



KITPLY CUP COMES ALIVE: With the final of the tri-nation Kitply Cup already underway inside the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday afternoon, hundreds are seen waiting outside. The tournament involving India, Pakistan and Bangladesh saw a full house only yesterday.

Federer in final

World number one Roger Federer picked up his 58th consecutive win on grass to breeze into Sunday's final of the Halle ATP tournament by seeing off Germany's Nicolas Kiefer 6-1, 6-4 in Saturday's semifinal.

Federer has yet to drop a single set here at Halle, his traditional grass-court warm-up for Wimbledon later this month, where he will bid to win a sixth consecutive title.

In Saturday's one-sided semifinal, Federer took the first set 6-1 in just 22 minutes until Kiefer rallied briefly in the second at 3-2 up, but squandered four break points.

Federer levelled the set at 3-3, before breaking Kiefer for a 5-4 lead and serving for the match Federer used his first match point to claim victory in just 65 minutes.

"I served well today and I could go through Nicolas' second serve - that helped me a lot, especially in the first set," said the Swiss.

He is looking to win his fifth Halle final on Sunday where he will face Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber who put out American second seed James Blake 6-3, 7-5 in Saturday's other semifinal.

A hat-trick for Chanderpaul

Shivnarine Chanderpaul carried his bat for the third consecutive innings but once again lacked support from his teammates as West Indies were dismissed for 216 on the second day of the third Test on Friday.

Although Chanderpaul compiled 79 not out Australia, who are 1-0 up in the three-match series, still took a first innings lead of 35 runs with left-arm pace bowler Mitchell Johnson capturing four for 41.

Left-hander Chanderpaul has scored two centuries against the Australians and only once in five innings has he failed to make at least a half-century. He has scored 392 runs so far in the series for an average of 196.

Akhtar ban

FROM PAGE 17 but dropped the suit after the player made a public apology.

Akhtar, who has played 46 Tests and 138 one-day internationals since 1997, is yet to play for Pakistan this year.

The temperamental fast bowler was also involved in a doping scandal in 2006. He and fellow pacerman Asif tested positive for mandrolone and were banned for two and one year respectively in October 2006. The bans were lifted on appeals.



Did U Know?

Canoeing first became an official Olympic event at the Berlin Games in 1936.

Bell tolls in one off T20

Cricket

AFP, Manchester

Ian Bell responded to the challenge of opening with an unbeaten 60 as England thrashed New Zealand by nine wickets in the lone Twenty20 international at Old Trafford here Friday.

Bell, normally a middle-order batsman and often accused of not making runs when they are needed, produced a chanceless innings.

Together with Kevin Pietersen, dropped on nought by New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori, he saw England to their modest target of 124 with 15 balls to spare.

Pietersen finished on 42 not out, at just over a run-a-ball, and shared an unbroken stand of 79 with Bell in 12 overs as New Zealand lost their seventh straight Twenty20 international.

By contrast, this was England's third consecutive Twenty20 victory against the Black Caps after two wins in New Zealand in February.

New Zealand's total of 123 for nine was their lowest in 15 Twenty20 matches after they'd lost the toss on a lively Old Trafford pitch.

Fast bowler Stuart Broad led England's attack with two wickets

for 17 runs and off-spinner Graeme Swann two for 21.

"It was an excellent performance. The guys seem to hit their lengths from ball one," said England captain Paul Collingwood.

"Credit to Jimmy (Anderson) and Broady for the way they set the tone. There were no negatives, the way Belly and KP finished it off, it was all very professional."

This week it was announced that England players would have the chance to earn a million dollars each if they beat a Caribbean 'Super Stars' side put together by Texan billionaire Allen Stanford in a Twenty20 match in Antigua on November 1.

However, Collingwood said the way in which England performed at Old Trafford was a testament to their collective professionalism.

"It is a massive game, the Stanford match. But it's not been a distraction, if anything it's been a positive for us."

A disappointed Vettori added: "When we reflect on the seven losses, we've had a couple of close ones and a couple of hideings. But today (Friday) just wasn't good enough."

England had struggled for a reliable opening batsman in limited overs cricket since the international retirement of Marcus Trescothick.

But Luke Wright and Bell, England's 10th different first-wicket pair in 14 limited overs matches, got the run-chase off to a rapid start with a stand of 48 which left the hosts needing under a run-a-ball for victory.

Bell, who struggled for runs in the Test series, had warmed up for this match by making 42 as an opener for Warwickshire in a washed-out Twenty20 clash against Glamorgan.

"It's been a frustrating month," said Bell. "It was nice to get runs for Warwickshire in the Twenty20, just free up, get some runs and enjoy it."

Pietersen had a lucky break when, on nought, he saw Vettori 'drop a high, one-handed,' caught and bowled chance in the left-arm spinner's first over.

World Cup semifinalists New Zealand play the first of five one-day internationals against England at the Riverside on Sunday with the final match of the series at Lord's on June 28.

"It's a huge injury, he's one of the best all-rounders in the world," Vettori said of Oram after New Zealand suffered their seventh successive Twenty20 defeat.

Oram, 29, scored a century in the drawn first Test at Lord's and featured in all three matches of a series England won 2-0.

Man-of-the-match: Ian Bell. Toss: England. Umpires: Ian Gould and Peter Hartley.

ORAM BLOW FOR NZ ODIs against England from today

AGENCIES, Manchester

New Zealand have been struck a major injury blow after Jacob Oram was ruled out for at least ten days with a hamstring strain. He pulled out of the Twenty20 at Old Trafford on Friday shortly before the toss after hurting himself in the warm-up.

Oram could now miss the rest of the tour after Daniel Vettori, the tourists' captain, said he risked being sidelined for "seven to ten days".

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Villa strikes

FROM PAGE 17 with a point, taking off Ibrahimovic to save his troublesome knee, and sitting deep as the second period began.

Their reluctance to come forward frustrated Spain, who had used the counter-attack to such lethal effect against Russia.

Cesc Fabregas came off the bench to help create some openings but Spain found Isaksson in solid form when they did get within shooting range.

The Manchester City keeper spilled a low Silva shot but recovered to keep out Villa's follow-up before Torres' shot was blocked by Daniel Andersson.

Isaksson made another smart stop to keep out Marcos Senna's stinging effort on the run soon after and it looked as though Sweden had done enough for a draw.

But Villa had other ideas, latching on to Joan Capdevila's pass in the 92nd minute and expertly sliding the ball into the corner of the net.

Big guns inch closer China crash out

AFP, Singapore



North Korea, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia powered into the final phase of Asian World Cup qualifying on Saturday, but China crashed out of contention after losing 2-1 to Iraq.

Japan inched closer to joining the big guns by beating Thailand 3-0, with their defenders doing the damage.

They now have 11 points, and a draw or win for Bahrain against Oman in the group's other game later Saturday will see the three-time Asian champions safely into the final round of qualifying.

Hong Yong-jo scored twice as North Korea beat Jordan 2-0 in Pyongyang to seal not just their place among the final 10 teams still standing on the road to South Africa in 2010 but also South Korea's.

Trailing the two Koreas by four points at the start of the game, Jordan needed a win to keep alive their hopes, but a goal in each half from Serbian-based striker Hong sealed their fate.

South Korea play Turkmenistan later Saturday in Ashgabat but the result is now academic because of the 2002 World Cup semifinalists assured of a place in the draw for the next round.

That draw takes place later this month to decide the two groups of five who will vie for the four automatic berths Asia has been allocated

in the finals. The fifth-placed side played off against a team from Oceania.

Saudi Arabia, in their first match under new coach Nasser Al Johar, who replaced the sacked Hello dos Anjos earlier this week, took the points they needed against Singapore to ensure they remain on track.

It was one-way traffic, with goals from Abdoh Atef in the first half and substitute Ahmed Al Fraidi in the second, leaving them on 12 points in Group 4 alongside Uzbekistan, who earned their place in the deciding round last week.

Singapore trail on three points, with their dreams of appearing at a first ever World Cup finals shattered. Lebanon, who have lost all their games so far, play the Uzbeks later Saturday in Tashkent.

Japan virtually ensured their progress from Group 2 with a resounding 3-0 defeat of Thailand in Bangkok, boosted by influential midfielder Shunsuke Nakamura starting after recovering from an injury.

Playing in front of masses of drum-beating Japanese supporters, the visitors struck first in the 22nd minute when Marcus Tanaka nodded home a corner kick from Yasuhiro Endo.

Japan doubled their lead in the 38th minute when captain Yuji Nakazawa headed in at the far post and Kengo Nakamura wrapped it up two minutes from time.

But it was curtains for under-achieving China, who needed to beat Iraq and then overcome Australia a week later in Sydney to have any hope of advancing.

Instead, they will finish bottom of Group 1 with coach Vladimir Petrovic's job hanging by a thread.

Iraq's 2-1 win put them alongside Australia and Qatar at the top of their table on seven points, setting up an intriguing final round of games on June 22 when Iraq play Qatar and Australia are at home to China.

Pakistan

FROM PAGE 17

Y Pathan	2	0	11	0
Yuvraj	4	0	23	0
Raina	1	0	11	0

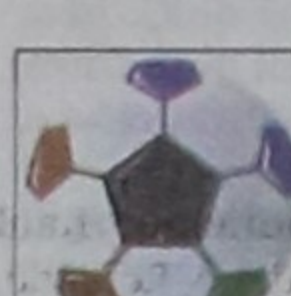
INDIA				
Gambhir c sub (Jamshed) b Gul	40			
Schwab c Malik b Tanvir	2			
R Sharma c sub (Jamshed) b Gul	24			
Y Pathan c Younis b Iftikhar	25			
Yuvraj c Akmal b Afridi	56			
Raina c Afridi b Fawad	24			
Dhoni c sub (Jamshed) b Afridi	64			
I Pathan c Malik b Iftikhar	28			
Kumar lbw b Gul	5			
Chawla b Gul	2			
I Sharma not out	0			
Extras: (lb-7, nb-2, w-11)	20			
Total: (All out in 48.2 overs)	290			
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-67, 3-79, 4-106, 5-179, 6-187, 7-247, 8-262, 9-284.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Gul	9	0	57	4
Tanvir	10	1	60	1
Iftikhar	10	0	58	2
Afridi	9.2	0	56	2
Malik	4	0	28	0
Fawad	6	0	24	1

Result: Pakistan won by 25 runs. Man-of-the-match: Younis Khan. Man-of-the-series: Salman Butt. Toss: Pakistan

Maldives new SAFF kings

INTERNET, undated



Maldives crowned the champions of SAFF Championship for the first time after a thrilling 1-0 win over India in the final at the Sugathadasa Stadium in Colombo last night.

Mukhtar Naseer was the hero of the match scoring the historical goal in the 87th minute from a long-range shot.

First half was equally balanced where both Maldives and India had their opportunities to get opener but neither team found the target.

Ali Ashfaag was unstoppable in the half and suffered a serious injury when Indian defender Anwar brought him down inside India half. Anwar was booked for the foul and Indian defence cleared

Maldives free kick.

Maldivian defenders played well holding the speedy strikers of India, but the nervous men in red made poor passes but there was always another to recover it.

Maldives' best opportunity in the first half fell into Ahmed Thoriq's feet when the ace striker, who missed the semifinal through injury, headed the ball but was only on target to the crossbar.

It was totally a different Maldivian side in the second half, where they were on full attack and kept the Indian side under constant pressure.

Maldives' keeper Imran had few moments to show his capabilities but on the other side Indian 'keeper had no time to breathe as Ashfaag, Ismail Mohamed, Mukhtar Naseer, Ahmed Thoriq and Ibrahim Fazeel's deadly attacks were too much for them.

Maldives kept knocking on Indian door and an hour mark

Ashfaag's powerful shot went across the face of the goal.

Few minutes later another powerful shot from skipper Assad went across the goal.

But just three minutes before full time, Mukhtar Naseer fired a thunderbolt outside Indian penalty area and Indian keeper had no time to save the ball which glued on the net. A nation was on their feet and the nearly five thousands Maldivian supporters in Sugathadasa stadium rocked the atmosphere.

Even in the dying minutes of the second half Maldives had chances to increase the lead, but who cares? A win is a win and Assad and Co showed a performance that deserves to bring an end to a dream that lasted 17 long years.

Ali Ashfaag was named as the man of the tournament and Ibrahim Fazeel, who scored three goals, named top scorer.



Maldives players celebrate their first-ever SAFF Championship victory after their 1-0 win against India in the final in Colombo yesterday.

Nadal faces Djokovic in final

Tennis

AFP, London

Rafael Nadal ended Andy Roddick's reign at Queen's as the Spaniard reached his first final at the pre-Wimbledon tournament on Saturday.

Nadal, the top seed, will meet Novak Djokovic, who thrashed David Nalbandian 6-1, 6-0, in Sunday's final following his 7-5, 6-4 win over reigning champion Roddick.

Just a week after winning his fourth French Open with a breathtaking demolition of Roger Federer, Nadal has made a seamless transition to the lush grass of west London.

"It means a lot to play so well

against the defending champion who has won so many games here," Nadal said. "I felt he was the favourite because he is an amazing player on grass because of his serve. I'm really happy."

Roddick left Queen's as the champion in four of the last five years, losing only one of his previous 26 matches, but even a grass-court powerhouse like the American third seed was unable to subdue Nadal.

"Credit to him, he played well, there's no question," Roddick said. "I was pretty happy with the way I hit the ball but he's just so match-sharp right now."

"There's no question who was sharper going in. He's won a Grand Slam title so I think I was fighting an uphill battle. He's almost in cruise

control from playing so many matches."

Despite the extra advantage of playing just one set in the last two rounds after Mardy Fish and then Andy Murray's withdrawals, Roddick never looked likely to repeat his win over Nadal in Dubai earlier this year.

Nadal has elevated his game to another level and looks in the kind of form to ruffle Federer at Wimbledon.

Even Roddick's fierce serves of over 140 mph couldn't subdue Nadal and he quickly earned three break points. Roddick managed to claw them back to stay on level terms but Nadal's superior groundstrokes always look likely to make the difference.

Johnson gives Aus lead

FROM PAGE 17 gates for the Aussies, after the West Indies all-rounder and Chanderpaul had added 60 for the fifth wicket.

Johnson had further success and prolonged Denesh Ramdin's dry spell with the bat, when he had the West Indies wicketkeeper caught at second slip for one.

Australia made sure there was no come back from the rest of the West Indies' batting -- Jerome Taylor, Sulleman Benn, Daren Powell, and Fidel Edwards -- despite a couple of dropped catches by Katich at first slip off Johnson.

Australia had earlier been dismissed about an hour and 40 minutes before lunch, after they continued from their overnight total of 226 for seven in their first innings.

Edwards made the breakthrough, having Test newcomer Beau Casson lbw for 10.

Johnson was caught at gully for a duck fending away a lifting delivery from Taylor, who was the pick of the West Indies bowlers with three for 46 from 12 overs.

The Aussie innings came to a close when Edwards bowled Stuart Clark for one to end with three for 53 from 17 overs.

Australia then captured three wickets before lunch to put their noses in front and leave West Indies on 89 for three at the interval.

Lee removed West Indies captain Chris Gayle and fellow left-handed opener Sewnarine Chattergoon in an energetic opening spell, and Clark added another key scalp of West Indies vice captain Ramnaresh Sarwan.

Lee struck an early blow, when he had Chattergoon caught behind for six nibbling at a delivery that moved slightly away, and then caused West Indies further grief, when Gayle drove majestically at a loose delivery and was caught at mid-off for 14 to a spectacular diving catch from Casson.

Australia gained the edge, when Sarwan, a century-maker in the second innings of the drawn second Test in Antigua, sliced a drive and was also brilliantly caught by a flying Mike Hussey at gully for 20.

After lunch, Australia had limited success, and encountered Chanderpaul, their usual stumbling block, as West Indies tried to recover from the early damage.

Australia managed to remove Marshall before tea, after their bowlers extracted plenty bounce from the hard, true pitch, but failed

to gain very little sideways movement and pace.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at lunch on the third day of the third and final Test between West Indies and Australia at Kensington Oval on Saturday:

AUSTRALIA: First Innings	31
Jayes c Ramdin b Taylor	36
Katich c Gayle b Edwards	18
Ponting lbw b Taylor	12
Hussey c Powell b Bravo	10
Clarke c Ramdin b Bravo	52
Symonds c Chattergoon b Bravo	52
Haddin lbw b Benn	32
Casson lbw b Edwards	10
Lee not out	23
Johnson c Benn b Taylor	1
Clark b Edwards	0
Extras: (lb-7, w-21, n-b8)	36
Total: (All out in 68 overs)	251
Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-75, 3-96, 4-96, 5-111, 6-198, 7-213, 8-244, 9-245.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Powell	11	5	43	0
Edwards	17	4	55	3
Taylor	12	2	46	3
Gayle	7	2	6	0
Bravo	15	5	61	3
Benn	6	0	33	1

WEST INDIES: First Innings	14
Gayle c Casson b Lee	16
Chattergoon c Haddin b Lee	6

Sarwan c Hussey b Clark	20
Marshall c Casson b Symonds	39
Chanderpaul not out	79
Bravo c Haddin b Johnson	29
Ramdin c Clarke b Johnson	1
Taylor c Katich b Clarke	0
Benn c Haddin b Johnson	3
Powell c Haddin b Lee	9
Edwards c Ponting b Johnson	15
Extras: (lb-7, nb-8)	1
Total: (All out in 58.5 overs)	216
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-26, 3-64, 4-108, 5-168, 6-188, 7-189, 8-195, 9-204.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Lee	15	2	64	3
Clark	15	4	41	1
Johnson	11.5	3	41	1
Symonds	8	4	17	1
Casson	7	1	43	0
Clarke	2	0	3	1

AUSTRALIA: Second Innings (over night 35 for no loss)

Jayes not out	78
Katich not out	74
Extras: (b-2, lb-1, w-1, nb-2, pen-5)	11
Total: (For no loss in 53 overs)	163

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Powell	10	3	27	0
Edwards	8	2	23	0