

Kafelnikov downs Gustafsson

LONDON, Feb 24: Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov continued his march towards the world number one spot with a 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 victory over Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson in the 500,000-dollar Guardian Direct Cup indoor tournament at Battersea Park here on Tuesday, reports AFP.

However, Kafelnikov did not have the match all his own way despite hardly breaking sweat in winning the first set 6-2 in just 22 minutes.

Gustafsson came roaring back in the second set, breaking for a 4-3 lead and then saving three break points in the next game to consolidate his advantage before levelling the match 6-6.

Kafelnikov then had to save a break point in the first game of the decider before finally getting on top in one hour 32 minutes.

The 25-year-old Russian will now face Zimbabwe's Byron Black in the second round knowing he is just three wins away from a place in Sunday's final and taking over at the top of the rankings from Pete Sampras, making him only the 15th world number one since the rankings began in 1973.

Britain's third seed Greg Rusedski had an easy passage into the second round brushing aside veteran Italian Gianluca Pozzi. The British number two won 6-2, 6-1 in just 43 minutes and will now meet Petr Korda in the last 16.

Czech Korda had earlier marked his return to form with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over South Africa's Wayne Ferreira.

The victory was a welcome boost for the Czech, who has endured a miserable run since Wimbledon last year when he tested positive for a banned substance and was subsequently stripped of his prize money and ranking points.

Korda was joined in the second round by Thomas Johansson, Byron Black, Guillaume Raoux, Dominik Hrbaty and Nicolas Kiefer, who came through an epic 2 hr 34 min struggle with France's Cedric Pioline.

Solid start for Serena

PARIS, Feb 24: Powerful American teenager Serena Williams set the alarm bells ringing on the first day of the 500,000 dollar Paris Indoor Open on Tuesday when she ruthlessly outplayed qualifier Asa Carlsson in straight sets to reach a second-round showdown with second-seeded home favourite Nathalie Tauziat, reports AFP.

The 17-year-old 24th-ranked Williams, who raced to a 6-1, 6-2 victory in just 62 minutes, left her Swedish opponent groggy with the relentless power and pace of her blistering groundstrokes.

And her performance, which was watched by an attentive world No 1 Martina Hingis from the VIP box, must have given many of the star players food for thought — especially Tauziat who will face the powerful young American for a quarterfinal place on Thursday.

Tauziat, 31, who entered the world's top 10 for the first time last year after reaching to final at Wimbledon, is one of eleven French players in the 28-player draw.

Williams, who arrived in the French capital from Hanover on Monday after winning the doubles title alongside fifth-ranked older sister Venus, shrugged off her victory and claimed she could play "much better."

"I didn't think I played all that well today," she said, adding: "I have to improve my consistency and my aim this year is to get into the top 10."

Williams said she was deliberately scheduling her season to avoid playing her sister, who this week is competing in Oklahoma.

Baishakhi, Nadim move up

Sports Reporter

(Tpe) def Olga (Kaz) 6-1, 6-2, T Ninako (Jap) def M Sunita (Ind) 6-2, 6-1, C Hsia Chien (Tpe) def P Natrajan (Ind) 7-5, 6-0, Radhika Tulpule (Ind) def T Ayako (Jap) 6-1, 6-0, Nonawagh (Ind) def Disha Islam (Bar) 6-0, 6-2, C Yunhan (Tpe) def H Natsumi (Jap) 7-5, 7-5, C Chea Jung (Tpe) def PL Serichon (Tha) 6-4, 6-4, Nida Waseem (Pak) def U Hua (Tpe) 6-3, 6-3, C Han (Tpe) def L

Pereira (Ind) 6-1, 6-7 (7-5), 6-3, Y Suchanan (Tha) def D Shanchaefer 6-1, 6-2.

Boys' Singles first round: Alok Bhide (Ind) def S Singh (Ind) 6-3, 6-3, Motonari Minato (Jap) def Mustafizur Rahaman (Bar) 6-2, 6-0, Ahmed Wahla (Pak) def Nishank Mishra (Ind) 6-2, 6-4 and Chuang Hsiao Y (Tpe) def Rahat Kamal Islam (Bar) 6-4, 6-2.

round of the Bangladesh International Junior Tennis Tournament '99 being played at the National Tennis Complex.

On the second day of the 13-nation tournament, Baishakhi ousted her Indian counterpart Y. Kameswari 6-4, 6-4 while Nadem outplayed his compatriot Kabir Hossain 6-1, 6-2.

Both Nadem and Baishakhi added 15 points each to their World junior circuit rankings.

Top seed and World junior number 36, South African McDade Andrew, also booked a berth in the second round with a 6-1, 7-6 (7-1) win over Chinese Taipei's Lu Chin Chi.

Results of other matches played yesterday: (Kaz) - Kazakhstan, Ind - India, Tha - Thailand, Tpe - Chinese Taipei, Jap - Japan, Ban - Bangladesh, Pak - Pakistan)

Girl's Singles first round: Y Khazoya (Kaz) def G Monahar (Ind) 6-4, 6-4, I Reddy (Ind) def H Ratniva (Tha) 5-6, 6-4, 6-0, S Phadke (Ind) def C Chitrri (Ind) 6-1, 6-0, G Sheetal (Ind) def Y Peili (Tpe) 6-2, 6-0, L Yi Ying

Barisal cricket

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Feb 24: Sangskriti Majlish defeated Barisal Cricket Institute by 125 runs while Brothers Union outplayed Durjoy Smriti Sangha by 8 wickets in the First Division cricket league played here at the Inner and Outer stadiums respectively today.

Sangskriti Majlish scored 220 losing 9 wickets in 38.3 overs.

In reply Barisal Cricket Club managed only 95 runs losing all in 31 overs.

Team of Sangskriti Majlish adjudged man-of-the-match.

Besides, Brothers Union scored 119 losing only two wickets in 24.5 overs.

In reply Durjoy Smriti Sangha scored 118 losing all in 28.4 overs.

Man-of-the-match Raju of Brothers Union.

Nida Waseem of Pakistan plays a forehand against Luyen Hua of Chinese Taipei during their 13th Bangladesh international junior tournament fixture yesterday.

— Star photo

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Nida Waseem of Pakistan plays a forehand against Luyen Hua of Chinese Taipei during their 13th Bangladesh international junior tournament fixture yesterday.

— Star photo

Arsenal thru' without fuss

LONDON, Feb 24: Arsenal beat Sheffield United 2-1 in their unprecedented FA Cup re-match at Highbury on Tuesday with Marc Overmars, at the centre of controversy in the original game, scoring the opening goal, reports Reuters.

The score was identical to the first game on February 13 but this time it was First Division United not Arsenal, who struck in the closing minutes through Lee Morris.

The Cup holders held out for the last three minutes to book a home tie against Huddersfield Town or Derby County in the quarterfinals on March 6.

Overmars had scored the winning goal 'against the spirit of the game' in the original fifth round tie, causing Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger to offer a re-match the first in the competition's 127-year history.

"It shows you can play fair and win," Wenger said. "I was important to restore the spirit of the game but also important to win."

Winger Overmars, booed at every touch by the United fans, seized a Stephen Hughes pass to tuck the ball past Alan Kelly in the 15th minute.

It was then compatriot Dennis Bergkamp who had the home fans stunned with a goal of sublime quality 20 minutes later.

Overmars started the move with a 50-metre crossfield pass to Ray Parlour — the midfielder cut the ball back to Bergkamp who, with back to goal, chipped the ball perfectly over Kelly and

into the net.

Asked about Overmars, Wenger said: "He was maybe upset about the criticism he received. The club got credit but he didn't but the best answer was to show the sort of game he had tonight."

Sheffield United could have then the lead in the 11th minute when striker Marcelo shot over the bar with just Davi Seaman to beat but they were generally outclassed by an Arsenal side right at the top of their form.

The original match ended in uproar after Overmars scored the 76th minute winner from a Kanu cross. The Nigerian collected a ball from an Arsenal throw that United had been expecting to be given because they had put it out of play to allow an injured player to receive treatment.

Star performer for Real was midfielder Jose Maria Gutierrez who dazzled with the ball at his feet although his finishing once again left a lot to be desired.

He missed two good first half chances, including a close range header after 25 minutes which skinned over the crossbar.

Racing had their chances in the second half and Real goalkeeper Bodo Illgner was required to bring off three acrobatic reaction saves to ensure he kept a clean sheet.

The result there could determine whether the Dutchman is still in charge on Wednesday when Real face Dynamo Kiev in the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in the European Cup quarter final leg.

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In the Dutch, Hiddink's side finished fourth in France '98, going out at the semifinal stage to Brazil on penalties before losing a low-key third place play-off to Croatia.

1998: July 16, appointed Real Madrid coach in succession to Jose Antonio Camacho. Had mixed start to the season, securing qualification to European Cup quarter-finals but struggling for consistency in the league.

1999: February 24, sacked as Real Madrid coach after seven months with team in sixth place in the first division.

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