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# Star SPORT

DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 9, 2008, E-MAIL: sports@thelystar.net

**LIPRO**  
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FROM SPAIN

## Why give away free tickets?

SPORTS REPORTER

"Come on man, take one at least" was what this reporter faced while entering the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium before the Bangladesh-Pakistan Kitply Cup opener began yesterday. It was not a friend offering a piece of candy but a blacker, and one can find at least 10 to 15 of them roaming around the main gate.

Although the ground remained half-filled, there was a lot of reasons for the blackers to get into action. Firstly, it was the return of a tri-series after five years and secondly, a popular foreign outfit was in town. Pakistan is a big hit in Bangladesh, even with a depleted squad and the much-maligned Tigers are unmissable.

So when the blackers gathered the spectators, one was compelled to ask the prices and it was surprising to find that they were willing to sell gallery tickets at the actual price of twenty taka. But the VIP

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## Defeated before defeat

BISHWAJIT ROY

Pakistan coach Jeff Lawson specially thanked the rain gods after his side secured an emphatic 70-run victory against hosts Bangladesh in the Kitply Cup opener at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The Australian also praised the ground staff in Mirpur for whom the game finished despite the mid-afternoon heavy downpour that delayed the match by two hours.

"We were lucky enough that rain didn't come again and the groundsmen did the hardest job. The ground is really fantastic. For all of their efforts, we finished the match," said Lawson with a smile on his face while speaking at the post-match briefing held at midnight.

It seemed that Lawson hardly had any doubt about the outcome of the match and the only threat for them was the seasonal rain.

But more interest was when Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons came to speak to the media earlier.

Siddons, like his Aussie counterpart, also had the same belief on the outcome and as a result he had no reason to be disappointed with his boys after yet another heavy defeat at the hands of Shoaib Malik's men after a humiliating 5-0 whitewash in Pakistan last April.

His explanation in the post-match briefing made it clear that they accepted the defeat once Pakistan put up 233 runs in 39.3

overs.

"It was impossible chasing down 233 runs in 40 overs. It was a tough task. Actually our bowlers let the team down and they should take a long, hard look at themselves," said the shaven-headed coach when asked whether his batsmen went to the middle with the target of a victory.

"I think it was possible to chase the score but we failed to have partnerships. Actually I had a plan to make a partnership with Tamim and then go for the kill but I have to change my mind after losing few quick wickets in the middle. Afridi bowled very well to dash our hopes," said Ashraful, most of whose innings brought something special for Bangladesh.

But he also made one thing clear that now their target is not to win the match.

"We don't want to take the pressure by saying that we want to win the match against India," said Bangladesh skipper when he was asked whether they have any target to win the game against India.

### SCOREBOARD

Final scorecard of the tri-nation one-day series match between Bangladesh and Pakistan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

#### PAKISTAN

Butt c Rafigul b Kapali	70
Akmal c Rahim b Mahmud	25
Younis Khan run out	0
Yousuf c Razzaq b Kapali	59
Afridi c Nafees b Kapali	20
Malik b Razzaq	9

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## Modric sinks Austria

AFP, Vienna



**Paolo Maldini**  
(AC Milan's veteran captain)  
"I like playing football and I believe I can still do it well."



**ESPN**  
Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live at 8.30pm  
Euro 2008  
Romania v France  
Live from 10.00pm  
Netherlands v Italy  
Live from 12.45am (Tuesday)

it'spoton.

Croatia opened their Euro 2008 account with a predictable but unconvincing 1-0 victory over co-hosts Austria at the Ernst-Happel Stadium here in

Vienna on Sunday.

There were no surprises in a match between one of the outsiders for a run to the title and a team ranked 92nd in the FIFA world rankings -- below even the likes of Guatemala, Libya and Trinidad and Tobago.

It took only four minutes for Austria to be exposed as the minnows that they are in this competition as Rene Aufhauser clumsily bundled over Ivica Olic in the box.

Middlesbrough defender Emanuel Pogatetz was booked for protesting over-zealously but there was little doubt that referee Pieter Vink from the Netherlands had got

Josip Simunic cut out a centre from Martin Marnik.

Pletikosa was then called into action again to punch clear Ivancic's corner before Standfest headed high and wide with a farpost header from a deep cross.

Modric got behind the Croatia defence on the hour mark after a mistake from Pogatetz but Martin Stranzl snuffed out the danger and cleared the Spur's man's cross before Olic could get to it.

Just as had happened in the first half, Austria came more into things later on and the introduction of the lively Umit Korkmaz, as well as veteran Croatian born forward Ivica Vastic, added a spark to the hosts.

Even spurred on by a crowd of more than 50,000 people, Austria caused a few scares for the Croats who actually came closest to scoring when substitute Igor Budan's flick from a Corluka cross was deflected just past the near post.

Moments later another substitute Roman Kienast almost levelled but his flicked header drifted wide.

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Croatia should have doubled their lead on 35 minutes when a deep cross from Manchester City's Vedran Corluka fell to Mladen Petric at the back post, but he lashed a left foot volley miles off target when composure, and maybe even a touch to bring the ball under control, was needed.

Austria had a brief period of pressure before the break when Croatia goalkeeper Stipe Pletikosa palmed away a dangerous cross from Joachim Standfest and then

deflected just past the near post.

