

Sania remains in 27th place

PTI, New Delhi

Despite being out of action since her early exit from the US Open Grand Slam tennis, Sania Mirza clung to 27th place in WTA ranking for their third consecutive week.

The Indian star, who is nursing a wrist injury and is doubtful for the Sunfeast Open WTA event beginning in Kolkata today, also maintained her doubles ranking to be at 18 spot in the latest rankings.

Sania has been drawn against US-based Sunitha Rao in the first round at Sunfeast Open.

Among the Indian men, Mahesh Bhupathi moved out of top-20 and stands at 21st spot in the doubles charts which saw his compatriot Leander Paes continue to be ranked 16th.

Dravid wasn't

FROM PAGE 17 based on my observation of whether I would be able to give it my very best, like I have always tried to.

"Finally, you have to be comfortable yourself that you will be giving it your best and not going through the motions, which will not be fair to the team."

The 34-year-old batsman, however, refused to comment on who should step into the skipper's shoes.

Veteran Sachin Tendulkar and the younger Mahendra Singh Dhoni have emerged as frontrunners for the job. The selectors will choose a new man at a meeting in Mumbai on Tuesday.

"I obviously will not like to comment on it and it is a decision best left to the selectors," said Dravid.



PHOTO: AFP

US golfer Tiger Woods holds the FedEx Cup trophy after the final round of the Tour Championship at East Lake Golf Club in Atlanta on Sunday.

Siddons

FROM PAGE 17 him in South Africa.

"It apparently looks like we have to make a new start. We have some new candidates in line but everything is in preliminary stage," said a frustrated Lipu.

At this stage, the chance of Bangladesh touring New Zealand in December-January with a foreign coach looks remote.

Roma

FROM PAGE 20 Unidnes went close to doubling their advantage in the 62nd minute only for Gyan Asamoah's half-volley to ricochet off the upright.

Napoli's 2-0 win over Sampdoria lifted them up five places into third between Inter and Juve.

Sunday's late match between struggling Parma and mid-table Cagliari ended in a 1-1 stalemate.

On Saturday fifth-placed AC Milan were held to their second successive 1-1 draw with only Alessandro Nesta's late late equaliser avoiding an embarrassing slip up at struggling Siena.

Siena, lying fourth from the foot of the table, took a 24th minute lead thanks to Massimo Maccarone, who pounced on some comedy defending as Nelson Dida fumbled an effort from Cristian Bucchi and then Kakha Kaladze tripped over the ball as he attempted to clear it.

That let in Maccarone although the former Middlesbrough player was lucky not to be caught up for offside as he slotted in from close range.

The Tuscany club were heading for valuable maximum points until Nesta popped up in the 91st minute to level from a volley after a move started by a free kick awarded when Leandro Grimi felled Clarence Seedorf.

Also on Saturday Lazio were held to a goalless draw by second from bottom Empoli.

Germany

FROM PAGE 20 The Japanese defence became increasingly dogged as Germany pushed forward, with coach Silvia Neid bringing on 19-year-old sensation Fatmire Bajramaj to add penetration.

But it was only three minutes from the end that Lingor finally sealed victory by firing home a penalty after Martina Mueller was brought down inside the area.

In Chengdu, Kelly Smith scored twice to send England into the quarter-finals and end a nightmare tournament for Argentina, who conceded 18 goals and scored just one, reflecting the gulf between them and the best teams in the world.

The star striker pounced in the 64th and the 77th minute to bring her World Cup tally to four goals in three games and ensure England made the last eight for the first time since 1995.

The game got off to the worst possible start for Argentina when captain Eva Gonzalez scored an own goal in the ninth minute.

Jill Scott poned barely 60 seconds later with a long-range effort to put England a well-deserved 2-0 up at half time.

The South Americans then gave away two penalties and had Catalina Perez sent off -- leaving them in all sorts of trouble.

Fara Williams converted the first penalty kick in the 50th minute, Smith scored her brace and then substitute Vicky Exley added another from the spot on 90 minutes.



AFP, Atlanta

Tiger Woods easily fended off his challengers to capture the 2007 Tour Championship by eight strokes and collect 11.2 million dollars in prize and bonus money on Sunday.

Woods, who has won four of his past five tournaments, fired a four-under 66 for his 61st career PGA Tour victory on Sunday.

The 13-time major winner became the first player in PGA Tour history to win seven or more events in a season four different times. He is now one win away from equalling Arnold Palmer (62) for fourth on the all-time win list.

"I really played some good golf and got on a birdie run there in the middle of the round and basically put it away," Woods said.

