



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 Cink of Hungary safely went through.

Schiavone outclassed Anne Kremer of Luxembourg 7-5, 6-2, while Cink 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

World number six Svetlana Kuznetsova beat Agnieszka Radwanska to grab the second China Open title in her fourth appearance at the tournament finals on Sunday, climbing to the fourth spot in the world.

Kuznetsova began the match by a break to take a 2-0 lead. In the following games, Kuznetsova didn't drop any of her own serve games, and broke twice to establish a 5-2 lead. The 24-year-old Russian seized the second of the two set points to end the first set 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

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.

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 Sultana, 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, Mosam Ali, Shah Nawas Hossain, Jotirmoy Saha, Mezbaur Islam Nanna, Jahirul Islam Mitul, Sharafat Mia and Khairul Bashar Sumon.

Ticket touts

FROM PAGE 17
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

FROM PAGE 17
Besides Radio Foorti is the tournament's radio partner.

"We have a jersey unveiling programme, live concerts involving popular pop stars at the SBNSC 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 -- Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium and Khan Saheb Osman Ali Stadium in Uttara.

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.

Stalemate

FROM PAGE 17
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 BKSP 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 Kirra Sangha have signed up a couple of players.

Delhi live another day

CRICINFO, undated



The prospect of a league stage line-up without a single Indian Premier League (IPL) team would have been a nightmare for the organisers and television rights holders, but Delhi Daredevils' merciless showing Sunday went a long way in dispelling those fears. With their backs to the wall, the fear of elimination in front of their home fans drove them to deliver a 50-run walloping against Wayamba and also reverse the trend of low-scoring games at the Feroze Shah Kotla.

The performance of the Australian pace-bowling duo of Dirk Nannes and Glenn McGrath effectively shut Wayamba out of the game early in the chase but the foundation was laid by a brilliant display of power hitting by Virender Sehwag and Dinesh Karthik. Their 67-run partnership pushed Delhi to a score at least 30 runs above what captains had predicted to be competitive after summing up the conditions over the last three games at this venue.

The pitch at the Kotla came under scrutiny after the first couple of games on Friday and again on Sunday when New South Wales had to grind it out on a slow and low surface to post 130. Both NSW and Delhi employed strong horizontal bat shots, but the difference was the Delhi pair's tremendous bat speed that allowed them to collectively hit 15 fours and four sixes. Without taking any credit away from NSW, the duo of Phillip Hughes and Moises Henriques managed only seven fours and three sixes between them.

In the context of Delhi's assault, the first three overs -- which yielded just three runs and included an opening-over maiden -- were an aberration. The innings opened up in the fourth over when Isuru Udana,

whose slower balls and good length deliveries got a little predictable, got hit for three boundaries.

There was a lull when two star attractions in Tillakaratne Dilshan and Gautam Gambhir departed in quick succession. Those strikes didn't deter Sehwag who gave the raucous home crowd plenty to cheer with some powerful strokes off the front foot.

Farveez Maharoof was brought in to take the pace off the ball and make run-scoring difficult but Delhi didn't allow him to settle. Karthik cleverly picked the huge gap at third man, dabbing him past the keeper for two boundaries in

an over. His initial strategy was to knock the ball into the gaps and allow Sehwag the strike. The track had given the spinners assistance in the NSW game and the Sehwag and Karthik, perhaps mindful of that, didn't want them to settle into a comfort zone either. Sehwag slogged Kaushal Lokurachchi's first ball over deep midwicket before Karthik too joined in the act, reaching out to drive the bowler past the covers.

A frantic call for a single cost Sehwag his wicket but the innings never lost momentum, thanks to Karthik who was already well-set. In the 19th over, Karthik slogged Ajantha

Mendis for three consecutive sixes over the leg side, much in the same vein as Justin Ontong's late assault for the Cape Cobras on Saturday.

The match was all but sealed when Nannes and McGrath punched holes into the Wayamba top order to reduce them to a hapless 36 for 5. Mahela Udawatte swung at thin air and lost his middle stump to Nannes while Michael Vandort was bowled by same bowler after making a start with two impressive boundaries. The Powerplay overs yielded an unsatisfactory 31 and the minute Jeevantha Kulatunga tried to force the pace against Amit Mishra, he holed out to sweep cover. McGrath knocked back Jehan Mubarak's off stump for a first-ball duck and with it all hopes of a competitive chase.