Moments later another substitute Roman Kienast almost levelled but his flicked header drifted wide.

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After Croatia's 1-0 win over Austria, the two teams will meet again on Tuesday in a match that could decide who goes through to the knockout stage.

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Modric's fate not yet decided



NO WAY OUT: Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful is being struck by a bouncer from Pakistan paceman Sohail Tanveer during the opening match of the tri-nation one-day series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

## Bangladesh bow out

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh crashed out of the fifth SAFF Championship from the group stage when the 2005 runners-up lost 1-0 to Sri Lanka in the final Group B match in Colombo.

Sri Lanka finished group champions with five points to set a clash against fellow hosts Maldives in the June 11 semifinal at home while surprise pack Bhutan, who stunned Afghanistan to advance to the knockout stage, will travel to Maldives to play defending champions India in the other semifinal on the same day.

"The public prosecutor has completed his proceedings in today's hearing," Mansoor Suhail, the PCB media director, told Cricinfo. "He has provided his report to the Attorney General and he will then take further action either later today [Sunday] or tomorrow."

Nadeem Akram, the Pakistan Cricket Board official overseeing the case, was hoping a decision

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Asif's fate not yet decided

CRICINFO, undated

The case involving Mohammad Asif, the Pakistani fast bowler detained in Dubai for possession of an illegal substance, has been referred to the Attorney General.

Asif appeared before the court on Sunday, which was adjourned soon after the recommendations of the public prosecutor were heard.

The investigation into the matter has been completed, and the Attorney General was expected to take up the case either later yesterday or today.

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Monem Munna Bridge goes official today

SPORTS REPORTER

The bridge at Dhanmondi Road No. 8 (old) will be officially called the Monem Munna Bridge from today.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Sadeq Hossain Khoka will unveil the plaque of the Monem Munna Bridge at 12.30pm.

The decision was taken by the DCC to name the bridge on occasion of the 42nd birth anniversary of Munna, one of the best footballers of the country, who died three years ago.

Arguably the best defender in the country, Munna was just 39 when he passed away at the Bangladesh Medical College Hospital of critical kidney ailments.

The 'last superstar' of domestic football, Munna led the national team to win their first ever trophy in a foreign football tournament in 1995 in Myanmar.

The central defender played 12 years for Abahani and during that period, also became a household name in Kolkata where he donned the East Bengal shirt from 1991-93.

Munna retired in 1997 and the one-time highest paid footballer in the country became Abahani manager before kidney related complications cut his life short.

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SPORT GOES ALL COLOUR

French Open

AFP, Paris

Rafael Nadal defeated Roger Federer in the French Open final for the third year running on Sunday and joined Swedish legend Bjorn Borg as the only man to win four straight titles at Roland Garros.

The Spaniard scored a stunning 6-1, 6-3, 6-0 triumph over the world No.1, taking the last nine games of the match in stark contrast to the four-set battles he edged to see off Federer in the two previous finals.

Federer was powerless to stop the barrage of heavy top spin fired at him as he slumped to a demoralising hiding. If he was a rapier, Nadal was a sledgehammer and in that matchup there was only ever going to be one winner.

Nadal has now won all 28 matches he has played at Roland Garros and having just turned 22, he is well on his way to replacing Borg as the greatest claycourt player of all time. He did not drop a set all fortnight.

"Sorry for Roger, but to win here is incredible and especially to win this tournament four times," he said after receiving the trophy from the hands of six-times winner Borg.

For 26-year-old Federer it was another dark day in the City of Light.

He came into Paris looking to join the history-makers as just the sixth man to have won all four Grand Slam titles. He leaves with the sorry record of being the only player in Grand Slam history to lose to the same player in three consecutive finals.

"I would like to have won more than four games but Rafa has played an incredible tournament and he fully deserves to win," he said.

"But I'll be back to try again next year and I am looking forward to the rest of this year."

Perfect playing conditions

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Four-tastic Nadal

French Open

AFP, Paris

greeted the start of the match but clear crowd favourite Federer got off to the worst of possible openings when he dropped his serve and then squandered two break points in the following game.

He saved two break points to open his account in the third game, but as the match went on, Federer's serve improved and he took the set 6-1.

Playing hopelessly and without

regularity, Federer got the crowd

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shirt he has favoured throughout

the fortnight, opened the second set

with a love service game and then

promptly broke Federer for the third

time in a row as the world no.1's

famed forehand badly misfired.

There was then a brief moment

of hope for Federer's many fans as

he nailed his first service break

of the match.

Attacking the net with more

regularity, Federer got the crowd

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THIS IS MINE: Rafael Nadal holds the trophy after his win over Swiss world number one Roger Federer in the French Open final at Roland Garros in Paris yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Croatia star Luka Modric scores the only goal from a penalty during their Euro 2008 match against co-host Austria at the Ernst-Happel Stadium in Vienna on Sunday.

**SCORE AGAINST DANDRUFF WITH CONFIDENCE**

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**SPORT GOES ALL COLOUR**

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PHOTO: AFP  
THIS IS MINE: Rafael Nadal holds the trophy after his win over Swiss world number one Roger Federer in the French Open final at Roland Garros in Paris yesterday.