

Brazil slump to all-time low

AFP, Paris

Brazil have slumped five places to an all-time low 18th in the latest FIFA World Cup rankings as they struggle to regroup under new manager Felipe Scolari.

The 2002 World Cup-winning coach has been brought back to replace Mano Menezes in charge of a side badly in need of some fresh ideas before next June's Confederations Cup where Brazil have been drawn with Italy, Mexico and Japan.

As World Cup hosts, the Brazilians have no qualifiers to play and have been involved in a series of friendly matches, the last of which ended in a 1-1 draw with Colombia in the United States.

In continental terms, Brazil are ranked only fifth in South America behind Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador and Uruguay.

World champions Spain stay top of the rankings followed by Germany and Argentina with Italy up one place to fourth and Colombia up three to fifth.

TOP 20

1. Spain
2. Germany
3. Argentina
4. Italy (+1 place)
5. Colombia (+3)
6. England
7. Portugal (-3)
8. Netherlands (-1)
9. Russia
10. Croatia
11. Greece (+1)
12. Switzerland (+4)
13. Ecuador (+4)
14. Ivory Coast (+1)
15. Mexico (-1)
16. Uruguay (-5)
17. France (+1)
18. Brazil (-5)
19. Algeria
20. Sweden (+3)

What to WATCH

STAR Cricket
India v England
First T20 (D/N)
Live from 7:30pm

ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

TEN Action
UEFA Champions League
Round of 16 draw
Live from 4:15pm
UEFA Europa League
Rd of 16 & 32 draw



Bayern Munich midfielder Xherdan Shaqiri is ecstatic after scoring the second goal against Augsburg during their German Cup match in Augsburg on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Quest to reach Wembley

AFP, Paris



A glamour ceremony to be held in Nyon, Switzerland on Thursday will unveil the much anticipated pairings for the knockout phase of the Champions League, as the 16 remaining teams continue their quest to reach the May 25 final at Wembley.

A fresh champion will lift one of the most recognisable trophies in the game after holders Chelsea suffered the humiliation of becoming the first defending champions to exit following the group phase.

Perennial favourites Barcelona go into the hat for next February's matches, as the team everyone wants to avoid, although fellow pool winners Manchester United, Paris Saint-Germain, Borussia Dortmund, Malaga, Juventus, Schalke 04 and Bayern Munich are all guaranteed to avoid the four-time champions as seeded teams.

Real Madrid who won the last of their nine European Cups in 2002, are the pick of the second-placed group teams although along with Valencia, they cannot face their Catalan arch-rivals as teams from the same country cannot face each other until the quarterfinals.

Celtic who became the first British team to win the trophy back in 1967 when they beat Inter Milan, are the only other side from the runners-up that include Porto, Galatasaray, Shakhtar Donetsk, AC Milan and Arsenal, who are certain to avoid Tito Vilanova's team.

Paris Saint-Germain who make their first appearance in the knockout stages since 1995, had the best record in the group round as two-time champion Carlo Ancelotti guided the mega-rich capital outfit to five wins and one defeat - 1-0 against Porto.

Bayern Munich are off to a blistering start in the Bundesliga where they are runaway leaders and are back on track to win their first Champions League since beating Valencia in 2001.

Their opponents will come from a group that include Real Madrid, Celtic, Porto, Shakhtar or Arsenal.

Manchester United who won the first of their three European Cups in 1968 when Bobby Charlton and George Best were on target in the 4-1 win over Benfica at Wembley are another team to avoid.

Although they went out in the group phase last season, manager Alex Ferguson has again tweaked the Old Trafford juggernaut with the inspired signing of Robin van Persie who has already combined with Wayne Rooney for 19 domestic goals, including his league-leading 12.

'It won't be end of world'

AFP, Lisbon

Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo said in an interview published on Wednesday that he would love to win this year's Ballon d'Or but it would not be the end of the world if the prize went elsewhere.

"If I win, perfect. If I don't, never mind, life goes on. But obviously I'd love to win. I'm not going to lie or be hypocritical," the 27-year-old Real Madrid forward was quoted as saying on the Portuguese football federation website.