Woods not only collected the 1.2 million-dollar tournament winner's cheque but also the 10 million-dollar bonus as the inaugural FedEx Cup points champion.

The 10 million dollars will be paid as an annuity into his retirement account for Woods, who finished with a 23-under total of 257.

Asked if he can remember another time, even back to juniors when he won two trophies in a single tournament, Woods said, "I

don't ever remember doing it."

After a modest start, Woods birdied the sixth hole then caught fire on the back nine to finish with six birdies and two bogeys at the East Lake Golf Club.

Woods started the day with a three-shot cushion over playing partner Mark Calcavecchia.

Masters champion Zach Johnson, who fired a course record 60 on Saturday, shot 68 to finish in a tie for second with Calcavecchia who fired a 71 for 265.

Woods is now an impressive 41-3 when holding the lead going into the final round of a PGA event but oddly enough Woods' brilliant record as a frontrunner wasn't crafted at the East Lake Golf Club.

Woods was hoping to erase memories of two Sunday collapses at East Lake in 2000 and 2004, when he lost third-round leads. It has only happened three times in his PGA Tour career.

Woods also became the first player to win the Tour Championship a second time and his 257 is the lowest score in Tour Championship history.

Woods shot 33 on the front nine and Calcavecchia made the turn at 34 as he failed to capitalize on several opportunities early to close the gap on Woods.

Calcavecchia said he doesn't see any flaws in Woods' game.

"A pretty easy 66," Calcavecchia said. "He sets up his

game by driving it so well. When he bombs it down there his distance control is so good and his short irons are good and he controls his spin. And he is the best ever, best ever putter, period." Woods got off to a slow start at East Lake, posting a bogey on the second hole and then scrambling to save par on the par-four 387-yard number three. He rallied to make birdie on the sixth, eighth and ninth holes.

Woods seemed to settle into form on the fifth hole with the help of a solid tee shot that travelled 309 yards. At 520 yards, the fifth is one of the longest par-fours in PGA Tour history.

He had another superb tee shot on the 200-yard par-three sixth, landing his ball just two feet from the pin for his first birdie of the day.

By this time Woods was sticking to his formula of taking birdie opportunities and avoiding bogeys as he did through the first three rounds of the tournament, leaving the course in tatters with rounds of 64-63-64.

Tougher pin placements and firmer greens translated into higher scores for most of the field Sunday.

Woods hit nine of 14 fairways, 14 of 18 greens and needed 28 putts on the day.

The top 30 players in FedEx Cup points secure a return trip to Georgia next year to compete in the Masters at Augusta National.

MacGill fined for outburst

AFP, Sydney

Australian bowler Stuart MacGill was Monday fined for an outburst during a recent match in Pakistan.

Cricket Australia said MacGill, a leg-spinner who has long lived in the shadow of retired Test great and fellow leg-spinner Shane Warne, breached its code of behaviour during Australia A's unofficial Test match against Pakistan in Faisalabad.

MacGill, 36, was fined 50 per cent of his match fee over the incident, in which he was reported to have used language which was "obscene, offensive or of a generally insulting nature to another player, official or spectator."

The outburst came in the closing stages of the game after MacGill had bowled to Pakistan A's lower-order batsman Mansoor Ajjad.

"I have no problem with players being combative on the field but there is a line they cannot cross and Stuart crossed that line," Cricket Australia's general manager Michael Brown said in a statement.

India may

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the Mid Day newspaper.

But former Indian chief selector Kiran More said he would prefer a "youngster" to do the job.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Dhoni, 26, is leading the team in the ongoing Twenty20 World Championships in South Africa.

Australia will arrive in India later this month to play seven one-day internationals.

India will then play a home Test and one-day series against Pakistan before leaving for Australia for a Test series.

India are also without a coach since former Australia captain Greg Chappell quit after the team's first-round exit from the World Cup in the Caribbean early this year.

Wasim denies

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four hours. It is an ideal format for them," he added.

He, however, declined to pick any favourite for the ongoing Twenty20 World Cup, saying it was difficult to make predictions in such a format.

Akram also expressed his disappointment over Pakistan's defeat to India on the 'bowl out' rule.

"It was disappointing to see one of our bowlers could hit the target although we played well on the field. It was sad to see our bowlers didn't take the 'bowl out' seriously. I don't know why the pacers opted to bowl off a short run-up, it spoilt their rhythm."

Tigers' last

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Aftab Ahmed's performance has impressed the young Bangladesh captain most as the Chittagonian followed up his unbeaten 62 against the West Indies with knocks of 31 and 36.

"I thought the bowling also was good and Abdur Razzak, Mashrafe Mortaza and Syed Rasel all did their job nicely," the Bangladesh captain added.

Jol given

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"So I think I will be here in six weeks. I feel there are two worlds here in London.

"There are you guys (journalists) and then there are the supporters who read your papers. It's amazing, no?"

"Although they read your papers, they're still backing me. That's a great feeling."

"I don't think the board is a problem. I tell them all the time what's wrong. We speak about players and talk about the team."

Rui relishes

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what is a very special occasion," he said.

Prior to his 2001 arrival at the San Siro, Rui Costa spent 7 excellent years with Fiorentina after a three season spell at Benfica.

The former Portuguese international, who decided in 2004 to focus on his club career, has 94 caps for his country.

He left Milan in 2006 after working out a mutual contract termination deal with the Rossoneri in order to return to the club with whom he dreams of ending his career - Benfica.

Vettori not

FROM PAGE 17 Vettori believed his team was on the right track in the tournament after the first Super Eight win over India. New Zealand face England on Tuesday and hosts South Africa on Wednesday, needing to win one to ensure their place in the semifinals from Group E.

"We have some bigger challenges ahead and hope to do well there too," the captain said.

The flurry of sixes and fours have attracted fans to the grounds since the inaugural world championships began on September 11.

Greg's India-coming



CRICINFO, undated

Greg Chappell will return to Indian cricket six months after he left it, this time as an advisor to the Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA) for its Centre of Excellence. Chappell, who left India in early April, is expected to take up his new assignment on October 1 and will be joined by Ian Fraser, who was the Indian team's biomechanist when Chappell was the coach.

Chappell quit as India coach after the World Cup in the Caribbean and is currently with the Australian Centre of Excellence in Brisbane. While he will be working on a six-month tenure, Fraser will be employed on a near-fulltime basis.

The RCA president, Lalit Modi, who announced their coming on board, said it would take the Rajasthan Cricket Academy -- where the centre will be based -- to the forefront of development of cricket "not just in Rajasthan, but across India and the entire cricket-playing world."

The move does not come as a surprise as it had been in the works for a while. In July, Chappell told the IANS agency he was negotiating such a deal with Modi.



GREG CHAPPELL

Soon after he quit the India job, Chappell had given a presentation to the Indian board which emphasised the importance of fitness and the development of youth. Chappell was subsequently offered a position at the National

Cricket Academy in Bangalore but that did not work.

A press release from the RCA said the academy would have five indoor pitches, 24 outdoor practice wickets, a full video analysis system, a state-of-the-art gymnasium and an electronic data library and will accommodate 70 students.

It quoted Chappell as saying students at the academy would be coached using new techniques as "first class and international cricket is becoming demanding for players. Training methods of the past will not be suitable for the player of the future who will need to be fitter, stronger and more resilient, more flexible."

Modi said a new training programme had been developed with help from Chappell and Fraser. "In the first phase, we will be recruiting 110 students in five batches of 22 from Rajasthan," he said. "Each batch will be in training for two weeks. And it will be for boys in the age group of 16 to 19 years." A programme for students from outside Rajasthan will be announced in November 2007.

Punter's men punters' pick

AFP, Colombo



are strong favourites in the online gambling world to win the ongoing Twenty20 World Championships in South Africa.

Australia bounced back after suffering a shock defeat against Zimbabwe to thrash England and Bangladesh and retain their place as title contenders, with British bookmaker Ladbrokes making them favourites with odds of 13-8.

Online punters have rallied behind Ponting's men to pocket the winners' cheque worth 2.24 million dollars.

"On paper, they (Australia) remain a dangerous side," says website readabet.com.

Hosts South Africa are second favourites at 4-1, followed by World Cup runners-up Sri Lanka (5-1), New Zealand (8-1), and Pakistan (12-1), according to betting site boylesports.com.

British bookmaker William Hill is offering odds of 14-1 on England to win the championships after they were thrashed by the Australians.

India are at 28-1 while Bangladesh, who knocked the West Indies out of the tournament, rate 100-1 on paddyppower.com.

With more than five million dollars of prize money on offer, the inaugural event has attracted millions of dollars in bets, with some punters opting to use technology to avoid queues at betting shops, bookmakers said.

As technology becomes more sophisticated and wagering faster, big gaming players such as Ladbrokes and William Hill are now allowing cricket lovers to place bets from mobile phones or through interactive TV (I-TV).

Wireless application protocol (WAP) allows users to access the Internet through mobile phones or other hand-held wireless devices. I-TV allows viewers to bet using a remote control.

Online betting seems to appeal to the young and affluent, who prefer privacy when making a wager to a public queue outside a betting shop, notes British e-consultancy, Decipher.

Bookmaker betfair.com has Sri Lankan batsmen Sanath Jayasuriya, Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara among the favourites to score the fastest 50.

"Jayasuriya has been to the fore for the Sri Lankans, impressing with bat and ball and picking up the man-of-the-match award in both the games so far," says bettingzone.co.uk columnist Andy

Schooler.

Bookmaker paddyppower.com is offering odds of 9-1 that Australian opener Matthew Hayden will be the tournament's top run-scorer, followed by compatriot Adam Gilchrist (10-1).

Betfair.com has batsmen Brad Hodge, Luke Wright, Peter Fulton, Lou Vincent and Brendon McCullum all at 25-1.

Australian paceman Brett Lee, who claimed a hattrick against Bangladesh on Sunday, remains favourite with the ball, with paddyppower.com rating him at 11-1 and popular Sri Lankan paceman Lasith Malinga at 14-1.

Wenger wary

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Wenger, who led his side to the Champions League final in 2006, explained that currently he is focused on qualifying out of a testing group which also houses Slavia Prague and Steaua Bucuresti.

"Our first expectation is to qualify from the group stage. Then you hope for a draw that will allow you to go as far as possible," he added.

"But I'm mainly hoping that we qualify from the group stage and that we play well because the quality of the competition improves year on year."

Chelsea craving glory

FROM PAGE 20 Steffen Iversen and ex-Liverpool defender Bjorn Tore Kvarme are among their other more experienced players.

The Trollongan, fifth in the Norwegian league, overcame Kazakh champions FC Astana and then Finnish title-holders Tampere to qualify for their 11th Champions League campaign.

The Trondheim club's Canada goalkeeper Lars Hirschfeld, who used to play for Tottenham, said manager Knut Torum's team were bracing for their trip to west London.

"A little bit daunting, but that's what you're there for," Hirschfeld told the Canadian Press.

"You go there (to the Champions League) for the biggest games possible."

"You go to just hopefully upset somebody. Anything can happen, but we have no expectations. We're just going there to have some fun and whatever happens happens."

Chelsea, last season's Premier League runners up, have never faced Norwegian opposition in the Champions League.

And Rosenborg face a daunting task: Chelsea have conceded in only three of their last 11 Champions League home games.

In Group B's other game Tuesday, Germany's Schalke host Spain's Valencia.

"It is a dangerous group. Chelsea are first seeds, Valencia second -- two teams involved in the quarterfinals last season, we met each other," Mourinho said. "Schalke were contenders for the Bundesliga until the final week, they have a strong team. I know that when they play at home, their magnificent stadium is like a fortress."

"And Rosenborg are a typical Norwegian team, no big responsibilities because they are outsiders but I think they are also not an easy team."

Rafa sets

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second half goal from Lisandro Lopez, that sent them top of the league.

Jesualdo Ferreira's side will take further heart from their impressive home record of never having lost at home to English opponents in nine fixtures, including a UEFA Cup goalless draw against Liverpool in 2001.

Ricardo Quaresma will be a key figure if Porto are to extend that run.

The Portugal winger's conviction that Porto can mount a serious European challenge persuaded him stay at the Dragao and now he wants to make good on his side's potential.

"I know there was some talk about me leaving Porto during the summer, but my dream is to be a European champion with this club. Porto were champions in 2004, so let's try again."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	1 Burghoff role	38 Radium discoverer	57 Rushmore nickname	11 Confuse	17 Bandit
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12 Unpleasantly plump	44 Grand-scale tale	3 Battled verbally	26 Doc	28 Slick in	30 Idolaters' emotion
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15 Plotting group	49 Bits	6 Alter the sketch	38 Rellnquished	39 Defeat	40 Construction fastener
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18 Where the bees are	53 Mine output	8 Nuoc (Oriental fish sauce)	42 Potent proclamation	46 Hales' pal	48 Huck's
20 Eurasian range	54 Words to live by	9 Stylish bug killer	46 Hales' pal	50 Toss into the mix	51 Tolu source
21 Suitable	55 Banned bug killer	10 Spick-and-span	50 Toss into the mix		
23 Spy novel org.	56 Pie ingredi-ent?				
24 Explite					
25 Consider					
27 Marble cake feature					
29 Trial					
31 Pasture, land					
35 Nerdy type					
37 "Only Just Begun"					

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN TATTOO
ARTISTS ARE TEASING PEOPLE, YOU WOULD
ASSUME THAT THEY'RE NEEDLING THEM.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P equals Y