Delhi never showed any signs of slackness in the field even while Wayamba had two capable batsmen in Mahela Jayawardene and Maharoof at the crease. Dilshan set one such example when he sprinted all the way from mid-off to his right and took a tumbling catch to send back Maharoof. Jayawardene, walking in at No 4, helped himself to a half-century which got lost in the collapse. His innings featured two clean strikes over the rope and a reverse sweep for four. He then holed out to long-off to hand Nannes his fourth wicket.

In their last ten overs, Delhi slammed 104 runs. Wayamba, in their full quota, managed only 120 runs and there lay the big difference between the teams. Though Jayawardene's effort came in a lost cause, it could make a difference if the net run rate comes into the picture at the end of the round.

BRIEF SCORES
Delhi Daredevils 170 for 5 (Sehwag 66, Karthik 61) beat Wayamba 120 for 7 (Jayawardene 54, Nannes 4-24, McGrath 2-20) by 50 runs



Delhi Daredevils bowler Glenn McGrath (R) celebrates with teammates Amit Mishra (L) and Dinesh Karthik after taking a wicket of Wayamba Eleven in their Champions League match at the Feroze Shah Kotla Stadium on Sunday.

NSW first in 2nd round

CRICINFO, undated



New South Wales, the champions of Australia's Big Bash, were the first team from Group B to secure passage, with points carried forward, to the second round of the Champions League. They did so by showing tremendous adaptability in both their matches on slow Delhi pitches with low bounce. Phillip Hughes and Moises Henriques quickly assessed what a competitive total would be on such a surface -- only 130 was needed on Friday night -- and their bowlers, fast and spin alike, bowled a dangerous stump-to-stump line, snuffing out Sussex's chase with early wickets and extremely few Powerplay runs.

The game was won for NSW during the 90-run partnership between Hughes and Henriques. Hughes played the patient innings while Henriques used the long handle to telling effect. Both

batsmen reached half-centuries but, despite being extremely well set, were unable to provide the slog-over thrust needed to take the total towards 150. That they were unable to do so was more an indictment of how difficult batting was on this surface than a criticism of their power-hitting skills.

Just how tough Sussex's chase would be was evident in Brett Lee's opening over of the chase. Bowling fast and straight, Lee pitched one on a length: the ball stayed low, ripped through Ed Joyce's defence, and crashed into the middle of off stump. The total of 130 had suddenly grown in stature.

NSW's innings was in strife at 40 for 2 and they had reached only 50 at the half-way stage when the acceleration came. Hughes hit the first six in the 11th over, muscling Piyush Chawla with a flat bat over long off, and Henriques, who was dropped at cover a few balls later, struck the second, slog-sweeping over deep midwicket. NSW took 17 runs off the 11th over and appeared to be back on track.

Henriques had struck three sixes during his cameo against the Eagles and began to do a repeat, launching Rory Hamilton-Brown over extra cover and clearing the long-on boundary off James Kirtley.

The batsmen scored 45 runs between overs 10 and 15 and, with eight wickets in hand, a score of 150 was probable. There were no boundaries in the last four overs, though, the most eventful delivery being the beamer from Dwayne Smith that crashed into the wicketkeeper's helmet, and NSW had to settle for less.

It isn't often that a team scores merely 130 in a Twenty20 match despite having eight wickets in the bank but it was that sort of a pitch. It got lower and slower as the day wore on; the batsmen struggled to find timing and had to stay vigilant to keep out the occasional shooter. Robin Martin-Jenkins' first delivery of the match set the tone as it thudded into the bottom of David Warner's bat. The Sussex bowlers rarely wavered from the straight-and-narrow line,

hoping they would hit if the batsmen misjudged the pace and bounce. It was a method NSW's attack would implement with success.

BRIEF SCORES
New South Wales 130 for 2 (Hughes 62 not out, Henriques 51 not out) beat Sussex 95 for 8 (Henriques 3-23) by 35 runs

Miracle-maker

FROM PAGE 17
Maradona had been under huge pressure after an unimpressive qualifying performance left his team on the verge of facing a play-off to reach South Africa. But they will now face Uruguay, a point behind Argentina in fifth, on Wednesday in a make-or-break game.