"Fair or unfair, the decision will be what it will be... I'll maybe be very happy or maybe very sad. But that's life. I can't live according to an individual prize," the 2008 Ballon d'Or winner added.

Barcelona's Lionel Messi, who earlier this month surpassed the 40-year-old record of 85 goals in a calendar year set by Germany's Gerd Mueller in 1972, is favourite to take the prize for an unprecedented fourth successive year.

"It won't be the end of the world if I don't win," Ronaldo said, adding that careers were defined more by team prizes than individual ones.

Ronaldo, Messi and the Argentine's Spain teammate Andres Iniesta are the three players shortlisted for the award, which will be presented in Zurich early next month.

Corinthians feted as heroes

Football

AFP, Sao Paulo

Sao Paulo on Tuesday gave a heroes' welcome to its beloved Corinthians on their return home from their 1-0 weekend victory over European Champions Chelsea in the Club World Cup in Japan.

The players flew in early Tuesday after a 20-hour flight from Japan with a stopover in Germany.

Thousands of elated fans, many donning the Corinthians' black and white jerseys, lined the route as the open-air bus carrying the local heroes slowly made its way through the streets of this huge metropolis of 11 million people, South America's largest.

Joined by popular Brazilian singer Thiaguinho, the players basked in their glory, taking turns to hoist and kiss the coveted FIFA Club World Cup.

The players were welcomed on arrival by Sao Paulo Governor Geraldo Alckmin and later received a special commemorative plaque from outgoing Mayor Gilberto Kassab.

There were special cheers for striker Paolo Guerrero, who scored the only goal in Sunday's final in the Japanese city of Yokohama.

"Two-time champions", "Ole Ole Ole", the crowd chanted.

The Sao Paulo club secured their second continental title -- they won the 2000 FIFA Club World Championship -- and became the first side from outside Europe to win the title since 2006.



Corinthians' players celebrate with the Club World Cup trophy during their victory parade in Sao Paulo on Tuesday.

Balotelli accepts fine

REUTERS, London



Mario Balotelli has accepted a fine of two weeks' wages from Manchester City after withdrawing his appeal against disciplinary action taken by the Premier League champions, the club said on Wednesday.

The volatile Italian striker, who was fined by City after a series of well-documented misdemeanours on and off the pitch last season, had been due to have his case heard by a Premier League panel on Wednesday but the hearing was cancelled.

"After amicable talks between the parties, as a sign of respect for (coach)

Roberto Mancini, the supporters and the club, Mario Balotelli has chosen to accept a two-week fine levied upon him by the Club and withdraw his disciplinary appeal," a City statement said.

"Mario remains available for selection for all forthcoming fixtures."

Despite the 22-year-old Balotelli's decision to end his dispute and agree to a 340,000 pounds (\$550,000) fine his relationship with the club and Mancini appears to be at breaking-point.

The player who former Inter Milan boss Jose Mourinho once branded "unmanageable" was left out of the squad against Newcastle United last weekend.

Tito suffers cancer relapse

REUTERS, Madrid

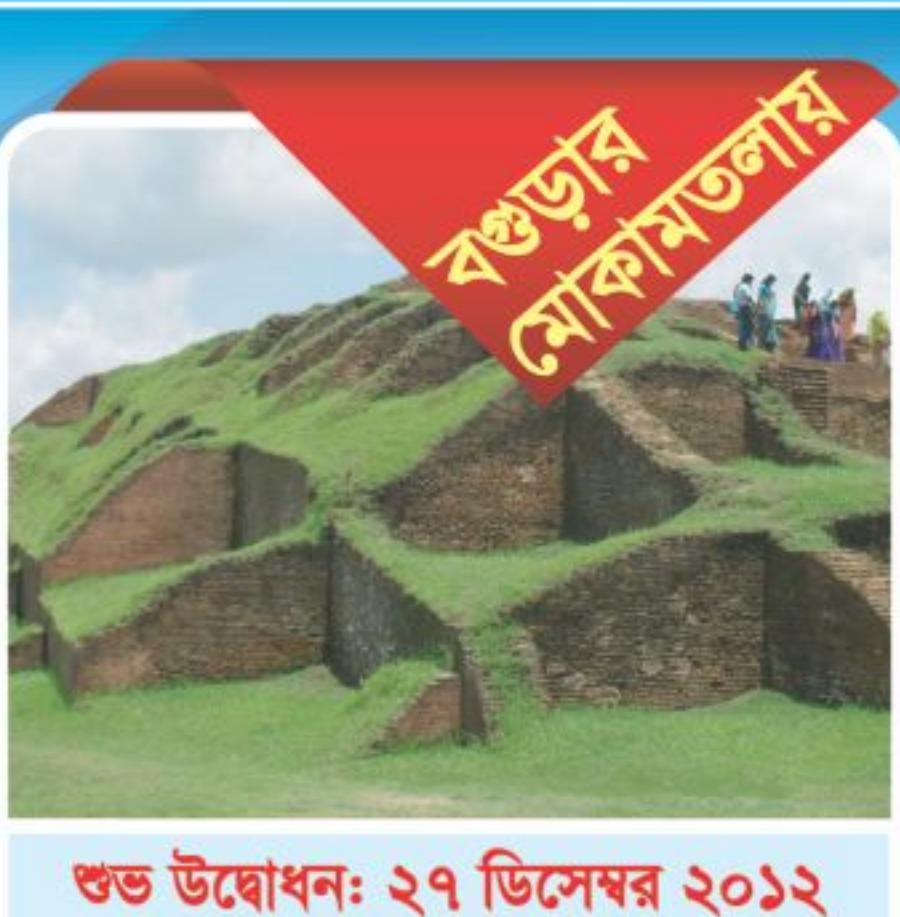
Barcelona coach Tito Vilanova has suffered a relapse on the cancer in his saliva glands, Spanish daily El Pais reported on Wednesday citing sources at the club.

The 43-year-old Vilanova, who underwent surgery on a tumour in his glands last November, stepped up from his role as assistant coach to replace Pep Guardiola as first-team coach for this season.

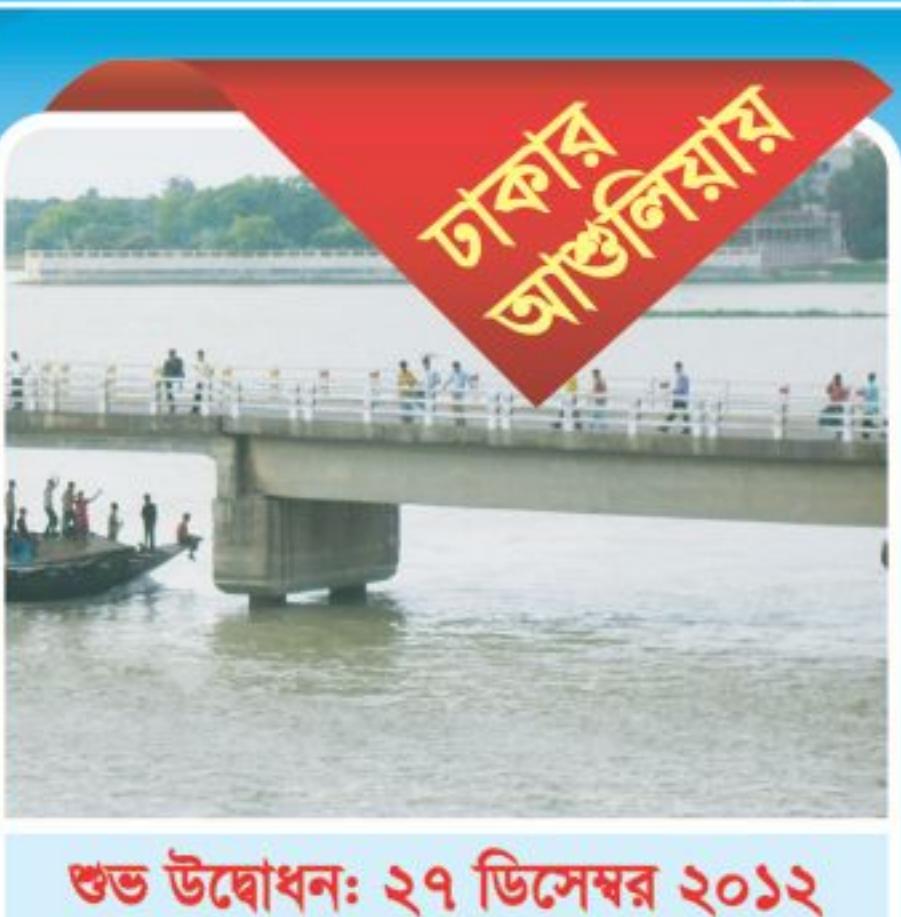
ব্যাংকিং সেবা সম্প্রসারণের লক্ষ্য বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক লি: (বিডিবিএল)-এর ৫টি নতুন ব্রাঞ্চের শুরু উদ্বোধন



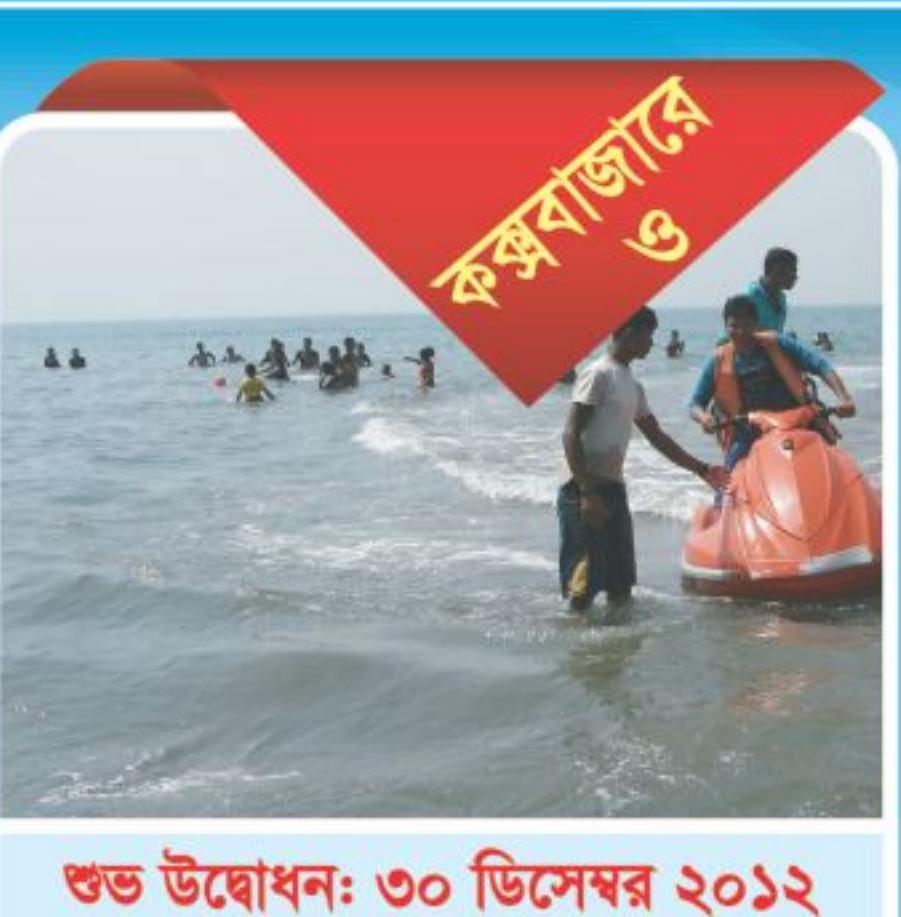
শুরু উদ্বোধন: ২৩ ডিসেম্বর ২০১২
মাধবনী ব্রাঞ্চ
জে এন্ড জে টাওয়ার, ছাট মাধবনী, নরসিংড়ী।



