



Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni (C) inaugurates the Prime Bank ATF Under-14 Tennis Tournament 2009 at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday.

Sania sails

AFP, Osaka

India's Sania Mirza sent out a strong signal of intent when she eliminated fifth seed Shahar Peer of Israel in the first round of the Japan Open women's tennis tournament on Monday.

The 22-year-old Mirza, who captured her first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open mixed doubles with Mahesh Bhupathi this season, needed one hour 52 minutes to complete a 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 win over her frequent doubles partner.

In the second round, Mirza will take on Viktoriya Kutuzova of Ukraine, the winner over Russian Maria Kirilenko who retired after losing the first set 6-2.

Eighth seed Yaroslava Shvedova of Kazakhstan fell to France's Mathilde Johansson 7-5, 2-6, 7-5, but fourth seed Francesca Schiavone of Italy and seventh seed Melinda Czink of Hungary safely went through.

Schiavone outclassed Anne Kremer of Luxembourg 7-5, 6-2, while Czink dispatched Japanese wild card entrant Ryoko Fuda 6-4, 6-4.

In other first-round action, Britain's Katie O'Brien breezed past Alexa Glatch of the United States 6-3, 6-4.

China Open goes to Kuznetsova

Tennis

AGENCIES, Beijing

today," said runner-up Radwanska after the match. "But it's really a good feeling to play the top players in strong tournaments like this."

Kuznetsova told a news conference that she treated the final as a single match.

"I think good players are always performing their best in every match," she said. "So I tried my best, and this is what I did."

The win ensures that Kuznetsova, currently world number six will move into the top five when the new WTA rankings come out on Monday.

"Normally I feel tired at the end of the season but now I feel great," Kuznetsova said, adding the win had given her "great confidence" heading into the season-ending championship in Doha later this month.

Meanwhile, in the day's first match, Bob Bryan and Mike Bryan needed 50 minutes to beat Andy Roddick and Mark Knowles to grab the men's double title. Their rivals didn't do much to stop them, and the twins finished the match 6-4, 6-2.

In the second set, Kuznetsova broke again to lead 2-0. She continued her masterful form by hitting a number of powerful attacks. Although Radwanska didn't drop any of her serve points in the rest part of this set, one break was enough for Kuznetsova to seal the victory 6-2, 6-4.

"I am not feeling very well

'KP inclusion a gamble'

Cricket

AFP, London

Former England skipper Mike Gatting believes it is unlikely Kevin Pietersen will be at his best on the upcoming tour of South Africa and has branded the batsman's inclusion in the tour party a gamble.

Pietersen is in both the one-day and Test squads for the 11-week tour that gets underway next month, despite having yet to fully recover from surgery he underwent in July for an Achilles tendon problem.

The South African-born star is expected to be physically fit in time for the five-match one-day series that begins in

Johannesburg on November 20. But Gatting questioned whether that would leave sufficient time for him to regain his form in time for the Tests.

"We only have one or two warm-up matches so it's going to be a big ask from him to get back to his best, even someone of his ability," Gatting said. "He wasn't in the best of nick when he left."

"He hasn't played for a few months and hasn't done a great deal. He can't just pick it up where he left off after such a serious injury. You have to have a couple of games to get into it, get your rhythm back, get your hand-eye co-ordination right and it will take time."

"He may still have the injury lingering in the back of his mind so he has to get fully confident again. All that has to be out of his mind so he can get on with the batting."

T&T open in style

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timed flick past midwicket for another boundary.

His opening partner William Perkins missed several scoops past the keeper, and was beaten when he tried some boomer drives as well, but that didn't stop him from trying to clobber most deliveries. When he connected, the ball went a long way; the highlight was when he shaved down the track and powered Ben Phillips over long-off for six.

With the runs flowing, Somerset's bowlers, as in the upset-win against Deccan Chargers, launched a fightback. They plucked four wickets in ten balls to bring the game back on an even keel. Simmons sliced the penultimate delivery of the fifth over to third man, two balls later Perkins missed a straight one from Willoughby. Darren Bravo, who had showed his confidence levels by swinging his first ball over long-on, was next to go, to a reflex caught-and-bowled from Willoughby. His brother Dwayne went for a golden duck slapping a wide ball from legspinner Max Waller, his second delivery in two matches, to backbreak point.

The spin pair of Waller and Arul Suppiah then ensured a less frenzied passage of play, keeping the batsmen mostly to singles and twos. Waller was getting plenty of turn, and his googly was proving hard to read, while Suppiah fired it in flatter.

After the top-order collapse,

Talent hunt

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State Minister for Youth and Sports Md. Ali Sarkar and Kazi Monirul Kabir, chief communications officer of Grameenphone will be present at the inaugural ceremony.

Did U Know?

New Zealand's Mike Thackwell is the youngest Formula One race starter till date. He was 19 years old when he started.

TALK TURKEY



Andrew Strauss

(England cricket captain)

"The Bangladesh tour is quite a useful one in our development in terms of playing on sub-continent wickets... I'm not going to say I am definitely on it at this stage and I'm not going to say I'm definitely not on it, we'll just need to see where we are as a side." After being in the news that he might not be on the tour in February 2010.

U-14 tennis tourney on

SPORTS REPORTER

The Prime Bank ATF Under-14 Tennis Tournament kicked off at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday. A total of 32 players from nine countries including Bangladesh are taking part in the event.

Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni inaugurated the meet as the chief guest. M. Ehsanul Haque, managing director of Prime Bank Limited was the special guest on the occasion. Senior vice-president of Prime Bank Ferdousi Sultan, BTF president Shahriar Alam, MP, and general secretary Istiaq Ahmed were also present.

Henin granted wildcard for Aus Open

AFP, Sydney

Former world number one Justine Henin has been granted a wildcard to play in the 2010 Australian Open in her return to tennis, organisers said on Monday.

The 27-year-old Belgian, who won the Australian Open in 2004, announced last month that she was ending her self-imposed retirement to come back to the women's tennis circuit.

Her coach, Carlos Rodriguez, said last week that Henin was likely to make her return in the Brisbane International, starting on January 3, ahead of the January 18-31 Australian Open in Melbourne.

"I spoke to Justine's team over the weekend and was happy to grant her request for a wildcard into the Australian Open," tournament director Craig Tiley said in a statement.

MSC name

FROM PAGE 17

Mohammad Akil, KM Firoz, Momin Ali, Shah Newaz Hossain, Jotirmoy Saha, Mezbui Islam Nannu, Jahirul Islam Mitul, Sharafat Mia and Khaireul Bashar Sumon.

Ticket touts

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rupees," said Rahul Chadha. Sunil Dahiya said: "I needed four tickets for 400 rupees each. This man was selling them for 350 rupees. I was worried whether the tickets were genuine but decided to go for them. I had no problems inside."

"We have no idea about this," said Ravi Jain, member, Delhi and District Cricket Association.

Premier T20

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Besides Radio Foorti is the tournament's radio partner.

"We have a jersey unveiling programme, live concerts involving popular pop stars at the SBNCS during innings breaks, a DJ corner, cheerleaders, SMS quiz competition for fans, a paper-lantern show and fireworks have also been planned. Through the media we want to invite the fans to this grand show," informed Tamim adding that there would be no such programmes like cheerleaders and live concert at two other venues -- Dhamondi Cricket Stadium and Khan Saheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fazlulah.

To make the event more attractive, the CDDM chairman said they will award Tk one lakh each to the hitter of most sixes and quickest fifty. The best batsman and the bowler of the tournament will get Tk two lakh each.

Sponsors Partex will provide Tk 20 lakh, 12 lakh less than the estimated budget of Tk 32 lakh.

"Our association with cricket in this country has previously seen the involvement of RC and MUM. However, considering the fast pace of the T20 format we thought Big Boss would be the ideal brand for the occasion," said Rubel Aziz, managing director of Partex Beverage Ltd.

BCB's marketing and commercial committee chairman Aziz Al Kaiser and media committee chairman Jalal Yunus were present during the briefing.

BRIEF SCORES

Trinidad & Tobago (Ramdin 39, Willoughby 3-35) 106 (de Bruyn 43*, Dwayne Bravo 4-23)

Result: Trinidad & Tobago beat Somerset by 44 runs

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declared October 6-15 transfers citing lack of quality players. Abahani, Dhaka Mariners and Bangladesh Sporting Club asked the game's governing body to clarify whether the players from national side, youth team and BKS would be available for the season.

Last year's Club Cup runners-up Sonali Bank have almost completed their transfer formalities while league holders Usha Kiria Sangha have signed up a couple of players.

Delhi live another day

CRICINFO, undated

Airtel Champions League Twenty20

Delhi Daredevils

vs Wayamba Eleven

at Feroze Shah Kotla

on October 11

Match 10

11:30 AM

Local time

Delhi 170 for 5 (Sehwag 66, Karthik 61)

Wayamba 120 for 7 (Jayawardene 54, Nannes 4-24, McGrath 2-20)

Match 11

11:30 AM

Local time

Delhi 104 for 5 (Sehwag 36, Karthik 31)

Wayamba 104 for 5 (Nannes 4-24, McGrath 2-20)

Match 12

11:30 AM

Local time

Delhi 104 for 5 (Sehwag 36, Karthik 31)

Wayamba 104 for 5 (Nannes 4-24, McGrath 2-20)

Match 13

11:30 AM

Local time

Delhi 104 for 5 (Sehwag 36, Karthik 31)

Wayamba 104 for 5 (Nannes 4-24, McGrath 2-20)

Match 14

11:30 AM

Local time

Delhi 104 for 5 (Sehwag 36, Karthik 31)

Wayamba 104 for 5 (Nannes 4-24, McGrath 2-20)

Match 15

11:30 AM

Local time

Delhi 104 for 5 (Sehwag 36, Karthik 31)

Wayamba 104 for 5 (Nannes 4-24, McGrath 2-20)

Match 16

11:30 AM

Local time

Delhi 104 for 5 (Sehwag 36, Karthik 31)

Wayamba 104 for 5 (Nannes 4-24, McGrath 2-20)

Match 17

11:30 AM

Local time

Delhi 104 for 5 (Sehwag 36, Karthik 31)

Wayamba 104 for 5 (Nannes 4-24, McGrath 2-20)

Match 18

11:30 AM

Local time

Delhi 104 for 5 (Sehwag 36, Karthik 31)

Wayamba 104 for 5 (Nannes 4-24, McGrath 2-20)

Match 19

11:30 AM

Local time

Delhi 104 for 5 (Sehwag 36, Karthik 31)

Wayamba 104 for 5 (Nannes 4-24, McGrath 2-20)

Match 20

11:30 AM