The circumstances, combined with his long absence from the national team, made the goal all the more special for Palermo. "It was incomparable because it was for the national team at a time like this," the striker said. "I don't know if it was fate but I thank God for this triumph."

'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."

Pietersen, 29, has yet to play a Test for England in his homeland but scored three centuries in five one-day internationals there in 2005 and has gone on to establish himself as one of the world's finest batsmen.

England nevertheless have demonstrated that they can thrive without Pietersen by beating Australia in this year's Ashes series before reaching the semifinals of the recent Champions Trophy tournament in South Africa.

"We managed to win the Ashes without Pietersen so I can't see why we can't do well in South Africa without him," Gatting added.

"What England have to do is get rid of that inconsistency because at the moment when they are good they can be very good, but when they are bad they are very bad."

T&T open in style

FROM PAGE 17
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 booming drives as well, but that didn't stop him from trying to clobber most deliveries. When he connected, the ball went alongway; the highlight was when he sashayed 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 slashed 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 backward 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, 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 slashed 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 backward point.

T&T looked to the big-hitting Kieron Pollard for providing the impetus. However, he miscued a high full toss in the 16th over, leaving Denesh Ramdin the task of steering the team past 150. Ramdin's was a measured knock compared to his teammates, hitting only two boundaries in a run-a-ball 39. It was Sherwin Ganga though, who gave the late push that T&T needed, smashing two leg stump full tosses for four in the 19th over and launching the first ball of the final over past long-on.

The team from the Caribbean ended on a 150, certainly a competitive score but one which Somerset should have got closer to. By being shot out for their second-lowest Twenty20 score, Langer's side are now left nervously watching the Deccan T&T game on Wednesday to know whether they progress.

BRIEF SCORES
Trinidad & Tobago (Ramdin 39, Willoughby 3-35)
Somerset 106 (de Bruyn 43*, Dwayne Bravo 4-23)
Result: Trinidad & Tobago beat Somerset by 44 runs

Talent hunt

FROM PAGE 17
State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad 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.



