

What to WATCH

SONY SIX & TEN 2
Confederations Cup
Australia v Germany
Live from 9:00pm

TENNIS CAREER FOR MALDINI

Over a glorious quarter of a century he starred for AC Milan on the football pitch, now at 49 years of age Paolo Maldini has qualified for a tennis tournament in Milan. Maldini, now working as a director at Miami FC, qualified by wild card in the doubles in the weekend long Aspria Tennis Cup, part of the challenger circuit, the level below the ATP. "He's got a good service, he doesn't have a speciality shot but he has no weak points either," his partner and coach Stefano Landonio told local media. Maldini won 26 trophies with AC Milan including five Champions Leagues before finally hanging up his boots in 2009 aged 41. He also played 126 times for Italy.



—AFP



Mexico players celebrate their second equaliser against Portugal during their Group A fixture of the FIFA Confederations Cup at the Kazan Arena in Russia on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Germans expect tough opener

AFP, Sochi



World champions Germany will pit an inexperienced line-up against Australia in their Confederations Cup opener on Monday with striker Timo Werner anticipating a robust challenge from the Socceroos.

With an average age of just 24 years, four months, and a combined total of 179 international appearances, Germany have the most youthful squad of the eight Confed Cup teams. Only three of the squad -- Arsenal's Shkodran Mustafi, Matthias Ginter and Julian Draxler -- lifted the World Cup in Brazil three years ago, but none played in the final.

With the likes of Thomas Mueller, Manuel Neuer, Mats Hummels and Jerome Boateng all left at home, Joshua Kimmich is the only Bayern Munich star in the Germany squad.

On the back of his breakthrough season with RB Leipzig, striker Timo Werner, 21, expects a fiery start in Sochi for the untested, green Germans.

"We don't all know how fit we are after a long and hard season," admitted Werner. "Now comes an unpleasant game in which the Australians will try, with their physiques and toughness, to take us on. But we have a duty to win the three points. We need to get a quick goal and then exert some dominance."

A year out from the World Cup in Russia, there has never been a better time for the Socceroos to poach a first win over Germany at a major competition at the fourth attempt.

The world champions have made no secret of the fact their goal is not to win the Confederations Cup, but to blood their next generation of stars.

"The first priority is to develop the team, the second to win here," said team manager Oliver Bierhoff bluntly.

With the likes of key midfielders Mesut Ozil and Toni Kroos rested, the pressure falls on 23-year-old captain Draxler.

With 30 caps, the Paris St-Germain star has the most experience and is expected to lead by example in the attacking midfield role.

Portugal held by Mexico

KAZAN, Russia



Cristiano Ronaldo brushed off speculation about his Real Madrid future, although Portugal conceded a late equaliser in a 2-2 draw with Mexico at the Confederations Cup on Sunday.

Ronaldo teed up Ricardo Quaresma to fire Portugal ahead in the first half in Kazan, but the goal was cancelled out before the break by Mexico striker Javier Hernandez's bullet header.

Cedric Soares restored Portugal's lead on 86 minutes, but Hector Moreno's stoppage-time header salvaged a point for Mexico in their Group A opener.

"We could have killed off the match but it didn't happen. The draw is a fair result without doubt," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos, whose side wore black armbands in honour of the victims of a deadly forest fire back home.

"I would like to say something on behalf of my players. People are very sad in Portugal and the players are thinking of all those who are suffering from what's happened."

Mexico coach Juan Carlos Osorio

said his team deserved their point but admitted there was work to be done going forward.

"Hector Moreno's goal handed Mexican football a huge result," he said.

"We still need to work on our finishing, we're not efficient enough in the final third of the pitch. The next match will be very tough because New Zealand will give it their all."

Ronaldo, 32, is reportedly furious over a tax probe into the off-shore accounts dealing with his image rights, and has reportedly vowed to leave Spain.

According to Spanish paper Marca on Sunday, Real Madrid's coach Zinedine Zidane even broke off his holiday to call Ronaldo to try to persuade his star not to quit the club.

But Portugal's talisman was at his best in an action-packed first half in his team's opening match, with hosts Russia and New Zealand still to come in the group. Ronaldo's superb volley looked to have helped Portugal take the lead, but the video assistant referee came to Mexico's rescue after Nani had put the ball in the net.

When Ronaldo's volley thumped the crossbar, Nani pounced on the rebound, but the video ref spotted that four players were offside.

However, Portugal, and Ronaldo,

were not to be denied.

The Euro 2016 winners took the lead on 34 minutes when Ronaldo sprinted into the box and his beautifully-timed pass found Quaresma unmarked in the area.

The Besiktas winger drew Mexico's goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa and tapped home the opening goal.

But Mexico responded with Hernandez testing Portugal keeper Rui Patrício, before putting his side level.

Mexico's all-time top scorer grabbed his 48th international goal from 93 appearances after some dreadful defending by Portugal.

Borussia Dortmund midfielder Raphael Guerreiro failed to deal with a cross into the box and Carlos Vela teed up Hernandez, who met the cross with a diving header.

After an explosive opening period, the second was a much tamer affair as both teams squandered half chances as the tempo dropped.

With time running out, Southampton right-back Cedric pounced on a loose ball and slammed home Portugal's second goal.

But with the 90 minutes up, Mexican defender Moreno rose highest from the final corner of the game to head in the equaliser.

HP squad to play six games in Darwin

Tigers' 29-member preliminary camp from July 10

SPORTS REPORTER



In the absence of A team matches, it is the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) High Performance Squad that is the stage for performers to hone their skills and make a case for a place in the national team. There will be an opportunity to stake claims in July when the squad leaves for Australia to play a series of matches under the guidance of coach Simon Helmot.

The BCB chief selector Minhajul Abedin said yesterday that there are those in the squad -- that will leave on July 1 -- who have been earmarked as 'immediate replacements', should the need arise for players in the national team to be replaced.

"We haven't seen the team list yet, the coach [Helmot] is finalising that," Minhajul told The Daily Star. "But we know that some experienced cricketers like Liton [Das], Abul Hasan, Mehedi Maruf and Anamul Haque will be touring."

"We are sending some immediate replacement players, those who can enter the national team if we need replacements for any reasons, and some for the development squad."

All of the matches will be in Darwin, the most northerly of Australian capital cities and the venue of one of only two Tests (the other being Cairns) that Bangladesh have played in Australia in 2003. According to Minhajul, there will be five one-dayers and one three-day match against a sort of invitational eleven.

"When the first-class season in Australia ends, the players come to Darwin and continue playing; since the weather in Darwin is different from the rest of the country," Minhajul explained. "The opposition will be formed from those players."

Minhajul also informed that a 29-member preliminary national squad will have a training camp from July 10, ahead of the two-Test series against Australia at home in August-September, which will be followed by a full tour of South Africa in October.

Tame finish for Siddikur

SPORTS REPORTER

After having gone toe-to-toe with the rest of the field, Bangladesh's best golfer Siddikur Rahman finished the Queen's Cup in Thailand with a whimper at joint 15th position yesterday.

The two-time Asian Tour winner, who had racked up matching 68s in the first two rounds, ended the event with consecutive 72s for an aggregate score of four-under-par (280).

The 32-year-old golfer exchanged three birdies for four bogeys in the final round at the Santiburi Samui Country Club in Koh Samui.

Siddikur finished eleven shots behind the eventual winner, Nicholas Fung of Malaysia, who carded a 67 yesterday to bag the winner's paycheque of 90,000 dollars.

A big blow for Kerber

AFP, London

Angelique Kerber suffered a fresh blow on Sunday when a hamstring strain forced the world number one to withdraw from the Aegon Classic in Birmingham.

Kerber has been clinging onto top spot in the WTA rankings despite failing to win a Tour level title this year.

Now the German's grass-court preparations for Wimbledon, one of her best chances of capturing a third Grand Slam title, have been hampered by the problem.

"It was okay, but when I started practising again after [the French Open in] Paris I felt it in the last few days," Kerber said. "It was fine but then it comes back a little bit. You never know how it's going to be."

"I'm still hopeful of playing next week at Eastbourne, and I really want to be right for Wimbledon. This is an important time for me."

