

Fan frenzy for legends line-up

JAHANGIR SHAH from Manikganj



The Shaheed Miraj-Tapan Stadium in Manikganj was packed to the rafters on Saturday. The crowd in attendance were enjoying the final of a football tournament. It was not a star-cast line-up of this generation's footballers but a constellation of some big names of a glorious past when football was a daily-dose of entertainment for sports lovers in the country.

Out in the middle were Don (who sported the hair-style of Kazi Salahuddin and earned his name as a striker), Alfaz Ahmed (who started his career as a defensive midfielder and left as a fine striker), and Arman Miah (one of the most skilled midfield playmakers the country has produced).

They were actually playing more for fun in a tournament called Dr. Jibon Smriti Veterans Gold Cup Football. They are the last of a golden generation of footballers in a country where the game suffered an unthinkable slide down over the last 15 odd years and is now languishing to survive.

The week-long tournament jointly organised by the District Sports Association and District Football Association has become a popular annual event ever since it was introduced in 2009. This is a platform where the football stars of the 70s to 90s got the opportunity to have a reunion on a football plain they once dictated. It also allowed the fans to be nostalgic and the knowledgeable Manikganj football fans have been thoroughly enjoying it.

Dhaka Sonali Oiti Club won the final defeating their Manikganj counterpart by 4-0 goals with Don scoring twice while Alfaz and Arman shared the other two goals.



Spectators turned up in staggering numbers as they were transported back to the past with legends of yesteryears lighting up the Shaheed Miraj-Tapan Stadium in Manikganj yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

But during the last week, the fans enjoyed the sight of so many exciting players of the yesteryears-- Nijam, Faisal, Rashedul Hasan Shamim, Milon, Jilani, Zahid, Milon Mollah, Lajuk, Jasim, Swapan, Mukul, Robin, Samrat, Gobinda et al.

Most of the former stars, who are now engaged in different professions, said that they take part in the tournament every year. They also expressed their happiness at seeing the passion of football fans and the respect they still receive.

This year the event also featured a team from Kolkatta. The Kalyani Town Club from Kolkata are taking part in the tournament for a second successive year. East Kolkata football team, which featured some star players from the East Bengal of the 70s and 80s, took part in the festival in 2015.

Khorshed Alam Babul, a midfielder with two hearts like Brazilian Kafu, welcomed the initiative and said that football is still a passion for fans.

"The presence of 15 thousand people in the field proves that people of this country still love football," said the midfield marshal of the 80s.

Another national award-winning football player Hasanuzzaman Khan Bablu said that this kind of sporting activity will allow young generations to take to the field rather than terrorism or drugs. The Mayor of Manikganj municipality Ramzan Ali and Organizing Secretary of the Bangladesh Jubo League SM Jahid distributed prizes among the winners. The Mayor, Ramzan was also present on the concluding day of the tournament.

The tournament began on July 8 with the State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Zahid Malek Swapan inaugurating the festival that was nostalgia at its best.

ALL TIME GRAND SLAM WINNERS					
PLAYER	TOTAL	AO	FO	W	US
Roger Federer	19	5	1	8	5
Rafael Nadal	15	1	10	2	2
Pete Sampras	14	2	0	7	5
Roy Emerson	12	6	2	2	2
Novak Djokovic	12	6	1	3	2

FEDERER WIMBLEDON WINS	
2003	def. Mark Philippoussis 7-6 (7-5), 6-2, 7-6 (7-3)
2004	def. Andy Roddick 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7-3), 6-4
2005	def. Andy Roddick 6-2, 7-6 (7-2), 6-4
2006	def. Rafael Nadal 6-0, 7-6 (7-5), 6-7 (2-7), 6-3
2007	def. Rafael Nadal 7-6 (9-7), 4-6, 7-6 (7-3), 2-6, 6-2
2009	def. Andy Roddick 5-7, 7-6 (8-6), 7-6 (7-5), 3-6, 16-14
2012	def. Andy Murray 4-6, 7-5, 6-3, 6-4
2017	def. Marin Cilic 6-3, 6-1, 6-4

A masterful fortnight of tennis culminated in a straight-sets outclassing of Marin Cilic in the final yesterday, and with it Roger Federer stood alone in ruling the grasscourts of Wimbledon with a record eighth title.

PHOTO: AFP

Roger reigns supreme

AFP, London



Roger Federer won a record eighth Wimbledon title and became the tournament's oldest champion Sunday with a straight-sets victory over injury-hit Marin Cilic who dramatically broke down in tears midway through the final.

Federer claimed his 19th Grand Slam title 6-3, 6-1, 6-4 and at 35 is Wimbledon's oldest men's winner of the modern era, succeeding Arthur Ashe, who was almost 32 when he won in 1976.

However, the Swiss superstar's 11th Wimbledon final, and 29th at the majors, will also be remembered for the moving sight of the popular Cilic breaking down in tears after slipping 3-0 behind in the second set.

The seventh seeded Croatian, the 2014 US Open champion, sobbed inconsolably and buried his head in his towel as his title dream slipped away.

He had his left foot taped at the end of the second set but it was in vain as Federer became the first player since Bjorn Borg in 1976 to win Wimbledon without dropping a set in the entire tournament.

"He's a hero," Federer said of his opponent. Twelve months ago, Federer was defeated in five sets in the semifinals by Milos Raonic and promptly shut down his season to rest a knee injury.

"It's disbelief I can achieve such heights. I wasn't sure I would ever be here in another final after last year," said Federer, who turns 36 in three weeks' time and who has now broken the tie for seven Wimbledon titles he shared with Pete Sampras and William Renshaw.

"I had some tough ones in the finals, losing two against Novak [Djokovic].

"But I always believed. I kept on believing and dreaming I could get back.

"Here am I today with the eighth. It's fantastic, if you keep believing you can go far in your life."

Federer won his 18th Slam in Australia in January on his return to the tour before adding the Indian Wells and Miami Masters back-to-back and a ninth Halle grasscourt title.

EIGHT CHAPTERS OF DOMINANCE



MOST WIMBLEDON WINS

Roger Federer	8 (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2017)
Pete Sampras	7 (1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000)
Björn Borg	5 (1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980)

FED-FACTS

Federer becomes the first man in history to win eight Wimbledon titles and the second to win eight titles at the same Grand Slam event.

At 35 years 342 days, Federer becomes the oldest man in the Open Era to win the Wimbledon title.

With a straight-sets win, Federer becomes the third man in the Open Era to win multiple Grand Slam titles without dropping a set.

He also skipped the entire claycourt season.

"I've got to take more time off," joked Federer, playing in just his seventh event of the year.

"I'll be gone again for the next six months! I don't know if it will work as well again."

Cilic, who had spent four and a half hours more than Federer getting to the final, said retiring with his injury was never an option.

"I never give up in a match. I gave it my best -- it's all I can do," said Cilic who was still emotional at the trophy presentation.

"I had an amazing journey here. I played the best tennis of my life. I really want to thank my team -- they gave so much strength to me."

Beneath the Royal Box where Prince William and wife Kate rubbed shoulders with actors Hugh Grant and Bradley Cooper, Cilic had his first break point in the fourth game.

It was saved by Federer and it was to be Cilic's only glimmer of hope. Federer broke in the next game when his opponent suffered a nasty fall on the worn surface which was to ultimately undermine his challenge.

Federer then served up two love service games before claiming the opener 6-3 off a Cilic double fault, the Croatian's second.

The Swiss superstar swept into a 3-0 lead in the second set and at the changeover, Cilic slumped in his court-side chair in tears and pain. The trainer and doctor were summoned before Cilic hid his head in his towel in a desperate attempt to compose himself.

The 28-year-old held serve on the resumption but the lethal barrage continued, Federer stretching his lead over his friend to 4-1.

Cilic dropped the set 6-1 and called a medical timeout to have his left foot banded and take a painkiller.

His discomfort was reflected in his statistics. Federer pounced again with a break for 4-3 and wrapped up the one-sided final with a second serve ace to complete his coronation after just 1hr 41 minutes.

Fittingly, he too wept at the end.

Ibrahim in for Jewel

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Ibrahim left here on Saturday to join the national U-23 football team after Jewel Rana was ruled out of the AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers after picking up an injury in a practice match against Qatar.

The U-23s team departed from Qatar for Jordan yesterday afternoon en route to Palestine, where the tournament will begin from July 19.

According to the team manager, Jewel, who left for Bangladesh last night, will need up to five weeks to heal.

The U-23s will face Jordan in their opener on July 19.

Jimmy joins hockey camp

SPORTS REPORTER

Rasel Mahmud Jimmy joined the national hockey team's ongoing preparation camp for the upcoming 10th Men's Asia Cup yesterday, one week after he was exempted from a ban.

Jimmy was dropped from the preliminary squad due to the three-year ban but was brought back as part of newly-appointed coach Mahbub Harun's demands and is now part of a 43-member preliminary squad.

Jimmy vowed to do his best to take Bangladesh through qualifying by producing good results at home.

