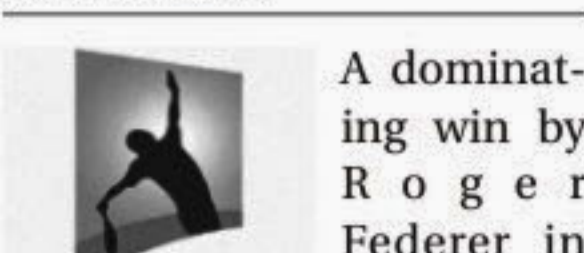


Final before the final Federer to face Nadal in semis

AP, Melbourne



australian open
The Grand Slam of Asia-Pacific

A dominating win by Roger Federer in his 1,000th career match and a more testing workout for Rafael Nadal have set up a rare Grand Slam marquee semifinal between the former No. 1-ranked players.

Four-time Australian Open champion Federer advanced to his ninth straight semifinal at Melbourne Park with a 6-4, 6-3, 6-2 quarterfinal win Tuesday over Juan Martin del Potro, the man who beat him for the US Open title in 2009.

In an often tempestuous night match at Rod Laver Arena, Nadal advanced with a tough 6-7 (5), 7-6 (6), 6-4, 6-3 win over Tomas Berdych.

"Happy with how I finished match physically, I was able to keep running with high intensity," Nadal said.

Federer and Nadal -- they were ranked 1-2 for many years -- have been on opposite halves of the draw since the 2005 French Open. That was the last time the pair met in a Grand Slam semifinal, won that year by Nadal in four sets.

Defending women's champion Kim Clijsters, still dealing with a left ankle injury, advanced to an Australian Open semifinal against third-seeded Victoria Azarenka by beating No. 1 Caroline Wozniacki 6-3, 7-6

(4) Tuesday. Clijsters's victory ensured that Wozniacki would lose the top ranking she has held for most of the last 15 months.

Azarenka beat No. 8 are on Wednesday -- Andy Murray plays Kei Nishikori of Japan and top-seeded Novak Djokovic takes on David Ferrer.

In the remaining



PHOTO: AFP

Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark is frustrated after conceding a point during her Australian Open quarterfinal loss to Belgium's Kim Clijsters in Melbourne yesterday.

Agneszka Radwanska 6-7 (0), 6-0, 6-2. Azarenka is one of three women who could finish at No. 1 in Melbourne -- Maria Sharapova and Petra Kvitova are the others.

The quarterfinals on the other side of the men's draw women's quarterfinals Wednesday, Sharapova plays Ekaterina Makarova, who beat five-time champion Serena Williams in the fourth round, and No. 2 Kvitova takes on unseeded Sara Errani of Italy.

Halim enters Guinness

SPORTS REPORTER

Abdul Halim wrote his name in the pages of the Guinness Book of World Records when the global authority on record-breaking achievements acknowledged his feat of balancing a football on his head for the farthest distance yesterday.

The official website of Guinness Book of World Record said "The farthest distance travelled with a football balanced on the head is 15.2 km (9.44 mi) and was achieved by Abdul Halim (Bangladesh) at Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 22 October 2011".

Halim is the second Bangladeshi to have his name in the Guinness Book of World Records after table tennis legend Zohera Rahman Linnu.

The previous record belonged to Yee Ming Low of Malaysia, who completed 11.129 km at the Subang Jaya Municipality Stadium Selangor on August 21, 2009.

"I always believed that I would get acknowledgement from Guinness Book of World Records. Now I am happy that I have made Bangladesh proud," said Halim in his instant reaction.

'Close the gap between DSAs and DFAs'

SPORTS REPORTER

General secretaries of different District Sports Associations (DSA) yesterday sought the interference of Sports Minister Ahad Ali Sarker to bring about greater interaction between DSAs and the Districts Football Associations (DFA) in a bid to revive football at the district level.

The request was made at the National Sports Council's (NSC) council meeting which was held after seven years at the NSC Auditorium with the sports minister chairing the meeting.

General secretaries of the 64 DSAs and seven divisions, general secretaries and president of 42 sports federations and associations and other stakeholders attended the meeting.

DSAs are affiliated bodies of the NSC and receive government funds which the DFAs -- affiliated bodies of the Bangladesh Football Federation responsible for organising district-level football since 2008 -- have to do without. This has led to a financial crisis that has resulted in stagnation of the sport at district level.

"Though it is not our affair, on behalf of DSA secretaries I must say that if there is no football at district level, there is no sports in Bangladesh as activities of football remain halted since the formation of the District Football Association. I request the sports minister to close the gap between DSAs and DFAs," said Yousuf Jamil Babu, president of the DSA secretaries' forum.

