



PHOTO: AFP

Swiss superstar Roger Federer gestures during his Australian Open third round fixture against Albert Montanes of Spain on the sixth day of the tournament in Melbourne yesterday. Federer won 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.

Tendulkar out for nought!

ANI, Pune

Arjun Tendulkar, son of cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, played his first sub-junior national cricket tournament, representing the MIG Club in the Under-13 Cadence Trophy here on Friday.

Junior Tendulkar opened the batting for his side, but got out without opening his account. His side lost the match to the Vengsakar Academy.

"He is very young and he is playing a competitive tournament for the first time. It is a new experience for him. I am sure he will take lots of experience and memory out of this tournament," said Ajay Shirke, President of the Maharashtra Cricket Association and the organiser of the tournament.

Sixteen teams are participating in the tournament.

ESDO Gold Cup Badminton

OUR CORRESPONDENT from Thakurgaon

First ESDO Gold Cup Badminton was inaugurated on Friday at Gobindanagar village in Thakurgaon municipality.

The duet badminton tournament is being organised by Eco Social Development Organisation (ESDO) where 32 teams from different northern districts are taking part.

Thakurgaon Sammo Krira-O-Shangskritik Goshthi smashed Dinajpur Modern Optical team by 2-0 set in their opening match. In the other match, Dinajpur Federal Insurance defeated Thakurgaon Tangan Shahitya-Krira Shangshad by same margin.

Earlier a colourful opening ceremony was held at the ground where vice-president of Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) and former lawmaker Mizanur Rahman Manu attended inaugurated the tournament as chief guest.

Ciro dismisses

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The team is also hamstrung by important absences such as strikers Vincenzo Iaquinta and David Trezeguet as well as midfielders Felipe Melo, Christian Poulsen and Mauro Camoranesi.

So Ferrara admitted he was relieved to have Mohamed Sissoko back from African Nations Cup duty with Mali and fit again having been injured before he went to Angola.

"Momo is ready to play. The important thing is that he's not got any problems. The problems he had before are behind him and he's ready."

"He's important because of his great strength and because of the intensity he brings to training. That stimulates the whole group."

All set for

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I am looking forward to watching them on Sunday."

Angola coach Manuel Jose is also counting on the return to fitness of some key personnel, not least midfielder Dede and joint top scorer with three goals Flavio.

Looking ahead to Sunday defender Dias Caires commented: "We're motivated and ready for Ghana. It's not going to be easy, Ghana needs to be respected, but we're training and thinking only about victory."

Federer marches on

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battles ahead in the final week of a tournament he has won three times before.

"I feel like I'm fresh and ready to take on the bigger names," he said.

"So far it's been great. I'm happy the way I'm feeling. Obviously, you'll elevate your game gradually as the opponents get harder."

The Swiss top seed was never threatened by baseliner Montanes and broke the Spaniard's service three times.

Djokovic stormed into the fourth round with an impressive 6-1, 6-1, 6-2 win over Denis Istomin following patchy performances in his first two outings and will next play Kubot.

He lifted his game to a higher level to dominate the 103rd-ranked Uzbek in the

one hour and 37 minutes contest.

"I think at some stage in the tournament you want to have a straight sets win, an easy win, so you can get fast off the court and try to save all the energy as much as you can for the upcoming challenges," Djokovic said.

"So it was good to have the match like this."

Davydenko crushed Argentine Juan Monaco 6-0, 6-3, 6-4 and is yet to drop a set in three matches to reach the last 16 for the fifth year in a row.

The win over the 30th-seeded Monaco extended his current winning streak to 12 matches and the 28-year-old said for the first time he felt like a Grand Slam title was within reach.

"I am feeling very good confident now," he said.

Davydenko will now play ninth seed Verdasco, who was gifted a place in the fourth round when Austrian opponent Stefan Koubek retired after losing the first set 6-1, complaining of a virus.

