

What to WATCH

STARSPORTS 1
Women's World Cup
England v Australia
Live from 3:30pm

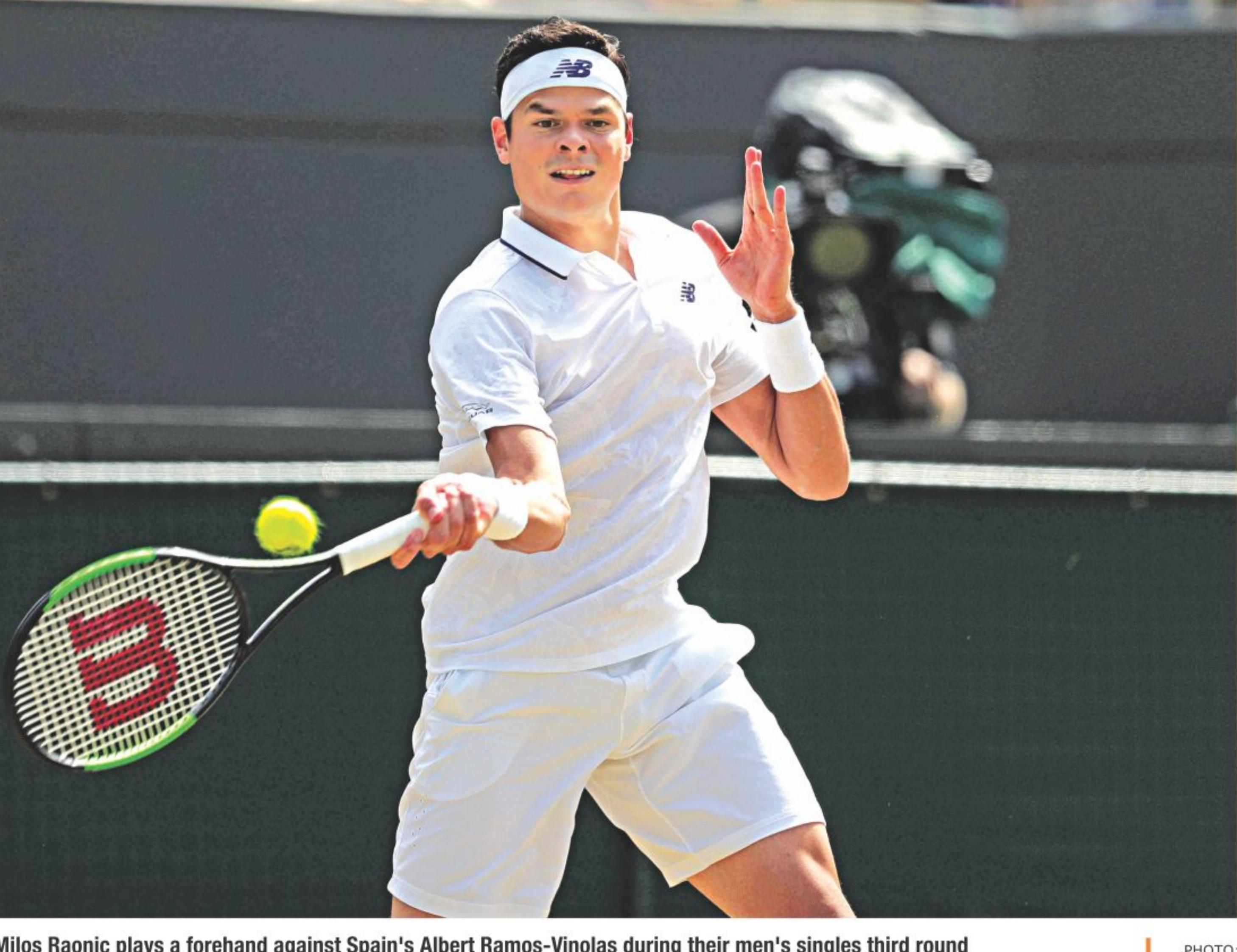
STARSPORTS 2
England v South Africa
1st Test, Day-4
Live from 4:00pm

SONYSIX & TEN 1HD
India v West Indies
T20I
Live from 9:30pm

STARSPORTS SELECT 1
Wimbledon
Third Round
Live from 4:30pm

MESSI'S SPECIAL GIFT TO GUESTS

Pablo Zabaleta has revealed Lionel Messi gave out special bottles of wine to those who attended his wedding last week. The Argentine showed off his dancing skills after tying the knot, while the pair were praised for donating the leftover food and drink to charity. But Zabaleta says there was another elegant touch in the form of giant wine bottles which had Messi's name on them. "We got a bottle of really good wine, a Malbec, which Lionel has put his name on the bottle," the right-back told West Ham's official website. "I've kept that bottle of wine in Argentina for next time." Zabaleta was delighted to be able to attend his close friend's special moment alongside 260 guests. —AGENCIES



Canada's Milos Raonic plays a forehand against Spain's Albert Ramos-Vinolas during their men's singles third round match in Wimbledon yesterday. Raonic won the match 7-6 (7/3), 6-4, 7-5.

'No high ambitions'

U-23s fly out to Nepal en route to Palestine

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh U-23 football team will fly out of the country this morning to play two practice matches in Nepal and Qatar as part of their preparation for the upcoming AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers with the hope of fine tuning the system they want to play in during the Qualifiers in Palestine from July 19 to 23.

The charges of Andrew Ord will play a practice match against the Nepal U-23 team on July 11 and one against the Qatar U-23 team on July 13 before facing hosts Palestine, Jordan and Tajikistan in Group E encounters of the qualifiers.

Considering FIFA rankings and their opponents strengths on paper, Bangladesh are the weakest side in the group and it is going to be an uphill task for them to turn the tables, and coach Andrew Ord did not give any hope of producing any surprising results in the qualifiers.

"I like to win but it is not going to happen as I wish. We have not won a game in the whole history of AFC U-23 Championship qualifiers. We will be trying to win a game in three matches and create history. But there will definitely be improvement. We need to stop losing. We need to be optimistic," Ord said during the disclosure of the 23-member final squad at the BFF House yesterday.

"Be patient, get behind the players.

Don't push the boys harshly as the harmony in the team is very good. The trick is to get a good start; then it will boost the players. We have got to be optimistic, try our best and give maximum. I will make sure everyone takes it seriously," said Ord.

Even though the Australian had two weeks to prepare his team, he did not get all the players together as some experienced players joined the camp with injuries in the latter part. So he is looking to the two practice matches outside the country as an opportunity to fine tune the squad.

"Preparation, I don't think, is over. It is halfway through. I think we will prepare in Nepal and Qatar too and will have a couple of training sessions there. We have two friendlies from where we can learn and try to fine tune the squad before the tournament," said the 37-year-old, who is going to lead a national U-23 side for the first time in his coaching career.

The management of the Bangladesh Football Federation has no high ambition either; rather they want to plug the gaps in the side.

"The unexpected result against Bhutan made us think differently. As Bangladesh U-23 is going to play against three tough teams, it will be unrealistic to expect something better from them. But we think many players of this team will be part of the senior team in near future, so we consider this tournament as part of our preparation for the Bangabandhu Gold Cup and SAFF Championship," said National Teams Committee chairman Kazi Nabil Ahmed.



Coach Andrew Ord (2nd from L) speaks as Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) officials look on during the official press conference of the Under-23 national team at the BFF House yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Venus drove 'lawfully'

AFP, Miami



New evidence shows Venus Williams was driving "lawfully" when she was involved in a deadly car crash that sparked a lawsuit against the tennis star, police in Florida said Friday.

An initial police report on the June 9 crash in Palm Beach Gardens described Williams as being "at fault" in the incident.

On Friday, Palm Beach Gardens police issued a statement saying new video obtained of the collision showed that "the vehicle driven by Venus Williams lawfully entered the intersection on a circular green traffic signal, and attempted to travel north

through the intersection to BallenIsles Drive."

She was forced to halt in the intersection when a south-bound vehicle turned in front of her, police said.

Once that car passed, Williams began to proceed through the intersection, also in accordance with traffic laws.

By that time, however, the light had changed and a vehicle driven by Linda Barson, traveling west on an intersecting street, collided with Williams' car.

Barson's husband, 78-year-old Jerome Barson, died on June 22 of injuries sustained in the crash.

Barson's family filed a lawsuit against Williams in Palm Beach County claiming she "negligently operated" her vehicle.

Murray bemoans state of courts

AFP, London



Defending champion Andy Murray added his voice to the growing list of players unhappy at the state of Wimbledon's grass courts, even claiming the hallowed Centre Court has developed divots.

World number one Murray said the courts were not in as good a condition as they have been in the past.

Other players have criticised the state of Court 18 with France's Kristina Mladenovic claiming that a hole had appeared in the surface.

Weeks of hot weather and little rain have left many surfaces stripped of grass after just five days of the two-week long tournament.

"The court I don't think is in as good of condition as previous years," said Murray after beating Italy's Fabio Fognini 6-2, 4-6, 6-1, 7-5 on Centre Court on Friday to reach the last-16 for a 10th straight year.

"There's quite a few spots on the court, like just behind the baseline and just in front of the baseline, where there's quite big lumps of grass, sort of almost like little divots there, which I don't remember really being the case."

Fognini agreed, saying the court "was really bad".

On Court 17 on Thursday, American star Bethanie Mattek-Sands suffered a horrific right knee injury after her leg buckled.

It was not clear, however, whether the state of the surface was a contributing factor in the 32-year-old's accident.

Earlier Friday, Wimbledon officials dismissed concerns over the state of the courts.

"The court preparation has been to exactly the same meticulous standard as in previous years," said the All England Club.

Milan snap up Conti

AFP, Rome

AC Milan continued their summer spending spree on Friday with the signing of Italian right-back Andrea Conti from Serie A rivals Atalanta on a five-year deal.

The Chinese-owned northern outfit described the Italian under-21 player as "one of the most interesting talents" in Serie A last season, when he helped Atalanta to fourth.

The 23-year-old arrives on a deal estimated to be worth 25 million euros (\$28.5 million).

Conti becomes AC Milan's seventh recruit as the club look to rebuilt after finishing sixth last term.

Other new arrivals include 21-year-old Portuguese midfielder Andre Silva from Porto for 38m euros (\$42.5m); Italian striker Fabio Borini on a one-year loan deal from Sunderland; Ricardo Rodriguez (Wolfsburg), Hakan Calhanoglu (Bayer Leverkusen), Mateo Musacchio (Villarreal) and Franck Kessie (on loan from Atalanta).

United agree Lukaku fee

AFP, London

Premier League
Belgian international striker Romelu Lukaku is set to join Manchester United for a reported £75million (\$97m, 85.5m euros), a record fee between British clubs, after the buying club announced Saturday they had reached agreement with United.

The 24-year-old's signing -- which the BBC says includes £15m in add-ons -- represents a coup for United and their manager Jose Mourinho whose former club Chelsea had earmarked him as their top striking target for the close season.

Going in the opposite direction could well be United and England record goalscorer Wayne Rooney, who according to press reports is willing to take a cut in his £13million a year wages to return to his first club, but with the promise of more first team football than United last year.

However, the 31-year-old's move, if it takes place, is not part of the Lukaku deal, according to reports, and United are willing to let him go on a free transfer despite having a year left on his contract.

It brings Mourinho and Lukaku back together again as the Portuguese manager in his second spell as Chelsea

manager had sold him to Everton in 2014 for £28million.

United said in a statement it was "delighted to announce a fee has been agreed with Everton for the transfer of Romelu Lukaku, subject to a medical & personal terms."

"A further announcement will be made in due course," added United.

Lukaku, who is reported to have been offered wages of over £200,000 a week by United, should have returned

to England on Thursday for pre-season training with Everton but instead was pictured training with his close friend and the most expensive player in the world, United midfielder Paul Pogba, who he is on holiday with in Los Angeles.

United are due in Los Angeles this weekend for a pre-season tour.

According to British media reports the decisive factor in Lukaku's head being turned towards United and not a



return to the club he idolised as a schoolboy Chelsea were Pogba and their agent Mino Raiola.

Raiola did extremely well out of United last year making an estimated £40m from Pogba's transfer from Juventus alone while stablemates Henryk Mkhitarian and Zlatan Ibrahimovic also joined the Red Devils'.

Chelsea reportedly balked at paying Raiola's fee for Lukaku's transfer although they had made a similar offer for the player.

Ibrahimovic's long-term injury suffered in a Europa League match last season and the fading powers of Rooney have made the capture of a top striker imperative for Mourinho.

Apparent efforts to sign Real Madrid's Alvaro Morata came to nothing leading United to switch their attention to Lukaku.

Ironically Chelsea may now need to beat a path to Real's door to try and secure Morata's services.

Conte is not reported to be angry with the Chelsea board but sources have told the British media he feels betrayed by Lukaku especially as he had held several discussions with him since the end of the season.

The Italian coach and his backroom staff are yet to sign the new four year contracts they were offered at the end of the campaign.