Speakers at the council meeting also urged the sports minister to hold the elections of different federations to maintain the democratic process in the sports arena.

Having promised to solve all problems raised by the councillors, Ahad Ali said, "The NSC will arrange a permanent fund for all federations, associations and DSAs to overcome the crisis as they have a plan to allocate Tk 1 crore in FDR in favour of its affiliated bodies."

He also promised to hold the council meeting regularly and run a lottery to create a fund for the federations and district and divisional sports bodies.

Army regain

FROM PAGE 16

had to be content with a late goal from Moinul Islam, who struck to reduce the margin to 2-1 two minutes from time, which was too late to defend their title against a team who became National Hockey champions for the 12th time in 28 years.

Malek was adjudged best player of the final and received Tk 10,000 while the champions and runners-up were awarded Tk 50,000 and Tk 30,000 respectively.

Punter, Pup make merry

Cricket

AFP, Adelaide

Australia's Ricky Ponting became only the third player in history to pass 13,000 Test runs on Tuesday as he and captain Michael Clarke put India to the sword in the final Test in Adelaide.

The resurgent Ponting posted his 41st Test century -- his second in three innings -- while Clarke raised his 19th Test ton, which follows an unbeaten triple hundred in the second Test in Sydney.

The experienced pair shared in a ground record fourth wicket partnership as Australia, chasing a 4-0 series whitewash, plundered the Indian attack to finish on 335-3.

At the close on a sweltering opening day, Ponting was unbeaten on 137 off 254 balls and Clarke 140 off 188 balls.

India, who lost their top Test ranking when they were crushed 4-0 in England last year, face their eighth consecutive away defeat if they fail to prevent another Australian victory this week.

Ponting and Clarke batted through the last two sessions of the day to add 251 runs together, following their stand of 288 in Sydney.

"I felt I played better today than I did in Sydney," Ponting said.

"It was probably a better wicket to bat on today, there wasn't much in it for any of the Indian bowlers.

"It's been a really good day for us and we have to make sure we win the first hour tomorrow and make sure this first innings is a big one."

To underline the gulf between the two sides, Australia's batsmen have posted six centuries in the series while India have still to register one.

Ponting, who went two

years without a Test hundred before the Sydney knock, is the third batsman to reach the 13,000-run career milestone after Sachin Tendulkar (15,432) and Rahul Dravid (13,262) -- both of whom

unbeaten 329 in the second Sydney Test earlier this month, gave two chances, on 50 and 133, both off Ishant Sharma.

India removed David Warner (8) and Shaun Marsh

runs in five innings in the series batting at number three.

Cowan looked to have done all the hard work in his 110 minutes at the crease before he was caught low down in the covers by Laxman for Ashwin's second wicket 10 minutes before lunch.

Stand-in skipper Virender Sehwag was proactive with his bowling changes in the morning session, wheeling in Ashwin in the fourth over of the innings and was rewarded with Marsh's wicket in the spinner's fourth over.

"I think it was really good batting by Ricky Ponting and Michael Clarke, they really took the game away from us in the second session," Ashwin said.

Sehwag also bowled his off-breaks in tandem with Ashwin in the first session of the Test before he was guilty of following the game to drift.

The opening batsman was deputising for skipper MS Dhoni, who is suspended for slow over rates.

SCOREBOARD
AUSTRALIA: First Innings
Cowan c Laxman b Ashwin 30
Warner lbw b Zaheer 8
Marsh b Ashwin 3
Ponting not out 137
Clarke not out 140
Extras: (lb-11, w-6) 17
Total: (For 3 wkts in 90 overs) 335
To bat: Hussey, Haddin, Siddler, Harris, Hilfenhaus, Lyon
Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-31, 3-84

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Zaheer	18	2	52	1
Yadav	12	0	87	0
Ashwin	26	4	81	2
Sharma	20	5	52	0
Sehwag	13	0	49	0
Kohli	1	0	3	0

INDIA: Sehwag, Gambhir, Dravid, Tendulkar, Laxman, Kohli, Saha, Ashwin, Zaheer, Sharma, Yadav
Toss: Australia.

Onus on the bowlers

Second Pak-Eng Test begins today

Cricket

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Rival captains Misbahul Haq and Andrew Strauss expect tough work for bowlers on a batting-friendly pitch at Abu Dhabi Stadium where the second Test starts on Wednesday.

The two Tests played here were drawn with three double hundreds and two centuries, and the last one saw Pakistan letting Sri Lanka off by dropping seven catches in the second innings. Pakistan also drew with South Africa here.

