



Did U Know?

Ken Rosewall is both the youngest and oldest man to win the men's singles titles at the Australian Open. He won in 1953 at the age of 18 and again in 1972 at the age of 37.



Wasim Bari

(PCB chief selector)
"I don't know about his background, but I found him a decent person, unlike normal cricketers."
On Rahul Dravid.

What to WATCH

ESPN

Sportscentre

Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports

Australian Open

Men's/Women's Second Rd

Live at 6:00 am

FA Cup

Man United vs Albion

Live at 2:00 am (Thursday)

Sania, Yan lead Asian charge

AFP, Melbourne

China's Yan Zi and India's Sania Mirza spearheaded Asia's charge at the Australian Open Tuesday, with five players from the region safely into the second round.

Yan scored the best result of the day, coming through a tough three-setter against 11th seeded Nathalie Dechy of France to clock one of China's best victories since its players started emerging on the world scene last year.

The 21-year-old, playing her first-ever Grand Slam match, proved too resilient for Dechy, who reached the semifinals here last year, winning 6-7, 6-2, 6-3.

Her compatriot Yuan Meng also won, beating Melinda Czink of Hungary and will face second seed Kim Clijsters next. The Belgian earlier accounted for Cho Yoon-jeong of South Korea.

Mirza, the highest-seeded Asian left at 32, scored a comfortable first round victory against Bulgaria's Victoria Azarenka, maintaining the form that pushed her to new heights last year.

The 19-year-old, whose star has risen rapidly since she won a wild card and made the third round of last year's Australian Open, outplayed Azarenka 7-6, 6-2 in 81 minutes.

She will now take on Michaela Krajicek of the Netherlands, with the prospect of meeting number three seed Amelie Mauresmo of France in the third round.

Japan's Shinobu Asagoe and Aiko Nakamura also kept their nerve to live for another day.

A US Open quarterfinalist last season, Asagoe came back from a set down to overpower Israeli Shahar Peer 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Nakamura made a meal of French qualifier Alize Cornet before finally triumphing 6-2, 4-6, 6-2 and will now play 31st seed Gisela Dulko of Argentina.

The Chinese star took the first set off Mauresmo before finally succumbing 4-6, 6-2, 6-2.

China's Zheng Jie also failed to progress, losing in three sets to Russia's Anna Chakvetadze.

Eight Asians fell at the first hurdle on Monday, including the region's top ranked player Ai Sugiyama, the 26th seed.

Veteran Tamarine Tanasugarn, who has been for long a flagbearer for Asian women, was ousted Tuesday by Jamea Jackson of the United States 7-6 (7/5), 6-2.

Biman land safely

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Biman completed the Super Six line-up of the Aktel Premier Cricket League with a comfortable seven-wicket victory over Kalabagan Krira Chakra at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

The match, which was called off without a ball being bowled on Monday due to foggy weather, turned into a 25-over-a-side contest following a delayed start.

Sent into bat, Kalabagan scored 105-8 in the face of some controlled bowling from left-arm spinner Mosharrar Hossain, the most successful Biman bowler with 3-23 in five overs. National left-arm pacer Syed Rasel was also impressive with two wickets giving away only eight runs in his quota of five overs.

Biman, in their chase, lost their opener Javed Omar (1) early but a 86-run second wicket partnership between Nazmus Shadat and Shahriar Hossain helped them to

cruise to 106-3 with five balls to spare.

Nazmus scored 41 off 65 balls with four hits to the fence while former national opener Shahriar was not out on 47 off 66 balls that featured six boundaries.

The victory of the national flag carrier meant the exit of last year's runners-up City Club from title race.

City and Brothers Union finished on equal 12 points on completion of the first phase but the

POINTS TABLE

Teams	M	W	T	AB	L	Pts
DOHS	11	10	0	0	1	20
Victoria	11	8	0	0	3	16
MSC	11	7	0	0	4	14
Sonargaon	11	7	0	0	4	14
Biman	11	7	0	0	4	14
BU	11	6	0	0	5	12
City	11	6	0	0	5	12
Abahani	11	4	0	0	7	8
Kalabagan	11	4	0	0	7	8
Agrani	11	3	0	0	8	6
Indira	11	3	0	0	8	6
Orient	11	1	0	0	10	2

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Gopibagh outfit progressed into the Super Six by virtue of winning the head-to-head clash against Tushar Imran-led City Club, who had hogged the spotlight in last two seasons.

With the day's outcome Biman improved their collection to 14 points to share the third spot with Mohammed Sporting Club and big-spending Sonargaon Cricketers.

Defending champions and table-toppers Old DOHS will launch their Super Six campaigns with a handsome four-point lead over their nearest rival Victoria Sporting Club, who glued to their previous collection of 16 points after conceding defeat against Sonargaon Cricketers in their final first phase match on Monday.

The Super Six featuring colour cloth and white ball will commence on January 20 with three matches billed on the opening day.

DOHS will take on Brothers Union at Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Victoria meet Sonargaon at the BKSP and Mohammedan

BCB to name squad for SL series soon

SPORTS REPORTER

The national cricketers will not be available when the Ispahani National Cricket League resumes on February 6 across the country.

"We will announce a short list comprising 16 to 18 players for the home series against Sri Lanka in the next couple of days. So, there is hardly any chance for any of the selected members to take any part in the National League," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed.

Sri Lanka are secluded arrive here on February 17 to play two Tests and three ODIs. The national camp will start on February 4 on completion of the Premier League.

The first phase of the camp will take place in Dhaka before it moves to Bogra's Shaheed Chandu Stadium, which is awaiting international recognition.

"We have a plan to release some players after the Test series to play the National League. We are also thinking to include few national team players in the A side to play against UAE," informed Faruque.



PHOTO: AFP
THE STORY ENDS: India opener Virender Sehwag edges a rising Navedul Hasan delivery to Pakistan wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal to end his marathon innings on the fifth and final day of the Lahore Test on Tuesday.

Australia to bid for WC

Cricket

REUTERS, Melbourne

Australia will proceed with a bid to stage the 2011 Cricket World Cup, a Cricket Australia official said on Tuesday, despite reports from Pakistan it would defer to a joint Asian bid.

The news comes just two days after Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh announced they were launching a joint bid. Pakistan officials had told reporters they understood Australia would not bid against them.

But Cricket Australia general manager Peter Young said Australia was still interested in staging the event.

"At this stage the ICC (International Cricket Council) is just asking for expressions of interest and we are interested," he told Reuters by telephone.

"The deadline is February and we will be going ahead with that,"

Young said details of Australia's bid had yet to be finalised but it was likely to form a partnership with New Zealand. Australia and New Zealand also co-hosted the 1992 World Cup.

The ICC is expected to make a

decision in June.

"We are confident we can host a world-class tournament," Young said.

"We haven't hosted the World Cup since 1992 and we have all the facilities and personnel to stage an event of this size again.

"We're exploring the option of a joint bid with New Zealand but if necessary we could go alone."

In Lahore, Pakistan Cricket Board director of operations Saleem Altaf told Reuters he was ready to face the challenge of an Australasian bid.

"We have no problems if Australia and New Zealand want to bid, because we will be making a strong bid in any case," Altaf said.

"The two World Cups that we (Asia) hosted in 1987 and 1996 were spectacular successes."

Altaf added the four Asian nations had already begun working on advanced preparations for staging the event.

"Asia is ideal for staging such a competition as logistically it is not a problem scheduling matches between the four nations," he added.

The World Cup has been awarded on an unofficial rotational basis for the past decade and Australia and New Zealand are next in line to stage the 2011 event.

Cally's desire

SPORTS REPORTER

Cally, the widow of former Bangladesh cricket coach Eddie Barlow, expressed her desire to spread the ashes of her deceased husband over BKSP, the lone sports institute of the country.

"Eddie's ashes had to be put in two separate bags. So, if BCB thought it appropriate and perhaps if someone was coming over here they could take some of the ashes back and spread it over BKSP, one of his favourite places," wished Cally in an e-mail to Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby, the former BCB official.

Former South African great Barlow, a true friend of Bangladesh cricket, died on December 31 last year in north Wales at the age of 65.

Cally also expressed her deep shock over the death of former BCB official Mahmudul Haque Manu.

India openers miss mark

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

India's openers Virender Sehwag and Rahul Dravid missed a world record partnership by four runs as the first cricket Test against Pakistan ended in a draw here on Tuesday.

India were 410-1 in reply to Pakistan's 679-7 declared when play was called off after just 2.2 overs on the fifth and final day at the Gaddafi Stadium here.

The result was a formality after murky weather and light rain curtailed play to just 64.2 overs from the available 270 overs on the last three days of the high-scoring Test.

Sehwag and Dravid, who needed 11 runs to surpass the world record

of 413 for the first wicket by fellow-countrymen Vinoo Mankad and Pankaj Roy against New Zealand in Madras in 1956, faltered despite being assisted by both umpires and the home team.

With four hours lost due to bad light on the final day, umpires Darrell Hair and Rudi Koertzen offered Indian captain Dravid a chance to start play just before tea even though the visibility was deteriorating.

When Dravid accepted the chance to break the record, the umpires consulted Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq who sportingly agreed to take the field.

Sehwag, overnight on 247, scored seven runs to take the total to 410 when he edged a slash off seamer Navedul Hasan to wicket-keeper Kamran Akmal.

A disappointed Sehwag finished

with 254 off 247 balls, his second double-century in as many matches against Pakistan after making 201 in the third Test in Bangalore last year.

Play was called off after only 12 minutes as the light worsened, leaving Dravid unbeaten on 128, his 21st Test century but the first as an opening batsman.

Venkatesh Laxman was the other batsman at the crease, having faced one delivery without opening his account.

"It was really bad we did not get the record because we went out there today with only that in mind since the light was not good at all," said Sehwag.

"I just love the Pakistani bowling. I was not getting runs before this series but I was confident I will

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Federer flies, Hingis thru'

Australian Open

AFP, Melbourne

Tournament favourites Roger Federer and Kim Clijsters powered into the second round of the Australian Open Tuesday on a day that saw Martina Hingis make a successful comeback to Grand

Slam tennis.

Hingis looked like the Swiss Miss of old on her return to a tournament she won three times between 1997-99 and last played in 2002 before injuries cut her career short.

The 25-year-old demolished Russian 30th seed Vera Zvonareva 6-1, 6-2 in just over an hour to claim her highest ranking scalp since launching a comeback earlier this month following a three-year

injury layoff.

Federer also sent a chilling warning to his rivals by swatting Uzbekistan wildcard Denis Istomin 6-2, 6-3, 6-2 in ruthless fashion.

The Swiss top seed, who Monday equalled US great Pete Sampras' mark of 102 weeks as world number one in the ATP rankings, was in devastating form and showed why he is the overwhelming favourite to land his second Australian Open.

Federer, who confessed to knowing nothing about his opponent, broke Istomin's serve six times and was always in command.

Germany's Florian Mayer is next up to face the Fed Express.

Lleyton Hewitt, the third seed who is scheduled to meet Federer in the semifinals, was far less convincing against the 58th-ranked Robin Vik of the Czech Republic, struggling to finish him off in a five-set thriller.

The Australian finally hammered the last nail into Vik's coffin after three hours 45 minutes, winning 6-4, 2-6, 5-7, 7-6 (7/4), 6-3.

"I had to wait, I had to bide my time and wait for my opportunities, but it was awfully close," said Hewitt.

Hewitt's former girlfriend Clijsters, like Federer a favourite to win the championship, showed no outward signs of the hip injury that threatened her appearance here as she brushed aside South Korea's Cho Yoon-jeong 6-3, 6-0.

But she said she was hurting and her movements and strokeplay were hampered.

Mary Pierce, the fifth seed, was equally commanding in her opening match, taking less than an hour to dismantle Australian Nicole Pratt 6-1, 6-1 and will next play Iveta Benesova of the Czech Republic.

Others safely into the second round include Amelie Mauresmo, the third seed who beat Pierce in the final of the WTA Championship.

But she was taken to three sets by China's Sun Tiantian.

Patty Schnyder, the Swiss seventh seed who reached the quarter-finals here last year, is also through after overcoming Eleni Daniilidou of Greece 6-4, 6-3.

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PHOTO: AFP
India's tennis-sensation Sania Mirza plays forehand against Victoria Azarenka of Belarus during their first round engagement of the Australian Open in Melbourne on Tuesday.