



Russia's world number one Dinara Safina poses with the winner's trophy after beating compatriot Svetlana Kuznetsova in the WTA Rome International final on Saturday.

Safina's sweet revenge



AFP, Rome

World number one Dinara Safina defeated Russian compatriot Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-3, 6-2 on Saturday to claim the WTA Rome clay court international title here.

Safina never looked in trouble as she stormed to victory in an hour and a half as her seventh-seeded opponent paid for a string of unforced errors.

The top seed also gained revenge for her 6-4, 6-3 defeat to Kuznetsova in the final of last week's Stuttgart Open.

It was Safina's first title of the season in her fourth final having also been beaten in the Australian Open and Sydney finals.

Safina, 23, also won her first title as the world number one, a honour she only achieved on April 20.

But while she will be delighted with her victory, the truth was that Kuznetsova handed it to her with 30 unforced errors to just 16 by Safina.

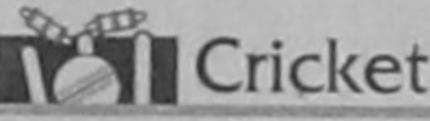
Having lost the first set in her previous three matches before digging deep to fight back, Safina admitted it was pleasing to have a less complicated match.

"Finally I won the first set," she sighed. "Today she was giving away more unforced errors than she usually does."

"I also played a little bit better. I was trying to get her off the baseline because she feels very confident there."

"But when she had some chances she was really missing a lot. In some moments I had to say: 'thank you very much'."

Suspended Pakistani players to meet Modi



CRICINFO, undated

Sohail Tanvir, the left-arm fast bowler, has said he and other Pakistan players will go to South Africa to discuss their Indian Premier League (IPL) suspension with tournament chairman and commissioner Lalit Modi.

The Pakistan Cricket Board had earlier banned its players from participating in the IPL after the country's relations with India deteriorated after the terror attacks in Mumbai in November. When the tournament was moved out of India -- over security reasons -- the Pakistan players were hopeful of returning but IPL officials said it wouldn't be possible as the squads had already been finalised earlier.

"A number of issues need to be discussed and we'll be

accompanied by a representative of the company we've engaged to handle our case," Tanvir, the highest wicket-taker in the 2008 IPL season, told the Kolkata-based Telegraph. "I strongly feel the IPL should've reviewed our status, especially after our government issued the NOCs once the tournament moved out of India."

Six Pakistani players had their contracts terminated by their franchises before the IPL auction in February. But Tanvir and Kamran Akmal of the Rajasthani Royals, Umar Gul of the Kolkata Knight Riders and Misbahul Haq of the Bangalore Royal Challengers only had their contracts suspended, thereby leaving the door open for a potential return.

"I believe we should've been allowed to play once the IPL was shifted to South Africa," he said. "I'm confi-

dent I would've matched, if not bettered, last year's record [22 wickets in 11 games]."

The four suspended players had in February appealed to the President of Pakistan to compensate them for the loss in earnings brought about by the government's decision to not allow them to travel to India and take part. Asked whether compensation from the franchises would be high on their agenda, Tanvir said that would indeed be discussed in South Africa.

Tanvir was also concerned about the lack of quality competition ahead of next month's ICC World Twenty20 in England. "You can only gain by playing with and against the best in the world," he said. "However, our board has worked out a schedule, whereby we'll get to play some Twenty20 matches at home, before we leave for England."

Schalke, this was a bad week for Wolfsburg who began the weekend three points clear but finished it level with Bayern.

"It was only after we conceded the second goal that we started to settle into the game," lamented Magath, whose side host Dortmund on Tuesday.

"Then we had a big chance to get the equaliser, but instead we conceded another goal. Stuttgart had a great game and deserved the win."

The three points were still the first of the season for last year's overall runner-up.

Germans Nick Heidfeld in a BMW-Sauber and Nico Rosberg for Williams were seventh and eighth respectively.

The Briton is now 14 points clear of his 36-year-old team mate, who had been tantalisingly close to his first win since he was Michael Schumacher's teammate at Ferrari in 2004.

