

I want to set up academy of highest quality: Bhutia

MUMBAI, NOV 25/—/ Indian football team captain Bhaichung Bhutia on Tuesday said his dream is to set up a top-class football academy in his home state of Sikkim or in some other north-eastern state once his career as a player is over.

"It's my dream project to set up a football academy of the highest quality. But for that I would need at least 40 acres of land. Unless I get this I would not set up the academy," said the ace Mohun Bagan striker at a media conference here to announce the Tata Tea-Arsenal Soccer Stars talent hunt. The Sikkim government has already said that it will consider Bhutia's proposal favourably. "Let Bhaichung come forward with his specific proposal for setting up a football acad-

emy in the state... We will favourably consider such a proposal," Sikkim sports minister PS Tamang said on Monday in Gangtok. Bhutia said that India's future is bright with the emergence of young players like Steven Dias, NP Pradeep, Sunil Chettri and Subrata Pal. "We have been doing well over the last three years. These players are young and have at least 10 years left to play good football. The future is bright," Bhutia said. About his association with the talent hunt contest along with Indian teammate and Mahindra United medio Dias, Bhutia said that the Football Players' Association has decided to support the venture and all such initiatives to develop the game in the country. "One of the FPA's objectives is to help promote the game at the grassroots level and at higher levels. The Tata Tea-Arsenal Soccer Stars event gives a great opportunity for the youngsters. We want more and more such tournaments to be played in India," he said. (PTI)