

Star

DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 18, 2022, ASHAR 4, 1429 BS

SPORT

"2026 will be much, much bigger. I think this part of the world doesn't realise what will happen in 2026. These three countries will be turned upside down and then flipped again. The world will be invading Canada, Mexico and the United States. They will be invaded by a big wave of joy and happiness."

FIFA president Gianni Infantino



Nadal intends to play at Wimbledon

AFP, Palma

Spanish tennis legend Rafael Nadal said on Friday he intends to play at Wimbledon but his final decision rests on how his troublesome left foot feels after training in London next week.

"My intention is to play at Wimbledon," Nadal said at a press conference in Mallorca. "The treatment and the last week of training tells me there is a chance. I will travel to London on Monday, play an exhibition and do a week of training to see if it's possible."

Nadal said injections meant his left foot felt "asleep" during the French Open final on June 5 -- he still beat Casper Ruud to claim a record-extending 22nd Grand Slam title.

Nadal travelled to Barcelona last week to begin "pulsed



radiofrequency stimulation", a treatment aimed at reducing nerve pain. Nadal's spokesperson said the treatment would leave the nerves in his foot "temporarily numb".

"I'm happy. I've felt a bit of pain, but it's different to what I had before, which for me is progress."

Nadal has won Wimbledon twice in his career, in 2008 and 2010 but is hoping to make his first appearance at the All England Club in three years.

"I will travel to London, play two matches there before the tournament and follow my normal schedule to prepare for Wimbledon," Nadal said.

"Who knows what can happen in a couple of days -- if the situation changes or something more negative (happens), there will be a moment to explain."

"But I am excited to travel to Wimbledon and to play for the first time in three years."

He said his plan is to "play Wimbledon, rest, then Canada and then the US Open."



Bangladesh had another frustrating day as catches were not accepted and reviews not taken during the second day of the first Test against West Indies at the Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua and Barbuda on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Missed opportunities pose further setback

SPORTS REPORTER

Skipper Shakib Al Hasan had said that it appeared the conditions were getting better for batting after the first day in Antigua and, from the evidence of the first session and the opening exchanges of the second session, the conditions for batting had definitely improved.

That meant more misery heaped on Bangladesh after their batting debacle on the first day. The pitch had posed questions in the early morning on Day One but, as so often has been the case, Bangladesh crumbled when faced with a slightly steep challenge.

The patches of grass that allowed a few deliveries to rise a few inches higher than they would under normal circumstances created great distress for the Tigers but the Windies batters continued to toil on the second day just they had done the day before. Patience and application was key.

There were instances that the ball gained on batters, such as with skipper Kraigg Brathwaite. But he would immediately drop his right hand off the handle and play with a soft touch.

Thus, whenever the bounced was greater than anticipated, batters were able to survive. Shakib Al Hasan got the only

wicket of the first session yesterday but unsurprisingly, the pace bowlers remained wicketless, albeit not for lack of trying. Just as they had kept a tight leash on Windies on the first day, they came back and created opportunities.

The lack of readiness for the format also told. In just the fourth over of the day, Ebadot Hossain tested Nkrumah Bonner with a few sizzling deliveries. Then, with the last ball of that over, he found the gloves of the wicketkeeper again. There were oohs and aahs but no real appeals. Replays later showed the ball took the outside edge.

Khaled Ahmed then got one to jump from a good length that undid Bonner. The outside edge split the gap between wicketkeeper and first slip but neither moved towards the ball. Mahmudul Hasan Joy, at leg slip, did not keep low enough when Brathwaite provided an opportunity and another chance went begging. In the second session, the collective shoulders dropped.

The situation once again portrayed the importance of getting into a positive frame of mind, especially in the first innings but the Tigers' tale in that regard has been sorrowful of late.

They were bundled out for 150 or below

in the first innings on seven occasions since 2018. No surprise that they lost those games by big margins.

Since 2018, those first-innings failures have also seen the Tigers lose 19 of the 28 Test matches prior to the first Test against the West Indies. In that time, they have won six and managed to draw three.

Of those 28 matches, eight have resulted in innings defeats, which included an innings and 219-run defeat against the West Indies in Antigua in 2018.

The Tigers' peak in Test cricket was the win over New Zealand at Mount Maunganui, where they showed a Test process for once during a first innings haul of 458.

That innings had seen a surge in positivity, not with aggression but relentlessly. They do not have to look too far, Brathwaite missed out on a ton, out for 94 when Khaled's delivery kept a little low in the second session. Brathwaite had however set his side up by playing 268 deliveries.

Taking lessons to improve from their disastrous showing in the first innings is never lacking. Something extraordinary will be required in the second innings or they will end up following in the footsteps of their past failures.

Karthik, Avesh help India level T20 series

AFP, Rajkot

Dinesh Karthik's blazing half-century and four wickets by Avesh Khan led India to a series-leveling 82-run victory over South Africa in the fourth Twenty20 international on Friday.

Karthik smashed 55 off 27 deliveries to guide India to 169-6, a total their bowlers defended by dismissing South Africa for 87 and level the five-match series at 2-2 in Rajkot.

The Proteas slipped to their lowest ever T20 total, two lower than their 89 all-out against Australia at Johannesburg in 2020.

Avesh returned his T20 best figures of 4-18 as the hosts in Rajkot defended their total with ease for the second time in a row with the series decider on Sunday in Bangalore.

The in-form Karthik set up the crushing victory with his maiden T20 fifty to lift India from a precarious 81-4 in the 13th over to take the attack to the opposition.

He put on a crucial 65-run stand with Hardik Pandya, who hit 46 off 31 deliveries. He smashed nine fours and two sixes as he surpassed his previous best of 48 to make India plunder 73 runs from the final five overs.



BFF shifts FIFA friendlies to Dhaka

STAR SPORTS REPORT

Considering the ongoing flood crisis in Sylhet, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has shifted the women's national team's two FIFA friendlies from Sylhet to Dhaka after Sylhet District Association expressed their helplessness to prepare the ground amid the alarming situation.



The booters are scheduled to play two FIFA tier-1 matches against their Malaysian counterparts on June 23 and 26.

Mohiuddin Selim, secretary of Sylhet DSA and executive member of the BFF, had let the football federation know about their incapability to prepare the practice ground as well as the competition ground for the FIFA friendlies. Also, the Bangladesh Premier League's tie between hosts Rahmatganj MFS and Bashundhara Kings, slated for June 20 at Sylhet Stadium was deferred by a day and shifted to Munshiganj.

England hit record score to crush Netherlands

REUTERS

England broke their own world record for the highest team total in one-day international (ODI) history after they smashed 498-4 in 50 overs against a hapless Netherlands side to win a one-sided contest by 232 runs in Amstelveen on Friday.

Jos Buttler, Dawid Malan and Phil Salt notched up centuries while Liam Livingstone walked into bat in the 45th over and scored England's fastest ODI fifty as they eclipsed their previous record of 481 against Australia in 2018.

Malan (125) and Salt (122) laid the foundation for England's record score with a 222-run partnership before Buttler (162 not out off 70 balls) came in and accelerated the scoring in what was a brutal onslaught on the Dutch bowlers.

Buttler, who top scored in the Indian Premier League (IPL) this season with 863 runs, continued where he left off, smashing seven

fours and clearing the ropes 14 times after he was let off twice by poor Dutch fielding early in his innings.

"It certainly feels like I'm in the form of my life. The IPL couldn't have gone much better for me so I was feeling in good touch coming here," Buttler said after he was named the man of the match.

"It was a really good wicket, we got off to a good start and that gave me the licence to really attack."

Buttler brought up his century in just 47 balls, the second-fastest in England history and one ball shy of his own record.

Needing to score at an eye-watering 10 per over to win, the Dutch side barely managed to score at half the required run rate before they were bowled out for 266, with Moeen Ali picking up three wickets.

"Getting Jason Roy out (in the second over) was a good moment," Dutch skipper Pieter Seelaar said. "But dropping those catches... (you

can't drop the best batsman in the world twice in an over. In that we let ourselves down."

As England continued dealing in sixes, some of which landed in the trees and bushes lining the ground, there was even a moment where the Dutch players had to help the ground staff search for the ball.

Livingstone, who reached his fifty in 17 balls, finished unbeaten on 66 off just 22 deliveries.

England now have the three highest scores in ODI history, having also scored 444 against Pakistan in 2016.

"It's great learning, this will make us better cricketers in the future," Seelaar added. "The intimidation was there, the Barmy Army was loud, we have to pull ourselves together and come back on Sunday."

England's second string side play two more ODIs against the Netherlands on Sunday and Wednesday.

