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NEW TURF, NEW DREAMS: Youngsters from a city-based sports academy have a ball at the inauguration of the artificial playing surface at the football Stadium in Bangalore on Wednesday

State to play a big role: AIFF

Artificial Turf Inaugurated At Bangalore Football Stadium

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: All India Football Federation secretary Kushal Das said on Wednesday that Karnataka and Sikkim will soon emerge as the pivots of India's football training with the setting up of the technical centres under FIFA's Goal project.

"We are in the process of setting up a technical training centre in both Bangalore and Imphal and we are looking for partnership for the technical programs. We are trying to get

months. Talks are on but nothing has been finalized. We will have a coach in place of Houghton in 2-3 months but we are not rushing into it," he said. Das said India will play two international friendlies against Maldives and Qatar in July to prepare for the World Cup qualifier against UAE slated for July 23 and July 28 (Chennai). "The team will train in the gulf for 7-10 days for the match."

BIG REVAMP ON CARDS

Karnataka Football Association president AR Khaleel said the existing structure will be revamped completely and the city will get a world class stadium with a 40,000 capacity. "The Jindal group has offered to reconstruct three stadiums in Bangalore, Kolkata and Mumbai and the AIFF will soon take a decision on this," Khaleel said.

The KSFA president also said that the Association has offers from 1-2 parties to start a professional club based in the city. "Bangalore is host to a lot of world class companies including infotech majors and I request all of them to help the game," he said.

KSFA honoured Olympians Ahmad Khan, Varadaraj and Asiad medalists Ethiraj, Arumainayagam, Nataraj and Sampath. In the inaugural match on the turf, the State veterans XI defeated Sports Journalists XI 3-0.

Kaka to stay on at Madrid

Brazilian football star Kaka has closed the door on a move to England by insisting he is staying in Spain. Speaking at the launch of the new Adidas Predator boot, the Sun quoted Kaka, as saying: "My challenge is to have a good season for Real Madrid. I want to be a winner with Madrid."

Tevez will not leave

Man City: Manchester City boss Roberto Mancini has said Carlos Tevez will not leave the club and lead City's assault on the Champions League next season.

Defoe unsettled at

Tottenham: England striker Jermain Defoe said he would consider leaving Tottenham if he fails to make it back into the side.

Birmingham 'keepers

in trouble: Birmingham became the latest club to be embroiled in controversy over their off-field behaviour after goalkeeper Colin Doyle's wife, Becky, revealed he and Ben Foster stayed out until 4am after the club's end-of-season dinner in Birmingham city centre.

Japan to tell Blatter it is safe venue:

Japan will seek to reassure Sepp Blatter that it is a safe venue for hosting football as the FIFA president visits in the wake of a tsunami which sparked the worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl, Japan's FA said. Junji Ogura, head of JFA, said on Tuesday he'd try to confirm that the Club World Cup, will be held in Japan in December in spite of the March 11 disaster.

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the expertise from Holland or Germany to develop the curriculum," Das said before inaugurating the newly laid artificial turf at the Football Stadium. "Now with the availability of the artificial turf we can use this facility for games and training," he added.

As if to downplay the exit of the national team's head coach Bob Houghton, Das said: "It is now more important to have good technical centres than to have a top coach and we will soon be developing robust technical programs."

Asked whether AIFF has appointed Armando Colacoas the new coach, Das said talks are on with the Goan. "We are in talks with him. We want him charge for the next three

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