



Rafael Nadal of Spain is ecstatic after his victory over Andreas Seppi of Italy during their US Open men's singles second round match at Flushing Meadows on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Halep, Nadal go through

REUTERS, New York

Fired-up fifth seed Simona Halep reached the third round of the US Open on Thursday with a straight-sets victory over Lucie Safarova in a battle of former French Open finalists under the new

roof of Arthur Ashe stadium. In the first match to be played from start to finish under the closed roof, Romania's Halep triumphed 6-3, 6-4.

Earlier on Wednesday, Rafa Nadal boasted after his first-round U.S. Open match that he had a video recording of being the first player to hit a ball in practice under the new roof at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The fourth-seeded Spaniard achieved the double as he hit the first ball in competition under the \$150 million roof after rain briefly interrupted his second-round match against Italian Andreas Seppi.

The crowd looked skyward at the spectacle of the high-tech closure and roared in approval when the two sides met above the court in five minutes, 35 seconds.

Play resumed seven minutes, 22 seconds after the stoppage with Nadal serving at 3-3 in the second set before he completed a 6-0 7-5 6-1 victory over Seppi that lifted him to a third-round match against Russian Andrey Kuznetsov.

The Spaniard was aglow after his victory and being part of the first match played under the Ashe Stadium roof. "I was very happy to be the first player to play in the competition with this fantastic roof closing," he said. "Amazing, unbelievable."

Nadal's mood was in stark contrast to women's French Open champion Garbine Muguruza who had preceded her compatriot onto the Arthur Ashe Stadium court and was upset by 48th-ranked Anastasiya Sevastova of Latvia 7-5 6-4 in the second round.

Muguruza and Sevastova played with the roof open, but both complained about the noise from the boisterous fans, which appeared to be exacerbated by the roof support structure trapping the sound.

Meanwhile, Milos Raonic became the first major casualty of the U.S. Open when American qualifier Ryan Harrison shocked the Canadian fifth seed 6-7(4) 7-5 7-5 6-1 on Wednesday to reach the third round of the year's final grand slam.

Swiss launch probe on Kaiser

REUTERS, Zurich

Authorities in Zurich have opened criminal proceedings against German soccer great Franz Beckenbauer and two former presidents of the country's football federation (DFB) in connection with its successful bid for the 2006 World Cup.

The Swiss Attorney General's office (OAG) said the proceedings related to allegations of fraud, criminal mismanagement, money laundering and misappropriation.

Raids were carried out simultaneously in eight locations on Thursday with the cooperation of authorities in Germany and Austria, the OAG said.

In all, four members of the 2006 tournament's organising committee were placed under investigation.

They were Beckenbauer - who led West Germany to World Cup wins as both player and manager - former DFB presidents Theo Zwanziger and Wolfgang Niersbach, and former secretary general Horst Schmidt.

Beckenbauer, who could not immediately be reached for comment on Thursday, has previously admitted to making mistakes but has denied wrongdoing.

Widely regarded as one of the game's finest players, he captained the West Germany team that won the 1974 World Cup and was coach when they won again in 1990.

Now 70, he is also a former member of world soccer body FIFA's executive committee.

Earlier this year, Germany's DFB commissioned a report into alleged irregularities over the awarding of the 2006 World Cup.

The report, published in March, said that, while there was no evidence of Germany paying FIFA members in return for votes, payments were made to at least one former FIFA official through a web of accounts involving several other firms or individuals, including Beckenbauer.



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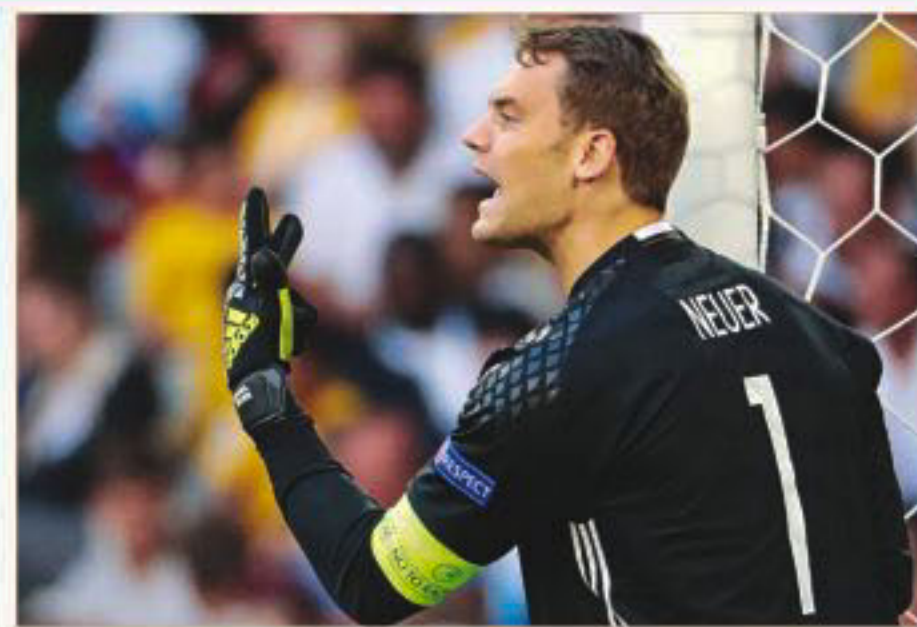
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NEUER TO LEAD 'DIE MANNSCHAFT'

Bayern Munich goalkeeper Manuel Neuer was on Thursday named as the new captain of world champions Germany following Bastian Schweinsteiger's international retirement. The 30-year-old Neuer will wear the captain's armband for Germany's opening 2018 World Cup qualifier away to Norway in Oslo on Sunday. "For me it is a great honour," said Neuer after the German Football Association (DFB) announced his appointment on their website. "It makes me proud to be captain of the team, but we all know that we need several players to lead on the pitch, if we are to succeed. The key things are already discussed within 'die Mannschaft' and decided together. Of course, the captaincy has great symbolic significance. I am very pleased with the trust the coach has shown in me in this appointment."

—AFP



Booters humiliated

Suffer 5-0 loss to Maldives

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh's preparation for their Asian Cup Play-Off Qualifiers went horribly as they suffered a humiliating 5-0 defeat at the hands of Maldives in an international friendly at the hands of Maldives in an international friendly at the National Football Stadium in Male last night.

It was new coach Tom Saintfiet's first match, one in which he attempted to fine-tune his team combination and strategy ahead of the crucial September 6th match against Bhutan. However, the night turned into a nightmare for both the Belgian coach and his charges as they conceded the biggest defeat to the Islanders, their third defeat to the nation on the trot since a shootout win in the 2003 SAFF Championship final.

The booters were used to defeating Maldives by large margins in the past and would suffer such heavy losses only to teams the calibre of Australia or Jordan, but yesterday's result was an eye-opener about

the state in which the team currently is.

Saintfiet handed international debuts to Mohammad Abudllah, Jafar Iqbal, Sohel Rana and Sentu Chandra Sen, but the young guns failed to impress in the match which was goalless going into the second half.

However, if their performances could be ignored, the performances from experienced players, especially from Raihan Hasan, Tapu Barman, Nasir Chowdhury and Wali Faisal, were inexcusable. The Maldivian forwards, especially Ali Ashfaq, toyed with Bangladesh's backline in the second half and enjoyed a goal-fest.

Most of the blame would fall squarely on the shoulder of the backline and the scoreline could have been even worse as Maldives squandered at least three clear-cut one-on-ones.

Asadullah put Maldives ahead in the 53rd minute before doubling the lead in the 61st minute. Hamza made it 3-0 in the 79th minute before Asadullah completed his hat-trick in the 82nd minute. Substitute Ismail Essa completed the rout in stoppage time.

Farewell Fussballgott

REUTERS, Munich



Midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger won his 121st cap in his last match for Germany as they beat Finland 2-0 in an international

friendly in Moenchengladbach on Wednesday.

Max Meyer's opener and Paulus Arajuuri's own goal handed the win to Germany, who gave a debut to Hoffenheim defender Niklas Seuele, a member of Horst Hrubesch's silver medal-winning Olympic team.

Manchester United midfielder Schweinsteiger, who announced his inter-

national retirement on July 29 following Germany's semi-final elimination from Euro 2016, played for 68 minutes before going off the pitch to a raucous reception and a standing ovation.

"It means so much that you're here today. It has been an honour to play for you," Schweinsteiger told the fans.

"It meant so much to me and I feel a deep gratitude. We will see each other again in the future and, until then, I wish the national side all the best."

The 32-year-old, who played a key role as part of the 2014 World Cup-winning squad, is fourth on the all-time list of appearances for Germany and has played.



Germany midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger is thrown in the air by his teammates after his last game for his country against Finland in Monchengladbach on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

ULAB to play in int'l cricket tournament

SPORTS REPORTER

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) has secured a place in the Red Bull Campus Cricket World Finals which will begin from September 5 in Sri Lanka.

The other teams are Sri Lanka's Business Management School, the University of Sydney, England's Loughborough University, India's Marathwada Mitra Mandal College of Commerce, the University of Central Punjab, the University of Pretoria and Dubai's Heriot Watt University.

Azhar guides Pak to 247

AFP, Leeds



Pakistan captain Azhar Ali led from the front with 80 but his side were still held to 247 for eight by England in the fourth one-day international at Headingley on Thursday.

When Azhar was out, Pakistan -- already 3-0 down in the five-match series -- were 169 for six off 38 overs and in danger of failing to bat out their full 50 in this day/night fixture.

But the fit-again Imad Wasim's unbeaten 57 and his eighth-wicket stand of 56 with Hasan Ali took Pakistan past 200.

England slow bowlers Adil Rashid and Moeen Ali shared five wickets between them, with leg-spinner Rashid -- one of five Yorkshire players in the side -- taking three for 47 on his home ground.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 247 for 8 in 50 overs (Aslam 24, Azhar 80, Wasim not out 57; Jordan 2-42, Rashid 3-47, Ali 2-39)

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