But despite that Pakistan have edge with off-spinner Saeed Ajmal in good form, having taken a career-best 7-55 during his 10-wicket haul which helped his team win the first Test by 10 wickets in Dubai inside three days.

"Ajmal got 10 wickets which created so much pressure on England so I think that is really an edge for us but at the same time I think the nature of the pitch here will make it tough to get 20 wickets," said

Misbah on Tuesday. Misbah urged the bowlers to stick to discipline and basics.

"I think you have to come out hard and just bowl a disciplined line and bowl according to the weakness of the batsmen, and just try to exploit the conditions but I think it will be really really tough to get wickets here," said Misbah.

Misbah said his team was ready for a backlash from England, who have not lost a Test series since January 2009.

"There is no doubt that England, being the world number one team, will try their 100 percent best and stage a strong comeback. We are ready for them," said Misbah, who has not lost a series since taking over as captain in October 2010.

Pakistan were likely to retain the winning combination, but if the pitch seems to offer initial pace they could replace paceman Aizaz Cheema with left-armern Junaid Khan.

England will wait on the fitness of pacer Chris Tremlett who has a sore back.

England captain Andrew Strauss agreed that the pitch looked good for batting.

Sania-Elena pair reaches final four

PTI, Melbourne

Sania Mirza and Elena Vesnina showed nerves of steel under pressure as they shocked second seeds Liezel Huber and Lisa Raymond to breeze into the women's doubles semifinals of the Australian Open on Monday.

The sixth seeded Indo-Russian pair staved off very strong resistance from the Americans for a 6-3-5-7-6 (6) win in the marathon quarterfinal, which lasted three hours and five minutes.

This is only the second time in Sania's career that she has reached a Grand Slam semifinal in the women's doubles event.

In 2011, she had reached the Wimbledon semis with Elena, losing to Kveta Peschke and Katarina Srebotnik.

Sania and Elena will now fight it out with the Russian combo of Svetlana Kuznetsova and Vera Zvonareva for a place in the summit clash.

The other semifinal will be played between the 11th seeded Italian pair of Sara Errani and Roberta Vinci and seventh seeded Czech combination of Andrea Hlavackova and Lucie Hradecka.

DOHS stay ahead

ABAHANI-CCS

Fazle Rabbi struck his first century of the season as Abahani made 265-5 in 50 overs.

The left-hander was at his rampaging best, hitting eight sixes and five boundaries during his 135 off 154 balls. Not just the big hitting, Rabbi added 111 with Marshall Ayub, who made 46, and a further 90 with skipper Mahmudullah Riyad, who also breezed into a half-century with the help of three sixes and two boundaries.

CCS were batting well in reply with Rokibul Hasan scoring 64, but English all-rounder Peter Trego took five wickets in his biggest contribution this season.

Apart from the five-wicket haul, Nazmul Islam Apu took three wickets.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BIMAN: 187-9 in 50 overs (Junaed 57, Javed 37; Sarmad 2-20, Yasim 2-27)
MOHAMMEDAN: 188-3 in 39.1 overs (Imtiaz 66, Imrul 59; Masud 1-21)
Result: Mohammedan won by 7 wickets.

OLD DOHS: 238 all out in 49 overs (Adnan 76, Shuvogoto 63; Kapali 3-22, Sanjamul 2-37)
GAZI TANK: 159 all out in 39.3 overs (Mominul 59, Rony 28; Nabil 3-28, Jalat 3-35)
Result: Old DOHS won by 79 runs.

ABAHANI: 265-5 in 50 overs (Fazle 135, Riyad 50; Robiul 2-37, Robi 2-46)
CCS: 241-8 in 50 overs (Rokibul 64, Atikur 40; Trego 5-48, Nazmul 3-36)
Result: Abahani won by 24 runs.

PCB already

FROM PAGE 16

But the BCB immediately said, let alone the permission, the security team that will travel to Pakistan to report back to the Bangladesh government about the possibility of a tour hasn't been formed yet.

"There's no question of giving permission [to visit Pakistan in April]. The government has only allowed forming the security team and after it comes back and reports to us, we will then decide if the cricket team will tour or not," said BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus.

"We haven't received any

written confirmation about the composition of this security team but we hope to get it soon," he added.

It was learned that an eight-member team, which will include representatives from the home ministry and police apart from a BCB director and its security advisor, will most likely go to Pakistan.

After it is formed, a few days will still be required to complete the paperwork of the team's departure. "The visit will take place in February because of an ICC meeting early that month," claimed a source.

'What can losers lose?'

Cricket

AFP, Adelaide

India have nothing to lose in their irretrievable series position and have a license to play their natural game against rampant Australia, spinner Ravi Ashwin said on Tuesday.

The Indian tourists found themselves in a familiar position in the fourth Test, slaving away in the field on a stifling day as Australia piled on 335 for three on Day One.

The Border-Gavaskar Trophy is gone after heavy losses in the first three Tests and India face the ignominy of a 4-0 series wipeout and their eighth consecutive away Test defeat in Adelaide.

Once again it was their series protagonists, Ricky Ponting and Michael Clarke, who had them in trouble with centuries in an unfinished 251-run stand for the fourth wicket with prospects of a 500-plus innings total on Wednesday's second day.

Ashwin, who was thrown the ball in the fourth over by stand-in skipper Virender Sehwag, believes all is not lost on the flat Adelaide batting strip.

"I think we have nothing to lose at this point in time," he said.

"Being three-nil down gives us a bit of a license to go out and play our natural game which could be a real blessing in disguise for us and all that's important is to [each] get those first 20-30 runs and stick it out."

"We'll have to look for those initial starts and try to capitalise and that could be the crucial part of this game."

Ashwin said the tourists did not have a psychological block bowling against Ponting and Clarke, who claimed their second centuries of the series on Tuesday.

"I don't think there is any psychological block towards that, but we were definitely telling and egging each other on especially in the second session of play," he said.

"We had to be really tight in that particular phase after lunch where it was quite crucial and that's where we gave a few easy runs to both of them and they just took off from there."

"After that it was quite easy to carry the momentum on."

"It's happened in two Tests now in Sydney and now in Adelaide and we'll look to get a couple of wickets tomorrow."

Eng U-19s

FROM PAGE 16

in delivering the victory. Ball kept his cool to remain not out on 24 off 27 deliveries, hitting one boundary.

Ash captured two wickets for 25 runs.

Both the teams will travel to Sylhet today where they will play the next three matches on January 28, January 30 and January 31.

The seventh and final one-day will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on February 4 as per the revised schedule announced yesterday.

SCORES IN BRIEF
 BANGLADESH UNDER-19: 252-9 in 50 overs (Soumya 40, Salman 34, Asif 67, Mosaddek 40, Al-Amin 23, Nuruzzaman 16; Adam Ball 4-44, Sam Wood 3-44)
 ENGLAND UNDER-19: 253-7 in 49 overs (Bell 30, Foakes 111, Leaning 16, Singh 20, Ball 24 not out; Asif 2-25)
 RESULT: England Under-19 won by three wickets.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN	ACROSS	DOWN
1 Pump up the volume	41 Arrange-ment	1 Actress	23 Jazz style
4 Pool-room supply	43 Machu Picchu's place	2 Jessica	25 43-Across' capital
8 Vase-shaped jug	44 Slithery squeezer	3 Engine knock	26 Stop up
12 Maui souvenir	46 Civil War victors	4 King Arthur's realm	27 North Sea feeder
13 Frizzy hairstyle	50 Not merely embarrassed	5 E.T.'s craft	28 Church service
14 Tragic	55 Modern-day evidence	6 Blunder	29 Reed instrument
15 Proscribe	56 Disturb	7 Detergent	30 Carry on
16 Gave a sermon	57 Advantage	8 Film worker	31 Exceptional
18 Seaweed, e.g.	58 Freddy's street	9 Oz bigwig,	35 Fruity pastry
20 Mr. Sajak	59 Old woman's home?	10 Prior to	38 Nuanced
21 Amorphous mass	60 Merino, e.g.	11 Roulette bet	40 Pistol
24 "La Vita"	61 Nay opposer	17 Young fellow	42 Luau side dish
28 Additionally		19 Census statistic	45 Not many
32 Streamlet		22 Egg	47 Concept
33 Lawyers' org.			48 Sans siblings
34 Big brass			49 Appellation
36 Unruly bunch			50 "—"
37 Daughters' counter-parts			51 Reaction to fire-works
39 Lien of a sort			52 Carnival city
			53 Altar affirmative
			54 Id counterpart

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15			16				17				
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CRYPTOQUIP

ZH ZCQ-VQPXKPHCHJ AZQVBW
 RV FQS K PQLX ZHF
 AZWZGPHRX ICJKO LP OPQIPF
 Z GPGGPQS GROGRBQQC.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: MY FATHER CAN NEVER BUY BOOKS FOR KEEPING PRIVATE MEMOIRS. HE'S ALLERGIC TO DIARY PRODUCTS. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals A