

# Star SPORT

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## Casillas plans WC ending

Several of Spain's golden generation of footballers will bring down the curtain on their international careers after the 2014 World Cup, veteran goalkeeper Iker Casillas said on Wednesday. Casillas, 31, winner of the World Cup and two European Championships, added it would be time for the younger generation to take up the baton. "A lot of us will retire from the national side after the World Cup," said Casillas. It is why winning the World Cup again would be a wonderful way to bow out."

## Fearless Tigers

BISHWAJIT ROY

It seems that this winter has not been too cold on the Bangladeshi newcomers as the addition of Shohag Gazi, Mominul Haque and Anamul Haque has provided a boost to the national side. The trio already made their arrival felt but they have also seen both sides of the coin following Bangladesh's defeat in the third match after two convincing wins in Khulna. After the four-wicket loss in the third game at Mirpur, the million dollar question is: will Bangladesh be able to win the series against the formidable West Indies?

Without doubt the winter would be more remarkable for the three newcomers if they can be part of a series-winning team and contribute something to the success. It however will not be an easy task even though the home side is leading the series 2-1 and showed some character even in defeat as West Indies' top performers like Marlon Samuels and Sunil Narine showed their class in the third ODI. A carefree Gazi, a smart Anamul and a shy Mominul were however confident enough about winning the series and they were hopeful that the dream can come

true today when the fourth match will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, starting at 2.30pm.

While Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim was reluctant to speak to the media on the eve of the fourth game yesterday, a rest day for the Tigers, his young brigade were however eager to express their determination and all three were praying that their skipper calls rightly at the toss for the first time in the series. Unlike the third game the pitch for the fourth game could be a batting paradise, in which case batting second will be much easier under lights, so luck at the toss is important for both teams in the day-night affair.

The young players were however very much aware of the fact that the toss factor is not in their hands. But what is in their hands is an attempt to improve their batting because the common feeling in the team was that they were a few runs short in the third game.

"We are still in a good position to win the series, so the mood in the teams is very good. Our plan is simple which is to play good cricket in tomorrow's (Friday) match. The main target is we must win the series. The third match was

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2



**A FAMILY DAY:** Bangladesh pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza holds his daughter at the lobby of Sonargaon Hotel yesterday morning. The Tigers enjoyed a day off yesterday as most of Mashrafe's team-mates stayed indoors.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## WI waiting on Gayle force

SPORTS REPORTER

While the West Indies did go on to win the third ODI in Mirpur on Wednesday to keep the series alive, there are a number of areas that the visiting team management will be worried about. The batting, for starters, is yet to click for the team.

Scores of 199 and 132 in the first two ODIs point to the need for a major overhaul in the visitors' batting order. Their pursuit of 228 in the last game also witnessed a collapse. Apart from Kieron Powell and Marlon Samuels, the rest of the batting order failed to negotiate the Bangladeshi spinners effectively.

It's been the constant failure of opener Chris Gayle that's been a major worry for the West Indians. Apart from a solitary wicket with the ball on Wednesday, Gayle's performance has been below-par. Scores of 35, 15 and 4 in the first three ODIs show that the aggressive opener hasn't quite enjoyed his stay.

The team management though believes that it's only a matter of time before the big man hits form. "Chris Gayle has played all round the world.



**West Indies assistant coach Toby Radford shows Kieron Pollard how to go on the front foot during an extended practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.**

PHOTO: STAR

He is a fantastic player and knows his own strengths and weaknesses. I think at some point in the next few days Gayle will get a big score, I am sure he will," said Toby Radford, assistant coach of the West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

"The players are gradually per-

forming. Sunil Narine bowled exceptionally well. [Verasammy] Permaul came into the side as well and bowled very well. Marlon Samuels's innings was outstanding really. He pretty much batted right till the end and allowed the other guys to bat within [themselves]," he added. Kieron

SEE PAGE 17 COL 6

## FIFA officials in Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

FIFA technical director Jean Michel along with two other FIFA officials arrived in Dhaka yesterday to conduct the final selection of footballers for the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) Academy in Sylhet.

After their arrival, Michel met with BFF president Kazi Salahuddin to discuss the progress of the BFF Academy in Sylhet. FIFA officials Vincent Subramaniam and David Borja along with BFF officials are supposed to travel to Sylhet today to see the Academy.

