

# Star SPORT

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## Street named after Mourinho

Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho is to have a street named after him in Setubal, his Portuguese city of birth, the region's town hall announced Thursday.

According to a resolution passed unanimously, the name of the Portuguese manager, who received the keys to the city -- located roughly 50 kilometres south of Lisbon -- in 2009, "must also be eternalised on the local geography".

"Jose Mourinho is today, in a fully deserved way, one of the most prestigious and most qualified coaches in the entire world," the statement added.



## Bangladesh face Palestine challenge

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh will be hoping for a bright start in the AFC Challenge Cup Qualifiers when they take on favourites Palestine in one of two matches on the opening day at the Dashrath Stadium in Nepal today.

Ranked 153, Palestine are sixteen places ahead of Bangladesh in the FIFA rankings and have not lost against Bangladesh in two encounters since 2006; winning once and drawing once.

This makes Bangladesh task of qualifying from Group D as champions that much harder. A positive result against Palestine will be absolutely necessary if there is any hope of progressing since Bangladesh will also face the hosts and ever-improving Nepal and the unknown quantity of Northern Mariana Island in their other two games.

Nevertheless, Bangladesh will have to face an uphill task to tame Palestine, comprising mostly of footballers playing in Europe and a team that have already showed their quality by beating India 4-2 in a recent friendly match in New Delhi.

Bangladesh, who last played international matches in November 2012 against

Thailand (0-5) and Malaysia (1-1), will certainly pin their hopes on the newly-appointed coach Lodewijk de Kruij, even though the Dutchman only had seven days to prepare his charges before the first competitive match.

"All the players worked very hard. The most important thing is that the boys are willing and motivated to deliver something better. They want to fight for the country," said Kruij at a pre-match briefing in Kathmandu according to goalnepal.com.

"We have been working hard every day and are well prepared. Let see what happen in tomorrow's match against Palestine," said the optimistic coach.

Kruij's counterpart Jamal Mahmoud was also upbeat about qualifying for the finals despite not having three to four key players who have been playing in different leagues outside Palestine.

"We are here to win and want to qualify for the finals as group winner," said Jamal, who guided Palestine to the semifinals of the 2012 final round.

Before coming to Nepal, Palestine played two friendlies against Kuwait who beat them 2-1 and India who they beat 4-2.

"We have beaten Bangladesh 2-0 in our

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PHOTO: COURTESY

Bangladesh national football team's coach Lodewijk de Kruij watches over his charges during a practice session at the Police Headquarters Ground in Kathmandu yesterday. Bangladesh will take on Palestine in their first match of the AFC Challenge Cup Qualifiers today.

## Zamrul, Mirona win 10km run

SPORTS REPORTER

National athletes Mohammad Zamrul Islam and Mirona Akter became champion in respective men's and women's section of the Dhaka International 10 kilometre run amid festive mood yesterday.

Zamrul took 28 minutes 24 seconds to complete his run which started from Gulshan Ladies club and finished at the end of Manik Mia Avenue via Gulshan-1, Tejgaon, Bijoy Sarani and Khamar Bari.

Zamrul is an athlete of Bangladesh Army and he was the runner-up in the 5000m run of the last national athletic championship. Zamrul's teammates Rafiqul Islam and

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## Aus seek spin fix

### Hyderabad Test from today



INTERNET, Undated

Amid heavy security and water-tight arrangements, Australia head into the second Test against India with as much of a demoralizing burden as England went into their Mumbai game last year with. A match down and with the certainty of vile turners to follow: the ends of teams on the subcontinent have always followed a set pattern, a trend that Alastair Cook-led England bucked with élan as they turned things around for a 2-1 series win after having lost the opening encounter.

Australia's site of resurrection -- if that happens at all -- will be Hyderabad, where a series of bomb blasts ravaged normal life a few weeks ago. The visitors seek a mandate similar to England's after a resounding loss at Chepauk. The means at their disposal, however, are not quite the same. In Monty Panesar and Graeme Swann, England had two spinners able to hold their own against India's batsmen. Australia lack a big turner and their only

dedicated spinner in the first Test, offie Nathan Lyon, went for over 200 runs in a show devoid of any impact.

The visitors' trust in opting to play to their strengths -- a four-strong pace attack -- didn't have the same effect as India's contingent of three spinners, who wreaked havoc on a crumbling Chennai pitch with uneven bounce. The track at Hyderabad is expected to follow in the same footsteps; in which case Australia will be seriously considering replacing a fast bowler with either left-arm spinner Xavier Doherty or all-rounder Steve Smith. Neither, though, is in the class of Swann or Panesar.

Clarke has also stated that going in with an unchanged eleven is also an option since he thinks the Hyderabad pitch will have something in it for the fast bowlers.

It can be safely said that it was MS Dhoni's lightning double-century that took the game away from Australia when things were rather evenly poised. But as much as Dhoni's innings played a part, the visitors' own batting was bereft of application.

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## Independence Cup from March 5

SPORTS REPORTER

The qualifying round of the Independence Cup Football Tournament has been deferred by three days and will now begin on March 5 at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

Rahmatganj MFS will face Bangladesh Air Force on the opening day.

"The qualification is scheduled to start from Sunday but we have deferred it by three days due to country-wide hartal on March 3 and 4 but we are hopeful that we will be able to complete the tournament by March," said BFF senior vice president Abdus Salam Murshedy at a press conference yesterday.

Murshedy informed that AT N Bangla, a private

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## Tigers train at Matara

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh national cricket team, after a four-hour journey from Colombo reached Matara yesterday morning, where they will begin the tour with a three-day warm-up game against the Sri Lankan Emerging Development Team tomorrow.

The Tigers made use of the centre-wicket facilities at the venue in the afternoon. Left-handed opener Tamim Iqbal practised with a bat for the first time since sustaining an injury to his left wrist during the Bangladesh Premier League T20 two weeks ago.

"Today he had a few hits against the slow bowlers. Initially, there was some pain but after the area was taped he felt much better and more confident. Our priority is to get him fit for the first Test and the signs looked good today. Tomorrow he will bat against the pacers and gradually he will be taking on more load," said Bangladesh physio Vibhav Singh.

With a number of last-minute changes in the squad, the upcoming three-day game will give Mushfiqur Rahim and Co. a chance to put their plans into action and finalise their eleven for the first Test which begins on March 8.

The middle order, for Bangladesh, is one of the areas that will need some sorting out. While captain Mushfiqur Rahim, vice-captain Mahmudullah Riyad and Nasir Hossain have their slots confirmed, uncapped players

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## Siddikur fails again

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman blew his chances of making it to the third Major of the year, The Open, by hitting a double-bogey in the penultimate hole at the Open Championship International Final Qualifying yesterday.

The 28-year old was the overnight leader with a six-under-par (66), and looked very much likely to grab one of the four qualifying spots throughout the second round as he remained on one-under-par till the sixteenth hole at the Amata Spring Country Club in Bangkok on Friday.

However, the mercurial golfer from Bangladesh sent his tee shot into the water on the par three 17 for a double bogey. That almost put paid to his chances of qualifying as needed an eagle on the last hole.

However, Siddikur could manage only a par-score in the 18th which meant he failed the qualifying mark by two shots. Siddikur, who is the first Bangladeshi to play and win on the Asian Tour,

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## Women's Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Dinajpur Municipal School recorded a 4-0 win over Nahar Academy of Mirpur in the Walton Motorbike 2nd Women's Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Ayesha, Sheli, Joba and Hasina scored one goal each for Municipal School.

In the day's other match, Narail DSA thrashed Anandamoyee School 6-0 with Nahida Akter slotting three goals while Kimi Karmaker scored twice and Sampa Biswas netted one goal.

## Real fear backlash

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid captain Iker Casillas is expecting a backlash from Barcelona when the two meet again in the league on Saturday after Madrid's 3-1 victory over the Catalans on Tuesday.

The Spanish champions booked their place in the Spanish Cup final with a complete performance that restricted Barca to very little going forward and contained their usual lightning speed on the counter-attack.

But Casillas believes he knows many of his international colleagues in the Barca side too well to think they will take defeat lying down.

"I know many of the Barcelona players and I know that they are competitive," he told the club's website.

Despite their joy in the cup, in the league it is Barca who have been the dominant force this season as they arrive in the capital with a 16-point advantage over Real.

And with another huge Champions

League game to come against Manchester United on Tuesday, many expect Jose Mourinho to make a number of changes.

However, Casillas believes it is important to try and maintain their positive momentum heading into their trip to Old Trafford with the teams locked 1-1 after the first leg of their last-16 duel.

"We need to be aware that when we don't win in the league the fans suffer. We have the duty to fight for every game and the next one is Barcelona.

"What we want to do is win and continue to cut the gap at the top. It is a deficit that perhaps doesn't reflect the real difference between the teams, but it is a competition where consistency is rewarded and Barcelona have been better

than us.

"It is a considerable lead, but with the crowd behind us we want to end a week that could be the turning point."

Casillas will definitely miss the match as he continues his recovery from a broken bone in his hand and Angel Di Maria is

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Bangladesh physio Vibhav Singh (L) has a chat with opening batsman Tamim Iqbal during the training session at the Matara Sports Club today. Tamim, who is nursing an injury on his left wrist, resumed practice with the bat during the session.

PHOTO: COURTESY