Hewitt, the 22nd seed, was leading 6-0, 4-2 at the time the unseeded Baghdatis walked to the net to concede the match with a shoulder injury and give the Australian an early passage into the round of 16.

"It's a blessing that I didn't finish really late and have to bounce back from a tough five-set match, because it's my hard enough playing Roger when you're fresh," Hewitt said.

Kubot was another beneficiary of an early withdrawal after Russian 20th seed Mikhail Youzhny withdrew with a wrist injury before their match.

Fed could've become an Australian

Tennis

APP, Melbourne

Swiss tennis legend Roger Federer on Saturday revealed he came close to emigrating to Australia as a youngster.

Federer, who has a South African mother, was born in Switzerland and has won his record 15 Grand Slam titles under the Swiss flag.

But his Swiss father, Robert, who is employed in the pharmaceuticals industry, spent three months working in Australia when his son was aged about 12.

And the family considered moving down under.

"I was maybe 12, 14 years old," said Federer, after progressing to the fourth round of the Australian Open.

"I actually remember my

parents having a debate about moving away from Switzerland to come live over here.

"At the end, they just said, 'look, we have all our friends over here.'

"So in the end they decided to stay in Switzerland."

Federer said the family went on vacation to Australia before he joined the Swiss National Tennis Centre at 14.

"We went on a big vacation here through Melbourne, Brisbane and Cairns and everything to get a better idea of the country," he said.

"It was a beautiful vacation, but in the end we decided to stay in Switzerland."

Federer has long enjoyed a close relationship with Australians, including two of his coaches, Tony Roche and Peter Carter, who died in a car crash in 2002.

T20 moving fast: Parore

Cricket

ANI, Auckland

Former New Zealand wicketkeeper Adam Parore has said that cricket as a game is changing fast, and Twenty20, the shortest version of the game has the longest advantage.

"The days when young players' aspirations from the time they showed promise at secondary school was ultimately to play Test cricket for New Zealand, take wickets and score centuries for their country, are coming to an end," Parore wrote in an article for the New Zealand Herald.

"My pick is that in time Test cricket won't be the No 1 version of the game. It will always exist because it is undoubtedly the best measure of a player's skills, but ODIs are in grave danger. Waning crowd interest and the rapid rise of Twenty20 will see to that, perhaps as little as five years from now," he added.

He also said that he expects Indian Premier League-type (IPL) tournaments to sprout round the globe, as they are the moneyspinners.

"When the top whack of 750,000 dollars -- plus a silent bid top-up understood to possibly have reached 2.5 million dollars -- is paid for a nondescript West Indian all-rounder (Kieron Pollard) you know the game is changing fast," Parore said.

The 39-year-old though thinks that eventually Twenty20 might become tiresome simply due to the fact that there are so many tournaments around the world.

"This is one of the factors which has damaged the ODI format, but market forces, as in so many other aspects of life, call the tune," Parore said.

"I can see teams touring and playing, say, three Twenty20s and two tests a couple of times a year.

International cricket will go the same way as international soccer and league," he added.

Electronic board

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and some of the new athletes may face trouble during the games," admitted BAF general secretary Shah Alam yesterday.

Explaining the reasons for not installing the electronic board, Alam quoted the NSC officials that the electronic board was attached to the starting pistol but it reached here without bullets. Bullets were banned from air travel in Europe and later they found it

in Singapore.

Alam, however, informed that the scaffolding for the electronic board has already been installed.

Like Athletics, the Bangladesh Boxing Federation is also facing problems as the boxing ring has just arrived here yesterday and it is likely to be installed in a couple of days. The boxing events will get underway from January 5.

Khulna edge

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Mortaza while Alok Kapali fell to Rasel after playing a good little knock of 52 which came off 77 balls. The next batsmen didn't contribute much as Razzak tore through the lower order to skittle Sylhet for 147 in 48.5 overs.

BRIEF SCORE

Khulna v Sylhet
Khulna: 242 and 226 (Habibul Bashar 57, Abdur Razzak 74; Tapash Kumar 3-35)
Sylhet: 272 and 147 (Alok Kapali 52; Abdur Razzak 3-64)
Result: Khulna won by 49 runs
Man-of-the-match: Abdur Razzak (Khulna)

Dhoni not

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everything in the field today. So we are waiting till the evening. But as it is now, I am almost hundred per cent sure of playing. VVS is not fit. You have to wait till tomorrow for the team. There is a bit of moisture today. We have to see what exactly the wicket looks like tomorrow before the start of the game. I think it will be a good track for spinners," he said when asked about his team and the condition.

India in the end won the first Test comfortably though the hosts pushed them hard, but Dhoni was hardly bothered with the margin of victory.

"It is not the margin of victory that is important. I think winning is important. It's important that we get a good start and after that you can really dictate terms to set your target and look to achieve it," he said.

Dhoni also said that there was no scope to be complacent about any game at the highest level. "Every game is important. It's a two Test match series. Whatever is the game maybe, every game has its own importance."

The Indian captain also spoke highly on their team's opening partnership and bowling effort in the first Test.

"Gambhir [Gautam] and Sehwag [Virender] complemented each other. I think both of them are very good. They can be branded as one of the greatest opening pairs. You may argue with it, but they are a bit different."

"Gautam is a very good batsman who is doing really well for us. Match after match he comes up with good scores. We are just hoping he gets one more in the coming two innings [in the Dhaka Test]. It will be a proud moment for him and for us," he said when asked about the left-hander's prospects of equalling Don Bradman record's of hitting centuries in six consecutive matches.

Clarke the only concern

Second Aus-Pak ODI today at SCG

Cricket

CRICINFO, Sydney

Australia over-ran Pakistan in the opening game thanks to Cameron White's first century at home and there is an opportunity to take a 2-0 lead in the five-match one-day international series when the sides meet in Sydney on Sunday.

The five-wicket success in Brisbane on Friday showed both outfits are batting well, but they will have a different set of conditions to cope with in Game Two.

Australia have a slight injury concern over Michael Clarke, who flew to Sydney earlier than his teammates on Saturday. Clarke was hit in the ribs by Mohammad Aamer shortly before being dismissed for 58 and crumpled to the ground.

"I think he'll be okay," captain Ricky Ponting said. "It looked pretty sore. I don't know much more about it but he seemed okay in the rooms."

There was also a worry for Ponting with the size of the crowd in Brisbane, which at 19,758 was about half the capacity, but the captain, a strong defender of the 50-over format, is hoping for much better over the next two fixtures.

"Sydney will be pretty much sold out I reckon and Adelaide [on Tuesday], you always get pretty good attendances there, so I think the next couple of games will tell

a truer story than this one."

However, unless there is a surge in support, the Sydney Cricket Ground will be half-full as well.

For Pakistan, Shahid Afridi showed his immense power when he seemed to be pulling his side to a match-winning total by blasting 48 off 26 deliveries at the Gabba. When Afridi is thrashing it's not safe standing on the boundary and he cleared it three times on Friday.

His spin was less of a threat, going for 66 runs for one wicket off 10, but the SCG will offer him much more assistance. "It's always good to see him," Salman Butt said. "You can enjoy what he does and everyone in the world enjoys what he does, he's a great entertainer."

Doug Bollinger heads to Sydney for his first ODI at his home ground, a place where he is treated like an all-conquering hero. His bowling in Brisbane was excellent after he gave up 15 in his opening two overs, finishing with 2 for 37 off 9.4. The two wickets came in his middle spell when he picked up Butt with an edge behind and Mohammad Yousuf, who played on to a steeping short ball which deflected from glove to ground to bats.

Adam Voges, the batsman and part-time spinner, joins the squad while James Hopes was retained even though he is 12th man in Brisbane. Unless Clarke is out there shouldn't be any alterations. "We'll wait and see what it looks like in Sydney,"

Ponting said, "but when you have a win like that it's pretty rare you make changes."

Pakistan were happy with their batting in Brisbane so there shouldn't be any reshuffling there, but there could be some tinkering further down the order. The tourists have a huge group of bowlers with them in a 17-man outfit and Navedu Hasan might be vulnerable after returning 1 for 61 in Brisbane, with Umar Gul very capable replacement.

After the swing of Brisbane comes the spin of Sydney. This is good news for the Pakistan, who have Afridi and Saeed Ajmal in their preferred line up, while Shoaib Malik also offers some off-spin. Australia have the specialist Nathan Hauritz, who will be happy to see his adopted home ground after giving up 0 for 68 in nine at his old backyard. There could be a shower or two during the day.

TEAMS

AUSTRALIA (probable): Shane Watson, Shaun Marsh, Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Clarke, Cameron White, Michael Hussey, Brad Haddin, Nathan Hauritz, Clint McKay, Peter Siddle, Doug Bollinger. PAKISTAN (possible): Salman Butt, Kamran Akmal, Younus Khan, Mohammad Yousuf (captain), Umar Akmal, Shoaib Malik, Shahid Afridi, Umar Gul, Mohammad Asif, Mohammed Aamer, Saeed Ajmal.

Tigers target

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win or a draw. Our batsmen lack concentration. We complete the hard part in batting as most of our batsmen got starts, but unfortunately got out in the softer parts," said Tamim adding that they always discussed about how they could improve at international level.

The Chittagonian also said that their mindset has totally changed under the guidance of coach Jamie Siddons as they no longer are a mere participant against the top-ranked sides.

"We can draw the Test series. We haven't come here to participate. We came here to compete and fight. We can draw the Test series. It's not like that we go to the field to watch the batting of Sachin [Tendulkar] and Sehwag [Virender]. I think our coach has played a big role to change the mindset of the players," the confident Tamim said.

"Talent and skill both is important for longer-version cricket and you know to implement these two together you must get enough international experience. We are pretty new in Test cricket. Most of the players are relatively new. Half of the players haven't played 20 Tests together including our captain [Shakib]. Hopefully, good days will come soon," he added.

He also described about his changed approach towards the longer-version game.

"I used to play less balls and score runs. I try to play more balls and score less in Test cricket. But still I made a mistake in the second innings of the first Test. My wicket was crucial just before lunch in the final day but I just lost my concentration though I concentrated hard till the 122nd ball. The next ball I made a mistake and I was out. This is the area we should work hard," informed Tamim.

He also hoped that they won't lose quick wickets this time in a track which is believe to help the batsmen.

PCB to change captain

Cricket

APP, Karachi

Pakistan are to appoint a new captain after the tour of Australia next month, the country's cricket chief said Friday.

"This captain [Mohammad Yousuf] was for this series only and we will decide after the tour of Australia about the captain, we will change," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ijaz Butt told the private ARY News channel.

Yousuf-led Pakistan were whitewashed 3-0 in the Test series against Australia earlier this month.

Pakistan had appointed Younus Khan captain for the tour of New Zealand in November-December last year but he pulled out to take rest, forcing the PCB to hand over the captaincy to Yousuf.

Following the New Zealand trip, Yousuf was retained for the Australia tour as Younus did not make himself available.

Butt said the loss of Younus as captain was unfortunate.

"We did not change Younus. Unfortunately the sports committee of the parliament made him run away after they levelled match fixing

allegations against him," Butt told the channel in an interview.

Younus resigned after the standing committee on sports alleged that the Pakistan team had thrown a match against Australia in the Champions Trophy in South Africa in September.

Australia sneaked home by one run off the last ball to qualify for the semifinals.

"How can someone fix a match on the last ball? Only a magician can do that and on this allegation Younus was mentally disturbed and resigned," Butt said.

Butt asked Younus to reconsider his decision and the player led the team against New Zealand in the five-match one-day series held in the United Arab Emirates in November last year.

Younus managed just 22 runs in three matches in Pakistan's 3-2 defeat, a slump in form which led him to pull out of the New Zealand tour.

"Younus was a good captain but he was hurt on the allegations and quit. Now we will soon decide about the change," said Butt.

Pakistan's next Test assignment is in England where they play Australia in two Tests -- a series shifted out of Pakistan over security fears.

They are due to play four Tests against England on the same tour.

Pakistan knock India out

APP, Wellington



Pakistan knocked defending champions India out of the International Cricket Council Under 19 World Cup on Saturday in a tense rain-affected quarterfinal at Lincoln.

In the other last-eight tie played Saturday, the West Indies beat England by 18 runs in a match shortened to 36 overs a side by bad weather.

India could only manage 114 for 9 in their 23 overs but Pakistan had to battle to reach the modest total, getting to their target with only three balls remaining and two wickets in hand.

Mandeep Singh top-scored for India with 40, after the 2008 champions lost two wickets in the first over. The main bowlers to cause the damage for Pakistan were Fayyaz Butt with 4-27, and Raza Hassan, who took three wickets.

Pakistan's chase started badly. They lost their first three wickets for just 17 runs in the

first seven overs but a partnership of 55 between Ahsan Ali and Rameez Aziz brought them back into the reckoning.

Wickets fell regularly until Hammad Azam steered Pakistan home, scoring an unbeaten 21 from 13 balls.

In the other quarterfinal, the West Indies scored 166 before dismissing England for 148.

The West Indies' victory was built on a 103-run third-wicket partnership between Kraigg Braithwaite (69) and Andre Cleary (52), as well as a devastating spell of bowling by paceman Jason Holder, who took 5-19.

Pakistan will meet the West Indies in the first semifinal on Monday. New Zealand will play Australia and South Africa meet Sri Lanka in the remaining quarterfinals on Sunday.

BRIEF SCORES

PAKISTAN: 117 for 8 (Ahsan 30, Aziz 28, Azam 17 not out; Unadkat 2-26)

INDIA: 114 for 9 (Mandeep 40, Fayyaz 4-27) Result: Pakistan won two wickets.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- 1 Turn on the water-works
- 4 Bridge coup
- 8 LummoX
- 12 Weeding tool
- 13 Doves' home
- 14 Four-star review
- 15 — Today
- 16 Leeway
- 17 Squared
- 18 Chickpeas
- 21 Chances, briefly
- 22 Annoy
- 23 Lustrous fiber
- 26 Monastery address
- 27 TV alien
- 30 Not merely impish
- 31 "Mayday!"
- 32 Vacidity, to Vivaldi
- 33 Foundation
- 34 "Kid-tested" cereal
- 35 Fight
- 36 Crib
- 37 Resort
- 38 Sanitation fleet
- 45 On the briny
- 46 Waikiki wiggling
- 47 Pismire
- 48 Test tube
- 49 Ms.
- 50 Old French coin
- 51 Count counter-part
- 52 Medley portion
- 53 Recede
- 2 Parks or Bonheur
- 3 Calendar quota
- 4 Predicament
- 5 Crazy birds
- 6 The gamut
- 7 Life stories
- 8 River tributary, often
- 9 Volcanic outflow
- 10 Micro-wave, for one
- 11 Lairs
- 19 Seethe
- 20 Lingerie item
- 23 CSA soldier
- 24 Rd.
- 25 "— pleasures and palaces though we may roam"
- 26 Home of "Glee"
- 27 Illustrations
- 28 Illuminated
- 29 Egg-yung link
- 31 Form of tennis
- 32 Suitor
- 34 Sedona maker
- 35 Arose (from)
- 36 "Hoops"
- 37 Cleaner's concern
- 38 Donated
- 39 Largest of the seven
- 40 Posterior
- 41 Mark's replacement?
- 42 Docket entry
- 43 Handle
- 44 Movie-goer's memento

Solution time: 27 mins.

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