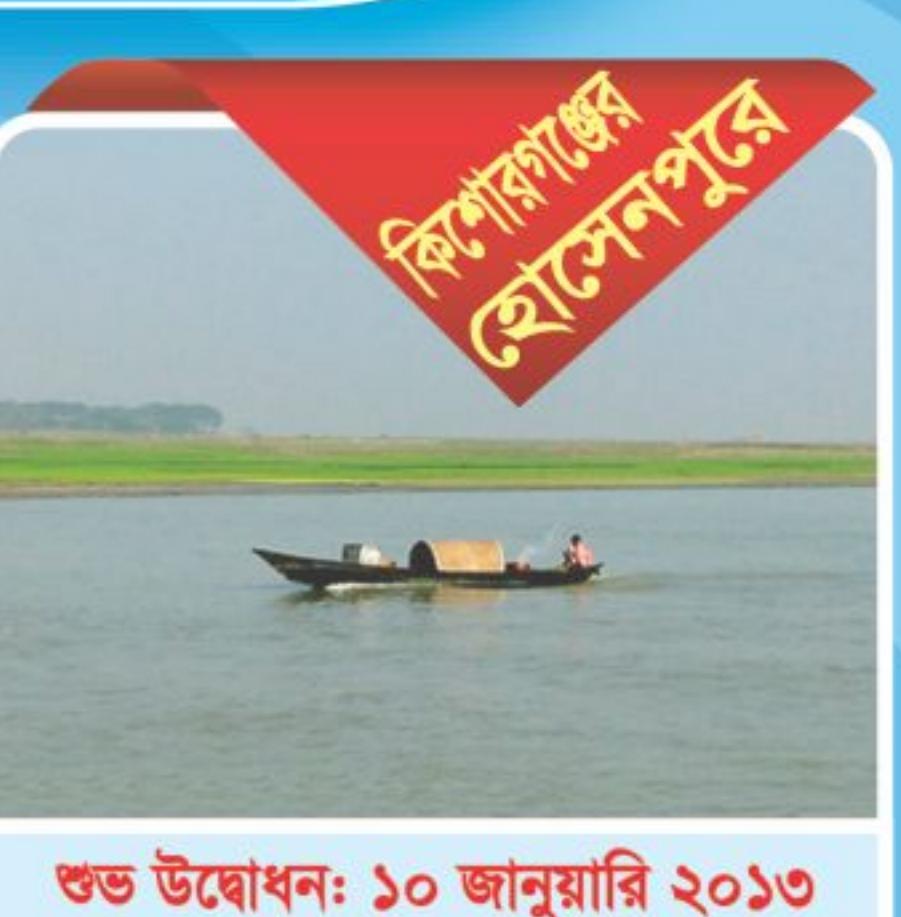
শুরু উদ্বোধন: ২৭ ডিসেম্বর ২০১২
মোকামতলা ব্রাঞ্চ
রাশিদা মার্কেট, মোকামতলা বাজার
বগুড়া।



শুরু উদ্বোধন: ২৭ ডিসেম্বর ২০১২
আঙ্গুলিয়া ব্রাঞ্চ
স্বনীল টাওয়ার, বাইপাইল, মেইন রোড
আঙ্গুলিয়া, চাকা।



শুরু উদ্বোধন: ৩০ ডিসেম্বর ২০১২
কর্ববাজার ব্রাঞ্চ
উমে বার্মিজ মার্কেট, মেইন রোড
টেকপাড়া, কর্ববাজার।



শুরু উদ্বোধন: ১০ জানুয়ারি ২০১৩
হোসেনপুর ব্রাঞ্চ
মফিজ ম্যানশন, হোসেনপুর বাজার
হোসেনপুর, কিশোরগঞ্জ।

অনলাইন ব্যাংকিং সহ সব ধরনের আধুনিক ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ।



বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক লিমিটেড

(একটি রাষ্ট্রীয় মালিকানাধীন ব্যাংক)

প্রধান কার্যালয়: ৮ রাজাঁউক এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০