Andrew Strauss

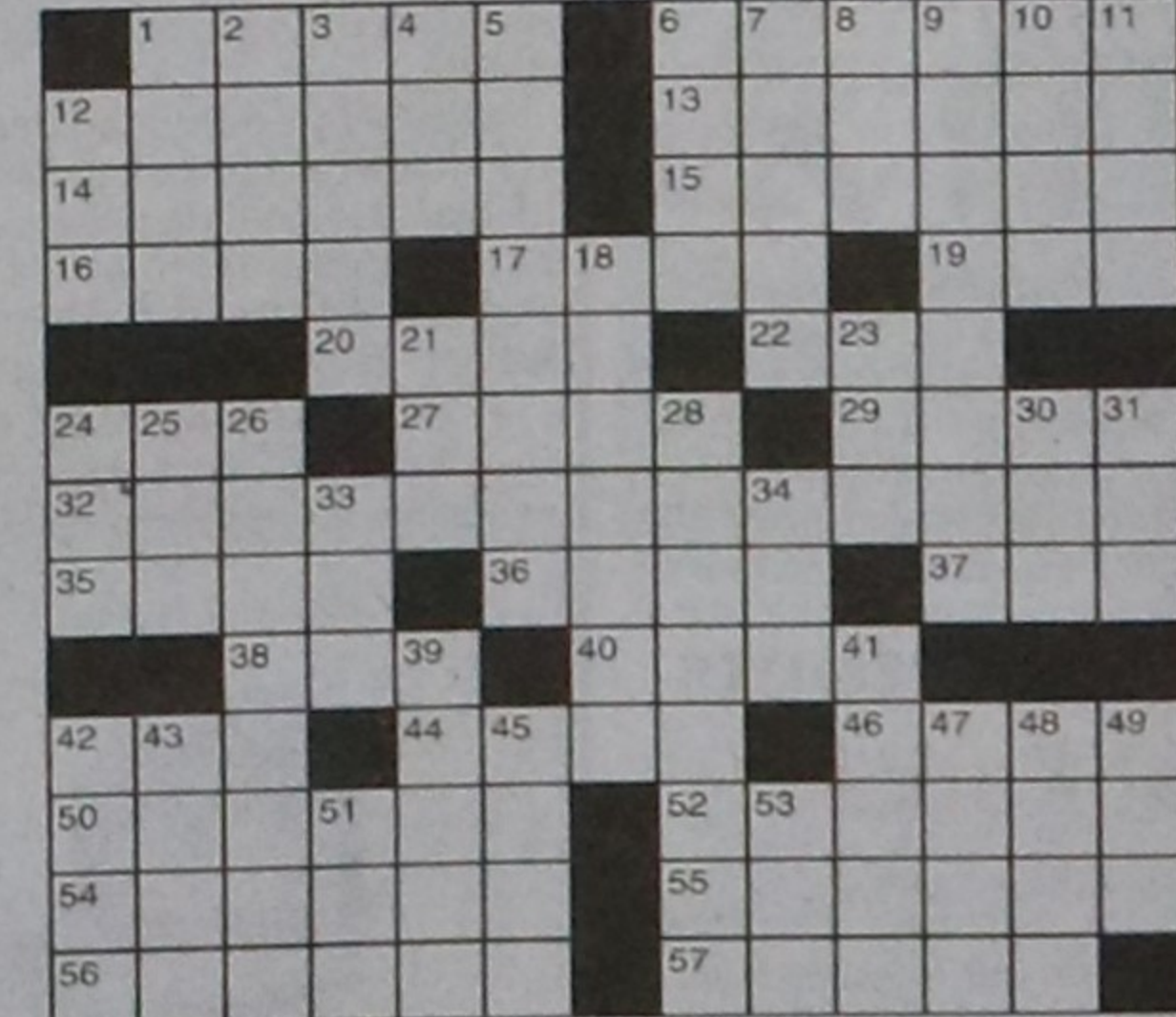
(England cricket captain)
"The Bangladesh tour is quite a useful one in our development in terms of playing on sub-continental wickets...I'm not going to say I am definitely on it at this stage and I'm not going to say I'm definitely not on it, we'll just need to see where we are as a side."
After being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

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS										DOWN																									
1 Ricochet	6 Takes off	12 Colorado city	13 Cheerful	14 Detective	15 Harsh	16 Men-only	17 Top	19 Mel of	20 Aesopian	22 Thither	24 Illustrations	27 Diane or	29 Tour de	32 John	35 China-town	36 Rival rival	37 Pismire	38 Emulate	40 Jog																
42 Sweet potato	44 Basilica section	46 Bullets	50 Narcotic	52 More	54 Go- (aggressive one)	55 Evening	56 Cleave	57 Beginning	1 Strong bond	8 Lawyers' org.	9 Archie's love	10 Right on the map	11 Marginalia	12 Fool	18 Next-to-last items	21 TV alien	23 Kimono	24 Don't just stand there	25 Pi	26 Metal-worker	28 Starbucks order	30 Documentary	31 "Guinness" Book suffix	33 Id counterpart	34 As well	39 Most common chemical compound	41 Urban fleet	42 It's all just posturing	43 Lacked originality	45 Sr., on the Seine	47 Bog down	48 Encounter	49 Tramcar fill	51 Foolhardiness	53 Quite some time

Solution time: 27 mins.

HOW GOOD THAW
AMOKIE EURO
HARBOR X MEN
ARTTY TIA
LES ONSTAR
SMELT DIG AWE
TIMY DIG SLOE
URT TWO SHELF
MANTHA AIR
OVER STUMPS
AVOW FOOTBALL
CAVE ERNE LEO
ETAL DEER EAT



CRYPTIQUIP

NLWVVNUGB NVYCVGC HTTCT
HGLWVCZAHNC MCKKCZ KV
PUN GHYC AVLMT VGC
AHMM KPHK AHWUKHM BHUG?
Yesterday's Cryptiquip: THE THREE
ARCHAEOLOGISTS WERE ABOUT TO EAT A
MEAL TOGETHER WHEN SOMEBODY
SUDDENLY CRIED "DIG IN!"

Today's Cryptiquip Clue: K equals T