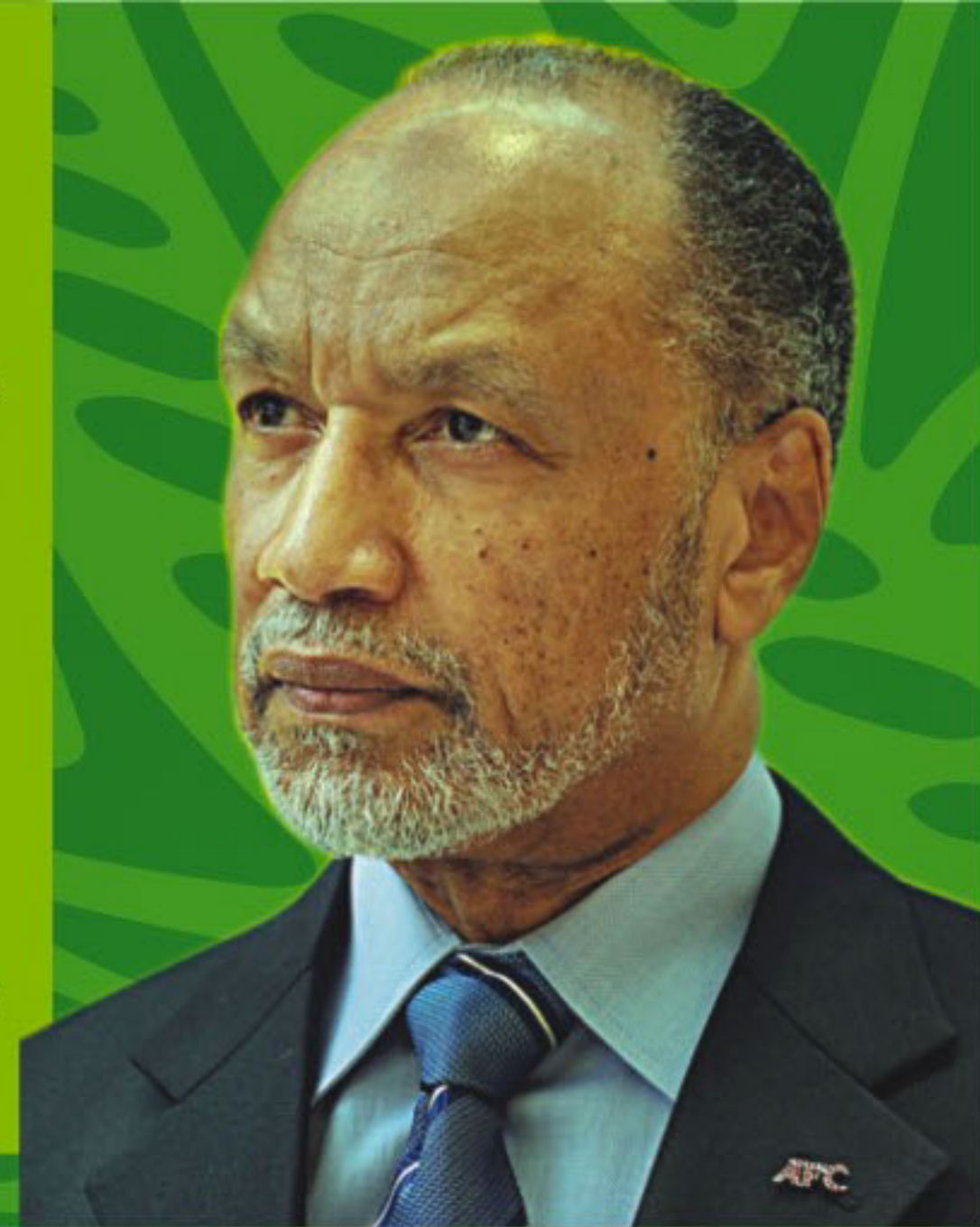


# Star SPORT

DHAKA SATURDAY MARCH 19, 2011, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

## Bin Hammam to challenge Blatter

Asian football chief Mohamed bin Hammam on Friday confirmed he will challenge 75-year-old Sepp Blatter for the FIFA presidency in June. Bin Hammam, the president of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), said he decided to stand against Blatter, who has been football's world governing body president for 13 years, after "careful study". "Today after careful study, consideration... armed with my love for football I have decided to contest in the upcoming FIFA presidential elections scheduled in June 2011," he told reporters at the AFC headquarters in Kuala Lumpur. The FIFA presidential elections take place



The whole of Bangladesh will be looking to the opening pair of Imrul Kayes (L) and Tamim Iqbal, seen here in practice at the GP-BCB National Academy Ground yesterday, for a good start in their crucial tie against South Africa today.



PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

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## Shakib relaxed

BISHWAJIT ROY

The general populace might have plenty of questions regarding Bangladesh's batting prior to their crucial Group B match against formidable South Africa today but Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan was as satisfied as he could be with his team's performance in the ICC Cricket World Cup and was upbeat ahead of the tough battle at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

The youngest captain in the tournament was in a carefree mood while talking with the reporters at the pre-match press conference following training at Mirpur yesterday.

"We have been playing good cricket throughout the tournament though many have raised question about our batting. At least three times we scored more than our opponents and that's why we won these matches," said Shakib when asked about his side's poor batting display in the tournament.

"I believe we have a good chance to win tomorrow's match if we can stick to our plan. Everybody is confident after back-to-back wins against England and Netherlands. It's possible to qualify into the quarterfinals if we can play our best cricket," added Shakib, who is also satisfied with his own perfor-

mance in the tournament.

The Bangladesh skipper also said that the team spirit was hardly dented by the West Indies defeat against England, which threw Bangladesh into a must win situation against favourite South Africa, against whom they had won the second round game in 2007 World Cup in Guyana.

"Yes, it could have been an easy for us if West Indies won their match against England and now the task is a little bit difficult for us. But everything is now in our hands. We can win the match to qualify into the quarterfinals. After the dismissal of Chris Gayle I watched a Hindi movie," said a confident Shakib.

"Without any doubt South Africa is a better team than us but we are confident because it would not be an easy task for any team in the world to beat us at our own conditions. Except the first game it was not so easy to bat on this wicket and you know our spinners

have been doing well and we are hopeful they will play a vital role also in the match," opined Shakib.

Bangladesh skipper also rubbished the notion that Tamim Iqbal and he must take the responsibility if his side wanted to win the big match.

"I don't think so, rather I believe that everybody should contribute if we want to win the match," said Shakib.

He however praised the South African bowling attack highly. "We must be careful against both spin and pace bowlers. South Africa has a very good bowling attack and as well their batting line-up is also strong. So we must put a good total on the board if we bat first and on the other hand we must bowl

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## Smith knows the occasion

SPORTS REPORTER



Graeme Smith believes the South Africa team have become accustomed to sub-continental teams and conditions as they face the Tigers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

The Proteas arrived in town the day after their win over Ireland last Tuesday but chose to train only yesterday, on the eve of their final group game in the World Cup.

But it was clear that they had come to this leg of the tournament having done their homework on the opponents who were denied an easier entry into the last eight by the loss of West Indies at the hands of England on Thursday night.

"We've had a good look at Bangladesh. They've averaged 40-42 overs of spin in a game so we expect to face a lot of spin tomorrow (Saturday). They also have seven left-handers in their team so we'd also look at that and see how we can benefit," said Smith during the official press conference.

Smith, who began his time as captain of South Africa in this country eight years ago, was well aware of the occasion it is promising to be for the hosts, a place in the quarterfinal beckoning through a win over the visitors.

"Obviously it's a big game for Bangladesh; they need to win the game. So we expect them to be very motivated and also a very passionate crowd tomorrow (Saturday).

"But also they are a team that will be under pressure. If we can get our basics right, play well for long periods and force them to do things that they don't want to do. That'll be the positive for us and hopefully we can do that," he said.

Bangladesh's only win over South Africa has been during the last World Cup's Super Eights phase when the Proteas went down by 67 runs in Guyana. But Smith made it quite clear that a lot of water has passed under that bridge.

"We don't come into this game with any added emotion. There's no talk of revenge. Four years is a long time and we've played against Bangladesh a fair bit.

"Tomorrow's going to be another one-off occasion for us. It is an important game for Bangladesh, we are just excited to be a part of that and want to play well," said the left-handed opener, who also informed that he has the full complement of 15 players to pick the eleven from.

If Bangladesh beat South Africa, they will move to eight points and West Indies will also finish on eight if they beat India. With three teams level on points and number of wins, the net run rate will decide the standings. West Indies and

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South Africa captain Graeme Smith (R) and his opening partner Hashim Amla limber up at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday for their last group match against Bangladesh today.

PHOTO: STAR

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### TODAY'S MATCHES

Match	Time	Venue
Bangladesh v South Africa	9:30am	Dhaka
Australia v Pakistan	3:00pm	Colombo



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## Be The Nokia Match Analyzer

### Bangladesh v South Africa

We will play our last and must win match today. We have to win this match with significant difference as 6 team of group B is still in fight for quarterfinal. We have had a rollercoaster of a ride. After losing to India (87 runs), we have had hard fought wins against Ireland, England and a comfortable win against Netherlands. However, in between these, the nine-wicket loss to West Indies when we were bowled out for 58 cost our net run rate significantly. On the other side, South Africa had an unexpected defeat to England by six runs but have otherwise been in top form. They have gone past West Indies (seven wickets), Netherlands (231 runs), Ireland (131 runs) comfortably and a three-wicket win against India.

Rashed

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