Belotti heading towards Torino departure?

AGENCIES, Milan



Striker Andrea Belotti was absent from Torino's kit launch ahead of the new Serie A season, further fuelling speculation that he is set for a big-money move this summer.

Belotti scored 26 times in 35 Serie A appearances for Torino last season and has been strongly linked with both Milan and Chelsea.

The fact that Belotti, the star of Torino's team and their most marketable player, was missing from the Turin-based side's new shirt launch could be a strong sign that he is ready to seek pastures new.

The Italy international has a €100m release clause in his contract but is being linked with a switch for less than that figure.

Milan have been rebuilding their team with fervour this transfer window and have added some big names like Hakan Calhanoglu, Andre Silva, Ricardo Rodriguez and have most recently prized away Juventus' Leonardo Bonucci -- who took out a full-page ad in a local newspaper to thank the Old Lady on Saturday.

Milan have also emerged as the most likely destination for Belotti, with the reports in Italy of player reportedly agreeing personal terms with the club. Torino president Urbano Cairo has already rebuffed previous suitors by saying that he would not settle for anything below the exorbitant release clause, but it appears that Milan are close to striking a deal.

Milan have reportedly made an offer of 40 million euros and also thrown in M'Baye Niang and Gabriel Paletta, but it appears that Torino want 80 million euros alongside the two players in order to complete the deal.



Terim attacks kebab house

AGENCIES, Istanbul

Turkey national team coach Fatih Terim has allegedly laid siege to a restaurant in a marketplace in Kusadasi, a beach resort town in Turkey, along with his bodyguard and two sons-in-law as it was too close to his son-in-law's eatery.

The Beeves Steakhouse, owned by Terim's son-in-law Ahmet Baran Cetin, is situated next to the vandalised Yuzevler Kebab House. Terim's son-in-law's repeated threats to the owner of the Kebab House to move away fell on deaf ears and with no avenue left, he called his father-in-law.

Terim called the owner and threatened him, but when he would not back down the Turkish coach, alleged to be in an inebriated state, travelled to the restaurant at midnight with and instigated a fight.

The owner of the restaurant, Selahattin Aydogdu, and four employees received minor injuries and pressed charges at the police station.

Allegedly, "important people" have called the owner of the restaurant all night to change his testimony and not press charges. But Aydogdu, who is also a member of Turkish Football Federation, said: "I will continue pressing charges. The match has just begun".



Lewis Hamilton celebrated winning his home British Grand Prix for the fourth year in a row by going crowd-surfing on his adoring audience.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Four in a row for Lewis

AFP, Silverstone



Lewis Hamilton swept to his fourth consecutive victory at the British Grand Prix on Sunday to move within a single point of world championship leader Sebastian Vettel.

In a dramatic race packed with incident, Vettel suffered a late puncture and finished seventh for Ferrari after his team-mate Kimi Raikkonen also pitted with a similar problem in the closing stages.

Hamilton's victory, a record-equalling fifth in his home event and the 57th of his career, rebooted his title challenge as he came home ahead of team-mate Valtteri Bottas, who started ninth.

"It's a feeling I just can't describe really," said a delighted Hamilton. "Look at this

crowd. Thank you to everyone who turned up. God bless you!

"It was incredible - I was inspired by all the kids who came."

Raikkonen was third for Ferrari, after the Italian team had made a strategic gamble with their tyres, ahead of Max Verstappen and his Red Bull team-mate Daniel Ricciardo, who had started 19th on the grid.

Nico Hulkenberg finished sixth for Renault ahead of Vettel, Esteban Ocon and his Force India team-mate Sergio Perez and Felipe Massa, who came home 10th for Williams.

Bottas said: "I am really happy for this today. It was not easy, with so many cars to get through, but the team did a perfect strategy. I just kept my head down and we managed it."

Alam escapes road accident with broken nose

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national hockey team's assistant coach Alamgir Alam suffered a nose injury during a road accident on his way back to Dhaka from Naogaon to join the national team's training camp in the capital yesterday.

After enjoying his two-day vacation in Naogaon, the former national hockey player boarded an SR Paribahan bus which collided with a truck at Sherpur, roughly nine to ten kilometres from Bogra, in the morning.

"The victims, including me, were rescued by the Fire Services."

"I was then taken to Zia Medical Hospital in Bogra for primary treatment and an X-ray was done on my nose which revealed a fracture," Alamgir informed over the phone yesterday.

"I have been advised to take two-weeks rest but I returned home safely," said the former Abahani, player adding that he would undergo a head examination after one week.