

What to WATCH

BTV & CHANNEL 9
New Zealand v Bangladesh
Second Test, Day-5
Live from 3:30am (Tuesday)
SONY SIX
Australian Open
Fourth Round
Live from 6:00am



Swiss maestro Roger Federer was ecstatic with his win over Kei Nishikori and he now has a clear shot at the title as World Number 1 Andy Murray (INSET) became the second major casualty after Novak Djokovic, exiting the tournament after a loss to the unheralded Mischa Zverev.



PHOTOS: REUTERS/AFP

Murray, Kerber bite the dust

Title there for the taking after top seeds crash out

AFP, Melbourne

World number ones Andy Murray and Angelique Kerber both crashed out of the Australian Open on a day of major upsets Sunday, as Roger Federer fought his way closer to an 18th Grand Slam title.

Murray was stunned by 50th-ranked serve-and-volley specialist Mischa Zverev in four sets before Kerber, the women's title-holder, tamely succumbed 6-2, 6-3 to Coco Vandeweghe.

The unpredictable results, following six-time champion Novak Djokovic's stunning loss in the second round, opened the door to a host of challengers -- with Federer leading the charge.

The 35-year-old Swiss won the last of his record 17 Slam titles in 2012, but he took full advantage of Murray's demise with a 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-1, 4-6, 6-3 win over Kei Nishikori.

Federer, who looks back to full fitness after a six-month injury lay-off, said the hard-fought, fourth-round win could be significant as he now eyes a quarter-final with Zverev.

"This is a huge moment for me in my career," Federer said. "I was telling myself, 'Stay calm'. I feel fit, I've trained as hard as I possibly can in the

off-season. That's what you tell yourself and you hope it pays off," he added.

Murray had been the hot favourite after Djokovic's shock exit, but the Briton lost 7-5, 5-7, 6-2, 6-4 to Germany's Zverev to extend his wait for a first Melbourne title.

The Briton was never expected to be troubled by the 29-year-old, who has never won an ATP title, but he suffered his earliest Melbourne departure in eight years.

It isn't since the 2004 French Open that the top two men's seeds have gone out before the quarter-finals, and for Murray, a five-time losing finalist, it meant yet more Melbourne misery.

"I've had tough losses in my career in the past. I've come back from them. This is a tough one," Murray said. "I'm sure I'll come back okay from it. But right now I'm very down because I wanted to go further in this event, and it wasn't to be."

Zverev, a former junior rival of Murray's, stretched to a series of elastic volleys to frustrate the Scot, coming to the net 118 times as he reached his first major quarter-final.

"I was like in a little coma, just serving and volleying my way through it. There were a few points where I didn't know how I pulled it off

but somehow I made it," he said.

Kerber's maiden Grand Slam title defence, and first major tournament as world number one, ended poorly as she came off distinctly second-best to the aggressive Vandeweghe.

The unseeded American broke Kerber's serve four times and was on top at the net and from the baseline as she grabbed her first win over a world number one.

In the quarter-finals, Vandeweghe, who halted Eugenie Bouchard in the previous round, faces French Open champion Garbine Muguruza, who swamped Romania's Sorana Cirstea 6-2, 6-3.

Earlier Venus Williams, the oldest player in the women's draw at 36, also became one of the first into the last eight when she beat German qualifier Mona Barthel 6-3, 7-5.

The seven-time Grand Slam winner allowed herself to dream of a possible final with her sister Serena, who is steaming through the other side of the draw in search of her 23rd major title.

"That could hopefully happen. We both still have to work very hard to get there," Venus Williams said.

Her quarter-final opponent is Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, who beat fellow Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-3, 6-3.

Bangladesh to get four mini turfs

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is all set to get four mini artificial turfs in four different districts under the AFC Mini Pitch scheme as an inspection team of Limonta Sport, an appointed company of Asian Football Confederation, yesterday arrived in the capital to assess the project areas.

The inspection team will travel to Nilphamari, Satkhira, Madaripur and Feni to assess the grounds and measure the expenditure for installing 20-40 feet artificial turf, goalpost, floodlight and iron-made fence at each venue.

"We sent names of 10 districts but the AFC has selected four districts after scrutinising the papers we provided," BFF vice president Tabith M Awal said. "To install the artificial turf, we need grounds which must be leased in favour of BFF for at least 10 years."

"The installation of turfs depends on the assessment reports of Limonta Sport which has been appointed by the AFC to inspect the grounds and measure the expenditure. The installation work will start as soon as the final approval from AFC comes on the basis of the assessment report of Limonta," said Awal.

Booters' camp starts at BKSP

SPORTS REPORTER



The fitness assessment training for the national footballers got underway yesterday at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan with 28 players out of 33 attending the opening day of the 12-day camp.

Bangladesh Football Federation has arranged the training camp to evaluate the current condition of the players ahead of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup, which is scheduled to be held in Dhaka in March.

Midfielder Jamal Bhuiyan failed to turn up as he is currently in Denmark while strikers Shakhawat Hossain Rony and Nabib Newaj Jibon skipped training due to injuries. Defender Mamun Mia and midfielder Atiqur Rahman Fahad

reported to the team manager over phone and are expected to join the camp within a couple of days.

On the opening day, the booters had an hour's training session which featured stretching, core stability and technique and they are supposed to have three sessions -- physical, technical and educational -- today.

"It is not possible to say anything based on the first day but the condition of the players can be understood after a few days," said assistant coach Syed Golam Jillani. "As the training has been arranged to get an idea about the condition of the players, I think the players will definitely be benefited as they have some commitment to the club and national team."

Meanwhile, the fitness training of the second group featuring 29 players will get underway from February 3.



The national team footballers listen intently to the instructions from fitness trainer and assistant coach during the first day of their conditioning camp at BKSP yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

Juventus ease past Lazio

AFP, Milan

Paulo Dybala hit a fifth-minute opener and Gonzalo Higuain added a quick second as Juventus humbled Lazio 2-0 on Sunday to restore their four-point lead over Roma.

Despite a poor record against the Turin giants in recent years, Lazio travelled to Turin looking to end the Serie A champions' 26-match unbeaten league run at home.

But Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri overcame a number of enforced absences to send out a reshuffled side that should have finished with a far more generous tally as several players spurned chances.

Juve's 16th win of the campaign leaves Allegri's men four points ahead of Roma, who can reduce the gap to a point with a win over Cagliari on Sunday.

Sevilla win, Atleti slip

AFP, Madrid

Sevilla produced another late fightback to remain just one point behind La Liga leaders Real Madrid after twice coming from behind to edge out rock bottom Osasuna 4-3 on Sunday.

However, Atletico Madrid lost further ground on the top three as they needed a spectacular Antoine Griezmann equaliser 10 minutes from time to secure a 2-2 draw at Athletic Bilbao.

Sevilla have now won five of the seven La Liga games when they have conceded first this season.

CHAPE RETURN TO ACTION

Chapeoense, the up and coming Brazilian football club decimated by a plane crash, proudly strode back on the field Saturday in a new line-up for their first match since the tragedy. The team took the field amid intense public and media attention focusing on the 20,000-place Arena Conda stadium in Chapeco decked out in the home side's green color. In the end, the game was a draw: 2-2 against Palmeiras. Before the 4:30 pm kickoff, the three survivors of the crash that wiped out their teammates received the Copa Sudamericana trophy to sustained applause. Widows of the players killed then filed onto the grass to receive medals on behalf of their husbands in an emotionally powerful ceremony.



Recalled Costa downs Hull

AFP, London



Diego Costa marked his comeback with a goal as Chelsea overcame an obdurate Hull City side 2-0 on Sunday to surge eight points clear at the Premier League summit.

Costa missed Chelsea's 3-0 win at Leicester City last weekend due to a back problem, amid reports he had rowed with a fitness coach after being unsettled by a big-money offer from China.

But after returning to the starting XI, his 15th goal of the campaign set Antonio Conte's side en route to an eighth straight home league win, which was rubber-stamped by Gary Cahill's late header.

With Tottenham Hotspur, Liverpool, Manchester City and Manchester United all dropping points and Costa back in the fold, Conte was left to reflect on something approaching a perfect weekend.

The Costa furore, and a recent 2-0 defeat at Tottenham, had threatened to rob Chelsea of their momentum, but they will go into back-to-back games against Liverpool and Arsenal with belief restored.

Marco Silva's Hull remain in the relegation zone, their disappointment compounded by injuries to Ryan Mason and Curtis Davies, the former being taken to hospital after an aerial collision with Cahill.

Costa replaced Willian in the only change to the Chelsea team that won at Leicester and he almost found the net inside 11 seconds, chesting down a headed clear-

ance and volleying just wide.

The game's early rhythm evaporated following a nasty clash of heads between Cahill and Mason, who had to be stretchered off after receiving treatment on the pitch for around eight minutes.

The nine minutes of added time yielded by Mason's injury produced the breakthrough.

Chelsea were aggrieved that Davies avoided a second yellow card for lunging in on Pedro, but they were celebrating shortly after.

Alonso's crossfield pass found Victor Moses on the right and he shifted the ball outside Andy Robertson before cutting the ball back for Costa to sweep home.

The penalty grievances were levelled up four minutes into the second half when Alonso escaped sanction despite clattering Abel Hernandez on the back of the foot as they competed for possession.

Costa twice threatened to double Chelsea's lead, but even with Davies forced off by an apparent hamstring problem, Hull continued to poke and probe, drawing groans from the home fans.

After seeing Courtois make another save, albeit to repel an off-target Michael Dawson effort, Conte made a double change, sending on Willian and Cesc Fabregas for Hazard and Pedro.

Fabregas made an instant impact, with his left-wing free-kick headed in by Cahill in the 81st minute for Chelsea's second goal.

Earlier, Arsenal secured a thrilling 2-1 win over Burnley courtesy of an Alexis Sanchez penalty in the 97th minute.



Chelsea striker Diego Costa marked his return to the team with a goal, scoring deep into stoppage time of the first half against Hull City at Stamford Bridge yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Choton returns

SPORTS REPORTER



Successful women's football coach Golam Rabbani Choton and his deputy Mahbubur Rahman Litu yesterday returned to the training camp of the under-16 women's team following inter-

vention of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin.

Choton and Litu had on Saturday left the training camp over disagreements with BFF's technical and strategic director Paul Smalley, who had criticised Choton's coaching system and was trying to bring some positional changes to the players.

Both coaches conducted training yesterday morning before the BFF boss discussed the matter with them at the BFF House.

"The problem is simple. The girls have been under pressure because of hard training. We have to understand the situation. The girls will play at a relatively different level from what are used to playing. So we have to prepare them before sending them to compete," Salahuddin told reporters after the meeting with Choton and Litu.

Though the women's football committee chairman Mahfuza Akter Kiron still termed the news report on the incident as a false and twisted one, BFF's vice president Tabith M Awal admitted the fact.

"You have filed a report after hearing the problem; you didn't wait for the solution. Now the problem has been solved but I know you will not write it. I hope you will write everything," said Tabith at a press conference which was arranged for declaration of the team's sponsorship for the J-Green Sakai Lady's Festival in Japan.

Tabith informed that Smalley will be working as adviser for the team during their Japan tour and will be advising on different aspects such as fitness, food, nutrition etc.

Walton will sponsor the team, who will play four matches in Japan as part of their preparation for September's AFC U-16 Championship in Thailand. "As Japan Football Association is bearing all expenses of the U-16 team for their Japan tour, we don't have much to provide. However, we are giving them all clothing," said Walton's additional director FM Iqbal Bin Anwar.

The 24-member team will leave for Japan tomorrow.

Stokes leads England

AFP, Kolkata

England all-rounder Ben Stokes put in a dominant performance with the bat and ball to help England pull off a five-run consolation win against India in the third ODI in Kolkata on Sunday.

Stokes claimed three wickets to help restrict India, who were chasing 322 for victory, to 316-9 as Kedar Jadhav's 90 went in vain.

Chris Woakes, who bowled the final over with India needing 16 to win, held his nerve to give England their first victory on the tour.

Earlier Stokes hit an unbeaten 39-ball 57 to help England post 321-8.

In England's innings, fifties from Jason Roy and Jonny Bairstow proved crucial before Stokes' knock.

England rode on a 98-run opening stand between Roy and Sam Billings before the Indian bowlers came back with regular strikes.

Stokes ensured the efforts of the top order were not in vain as his 73-run seventh-wicket stand with Woakes helped England put on 58 runs in the final five overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: England 321 for 8 in 50 overs (Roy 65, Baristow 56, Stokes 57 not out; Pandya 3-49)

INDIA: 316 for 9 in 50 overs (Kohli 55, Yuvraj 45, Jadhav 90; Stokes 3-63)

Result: England won by 5 runs.

Player-of-the-match: BA Stokes

Player-of-the-series: KM Jadhav