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Nadal finally floors Federer on grass in an epic final

AFP, London

Rafael Nadal dethroned five-time champion Roger Federer as king of Wimbledon on Sunday with an epic 6-4, 6-4, 6-7, 6-7, 9-7 win in one of the greatest Grand Slam finals of all time.

The Spaniard, who had squandered two match points in a nerve-shredding fourth set tie-breaker, added a first All England Club title to his four French Opens, shattering Federer's dreams of an historic sixth successive Wimbledon trophy.

"It's impossible to explain what I felt when I won. I'm just very happy to win this title. I never thought I could win but to do so is a dream," said Nadal who had lost the last two finals to Federer.

"I had match points but Roger is

very tough. I want to congratulate Roger because he is great for tennis, win or lose.

"He's still the number one, he's still the best. He is a five-time champion and I have just the one."

Federer admitted he had been beaten by the better man on the day.

"I tried everything," he said. "Rafa is a deserving champion -- he just played fantastic."

"It is a pity I did not win but I will be back next year."

Victory made the 22-year-old Nadal only the third man to win the French Open and Wimbledon in the same season, and the first since Bjorn Borg in 1980, while giving Spain its first men's champion here since Manolo Santana in 1966.

The win also ended Federer's six-year, 65-match winning streak on grass.

At four hours and 48 minutes, it was the longest final in Wimbledon history beating the 4:16 it took

Jimmy Connors to beat John McEnroe in 1982 and ended in murky Centre Court darkness at 21:16 local time (2016 GMT).

Nadal shrugged off a rain-enforced 35-minute delay to the start to break first to lead 2-1 with Federer desperately chasing the Spaniard's power-packed forehands.

The 22-year-old then fought off a break point in the next game to back up his advantage which stretched to 4-2 as the Spaniard edged the world number one in some brutal exchanges in tricky, gusty conditions on Centre Court.

Nadal unleashed a 96mph forehand to claim the opening set, the first set Federer had dropped in the 2008 tournament.

The 26-year-old Swiss star shook off his inhibitions to sneak to a 3-0 lead in the second set before Nadal battled back from 1-4 down to open up a two-set lead when Federer netted a simple-looking backhand.

Nadal saved a break point in the

fourth game of the third set and four more in the sixth as the London skies and Federer's mood darkened.

The top seed saved three break points to lead 4-3 and was 5-4 ahead when heavy rain sent the players off court for 80 minutes.

On the resumption, a reborn Federer grabbed the third set with an ace in a tense tiebreak before serve dominated the fourth set leading to another tiebreak.

Nadal went to 5/2 in the breaker but the champion stormed back to lead 6/5 and claim a set point which Nadal saved.

Incredibly, Federer then saved two match points and grabbed another set point at 9/8 before levelling the final when Nadal, stunned by his falling nerve, went long with a forehand.

At 2-2 in the final set, more rain caused a 30-minute suspension.

On their return, Nadal saved a break point in the eighth game

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STRETCHING TO THE LIMIT: Rafael Nadal of Spain makes a backhand return against world number one Roger Federer of Switzerland during the marathon Wimbledon men's singles final at the All England Tennis Club in London yesterday.

Rafael furious over paparazzi 'attack'

AFP, London

Wimbledon finalist Rafael Nadal launched a furious attack on sections of the media on Sunday after claiming he had been ambushed by the paparazzi when he arrived at a London restaurant.

The Spanish world number two, who was due to face Roger Federer in the All England Club final, claimed he was stunned to see eight paparazzi waiting for him and his family who had jetted in from Spain for the final.

"I didn't tell anyone I was going out and when I arrived they sort of attacked me. I don't know if this is the right word, but believe me it

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Aussies post massive total

AFP, Basseterre

Australia's batsmen mauled West Indies' bowling to set the home team 342 for victory in the fifth and final one-day international on Sunday.

Australia, choosing to bat on a hard, easy-paced Warner Park pitch, amassed 341 for eight from their allocation of 50 overs -- a record total against West Indies in a ODI -- as four of their batsmen passed 50.

Andrew Symonds top-scored with 66 from 80 balls, Luke Ronchi made a rapid-fire 64 from 28 balls, David Hussey led a flourish with 52 from 21 balls, and Mike Hussey gathered 51 from 52 balls.

Ramnaresh Sarwan took three

wickets for 57 runs from nine overs, and Fidel Edwards captured three for 86 from nine overs to be the most successful bowlers for West Indies.

The runs Edwards conceded were the most by a West Indies bowler in an ODI, three more than the 83 Corey Collymore gave away from his 10 overs against South Africa four years ago at Johannesburg.

Symonds, Ronchi, and the two Husseys built on the platform provided by openers Shaun Marsh and Shane Watson.

They put on 70 before Watson was caught at third man for 29 off Dwayne Bravo in the 13th over, and Marsh was caught behind off Edwards for 49 in the 20th over to leave Australia 129 for two.

Ronchi, promoted to No.3, showed his enterprise, when he

equalled the record for the second fastest 50 in an ODI by an Australian.

He drove his 22nd delivery from Edwards' "inside-out" through extra cover for his fourth four to reach the milestone in the 20th over.

But he was caught behind, when he was caught behind off the first ball from left-arm spin bowler Nikita Miller in the 22nd over before Sarwan also had stand-in Australia captain Michael Clarke caught behind for five in the next over to leave the visitors on 152 for four.

Symonds entered and batted with typical aplomb alongside Mike Hussey and they put Australia firmly on course for their massive total, when they added 113 for the fifth wicket. Symonds top-edged a pull to mid-wicket for a single to

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INDIA-SRI LANKA SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Asia Cup final between Sri Lanka and India at the National Stadium in Karachi on Sunday:

SRI LANKA

Jayasuriya c Sharma b Sehwa	125
Sangakkara run out	4
Jayawardene c Rohit b Sharma	11
Kapugedera c Raina b Sharma	5
Silva b Sharma	0
Dilshan c Dhoni b Pathan	56
Vaas b RP Singh	19
Kulasekera not out	29
Thushara lbw b RP Singh	5
Mendis b RP Singh	8
Muralidaran c Dhoni b Pathan	2
Extras: (lb-8, w-1)	9
Total: (All out in 49.5 overs)	273
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-34, 3-66, 4-66, 5-197, 6-213, 7-236, 8-256, 9-264.	

Bowler

RP Singh	9	1	67	3
Sharma	10	1	52	3
I Pathan	9.5	0	67	2
Ojha	10	1	38	0
Sehwa	8	0	30	1
Rohit	3	0	11	0

INDIA

Gambhir c Dilshan b Vaas	6
Sehwag st Sangakkara b Mendis	60
Raina b Mendis	16
Yuvraj b Mendis	0
Dhoni c Sangakkara b Vaas	49
R Sharma lbw b Mendis	3
Uthappa lbw b Muralidaran	20
Pathan c Jayawardene b Mendis	2
RP Singh b Mendis	0
Ojha not out	6
I Sharma b Kulasekera	8
Extras: (b-2, w-1)	3
Total: (All out in 39.3 overs)	173
Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-76, 3-76, 4-93, 5-97, 6-135, 7-154, 8-154, 9-160.	

Bowler

Vaas	9	0	55	2
Kulasekera	6.3	0	26	1
Thushara	8	0	51	0
Mendis	8	1	13	6
Muralidaran	8	0	26	1

Result: Sri Lanka won by 100 runs.
Man-of-the-match: Ajanta Mendis.
Man-of-the-series: Ajanta Mendis.
Toss: India
Umpires: Simon Taufel (AUS), Tony Hill (NZL)
TV umpire: Zameer Haider (PAK)
Match referee: Alan Hurst (AUS)

'Some good, some bad'

SPORTS REPORTER

that the Asia Cup performance in Pakistan was a mixed bag.

"There was a sign of improvement in our batting in the first three matches but we played really bad cricket in the last game. You cannot say it was a frustrating trip because there was a mixture of good and bad performances," said Ashraf upon Bangladesh's arrival at the Zia International Airport yesterday.

"Pakistan bowled well but still one cannot expect a score of 115 in such a good batting wicket," admitted Ashraf while talking about their horrible batting performance against the hosts to suffer a ten-wicket defeat.

Coach Jamie Siddons, who requested through the media manager not to question him on the much talked-about legal battle with Cricket Australia (CA), found signs of improvement in the tournament.

"Apart from that last game (Pakistan), we showed signs of improvement. We scored 283 against India and we created a chance of winning that game. This is a thing that we learn when we play against bigger sides," said Siddons.

"Last month we made our two best scores against UAE and India. Ashraf makes a hundred and the emergence of Rokibul (Hasan) -- something positive is out there. That's where we are improving and you cannot deny that," he added.

The 43-year-old Australian also emphasised on consistent performance rather than winning one or two games in a year.

"We have some international standard cricketers in our team. We found one like Rokibul. If we win one or two matches in a year it will not make the public happy. Let us hope we get consistent performance from individuals," he said.

The 24-year-old Bangladesh skipper Ashraf also praised the

consistent performance of Rokibul and the bright comeback of Alok Kapali, who hit his maiden hundred against India after being recalled in the side after two years.

"The consistent batting of Rokibul in the first four matches was encouraging for us while Kapali made a good comeback to the international cricket by scoring a fine century which is really good for our cricket. I think Tamim (Iqbal) was also good," said Ashraf while reflecting on his team's bright sides.

And the obvious question was that how he evaluated his own performance in the tournament

and the Tigers skipper said nothing new in response of this question.

"I should have played much better cricket but I failed to do so. I am trying hard to improve my performance and hope we would get the result soon," said Ashraf, who started the tournament with a well-composed hundred against UAE but failed to capitalise on his second one-day ton in the remaining games.

He said that there was no alternative for them than making the hard work to improve in this stage.

"Our next assignment is in Australia (in August) and we will

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Sri Lankan players celebrate with their boy wonder Ajanta Mendis (C) who tore the India batting apart with mesmerising spell of spin bowling in the Asia Cup final that the Lankans won by 100 runs at the Karachi National Stadium yesterday.

TALK TURKEY

ACC awards Akram Sachin best Asian batsman

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national skipper Akram Khan received the Asian Cricket Legend Award-Bangladesh on the inaugural Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Awards night held at Mahata Palace in Karachi on Saturday evening.

Regarded as one of the best and most influential batsmen in the country, Akram played eight Test matches and struck five half-centuries in 44 one-day internationals before retiring from international cricket in May 2003.

Akram's greatest legacy in Bangladesh cricket remains his match-winning 68 against Holland in an ICC Trophy match in 1997 when all seemed lost. Chasing 141 from 33 overs, Bangladesh lost their top-order for just 13 runs when

Akram, the then skipper, played diligently in the successful chase.

That win took Bangladesh into the semifinals of the competition and the eventual ICC Trophy triumph ensured that they obtained the ODI and Test status.

Akram began his career in the early 1980s playing for Bangladesh Railways before moving on to giants Abahani and then ended his club career with Old DOHS in the 2006-07 season.

He was touring Pakistan as a national selector with the Bangladesh team when he received the award.

Former India and Pakistan captains Sunil Gavaskar and Imran Khan were also honoured with special awards in the same category for both their respective countries.

But the night belonged mainly to Indian batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar, who was named the best Asian one-day batsman, and three Sri Lankans.

Tendulkar, who is recovering from a groin injury, could not make it to the ceremony and India ODI captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni collected the award on his behalf.

AKRAM KHAN

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Dilu, Bishu win again

SPORTS REPORTER

Dilu and Bishu of Gulshan Club won their respective Premier Division matches of the Delta Life Open Squash at the Dhaka Club yesterday.

In the Premier Division, Dilu crushed Zein Omar of Dhaka Club in straight sets while Bishu treated Ram Jagdish of Cadet College Club with the same disdain as he also won in straight sets. Parvez of Bashundhara Group beat Raju Ram of Navy Club in 2-1 sets of the same division.

In the A Division, Omar of Gulshan Club, Mohit (Dhaka Club), Touhid and Jagdish (BUET Club) advanced to the semifinals after eliminating their respective opponents in the quarterfinals.

In the Division B, Jonny Ram (Chittagong Club), Shaheed (Gulshan Club), Sumon Lal and Faisal (Dhaka Club) also won their respective matches.

In the Above-40 Division, Gani (Navy Club) beat Bablu by 2-0 sets, while Lt. Col. Huda defeated Jalal by 2-1 sets.

Zim pullout one-off

CRICINFO, undated

Zimbabwe's decision to pull out of the ICC World Twenty20 in England next year is just a one-off decision, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has said. The decision cleared the roadblock for the competition to be staged in England, but Zimbabwe retained its Full Member status in the ICC, a compromise outgoing ICC president Ray Mali termed as a "win-win solution".

The ICC statement read: "The Zimbabwe delegation have agreed to take this decision in the greater interest of world cricket and the ICC. This recommendation should be viewed as a one-off and will not be taken as a precedent."

The boards of England and South Africa had raised the issue of Zimbabwe's Full Member status

going into the ICC board meeting in Dubai, but India is believed to have played a major role in brokering the compromise. Giles Clarke, the ECB chairman, said Norman Aрендse, the Cricket South Africa president, highlighted Nelson Mandela's recent comments, in which he mentioned "the tragic failure of leadership in our neighbouring Zimbabwe".

"This statement was quoted during the board meeting by Norman Aрендse, the chairman of Cricket South Africa and had a significant impact," Clarke told the Independent. "Nelson Mandela is the legendary figure and, as Mr Aрендse said, it is a modern-day saint. His pronouncements carry weight." But it was Sharad Pawar, the BCCI president, who managed to persuade the Zimbabwe delegation, led by Peter Chingoka, to pull out.

"We have reached a conclusion that is undoubtedly the right one

for cricket," Clarke told the Times. "Norman [Aрендse] was very strong and when Sharad [Pawar] determined what he thought was the right course of action, there was no doubt what would happen. He made a very, very significant decision."

"I am very pleased with the agreement. We made our position absolutely clear all along, that Zimbabwe would not be coming, and that was the right position," Clarke said. "I was determined that it would be settled by us in the boardroom and that our players would never again be put in the situation where they had to make decisions." David Morgan, the new ICC president, had said the issue of Zimbabwe's membership was never discussed at the board meeting.

Meanwhile, Haroon Lorgat, the new ICC chief executive, praised

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THEY CAN STILL AFFORD A SMILE! Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraf (R) and Alok Kapali share a light moment as they wait outside the VIP Lounge of the Zia International Airport yesterday after the Tigers' return from Pakistan where they had a dreadful Asia Cup.