ITF JR TENNIS

Sino, Indian dominance

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian and Chinese players dominated the semifinal line-ups of both the boys' and girls' sections after they raced past their quarterfinals opponents in the Grameenphone 24th ITF Junior Tennis Championships at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

In the boys' section, Bowen Ouyang and Xin Gao made it to the last four alongside Sai Kartik Nakireddi and Mohit Jayaprakash of India. Only Ouyang was stretched in his match, beating Phassawit Burapharitta 7-5, 3-6, 7-6.

In the girls' section, Saisai Zheng and Xuanshuo Ou of China joined India's Ratnika Batra and Uzbekistan's Sabina Sharipova. In fact the Uzbek girl was the odd one out in the semifinals after she beat Meng Ning Deng 6-3, 6-0.

The semifinals will be held from 9am today.

Oram out for a month

CRICINFO, *undated*

The New Zealand all-rounder Jacob Oram has been ruled out of action for up to a month with a patella tendon tear, meaning he will take no further part in the home ODIs against Australia and that he could miss a sizeable duration of the IPL. The Central Districts medium-pacer Michael Mason has been named as Oram's replacement in the New Zealand squad.

"Jacob Oram suffered a partial tear of the patella tendon," New Zealand team manager Dave Currie said in a statement. "It is expected that Jacob will recover in three or four weeks, however he will be out for the balance of the Australian series."

Oram, 31, sustained a knee injury during the first match in Napier. Oram's injury means he will miss a significant amount, if not the entire duration, of the upcoming IPL starting March 12. He represents the Chennai Super Kings in the league on a lucrative contract worth US$675,000 a year.

Oram suffered a variety of injuries over the past year and a half. He returned home midway through the tour of Bangladesh in 2008 and missed the Test series in Australia because of a back injury. A calf strain kept him out of the home Test series against West Indies and an Achilles injury cut short his participation in the one-day series that followed and the home Tests against India. He announced his retirement from Test cricket last October after the latest in that long list of injuries.

Mason, 35, has played 25 ODIs, three Twenty20s and a solitary Test for his country. New Zealand's selectors have only named a squad for the first two matches. The next match is in Auckland on Saturday.

Siddikur

FROM PAGE 17

be placed second.

Harmeet Kahlon, another Chandigarh-based professional, is currently in third place as he returned a three under 69 on Thursday.

We need

FROM PAGE 17

Cameron White for 33. None of them were at their most fluent and the run-rate dropped until Michael Hussey and Mitchell Johnson moved things along a bit quicker in the later stages.

"I was out there at the time, I was feeling it as much as anybody," Ponting said. "At different times like that you have to change your game a little bit and adapt and get through and none of us did that today. A lot of our batsmen need to look at themselves long and hard to make sure they do better next time.

"Every game that we play has to be like it is your last. I didn't think we were necessarily playing with that sort of attitude tonight, especially with our bowling and our fielding. We've got a little bit of work to do before the next game."

All's well

FROM PAGE 17

thigh injury while Stuart Broad has a back problem which will keep him out of this match at least. Ajmal Shahzad and Liam Plunkett may both get a game in that case.

Bangladesh have included pacer Nazmul Hossain to the squad for this match, though are expected to field the same eleven that played in the second ODI.

PHOTO: AFP

Australia's Luke Doerner (C) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal against South Africa during their World Cup match at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium in New Delhi yesterday. Australia won 12-0.

HOCKEY WORLD CUP

Biggest win for Aussies

AFP, *New Delhi*

Title favourites Australia swept aside South Africa 12-0 on Thursday to record the biggest victory in the history of the men's field hockey World Cup.

Penalty corner specialist Luke Doerner slammed four goals, Jamie Dwyer three and Glenn Turner two as the Australians gave the South Africans a hockey lesson in their first Cup meeting.

The 11th goal in the 66th minute, which was attributed to Doerner, was later awarded to Dwyer by the technical bench.

Desmond Abbott, Fergus Kavanagh and Matthew Butturini were the other scorers in a spectacular goal spree at the Dhyan Chand National Stadium in the Indian capital.

The Kookaburras, who led 5-0 at half-time, surpassed Pakistan's 12-3 romp over New Zealand in the 1982 edition in Mumbai, which was the previous highest victory margin in the World Cup.

"I did not know it was a record, but it is not everyday that we score 12 goals in a match," said Australian coach Ric Charlesworth.

"This will help us in future games. I liked the way we played throughout the match. We were relentless. We attacked the opponents in a very good manner. I am also very pleased with our penalty corner conversions."

Australia, who lost their opening match against England, bounced back in style to defeat hosts India 5-2 and have now taken their Group B tally to six points from three matches.

European champions England, who have six points from two games, take on Pakistan later on Thursday.

India and Spain, with three points each, clash in the evening's last match.

South Africa have lost all three matches so far, scoring six goals and conceding 22.

"We are extremely disappointed," said South African captain Austin Smith. "The scoreline suggests Australia were too good for us. It is difficult to pick ourselves up after such a loss because we are a young side."

PHOTO: COURTESY

Niaz Murshed (C), the country's first Grand Master, addresses a press conference organised in connection with Parachute Advance International Chess Tournament at the National Sports Council conference room yesterday.

DAVIS CUP

Spain gunning for hattrick

Tennis

AFP, *Paris*

Spain open their campaign to clinch the first hattrick of Davis Cup wins since the United States in 1972 with a home tie against Switzerland on Thursday but neither Rafael Nadal nor Roger Federer will be involved.

The absence of the two superstars of world tennis is indicative of the current problems facing the supreme team title in tennis that was first contested in 1900.

With the physical demands on players more and more acute, the big names in the game are opting out of defending the colours of their respective countries in the competition.

Federer and Nadal apart, this week's World Group first round ties will be notable for the absences, either through injury or choice, of Juan del Potro of Argentina, Andy Roddick of the United States and Russia's Nikolai Davydenko.

British No.1 Andy Murray meanwhile has declined selection for his country in the zonal third-tier match against Lithuania.

Doubts over the future of the Davis Cup were voiced at the Australian Open in January when it was confirmed that discussions were underway to develop a credible alternative to the gruelling three-day format that would be acceptable to the players.

To date, those talks have remained at the exploratory stage but how successful is this year's competition will be closely watched by all concerned.

In the absence of the injured Nadal, Spain have been able to exploit their strength in depth to align a powerful looking claycourt team of David Ferrer, Tommy Robredo, Nicolas Almagro and Marcel Granollers.

Without Federer, Switzerland will look to Stanislas Wawrinka and Marco Chiudinelli, but they face a daunting challenge as Spain are unbeaten in their last 18 home ties dating back to a loss to Brazil in 1999.

The United States are the most successful country in Davis Cup history with 32 titles, but they will also start underdogs away to Serbia who will have World No.2 Novak Djokovic as their spearhead backed up by Victor Troicki and Janko Tipsarevic.

The Americans, who last won the Davis Cup in 2007, have gone for youth and height in the towering shapes of John Isner and Sam Querrey with the Bryan twins Mike and Bob again holding down the doubles berth.

Isner reached the fourth round of the Australian Open and captured his first ATP title in Auckland, New Zealand, last month. Querrey went 0-2 in his Davis Cup debut against Spain in 2008.

US captain Pat McEnroe said he was hopeful of pulling off an upset.

Howard salutes India

Cricket

AFP, *Sydney*

Former Australian prime minister John Howard has welcomed India's new-found influence over world cricket as he prepares to become the sport's governing body chief in 2012.

Howard, who is facing a challenge to win over Asian nations, according to Sri Lankan great Muttiah Muralidaran, said India's growing power was positive for the sport.

"India is the second most populous country in the world, it's cricket-mad, they are pluses," Howard told state radio on Wednesday.

"I think it's entirely wrong to look at the Indian involvement in cricket in a negative light.

"I think of those millions of people in India and the sub-continent... who play cricket. They play it with a passion and love it."

Howard, a self-confessed "cricket tragic", has been nominated for the rotating International Cricket Council presidency and will take over from India's Sharad Pawar in 2012.

Muralidaran said he had forgiven Howard for labelling him a "chucker", but added that it would not be easy for the conservative former leader to get South Asian nations on-side.

"It won't be an easy job. He has to convince the subcontinent -- that's going to be a tough challenge for him," Muralidaran told the Sydney Morning Herald.

India's huge market has made it cricket's most important powerbase, with its Indian Premier League Twenty20 tournament handing out lucrative contracts to the world's best players.

Howard also defended his suitability for the role despite having no experience of sports administration, unlike the New Zealand contender John Anderson.

"I think the fact I haven't been involved in cricket administration is explained by the fact I had a day job which made that rather difficult," he said in reference to his 30-year stint in politics.

Gilchrist confident of Deccan repeat

CRICINFO, *undated*

Deccan Chargers captain Adam Gilchrist is confident of reworking the magic that helped them lift the title in the second season of the IPL. He believed the team spirit and the new inclusions in the squad would be crucial in ensuring success again. "We've got a great bond that is a legacy of last year's victory," Gilchrist told the Deccan Chronicle. "It's certainly something that will be an asset for us."

The defending champions had purchased Kemar Roach, the West Indies fast bowler, for 720,000 dollars during the auction in January and also recruited Mitchell Marsh, who led Australia under-19 team to success in the World Cup.

"We are very excited about the new players," Gilchrist said. "I am looking forward to playing positive and entertaining cricket again. We've made up for the loss of [fast bowler] Fidel Edwards with the inclusion of Kemar Roach - he was very impressive during West Indies' series in Australia. Then there is young Mitchell Marsh, an exciting talent who has captained the Australian Under-19 team to the World Cup triumph recently.

"Marsh is a hard-hitting batsman and a good bowler. We've got some superb youngsters among the local players as well - Monish Mishra and Rahul Sharma to name a couple, have been very impressive during our practice sessions."

However, Gilchrist said it may be a while before Deccan hit top gear with the entire squad unavailable initially. "We do not have the whole squad together for the first couple of games. The Indian players are sort of on-and-off owing to commitments in domestic matches. It's a little bit tight but we will be fine once we get into the tournament."

Gilchrist, along with fellow-Australian Matthew Hayden of the Chennai Super Kings, were among the foreign players who had confirmed their participation for the third edition early, and he dismissed security fears surrounding the tournament. "I've been here for six days and feel very comfortable with the security arrangements," Gilchrist said. "Obviously, once the tournament gets underway, I've got no doubt the IPL will be doing all that it can to create a secure environment."

However, he was disheartened that Hyderabad will not host any matches. Hyderabad, Deccan's home ground, will not be hosting any matches in the third season of the tournament following a decision of the league to shift all matches scheduled to be held in Andhra Pradesh. The move was perceived as a response to the sporadic violence that has hit the region due to a separatist movement in the state. According to the revised schedule, Deccan would be playing their home games across three venues in Mumbai, Nagpur and Cuttack.

"It is extremely disappointing that we won't be playing in front of the home crowd, that's frustrating. I do feel for the Hyderabadi people," he said. "But I don't see that as a negative about how we will go about our cricket. We will try and focus on the grounds where we are going to play."

Deccan begin their campaign with the IPL opener against Kolkata Knight Riders at the DY Patil Sports Academy in Mumbai on March 12.

Mashrafe

FROM PAGE 17

hand to speak of the ground behind not considering the paceman for the second match.

"Mashrafe looked stiff in the warm-up game. He had asked for painkiller after the nets the day before the second ODI. So, he was not in plan to be in for two consecutive matches, but there was every chance he might have been taken in the third after one match rest," said Siddons.

There was an allegation from Mashrafe that the coach did not consult with him before he was dropped or that his teammates were not very welcoming towards him. Siddons had a very dismissive reply to those claims: "I don't need to consult with anyone before letting him know of the decision."

"I was busy with the batsmen. Champaka [Ramanayake] was supposed to be guiding him with the bowling aspects, but unfortunately he wasn't there due to illness. All the players were warm with him. He's a senior player. He shouldn't have been bothered by these trifle issues," said Siddons.

The coach was certain this chapter will have the least of impacts on the team's performance in the rest of the series.

Bowling

FROM PAGE 17

He also said that the form of Saha and Dinda was not a worrying factor. "Wriddhi, in fact, batted well in the Vijay Hazare Trophy," Ganguly said. "But he is batting way down at No. 6 whereas he should be batting up the order. Laxmi [Ratan Shukla] is bowling pretty well but he also needs to score runs. Dinda did pretty well. But we played mostly on good batting wickets where the batsman made good use of the Powerplay overs."

