

## Imranur to run in World Athletics today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's fastest man Imranur Rahman is all set to compete in the 100m sprint in World Athletics Championship in Budapest, Hungary today.



The England-born Bangladeshi sprinter will compete in Heat-3 alongside seven other athletes. A total of 33 sprinters will take part in four heats of the blue riband event, with top two two finishers from each heat along with the two best timers to progress to the Round-1, according to the World Athletics webpage.

Imran will compete against Alisher Sadulayev (Turkmenistan), Ty'ree Langidrik (Marshall Islands), Said Gilani (Afghanistan), Manuihei Teaha (French Polynesia), Onisio Pereira (Mozambique), Melino Tafuna (Tonga) and Melique Garcia (Honduras).

As per previous timings, the 30-year-old Bangladeshi is ahead of the rest in his heat with a personal best of 10.25 seconds which he produced in Asian Athletics Championships in Bangkok last year.



After having to watch Paris Saint-Germain open their season with a goalless draw against Lorient from the stands, French forward Kylian Mbappe was reinstated into PSG's first team last week after being frozen out of the main squad for weeks amid an ongoing contract stand-off. The PSG number 7, along with the club's new signing Ousmane Dembele, will be available to start their Ligue 1 clash with Toulouse today.

PHOTO: PSG

# Manchester United brace for tricky Spurs trip

AGENCIES

Erik ten Hag's Manchester United will be making a tricky trip to Spurs on Saturday in hopes of making it two wins from two in the Premier League -- a feat they haven't achieved in a league season since 2017-18 under José Mourinho.

Ange Postecoglou's Tottenham began their new campaign with a 2-2 draw away to London rivals Brentford last weekend, while the Red Devils scraped a controversial 1-0 win over Wolverhampton Wanderers.

In the game against Wolves, United saw 23 shots attempted at their goal -- the most that the Red Devils have faced in a Premier League match at Old Trafford in just under 18 years. André Onana made six saves in keeping a clean sheet on his competitive debut for the club but was lucky not to concede a penalty in injury time following a collision with Wolves' Sasa Kalajdzic.

Meanwhile, it will be Spurs' first home game since the departure of England captain Harry Kane to Bayern Munich, with new manager Ange Postecoglou chasing his first Premier League win after a 2-2 draw at Brentford on the opening weekend.

The good news for Spurs, however, is that Argentine defender Cristian Romero, who was subbed off after a head knock in their game against Brentford, is fit for today's game.

Romero headed Spurs' first Premier

League goal of the campaign after 11 minutes at the Community Stadium but was then taken off for suspected concussion.

"Cristian is good to go. He's ticked all the boxes and felt fine all week," Postecoglou told reporters on Friday. "Aside from that, no change from last week."

One player that failed to find the net in a Premier League game for Spurs, again, was Richarlison. The pressure is on the Brazilian to perform in front of goal following Kane's departure, and after Sunday's match at



PHOTO: MANCHESTER UNITED

Brentford, he's now played 1,096 minutes of Premier League action at Spurs and contributed just a single goal.

Richarlison's next goal would be his 50th in the Premier League, but he's only scored once in nine league appearances versus Man Utd, for Everton in April 2019.

Meanwhile, the top four last season all won their opening games this term but the

Manchester City versus Newcastle clash today ensures the run cannot continue.

The late kick-off at the Etihad will be City's fourth game in two weeks and follows Wednesday's UEFA Super Cup penalty shootout win over Sevilla in the sapping heat and humidity of Athens.

Pep Guardiola's side are also without influential Belgium midfielder Kevin de Bruyne, ruled out for up to four months after suffering a hamstring injury in the season-opening 3-0 win at Burnley.

"Thank you so much to the Premier League for letting us play on Saturday, and not on Sunday and Monday," Guardiola said sarcastically of the 72-hour turnaround on Wednesday's game. "Thank you so much."

Newcastle are meanwhile well-rested and still fizzing after their 5-1 home thrashing of Aston Villa on the opening weekend sent the Saudi-owned side top of the standings on goal difference.

Newcastle have yet to win a Premier League match at The Etihad but the arrival of Italy's Sandro Tonali has boosted an already strong midfield featuring Brazil internationals Bruno Guimaraes and Joelinton.

Elsewhere, Liverpool are overwhelming favourites to win their first home league game of the season against Bournemouth on Saturday, a side they thumped 9-0 at Anfield last August to equal the Premier League record.

## Spikers set for Asian challenge

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national volleyball team are all set to return to Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship after 30 years, taking on South Korea in Group H opener in Umair, Iran tonight.

The match will get underway at 9:45pm Bangladesh time.

Rank outsiders Bangladesh had their final preparation in Umair ahead of the match against South Korea, who are ranked fifth in Asia and 31st in the World.

The men in red and green, under the supervision of Iranian coach Ali-Pour Aroji, have been training Iran for more than one month to mark their return to the Asia's top-flight competition featuring 18 nations.

Horosit and Co played eight practice matches against clubs from Iran's Super League and Premier League as well as the Iran U-23 national team, winning five of those matches.

"Korea are undoubtedly a strong side but we are optimistic about giving a good fight against them. However, we are targeting to beat Pakistan. If all of us can put our best effort, there is a chance of beating Pakistan," Horosit told The Daily Star over phone a few days ago.

Bangladesh previously participated in this competition in 1989 and 1993, losing all eight of their matches against Japan, Pakistan, UAE, New Zealand, China, Australia, Qatar and Philippines.

## Matildas look to go out on a high

AFP, Brisbane

Australia captain Sam Kerr said Friday the Women's World Cup had been the best weeks of her career and she planned to stick around for the next one in four years' time.

The 29-year-old will lead her side out for one last game on Saturday when they face Sweden in the third-place playoff in Brisbane, with a bronze medal at stake.

The talismanic striker said Australia were already winners regardless of the result after going further than expected and taking a home nation with them, with bumper crowds and record-breaking TV audiences.

"I think for us all it has been the most amazing four weeks of our careers. Not only what has happened on the pitch, but what has happened off has been amazing," she said.

"When we first started at this World Cup, we could have never dreamed this would happen, the way the country has got behind us, the way we have been playing."

"But we have one more game where we can really end on a high. There's that extra motivation to ... really leave a legacy. Coming third place at a World Cup is something you can only dream of



as a kid."

It has been a rollercoaster ride for the Chelsea forward, who picked up a calf injury before their opening game and missed the first four matches.

But she played a full 90 minutes in their 3-1 semi-final loss to England, scoring a sensational goal, and said the experience had left her wanting more, with a fifth World Cup in her sights.

"I hope to still be here, if that's what you are asking me. I'm only 29," she said.

"I think most of us will still be here if we have the opportunity to be, we have to play at our club, play well, stay injury free."

"There might be a few more babies, who knows, four years is a long time. But I hope the core group is together."

**My departure to Paris was not something I wanted, it was not something I wanted to leave Barcelona.... also had to get used to a place that was totally different from where I had been living all my life, both in terms of the city and in a sporting sense, and, well, it was difficult, but the opposite of what is happening to me now here [in Miami].**

LIONEL MESSI, comparing his moves to PSG and Inter Miami

## Napoli 'starting from zero again'

REUTERS

Napoli ended their 33-year wait for a Serie A title last season in spectacular fashion by securing it with five games to spare, but with new management and recent history against them, retaining it could be a very tough task. They begin their title defence at promoted Frosinone on Saturday.

Looking to become the first team to win Serie A in back-to-back seasons since Juventus in 2020, Napoli will be coached by Rudi Garcia, who took over after title-winning manager Luciano Spalletti left on a season-long sabbatical.

The Frenchman is experienced but has had limited success in terms of silverware, with a Ligue 1 title and a French Cup victory the only two trophies on his CV.

His integration also cannot have been helped by the departure of long-time football director Cristiano Giuntoli, who left the club to join Juventus last month.

Garcia acknowledged the scale of the task facing Napoli during his unveiling.

"The title should give belief to the players but when the new season begins we're starting again from zero," he said.

"The players have to kind of forget about what they've accomplished before."

Ahead of the 2022-23 season, there were serious question marks over Napoli, after they lost a string of first-team regulars including Lorenzo Insigne, Kalidou Koulibaly, and Dries Mertens.

This time around, however, they have kept hold of their best players in Victor Osimhen and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia -- the Serie A's Golden Boot winner and Player of the Season respectively.

Striker Osimhen, who scored 26 league goals last season, is close to signing a new contract extension while Napoli are also reportedly working on tying down winger Kvaratskhelia to a long-term deal.

"I want Osimhen happy," Garcia said. "The club and the player have done a good job. He's a driving force, we ask him for goals. When (the contract) is official he can dedicate himself to matters on the pitch and I like that more."



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