Ferrari's 2007 champion Kimi Raikkonen, last year's winner in Barcelona, retired after less than a third of the race while McLaren's world champion Lewis Hamilton was ninth and lapped by his winning compatriot.

"But we played with a lot of energy and determination."

"Now we have to play as hard as we can up until the very end, because there is everything still to play for."

Tevez confirms Derby glory

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has been a great two years. Obviously in the last year my participation on the pitch has been less but that has been the choice of the coach, not my choice.

"I have given everything I possibly can to the shirt of Manchester (United) and I'm grateful to the fans. But I'm leaving and I do so with my head held high."

The complicated background to Tevez's contract status means the former West Ham forward is only on loan at Old Trafford and is a free agent at season's end with the ability to walk out on United.

Iranian businessman Kia Joorabchian's company MSI own Tevez's registration. Joorabchian claimed Sunday he had received an offer of 40 million pounds from a foreign club for Tevez.

The Argentinian refused claims that he has tried to hold the club to ransom by asking for more money, and insists he is not angling for a move abroad.

Derby glory

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Dimitar Berbatov had been fouled, Ronaldo stepped up and smashed a free kick which, with the help of a deflection, dipped and beat Shay Given in the Citygoal.

City beat United home and away last season but the match was over just before half-time when Berbatov produced some superb skill to bring a long ball down and Tevez rifled in the second goal.

Martin Petrov forced a fine save from Edwin van der Sar late on, but United almost made it 3-0 when Tevez hit the post in the dying seconds.

Later on Sunday, Chelsea can go to within three points of Liverpool in third if they win at Arsenal.

Gomez 4

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Dortmund's seventh consecutive win sealed a 4-0 victory over Karlsruhe and means they have made a late bid for the Bundesliga title as they move into fifth and could now claim a European place for next season.

Dortmund's world champion Kimi Raikkonen, last year's winner in Barcelona, retired after less than a third of the race while McLaren's world champion Lewis Hamilton was ninth and lapped by his winning compatriot.

As close

FROM PAGE 20

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Pakistan in last four

Hockey

AFP, Kuantan

Sohail Abbas found his scoring touch just in time to lead Pakistan into the Asia Cup semi-final field hockey with a 3-2 win over India in a Group B match in Malaysia Sunday.

The Pakistanis had five penalty corners but Sohail was on target with only one attempt and that turned out to be the winner.

Pakistan had earlier on Saturday drawn 1-1 with China and needed a win to book their semifinal place.

Pakistan coach Shahid Ali Khan said that the recall of the four players from Europe made the difference in the match.

"Sohail, Salman Akbar, Waseem Ahmad and Rehan Butt gave us experience and were influential in the win. We needed the full points and credit to the players in achieving it," he said.

The match was an absorbing encounter with a lot of goal-scoring chances at both ends.

Pakistan took the initiative from the start.

They had the ball in the back of the net in the fourth minute but Tariq Aziz's effort was ruled out by South African umpire Jon Wright.

Prabhjot Singh gave India the lead in the 16th minute after a botched penalty corner attempt.

The Pakistanis drew level in the 33rd minute when Sandeep Singh fumbled with his clearance and allowed the 20-year-old Haseem Khan to score.

In the second half Pakistan went on the offensive early and took the lead just one minute into the game. Haseem Khan was the scorer when he deflected a long ball into the D.

Rain started to fall in the 43rd minute and India managed to score their equaliser in the 46th minute through Rajpal Singh before play was stopped.

Play resumed after 45 minutes. Pakistan attacked and in the 54th minute won a penalty corner. Sohail finally got it correct with a low flick to put his team in the semis.

India coach Herender Singh was disappointed with the result but remained confident that his team will make the semi-finals.

"It was a good match and could have gone either way. Now we are under pressure and will have to get a win against China on Tuesday," he said.

"My players did well and I have no complaints about their performances," he added.

Easy wins for Biman, DU

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Biman and Dhaka University ran away with easy victories on the opening day of the Public Universities and Services Cricket tournament yesterday.