Kerber reached the final at Wimbledon last year and won the title in Birmingham the year before, so the timing of the injury is particularly bad.

After a season in which she has yet to win a tournament or to beat a top 20 player, Kerber had been hoping to recover form and confidence on a surface she has grown to love.

"When I started playing again on grass I was feeling much better," she said.

"I'm really looking forward to playing matches on it again."

QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

Porsche win Le Mans, torment for Toyota

Porsche floored Hong Kong actor and stuntman Jackie Chan's audacious bid for Le Mans glory as Toyota suffered fresh torment.

Florentino closing in on third mandate as Real Madrid president

Real Madrid President Florentino Perez is

closing in on a third consecutive mandate until 2021, with no candidate having challenging him in the election two days before the deadline.

AFC U-23 CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFIERS Ord selects preliminary squad for camp

SPORTS REPORTER



The preliminary squad of the national U-23 football team is all set to get to business at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) in Savar tomorrow after head coach Andrew Ord completed his second-phase trial yesterday with booters who failed to turn up and some from the U-19 team.

Ord had initially conducted a three-day trial with 35 footballers, who were selected by BFF's technical staff, from the 54 footballers plying in the Bangladesh Premier League clubs. However, the Australian wanted to watch players like Jewel Rana, Rubel Mia and Sohail Rana in action during training. And so, after studying those booters for the past three days, Ord selected his preliminary squad for the upcoming AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers, which will take place in Palestine from July 19 to 23.

"Hemanta Vincent Biswas, Jewel Rana and Mansur Amin could not attend training due either to injury issues or family obligations but all three players have been selected in the preliminary squad which will be declared tomorrow [Monday] by the coach," said the U-23 team's manger Satyajit Das Rupu yesterday.

Ord plans to compose the preliminary

squad with approximately 35 footballers including 10 to 12 experienced booters such as Jewel Rana, Rubel Mia, Sohail Rana, Mohammad Abdullah, Jafar Iqbal, Toklish Ahmed, Abdul Malek -- all of whom have represented the national team in the past.

Rupu also informed that the players will report to him on Monday evening at the BKSP and training will get underway the following day.

The former national footballer also added that they plan to play a couple of practice matches before travelling to Palestine and have already asked some countries as to whether they are interested to play any warm-up matches at home or in Dhaka. The team might also play practice matches with domestic premier league clubs as well, he informed.

"As South East countries will also be taking part in the U-23 Championship Qualifiers, we have approached them for practice matches even though we are yet to get a response," said Rupu.

Bangladesh had finished fourth in the 2015 Qualifiers in Dhaka where they suffered identical 0-4 defeats against Syria and Uzbekistan before playing out a goalless draw against India.

This time Bangladesh have been pitted against three strong opponents -- Jordan, Palestine and Tajikistan.



(From R-L) Game developer of Pechas Games Studios Munshi Syed Hasnat, brand ambassador Maria Noor and COO of Pechas Games Studios Ziad Ahmed pose alongside the mascot of Cricket Career Super League, a 3d android cricket game, during its official presentation at a hotel in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

CCSL hits Playstore

SPORTS REPORTER

With the cricketing world enthralled by the ongoing ICC Champions Trophy, Pechas Games Studios, an indie game developer in Bangladesh, has released a 3D cricket game for android smartphones called Cricket Career Super League (CCSL).

Developed by game designer Munshi Syed Hasnat, this is the third game based on cricket -- following on the success of Cricket Career Beginnings and Cricket Career World Cup -- released by the company which was founded in 2013 by Maiaz M Rahman.

However, this is only the first time that a game developed by a Bangladeshi company has been released internationally, by Zapak, a renowned Indian game developer com-

pany based in Bangalore.

All this information was disclosed by the company's officials during a press briefing at a hotel in the capital yesterday.

Hasan, the game designer, informed that this 3D hybrid cricket game has combined the management aspects of cricket with arcade gameplay to provide a unique experience to gamers all around the world.

The game's brand ambassador Maria Noor and the company's COO Ziad Ahmed spoke on the occasion as well. A nice little demo of the game was presented to the media during the programme.

The game is currently available for download on Google Play and will soon be available on Apple platforms as well.