PHOTO: STAR

Players and officials of Rajshahi Kasba High School receive the champions trophy from chief guest Chitta Ghosh after the final of the Rajshahi Division Ecstasy 6th National School Hockey Tournament at the Gor-e-Shaheed Maidan in Dinajpur yesterday. They beat Dinajpur High School 3-0 in the final.

CROSSWORD *By Eugene Sheffer*

ACROSS

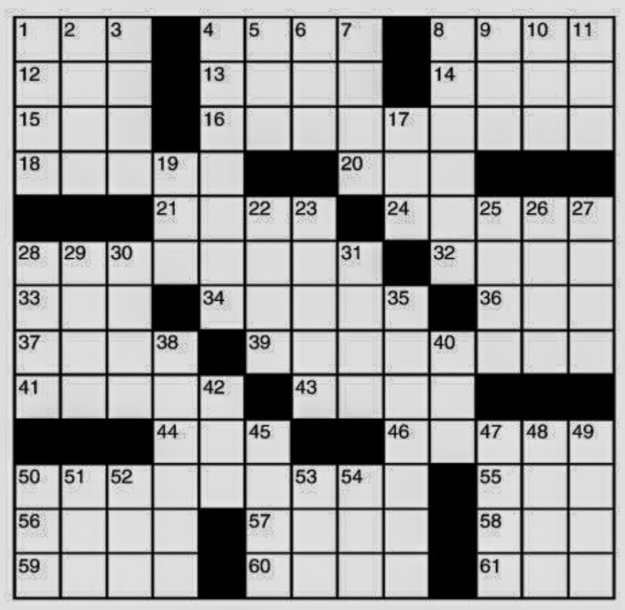
1 Pretense
4 Sit for a snapshot
8 Sleeping
12 Also
13 Press
14 "Arrivederci"
15 Lummox
16 Triangular Halloween treat
18 Use tweezers
20 Witness
21 Brewery products
24 Despots
28 Measures of luminous intensity
32 Fat
33 Mimic
34 Novelist Ephron
36 Grazing area
37 Anthropologist Margaret
39 Openly
41 Added
43 Martial-arts school
44 Sprite
46 Expand a computer file
50 February 2nd
55 Before
56 Enthusiastic
57 Right on the map?
58 — Francisco
59 Took the bus
60 Fling
61 Potent stick

DOWN

1 Surmounting
2 Brat's stocking stuffer
3 Vegan's protein source
4 Intoxicated
5 "... man — mouse?"
6 Trinity member
7 Tackles' teammates
8 Way in
9 Resume, for short
10 Listener
11 Dress in
17 Nevertheless
19 Scoundrel
22 A util.
23 Dieter's entree
25 "— Lang Syne"
26 Fishing rod attachment
27 Remain
28 Arrived
29 Pinnacle
30 Spruced up
31 China (Pref.)
35 Tweaks
38 Coat with flour
40 Charged bit
42 Every last crumb
45 Poetic measures
47 Vivacity
48 Persia, now
49 Confined, with "up"
50 Gridlock component
51 Past
52 Affirmative action?
53 Long March leader
54 Foolish one

Solution time: 21 mins.

S	T	E	P		F	L	A	T		T	E	A
I	O	T	A		A	I	D	E		R	U	B
S	O	C	C	E	R	M	O	M		A	R	E
			K	N	E	E		P	I	C	O	T
C	A	P	E	S			D	E	S	K		
A	L	O	T		R	E	U	S	A	B	L	E
P	A	L		S	H	E	E	T		A	U	G
T	R	O	U	P	E	R	S		A	L	S	O
		S	T	O	A			H	I	L	T	S
A	S	H	E	N		B	A	A	L			
L	E	I		G	O	L	F	W	I	D	O	W
O	R	R		E	V	E	R		N	O	D	E
E	A	T		D	A	D	O		G	O	E	S



CRYPTOQUIP

F L N W J W H S U G P W F L U P L D J L O W G Y N D W L O L N G B B J Y W U W U P C N B G Y H F, C S J G Y H F P G S G B U L H X Y J W L N X L J J W L N.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: NAME OF A DECIDUOUS TREE THAT ALWAYS FLOURISHES BEST WITHIN A FLORIDA CITY: MIAMI BEECH.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals T