

CITY

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS 1 & STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

New Zealand v India

Second T20

Live from 12:50pm

SONY ESPN

South Africa v England

Fourth Test, Day 3

Live from 2:00pm

SONY SIX & TEN 2

Australian Open

Live from 6:00 am & 2:30pm

TEN 2

FA CUP

Manchester City v Fulham

Live from 7:00pm

Tranmere v Manchester United

Live from 9:00pm

Shrewsbury v Liverpool

Live from 11:00pm

TEN 1

Serie A

Inter Milan v Cagliari

Live from 5:30pm

AS Roma v Lazio

Live from 11:00pm

Napoli v Juventus

Live from 1:45pm (Monday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

Bundesliga

Werder Bremen v Hoffenheim

Live from 8:30pm

Bayer Leverkusen v Dusseldorf

Live from 11:30pm



# Kyrgios rides epic storm to set up Nadal showdown

AFP, MELBOURNE

Firebrand Nick Kyrgios scraped past Karen Khachanov Saturday in five thrilling sets to set up a grudge match against top seed Rafael Nadal in the Australian Open fourth round.

The Australian showman came through a tense battle with the Russian 16th seed after 4hrs 26 mins in front of passionate home support on Melbourne Arena to win 6-2, 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (6/8), 6-7 (7/9), 7-6 (10/8).

“Mate, it was crazy, I don’t even know what to say right now, it was insane, I have no words for how I’m feeling right now,” said Kyrgios.

“This is epic, man, I don’t even know what’s going on,” he added. “He’s (Khachanov) an absolute warrior.”

It sets up a mouthwatering clash with the world number one Nadal, who romped past fellow Spaniard Pablo Carreno Busta 6-1, 6-2, 6-4.

Kyrgios, who was handed a 16-week suspended ban in September after a string of indiscretions, disparagingly labelled Nadal “super salty” last year, and mimicked his serving routine during the second round at Melbourne Park.

But Kyrgios tried to play down the feud with Nadal on Saturday, saying: “He has a winning record against me. Whatever happens between us, he’s an amazing player, he’s arguably the greatest of all time.”

Asked about 23rd seed Kyrgios after his

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NICK KYRGIOS  
AFTER HIS FIVE-SET WIN OVER  
KAREN KHACHANOV

match, Nadal was also diplomatic.

“When he plays good tennis and he shows passion for this game, he is a positive player for our tour.

“When he’s doing the other stuff, of course I don’t like.”

Kyrgios admitted he was on the verge of going “to a very dark place” in his second-round clash against Gilles Simon before refocusing.

And he mostly held it together against Khachanov, before a blow up at the umpire in set four over a time violation.

He had a match-point chance in each of the third and fourth sets but the Russian held firm

to ensure Kyrgios played the longest match of his career.

The Kyrgios serve was on fire early on, sending down four aces in the first two sets.

He made the break in game six, with Khachanov firing wide after a deft drop shot from the Australian. But Kyrgios was grimacing and at 5-2 took a medical timeout for an upper left leg niggle.

He returned to break again and empathically take the set.

The second set went with serve up to a tiebreaker, with some electrifying tennis from both men. Kyrgios won it and Khachanov slammed his racquet in frustration.

The Australian worked three break points in game five of the third set and while Khachanov managed to save two, he sent down a double fault to hand Kyrgios a crucial 3-2 advantage.

But he lost focus and was quickly broken and it went to another tiebreaker.

Kyrgios saved two break points at 3-3 in the fourth set then lost control after being given a time violation, hurling his racquet and confronting the umpire, calling him “stupid”.

His rant continued as he received attention for a nasty cut on his knuckle at the changeover after a spectacular airborne half-volley.

That set also went to a tiebreak where Khachanov prevailed, sending it to a fifth set.

There was nothing between them as they slammed balls at each other until the Australian finally won in the super tiebreaker, falling to the ground exhausted.

# Setien’s Barcelona fall at the Mestalla

AFP, Valencia

Quique Setien’s honeymoon period lasted less than a fortnight as he tasted his first Barcelona defeat on Saturday in his second La Liga game in charge after a 2-0 loss to Valencia.

A Jordi Alba own goal and Maxi Gomez’s strike at Mestalla raise early doubts about Setien’s appointment and give Real Madrid the chance to move three points clear at the top of the table when they visit Real Valladolid on Sunday.

Barcelona had most of the ball but their opponents had the best chances and Gabriel Paulista saw a third goal ruled out late on.

Setien promised a new style from former coach Ernesto Valverde but few will cheer losses. Despite dominating possession, Barcelona did little and as Valencia grew in confidence, they ceded control.

“There are things they have not understood or maybe we have not have explained ourselves well,” Setien said afterwards. “In the first half, quite frankly, we were bad.”

The question is whether Setien is trying to impose too much and perhaps whether this group are even well-suited his ideas.

“The players have to adapt to the coaching staff to understand,” said Sergio Busquets. “There were some good things but we have to improve.”

Valencia climb to fifth. This success came without their captain Dani Parejo

and, largely, without star striker Rodrigo Moreno.

The hosts hardly touched the ball for the first six minutes, their fans whistling as they urged a more aggressive approach. But the plan to sit and absorb worked, with Barca unable to create a single clear chance.

And when Valencia did intervene, they were more dangerous. With their first attack they won a penalty as Jose Gaya slipped past Gerard Pique and would surely have scored from eight yards before being brought down. Pique was booked and, Gomez stepped up, only for his driven shot to be well saved by Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

Referee Gil Manzano puts his hands together as if to apologise after failing to play advantage when Ferran Torres was clear but the frustration of Valencia’s fans turned to ecstasy shortly after half-time.

Pique’s flicked header landed at the feet of Gomez, whose driven effort took a cruel deflection off Alba and flew in.

Barcelona exerted some pressure and Lionel Messi led the way, hauled to the ground by Francis Coquelin and then denied by a brilliant Gabriel tackle. He fired past the post, headed wide and saw a curling free-kick saved.

Yet just as a Barcelona equaliser began to feel inevitable, Valencia struck again. A quick throw caught Alba out of position and Torres did well to cut inside and switch to Gomez. He took a touch and curled into the corner.



There was nothing Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi could do other than hold his head in despair as none of his 11 shots made a dent in Valencia’s armour during their La Liga match at the Mestalla yesterday.

PHOTO: TWITTER



Paris Saint-Germain superstar Neymar and his teammates were in attendance as the NBA staged its first game in the French capital on Friday and the Brazilian superstar met up with reigning MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo after the game and exchanged pleasantries.

PHOTO: TWITTER

# Eriksen set for Inter?

AFP, Milan

Danish international Christian Eriksen is poised to complete a move from Premier League club Tottenham to Serie A side Inter Milan, according to reports in Italy on Friday.

Eriksen will have a medical in Milan early next week before signing a contract until 2024 worth 20 million euros including bonuses, Sky Sports Italia and Gazzetta Dello Sport reported.

The final details have to be ironed out with the 27-year-old midfielder expected to be available for Tottenham’s FA Cup fourth round match Saturday at Southampton.

Eriksen joined the Premier League club in 2013 from Dutch side Ajax and has six months left on his contract.

Chinese-owned Inter Milan are pushing to return to the top of European football, having not won the league since Mourinho lead them to an historic treble in 2010.

Eriksen helped Tottenham reach the Champions League final last year, scoring against Luciano Spalletti’s Inter in both group stage matches, as the Italians exited the tournament.

The Dane becomes Antonio Conte’s third signing in January after defender Ashley Young from Manchester United, with midfielder Victor Moses arriving on loan from Chelsea.

# Palestine retain title in style

SPORTS REPORTER

Palestine became the first team to successfully defend the title of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup following a comprehensive 3-1 win over Burundi in the final of the sixth edition at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The top-ranked side in the tournament, albeit playing with a second-string squad, cruised to a 3-0 lead within half hour and, despite conceding their first goal of the tournament on the hour-mark, comfortably saw off the rest of the time to win their second title of this invitational tournament in their second appearance.

The balance of this Palestine side proved too much for an erratic Burundi team, who too had brought an understrength side to this competition.

Burundi had scored 10 goals

in their first three matches, with Jospin Nshimirimana bagging seven of those including two hattricks, but the spark in the attacking third was defused efficiently by the Palestinians while their defence was as vulnerable as ever.

The Palestinian forwards, though, were on target each of the three times they manoeuvred the ball through towards the Burundi box, with Khaled Salem, Sameh Maraaba and Layth Kharoub punishing their opposition for their sloppy defensive work in the first half.

PALESTINE 3 - 1 BURUNDI  
(Salem 3; Maraaba 10; Kharoub 26') (Ndikumana 60')

Salem opened the scoring in the third minute, tapping home Mohamed Darwish’s square-pass on a lob from captain Maraaba as the entire Burundi defence was

ROLL OF HONOUR		
YEAR	CHAMPIONS	RUNNERS-UP
1996	Malaysia Red	PSM Makassar
1999	Japan Football	Ghana U-23League XI
2015	Malaysia U-22	Bangladesh
2016	Nepal	Bahrain U-23
2018	Palestine	Tajikistan
2020	Palestine	Burundi
Player-of-the-final : Sameh Maraaba (Palestine)		
Player-of-the-tournament: Jospin Nshimirimana (Burundi)		
Top scorer: Jospin Nshimirimana (Burundi)		
Best Goalkeeper: Abuhammad Tawfiq (Palestine)		
Fairplay Trophy: Palestine		

caught napping.

The skipper doubled the lead seven minutes later when his speculative chip looped into the net as the Burundi defence failed to deal with a corner.

And then Kharoub got the third, slotting home a rebound on 26 minutes after Salem’s powerful shot had come off the post.

That was very much game, set and match for the defending champions, who were happy to sit back and wait for hitting on the break.

Unable to penetrate down the flank, which was the Plan A for Burundi, the East African side tried a few shots from distance, with Narcisse Masudi’s long-range effort on 21 minutes and Nshimirimana’s spectacular side-volley on 38 minutes being their best attempts of the half, but Palestine goalkeeper Abuhammad Tawfiq was agile enough to keep those attempts out.

Burundi, who were dreaming of winning their first-ever international trophy, had more possession after the break as Palestine sat deep, but their efforts yielded only one goal on the hour-mark.

Asman Ndikumana got that goal, placing the ball home from inside the box after Blanchard Ngabonziza had teed it up for him with a deflected cross following a corner.

There were chances in either end in the late stages of the game, with Burundi looking to reduce the arrears and Palestine looking to take advantage of the opposition’s desperation, but none were taken as the Middle Eastern side comfortably took home the title.

We are happy for our people. We played as a team. We knew they (Burundi) would attack through flanks which we blocked. We were determined not to concede. It was not an easy final because Burundi are strong and aggressive and they have good strikers. We changed our tactics after going 3-0 up; we tried to keep defensive organisation to keep a clean sheet.

MAKRAM DABOUB  
PALESTINE COACH

We are disappointed as we thought we would win. We were a bit casual. After going 3-0 down, we changed tactics and increased forwards in place of defenders, but they played defensively. We still thought we could come back but it proved to be difficult.

CONSTANTIN MUTIMA  
BURUNDI MANAGER



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina handed Palestine the Bangabandhu Gold Cup title after a 3-1 win over Burundi saw them retain the trophy at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED