

Daily Star
win big

SPORTS REPORTER

The Daily Star returned to the cricket field with a bang, defeating news agency UNB by five wickets in the 3rd DRU-Pepsi six-a-side cricket tournament at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday.

Opting to bat first, UNB were all out for 60. Shamim Ashraf emerged as the fastest bowler in the tournament while Sharif Islam and Helemul Alam bagged a wicket each. Daily Star's fielding also looked good, with special mention for Suranjit Debnath who had a forgettable time last year.

UNB captain Fahad Ferdous scored 35 runs.

In reply, Daily Star openers scored 56 with captain Abul Kalam Azad scoring 33 and Shamim hitting 23. Jasim Uddin Khan's contribution was a six off the only ball he faced as Daily Star reached their target in 3.3 overs. Azad was adjudged as the man-of-the-match.

Bhorer Kagoj, Ittefaq, Destiny, Independent and Aman Desh also won their respective matches.

Inter-Hall
swimming

RU CORRESPONDENT

A daylong Inter-Hall Swimming and Water Polo Competition was held at the Rajshahi University Central Swimming Pool yesterday.

A total of 50 residential students under nine halls took part in 17 events.

On the occasion, an inauguration function was held where RU acting VC Dr Mammunul Keramat was present as the chief guest and inaugurated the competition. Later, the VC distributed prize among the winners.

Flintoff sets
up big win

APP, Mumbai

Andrew Flintoff smashed an unbeaten century to set up England's emphatic 122-run victory against a Mumbai side in a one-day warm-up game here on Sunday.

Flintoff hit three sixes and 12 fours off 85 balls to help the visitors score 297-4 in 50 overs in the tour opener at the Brabourne stadium.

Paceman James Anderson then boosted his claim for a comeback to the team after having missed out on the Twenty20 Stanford series last week by picking three wickets and restricting Mumbai Cricket Association to 175-8.

Left-arm spinner Samit Patel claimed two wickets before Flintoff, who also took a low catch in the slips off Anderson, capped off a fine all-round performance with a wicket in the penultimate over.

Flintoff later said the century would hold him in good stead when the real contest against India begins with the first one-dayer in western Rajkot on November 14.

"We'll play against better teams on this tour," he said. "I'm not daft and I know it's a starting point. We're going to be playing against the likes of Harbhajan (Singh) and (Ishant) Sharma in just over a week's time."

"But a hundred is a hundred and I've not scored one for ages so I'll take it," the all-rounder said.

Other visiting batsmen too looked in prime form with Ian Bell (58) and Owais Shah (83) chipping in with healthy knocks after Mumbai skipper Niles Kularki won the toss and elected to field.

Bell was stumped advancing down the wicket to Vikrant Yelgeti while Shah mistimed a pull for Abhijit Shetty to take a catch at mid-wicket.

Shetty also top-scored for the hosts before being caught behind by Matt Prior off Anderson for 50 which included four fours.

His dismissal triggered a middle-order collapse with the home side losing three wickets for just five runs.

The tourists are set to play another warm-up game on Tuesday in the lead-up to the seven-match one-day series. The one-dayers will be followed by two Tests in Ahmedabad and Mumbai.

England pick

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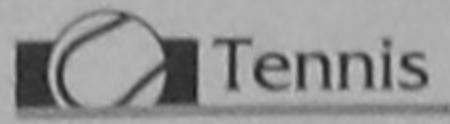
Mascarenhas who claimed the Player-of-the-Tournament award, were consistent throughout the two-day event and powered to 121 for 1, their highest total of the weekend, in the final. However, Australia responded in style and reached 89 without loss to give themselves a great chance of snatching their first Sixes title.

Crucially, though they lost three quick wickets and needed two off the final ball, Stephen O'Keeffe hit Tim Bresnan's delivery towards mid-on and though he picked up a single he was then run out, meaning England secured the trophy.

"We like leaving it late but that was outstanding," Bresnan said. "I don't think any of us have ever been involved in a final like that, played in front of such a fantastic crowd and with a tie at the end."

Ashley Giles, the England team manager, added: "It was a great game of cricket. I thought we got a good score, maybe could have got a bit more, but Australia played really well to fight back. To win one like that was great. It showed great character from the lads."

Venus downs Jelena



AFP, Doha

Venus Williams reached the final of the WTA Tour's year-end event for the first time in her career when she beat world number one Jelena Jankovic in a long, drawn-out thriller here on Saturday.

However the Wimbledon champion had several moments during the two-hour, 11-minute struggle when she looked physically stressed, especially in a final set lasting almost an hour.

"A couple of times I did feel distressed but you can't afford to lose these kind of matches," Williams said after her 6-2, 2-6, 3-6 win over the top-seeded Serb.

Williams succeeded despite frequently being forced to contain against a more mobile and surprisingly-aggressive opponent who had won five of their last six meetings, and who, after dominating the second set, seemed the more likely winner.

But Jankovic also tired, which hindered her chances of converting five chances to break back for 3-3 in the final set, in a pivotal game which had her mother Snezana calling out to her.

After that Williams was able to avert a little more, though her serving, which included eight double faults -- following ten the previous day -- was again patchier than she might have liked.

Nevertheless Williams' three times got big first serves in the deuce game in which she reached 5-3 and after that she took strength from the closeness of victory. She finished with an unstoppable straight forehand, backhand cross court angle combination.

She was watched sombrely throughout by her sister Serena Williams, the US Open champion who withdrew with a stomach muscle injury the day before. It was only when Venus got to match point that Serena grinned expansively.

The younger Williams' absence ensured there would be a surprise

finalist, with Vera Zvonareva, the last woman to qualify for the eight-player event, continuing her giant-killing run all the way to the final with a fourth major scalp.

The 24-year-old Russian, who has never won a major title, overcame Elena Dementieva, the Olympic champion, 7-6 (9/7), 3-6, 6-3 -- only the second time in six attempts that she has beaten her better-known compatriot.

It followed Zvonareva's other victories this week over the world number one Jelena Jankovic, the French Open champion Ana Ivanovic, and the former US Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova, to extend the first run of her career to 715,000 dollars so far.

"I've not really thought about the money," Zvonareva claimed. "I try to challenge myself and do my best and produce the highest level I can."

"I always try to be good at what I do. If I am not good I don't touch it. If I am I try to make it perfect."

Remarkably for the player possessing the slightest build of any in this tournament, Zvonareva was often able to force the pace from the back of the court, rifling flat and brilliantly accurate groundstrokes into tight corners and sharp angles against her much more powerful opponent.

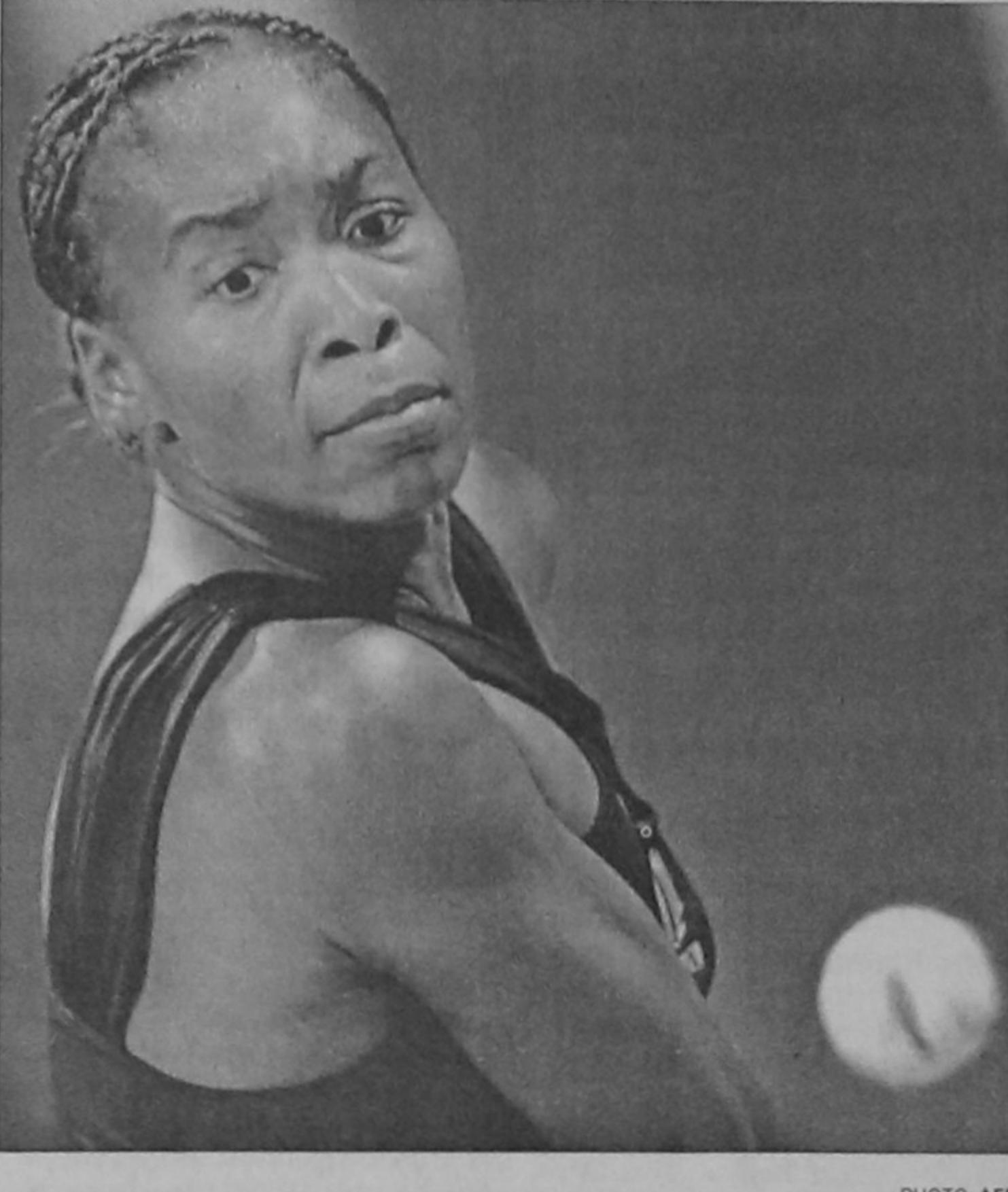


PHOTO: AFP
American Venus Williams plays a backhand return against Serbian Jelena Jankovic in the season-ending WTA Championships in Doha on Saturday.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

The first Junior South Asian Tennis Championship was officially inaugurated at the National Tennis Complex in Ramnagar yesterday.

Under-16 players from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh will take part in the meet.

The competition will be played with Davis Cup rules where the results will be determined by wins or losses in two singles and one doubles match between the sides.

Omar Sunny, Moazzaf Hossain and Saeed Saeed make up the Bangladesh team for the tournament.

DIV II FOOTBALL

Police Athletics Club and Little Friends bagged identical 1-0 wins in the Second Division Football League at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Stadium at Kamalapur yesterday.

Police's Barua struck the all-important goal against Bangladesh Boys in the 33rd minute in the day's first game.

In the day's other match, Little Friends beat Basabo Tarun Sangha at the same venue in the afternoon. Shahnoor netted the match-winner in the 35th minute.

In today's matches, BG Press face Euro Famous and Kadamtola Sangha take on Gazirchot.

DIVI HOCKEY

Barnak Samaj crushed Shishu Kishore Sangha 4-0 in the Green Delta First Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Nadim, Prosenjit, Sumon and Wahid scored once each for the winners.

In another match, Bachelors beat Dhaka Wanderers 2-1 at the same venue.

Sain and Latif scored field goals for Bachelors in the 41st and 60th minutes before Rahat of Wanderers scored a consolation goal five minutes later.

Rajib's 4th draw

SPORTS REPORTER

Enamul Hossain Rajib drew his third match in a row with the Bangladesh Grandmaster split points with local International Master Zude Arno in an eighth round match of the 12th Bavarian Open International Chess Championship on Saturday.

Rajib, unbeaten with six points after four wins and as many draws, was playing Pirrot Dieter of Germany in the ninth and last round yesterday.

GM Edouard Romain of France led the table with seven points.

Chandigarh crash out

CRICINFO, undated

Chandigarh Lions needed a big win to boost their semi-final hopes, but once they conceded 197 runs against Ahmedabad Rockets, their campaign was all but over. Their top order crumbled in the chase, and had it not been for a few handy lower-order contributions, the margin of defeat would have been much higher.

Ahmedabad's openers have been the engine of their batting line-up, and they revved it up in their final game. Ryan Campbell hit five fours and a six in his 122-28, putting on 44 with Murray Goodwin in 2.5 overs. Goodwin and Damien Martyn build on that early momentum, and Ahmedabad went along at more than ten an over. Martyn played second-fiddle to Goodwin, who was bowled by Rajesh Sharma for a 31-61. The middle- and lower-orders, however, failed to carry on with the momentum, and though Chandigarh added 79 in 8.5 overs after Goodwin fell, they were bowled out for 197. Love Abish grabbed three wickets in the 20th over, finishing with figures of 4 for 35.

Chandigarh had a disastrous start -- by the third over they were reduced to 12 for 3. Jason Gillespie took two wickets and later strikes from left-arm spinners Sumit Kalia and S. Sriram reduced them to 37 for 5. Captain Andrew Hall was left to rebuild the innings; he could manage only 22 and was the sixth wicket to fall with the score on 58. Karanveer Singh and Amit Uniyal revived the innings with brisk 40s, scoring seven fours and seven sixes in total, but it came too late to force a win.

Tigers better

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as fourteen players left their country simultaneously," he said.

Campbell was a little bit disappointed with the performance of Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful.

"He was too young when I

played against him but now he is

matured enough. His poor average

hardly reflects his calibre," he said

expressing his disappointment

about Ashraful, who averages a

little bit over 23 in both Tests and

ODI.

Johnson also echoed with his

former teammates sentiment

about Bangladesh cricket after the

ICL effect.

"Still it's long way to go but this

young team is really progressing

well, especially it seems that the

departure of some key players has

hardly affected the team. It's

always good if you have a combination of young and experienced

cricketers in the team," said

Johnson, the former Zimbabwean

pace bowler, who is running a

cricket academy named after him

in Durban.

Following the Sydney Test

between the two sides earlier this year Harbhajan was slapped with a

monkey god.

"One of our off-field team

couldn't hide his disbelief at

this... The frustration levels in

the camp were rising and I was

conscious of contributing to the

pressure on the team. It was another

turbulent match. I was out for a

first-ball duck. I trudged off, getting

darker at the world by the second

as monkey chants boomed out

around Wankhede Stadium. Finally

England pick

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matches against Australia in 1999-00.

More powerful sweeps and

effortless punches put mid-on

had taken Sehwag to 92 before Lee

dismissed him. Sehwag's attempt

to glance a short delivery off his

was well snappled up by Brad

Haddin. That dismissal made Lee

the highest wicket-taker for

Australia against India in Tests.

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