Michel will conduct the final selection of the players, who have been picked from nearly one lakh youth booters across the country, from tomorrow. Michel will get to see 152 youth booters as BFF plans to select 60 footballers -- 30 from the U-14 level and 30 from the U-18 level.

## A real belief in the team: Jurgensen

NAIMUL KARIM

It was a top-notch all-round performance by the Tigers in Khulna that gave them the two crucial wins over the West Indies in the beginning of the series. However, with the visitors having pulled one back on Wednesday, courtesy of a brilliant century by Marlon Samuels, the question that lingers in the minds of the thousands of Bangladeshi supporters is whether the hosts can keep their calm and pull off at least one win in the coming days.

Interim head coach Shane Jurgensen, who has been with the team for close to two years now, certainly thinks so and claimed to have noticed a positive change in the attitude of the players in the last couple of series.

"I think there's a real belief there. The boys know that we missed out on a little opportunity on Wednesday. What's changed in this team I think is their belief. We stumbled upon the Asia Cup and did well, we won against Ireland in the T20s and winning creates a good habit," said Jurgensen in an interview with The Daily Star yesterday. "The team now under-

stands what we do well when we win and what we didn't quite get right when we lose. That's a good sign," he added.

Victory for the West Indies on Wednesday means that the series now stands at a tricky crossroads and makes the fourth game very important. A win for the West Indies can shift the momentum towards the visitors and might eventually lead to a series win. The importance of the game was best reflected by Jurgensen who claimed that the third ODI was theirs for the taking.

"We weren't far from winning that game last night. We were bowling when there was dew on the ground. If a couple of catches might have been taken that were sort of half chances, it would have been a really close game. Had we got 20 more runs on the board, the story could have been different," he said.

The coach, however, was happy with the way the hosts came back after a weak start in the third ODI. "I really admired our fighting spirit yesterday. It could have been a lot worse. But we had some good little partnerships to get us where we got," said Jurgensen. "We just have to come back on the field and finish off with a good

SEE PAGE 17 COL 8

## Another poor start for Siddikur

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh golfer Siddikur Rahman started terribly in the Thailand Golf Championship, finishing the first round in joint-97th position after a round of three-over-par 75 at the Amata Spring Country Club in Bangkok yesterday.

Starting the tournament badly is a continuation of a trend this season for the 28-year-old and this start ranks as one of the worst by the 2010 Brunei Open winner.

It was however a spectacular day for South African Charl Schwartzel, who put in a flawless round of golf to finish at the top of the leader board with seven-under-par 65.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

## Khulna, Dhaka vie for title

SPORTS REPORTER



The final round of the 14th National Cricket League begins today with both Khulna and Dhaka aiming to etch their name on the trophy by winning their respective matches. Khulna lead the table with 34 points followed by Dhaka who have 30 points. An outright win gives a team six points, thereby providing second-positioned Dhaka a chance to win the trophy.

Khulna has a tough ask as they meet reigning champions Rajshahi at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra. They have been the leaders for the majority of the league. Khulna rode on Abdur Razzak and Murad Khan, who have taken 43 and 21 wickets in the league respectively. Khulna's Mohammad Mithun, who has scored 522 runs in the competition so far, will want to continue his good run in the final game. If they take the first innings' lead and draw the game, the three points will leave Khulna champions regardless of what Dhaka do.

Dhaka will take on Barisal at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi in a must-win encounter. The capital city will be looking towards their captain Mosharraf Hossain who has had a brilliant

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

## Ricky to be honoured at Hobart Test

AFP, Hobart

Newly-retired Test great Ricky Ponting will receive a tribute during next week's opening Test match against Sri Lanka in Hobart, Cricket Tasmania said Thursday.

The former Australia skipper played his final and 168th Test match against South Africa in Perth this week after a run of low scores in the three-Test series against the Proteas.

His home state association said Ponting will do a lap of honour around Bellerive Oval during the lunch break on the opening day of the Hobart Test on Friday, December 14.

Ponting has confirmed his retirement from

SEE PAGE 17 COL 6



**Cricket fans in huge numbers queue up in front of a Social Islami Bank Limited branch in the city's Moghbazar area yesterday.**

PHOTO: STAR