

## Mourinho eyes revenge

Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho admits his side have two major psychological barriers to overcome when travel to Lyon on Tuesday for the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie.

"There are two barriers we have to overcome: getting into the quarterfinals and overcoming a Lyon team that eliminated us the last time we met," Mourinho said.

"I am not losing any sleep (over Lyon). Since the day the draw was made I have worked with my team to find out all the details about Lyon. We also have (Zinedine) Zidane who knows them



Bangladesh players jog during a practice session at the GP BCB National Cricket Academy Ground in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## O'Brien minds job at hand

ATIQUÉ ANAM

As the cricketing minnows struggle to make an impression in the early part of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011, the debate over their exclusion from the 2015 edition is heating up with captains taking sides and letting their own theories on the topic be known.

While the leading Associate Member nations joined in the chorus against that deadly move by International Cricket Council, they lost some of the sympathy from the Test playing nations after Kenya and Canada got brushed off in their opening matches. Ricky Ponting, the Australia captain on Sunday opined that the World Cup will be a better event without the weaker Associate nations, in that it does not give them a positive experience as well as making the premier event less spectacular.

But that is a view not shared universally by the bigger nations as Andrew Strauss, the English skipper, took a cautious approach and implied: Let's get the World Cup over and see how they play and then decide.

And one of the Associates look intent on proving ICC and Ponting wrong. Ireland are

at the top of the Associate ladder and have been for two years, and they want to prove that they deserve their place with their performance and shift the onus on the ICC.

Niall O'Brien, the Irish wicket-keeper batsman believes they are a good enough side to go a long way in the World Cup.

"We believe we are good enough to play in a World Cup. We pride ourselves to be top of the minnows. We got confidence that we can go a long way," he said.

On Saturday, Kenya were humiliated, being bowled out for 69 runs against New Zealand and losing the game by 10 wickets while Canada were handed a 210-run defeat by Sri Lanka.

The 29-year old left-hander said he was disappointed with the way Canada and Kenya played in their opening matches, but believes they have five more matches where they can come back strongly.

For the time being though the Irish wicketkeeper feels that they would rather not look too much into the future and try to concentrate on the job at hand.

"Obviously we want to play in 2015 in Australia and New Zealand, that's a long way

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4



NIALL O'BRIEN

## Tigers thinking of the Irish only

BISHWAJIT ROY

After a day's rest, the Tigers returned to business at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The sun didn't shine on the day, but the gloom as well as the defeat against India in the opening match of the ICC Cricket World Cup hardly dampened the spirit of Shakib Al Hasan's men. They looked like a happy unit.

There might have been lack of enthusiasm outside the stadium comparing the euphoria before the opening ceremony and the opening match, but there was no shortage of enthusiasm among the players.

"As players need rest, so do the fans. But I am sure they will sing and cheer for us like they did before when we play Ireland," responded Bangladesh vice-captain Tamim Iqbal with a smile when a foreign journalist drew his attention to the lack of enthusiasm around the stadium.

The mood in the Tigers' tent was that what happened against India was now past and they had to shift their focus on their next game against Ireland on February 25 at Mirpur.

"We had a meeting today and what I can assure everybody is that we are no longer thinking about

the India match. We still have five matches in the first round and we are now completely focussing on Ireland. In my opinion today is the best day in one and a half months' practice as everybody enjoyed it and was relaxed," added Tamim.

There is hardly any scope for the Tigers to be complacent against the Europeans, who not only have a sweet memory against the Tigers in the 2007 World Cup but also have the ability to stun any team on their day, and Tamim also believed that they would need to play their best to beat the ICC Associate Member nation.

"It's World Cup, so there is no scope to be complacent at any stage. Ireland are a good team but we have the experience of playing against them and we know almost all of their players. We need to execute our plans which we failed to do against India. Our team is in good shape mentally and what I believe is that we have the ability to beat any team if we can play to our potential," observed Tamim.

But it's not easy to bring back the confidence of the bowlers, particularly the pacers after the way they were punished by the Indian bats-

men. Shafiqul Islam was particularly terrible and he was nowhere near his natural bowling in the first game, but coach Jamie Siddons assured that his bowlers were confident enough.

"We did not bowl very well but our confidence is really good, we bowled against probably the best batting line up in the World," said Siddons.

The Bangladesh coach also believed that it was

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

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Match	Time	Venue
England v Netherlands	3:00pm	Nagpur

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