At the Jahangirnagar University ground, Biman banked on a century from ex-national opener Javed Omar, who made 104 in a total of 321-7 in 50 overs before the national airliner bowled out Islamic University of Kushtia for just 149 runs in 41.4 overs.

The right-hander struck thirteen boundaries in his 118-ball essay. Hasanuzzaman (75) and Elias Sunny (33) added the final touch to a big score before another former national cricketer Sanwar Hossain starred with the ball.

In nearby BKSP, Dhaka University (66-1) crushed Noakhali Science and Technology University (65) by nine wickets with Fahad picking up four wickets.

Earlier, BCB tournament committee chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu inaugurated the competition at the Jahangirnagar University ground where all the players, officials and guests observed a minute's silence in memory of Dr MA Wazed Miah, eminent nuclear scientist and husband of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina before the start of the match. The players of all four teams involved in the matches also wore black badges. Dr Wazed Miah passed away on Saturday.

Mumbai march

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Mumbai's star bowler with two wickets for 15 runs in his four overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

MUMBAI INDIANS: 157-2 in 20 overs (Rahane 62 not out, Duminy 59 not out, Kumar 1-30, Van der Merwe 1-17).

BANGALORE ROYAL CHALLENGERS: 141-7 in 20 overs (Kohli 20, Boucher 40 not out, Harbhajan 2-15) Result: Mumbai Indians won by 16 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Jean-Paul Duminy.

Guingamp

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white flag of the Breton region, Guingamp, 13th in Ligue 2, made an encouraging start, with Rennes goalkeeper Nicolas Douchez producing fine saves to deny Eduardo and Richard Soumah.

Rennes seemed cowed by their rivals' industry but shortly before half-time Jerome Leroy served a reminder of their threat when he cracked an exquisite half-volley against the crossbar from 30 yards.

The favourites were a team reinvigorated in the early stages of the second period and Moussa Sow should have put them ahead when he thumped a shot against the crossbar after Leroy's sumptuous flick had put him clear through.

With just over 20 minutes remaining, Rennes won a free-kick wide on the right and Bruno Cheyrou's inswinging centre was headed home from close range by the unmarked Bocanegra.

The strike sparked jubilant scenes among the Guingamp fans, but even better was to come in the 83rd minute when Eduardo collected Lionel Mathis's pass before firing home an unerring strike off the base of the left-hand post.

Brothers claim T20

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Man-of-the-series Nayem hit five fours and a couple of huge sixes in his 34 off 18 balls while Hanif struck 56 from 48 balls. But the duo's departure left Dhaka Sports struggling and although they reached a competitive 146 for nine, it was not enough for a rampant Brothers Union.

Among the eight teams, KKR has been ranked as the most valued with a brand value of 42.1 million dollars, followed by Mumbai Indians (41.6 million), Rajasthan Royals (39.5 million), Chennai Super Kings (39.4 million), Delhi Daredevils (39.2 million), Royal Challengers Bangalore (37.4 million), Kings XI Punjab (36.3 million) and Hyderabad Deccan Chargers (34.8 million dollars).

The entire enterprise is valued at 2.01 billion dollars, Brand Finance said, adding its methodology took into account various revenue lines such as broadcasting, IPL sponsorship, team sponsorship, merchandising and gate receipts as well as the effect of performance, the catchment population of the city, the capacity of the stadium and the presence of iconic players.

Among the eight teams,

BRIEF SCORES

DAHAKA SPORTS CLUB: 146 for 9 in 20 overs (Nayem 34, Rashedur 1, Rajin 0, Anisur 7, Hanif 56, Ziaur 14, Wasel 6, Mashud 13, Taposh 1, Nahid 4 not out, Shahadat 1 not out; Razzak 2-32, Mubarak 2-28, Yunus 1-26, Shahjada 1-31, Dollar 2-28)

BROTHERS UNION: 148 for 4 in 18.1 overs (Mubarak 4, Nafees 53 not out, Tushar 6, Mehrab 8, Kapugedara 61, Razzak 5 not out; Hanif 3-15) Result: Brothers Union won by six wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Chamara Kapugedara.

Man-of-the-series: Wasim Nayem.

