

Semenya 3rd time lucky

World 800m champion Caster Semenya ran a season's best time of one minute 59.90 seconds to easily win her third comeback race here on Sunday as she rebuilds her career after her sex test ordeal.

The 19-year-old South African was back at Berlin's Olympic Stadium, where she won her world crown last August, only for the sport's governing body, the IAAF to demand a gender test into her abnormally high levels of testosterone.

Having only been cleared to race again last month, Semenya looked comfortable at the World Challenge meet, her third since her comeback, and dipped below two minutes for the first time since coming back.

She attacked in the last 100 metres and breezed past second-placed Cherono Koach of Kenya and third-placed Italian Elisa Piccione Cusma, even though Cherono ran a personal best of two minutes 00.40 seconds.

"It feels good to be back in Berlin," said the teenager.

"I did not think about everything that happened after my gold medal. I just concentrated on my race and my time."

"My goal was to run under two minutes and I achieved that."

"When I won the race, this brought back memories of the 2009 final for me."

"After my training this year, I was a little disappointed with my competition results, but now I am happy as I can see progress."

Sraboni

received any phone calls since. Shammi too refused to talk after being aware that the caller was a sports reporter.

The strange thing was that no other player of the camp dared talk to the reporters saying that they had no permission to talk to the media. Swapon however denied any such embargo on the players.

However, many alleged that the players have no say over general secretary Mahmudul Hasan Rana, who has been running a dictatorial regime since the establishment of the federation in 1997.

Meanwhile, Sraboni and Shahnaz sounded optimistic and vowed to do well in the Korean Open.

Aamer feels

Pakistan coach and fast bowling great Waqar Younis, as well as team bowling coach Aaqib Javed, on his game.

"Both Waqar and Aaqib have really helped me improve as a bowler. They guide me quite literally session by session."

"They will sit down and talk to me at the end of each session when I have been bowled and explain to me what I did well and what I didn't do well in the completed session of cricket."

"In addition they will talk to me about the upcoming session and what is required of me. They are of great help to me and I believe that I can only improve as a bowler with guys like Waqar and Aaqib around me."

Aamer explained he was not trying to bowl 'magic' deliveries.

"I feel that if I try too many different things and experiment too much, then that affects the quality of my cricket. My philosophy is to keep it simple and stick to the basics instead of trying to be too clever."

Aamer, on course to reach the landmark of 50 wickets in his 14th Test at Lord's, added: "It's great to be going into the final match at with some momentum. We'll be going all out for victory at Lord's."

Federer's 63rd

Fish netted a backhand on the first break-point chance of the third set to hand Federer a 5-4 lead and the Swiss third seed held serve for the victory, which came after two hours and 40 minutes when Fish sent a backhand wide.

Fish denied Federer on four break points in the first set without ever managing to get one against the Swiss star, but came through in the tie-breaker when it mattered most to claim the opening set.

Federer smacked a forehand winner for a 5-4 lead, but Fish answered with an overhead smash, achieved a set point when Federer netted a backhand and took the set after 67 minutes with a service winner.

"I played well the whole match. The first set was the one I really should have won and ended up losing," Federer said. "It was a close match, could have gone either way."

Fish managed a break point in the fifth game of the second set but sent a forehand beyond the baseline on the way to another tie-breaker.



Kenya's David Lekuta Rudisha celebrates after winning the men's 800m race in the IAAF World Challenge in Berlin on Sunday. He set a new world record with one minute 41.09 seconds.

Rudisha smashes Kipketer's record

Athletics

AFP, Berlin

Kenya's David Lekuta Rudisha set a new world record of one minute 41.09 seconds in the 800 metres on Sunday at Berlin's Olympic Stadium and insisted he can go faster still.

His time shaved two hundredths of a second off the previous best mark set by Denmark's Kenyan-born Wilson Kipketer in August 1997.

The 21-year-old African record holder and a world junior champion in the same distance in 2006, was led through the first 400m by pacesetter Sammy Tangui in 48.65sec.

Rudisha then managed to keep up his pace through to the line to break Kipketer's long-standing record, something he had recently been threatening to do, so promising has been his recent form on the track.

"This was my first real attempt to break the world record, I knew I was good, I had trained hard," said the softly-spoken Kenyan.

"Now that I have run that time, I can say I have the ability to improve and go faster."

"I am very happy, it feels great to have the world record."

Having only reached the 800m semifinals at

the World Athletics Championships here in Berlin last August, Rudisha said he came to the German capital with something to prove and wanted to make up for last year's disappointment.

"Last year, I had a bad time in Berlin," he said.

"So I did not want to talk too much about the world record before the race."

"I knew it was my day, the weather was good. I told my pacemaker to run the first lap under 49 seconds. He did a great job, but in the last 200 metres I had to push really hard."

"But when I saw the clock at the end, it was amazing, a fantastic feeling."

"I am very happy to be the fastest 800 metres runner in the world."

"Running is like a profession to me, so this means everything."

Rudisha has been in great form all season while competing in Europe.

In Oslo's Diamond League meeting in June, he broke Sebastian Coe's 31-year-old meeting record with a run of 1 min 42.04 sec.

Then at a meet in the Belgian city of Heusden-Zolder in July, Rudisha timed 1:41.51, an African record and the fastest time in the world since Kipketer set the previous best 13 years ago.

Acid test's

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Asked why he expected Morgan to keep Ian Bell out of the Ashes line-up, Ponting quipped: "I just have a feeling they [England] really like Morgan, what he brings to their set-up -- plus he's not English."

"I have got a lot of thoughts on why they pick those guys [non-England-born players], it is quite surprising when you look at their side and work out how many there are."

"But it doesn't matter where they are born, we have got to make sure whatever team they put out we are well equipped to break them down."

Ponting said the England team will present no surprises.

"I guess the beauty about their side is that we have seen all their players a fair bit," he said. "There will be no surprises, as far as we are concerned, on what they can do."

October's Indian tour of two Tests and three one-dayers kick-starts a gruelling eight-month schedule for Australia that will also include the Ashes Down Under and the 2011 World Cup on the sub-continent.

Greg to make

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"I am really excited by the challenge of this new role. From a talent management point of view, this will be an exciting period for Australian cricket," Chappell said.

Brown said his organisation undertook a detailed review of its cricket structure more than four years ago and Chappell's appointment was the final step in that process.

"Greg will work closely with the state cricket talent development managers and with the national selectors in a system that now gives us a tightly integrated, national talent identification and management system across all Australian cricket," Brown said.

Yorkshire seamer Tim Bresnan was the only addition on Sunday to the England team beaten at The Oval.

FIDE Rating chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Three players shared the lead in the Federation Open FIDE Rating Championship after leader Mahatabuddin Ahmed Robin lost his seventh round game yesterday at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room.

FM Khondoker Aminul Islam, Sohul Chowdhury and Abdul Momin were joint leaders with six points after beating Robin, FM Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon and Golam Mostafa Bhuiyan respectively.

Six players -- Robin, FM Rezaul Haque, Monir Hossain, Mohammad Shameem, Farhadur Imam, Nasiruddin Apu -- were in second position with 5.5 points each.

Kiwis not

FROM PAGE 17

to an abrupt end in Pakistan in March last year after a terror attack on the touring Sri Lankan team in Lahore.

The near month-long floods in Pakistan have killed 1,500 people and affected up to 20 million nationwide in the country's worst natural disaster.

But with foreign cricket teams not prepared to play in the country because of security concerns, Vaughan said it was up to the Pakistan Cricket Board to organise fundraisers outside the country.

CA OK with tweeting

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia have ruled out following England's reported lead of banning their players from using the social networking sites Twitter and Facebook during the forthcoming home Ashes series.

Weekend reports said England's cricketers were facing a ban from using Twitter and Facebook while on England duty, with team management worried they could be a divisive influence and lead to dressing-room secrets being revealed.

Australian opening batsman Phil Hughes caused a stir when he revealed on Twitter during last year's Ashes series in England that he had been dropped hours before the third Test.

Cricket Australia (CA) general manager Michael Brown said CA had no problem with players using the popular social networking sites.

"I was just listening to Michael Clarke who has 42,000 people listening to his tweets," Brown told reporters at the team's training camp at Coolool in Queensland on Monday.

"At this stage, it's really important that we are on about growing the game and embracing the future, and young people are a critical part of it."

"We want young people to be associated with the game."

Australian captain Ricky Ponting said the networking sites were a good way for the public to get to know players "behind the helmet".

"It is your job as international players to promote the game and be the best you can for the game," Ponting said.

"And if we can use social networks, if that brings people closer to the game, brings people through the gates to play, then that's what it is all about."

"The biggest thing we face as international players is... everyone knows us with the helmet on but very few in Australia or around the world actually understand what we are like with the helmet off."

"If there are ways to express yourself then feel free to do that, I am totally all for that as long as it is done the right way and within reason -- you won't see us banning our players from doing that sort of stuff."

Atwal's piece of history

Golf

INTERNET

Arjun Atwal became the first Indian and just the sixth Asian-born player to win on the PGA Tour when he secured a one-stroke victory at the Wyndham Championship on Sunday.

Atwal joined Japanese trio Isao Aoki, Shigeki Maruyama and Ryuji Imada and South Koreans KJ Choi and YE Yang in an elite but growing club of champions from world's most populous continent.

The 37-year-old, who now lives in Florida, sank a pressure-packed seven-foot par

putt at the final hole to edge American David Toms at Sedgefield.

His final round of 67 left him on 20-under 260, ignited by an opening day 61. Toms closed with a 64.

"It was a long-time dream of mine to win out here but until it happens you keep doubting yourself and, believe me, I had my doubts teeing up today, even with a three-shot lead," Atwal, who took up golf at the age of 14 in Calcutta, told reporters.

"Until you do it, you don't know. My swing wasn't feeling all that great today. It was a little tight [but] I just grinded it out and got it done somehow."

will resonate in his homeland. "I'm pretty sure it's going to be huge back home," he said. "My in-laws called my wife yesterday and said the coverage was just unreal with me leading."

"I know there were a lot of people in India and Dubai that watched me play. I've had a lot of messages."

Atwal was part of what at one stage was a seven-way tie for the lead, but he went ahead with a birdie at the 16th and came to the par-four 18th knowing a par would win.

After driving into the rough, he deliberately lashed a utility club up against the skyboxes beyond the green from where he was granted a free drop.

Ponting waiting for 'something special'

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Ricky Ponting said on Monday his Australian team were on the verge of "something special" over the next eight months packed with an Ashes series, a tour to India and next year's World Cup.

The Australians began a training camp on Queensland's Sunshine Coast and the skipper said he was excited by the prospect of what his team had to offer.

Ponting's men face two Tests and three one-dayers in India in October followed by a five-Test home Ashes series and seven one-dayers against England leading up to the World Cup on the sub-continent from February to April.

"I am looking forward to the next eight months of international cricket probably more than I have any period of my career," Ponting told reporters at the camp.

"I have been lucky to play in a lot of great teams and had success with those teams but I feel the current team of players now is on the brink of doing something special as well."

"We have been there or thereabouts with achieving something pretty special for a while."

"Going through the Australian summer undefeated last year [against the West Indies and Pakistan] was a great achievement by the team but we will be better than that in the

coming months."

Ponting will be aiming to improve on the last 12 months of eight wins in 10 Tests and 23 victories in 30 ODIs, including the Champions Trophy triumph.

While regaining the Ashes after relinquishing them in England last year is a constant topic of discussion, Ponting said his team had not lost sight of their looming tour of India.

"We have managed to maintain some very high standards around the group," he said.

"And they are what we want to build on until the middle of April, when we play some of the biggest cricket that there is on the international calendar -- a Test series in India, an Ashes series in Australia and a World Cup on the sub-continent soon after."

"Believe me, everything we do from now until mid-April will be about no stone left unturned... to ensure we have the best period of cricket that we possibly can."

But Ponting is particularly aware of the coming return battle for the famous Ashes urn.

"I am the only Australian captain in history to lose two Ashes series -- I will do my best to make sure it isn't three [and] the players are on the same page there," he said.

"We are definitely looking forward to that summer coming around."

Ponting began the mind games with England earlier this month when he said it was "absolutely possible" that his team could regain the Ashes with a 5-0 sweep.

'Mind your own business'

Cricket

AFP, London

Andy Flower has told Salman Butt to mind his own business after the Pakistan captain backed Australia to deny England a successful defence of the Ashes.

Butt's men beat England by four wickets at The Oval here on Saturday to reduce the hosts' series lead to 2-1 ahead of the fourth and final Test starting on the other side of London's River Thames at Lord's on Thursday.

Pakistan drew 1-1 in a two-Test series against Australia in England last month and Butt was unequivocal when asked by reporters at The Oval who he favoured to win the Ashes series, which starts in Brisbane in November.

"The Aussies are much better players in their own conditions," Butt said.

"The ball doesn't swing so much, so the bowlers have to work hard. In their conditions they are better than England."

However, England coach Flower, speaking on Sunday, said: "Salman Butt shouldn't really be making judgments about our bowlers in Australia."

"Of course, if the ball doesn't swing at any venue, [fast] bowlers will be less dangerous. That's perfectly obvious."

Meanwhile Flower wants a show of faith in the top-order to be rewarded with a much improved batting display at Lord's.

Yorkshire seamer Tim Bresnan was the only addition on Sunday to the England team beaten at The Oval.

That means England are set to field an unchanged top order at Lord's and Flower wants that vote of confidence rewarded after a poor display at The Oval.

"On the batting side, I thought we under-performed without a doubt," Flower said. "On a good Oval pitch, scores of 233 and 222 weren't good enough to win a Test match."

At The Oval, England lost their first seven wickets for 94 runs in their first innings and their last seven wickets for 28 in their second after Alastair Cook's century.

In an era of generally batsmen-friendly wickets, both pitch and overhead conditions favoured swing bowlers in the first two Test of this series.

But Flower said the odds were far more in the batsmen's favour at The Oval.

"I think the first two pitches we played on at Trent Bridge and Edgbaston were very tricky surfaces," former Zimbabwe batsman Flower explained. "So they would have undoubtedly have contributed to collapses."

"At The Oval, although we won the toss and batted, they were still quite trying conditions."

"But in the second innings there were no excuses whatsoever. We set up a brilliant platform through Alastair Cook and Jonathan Trott and we performed poorly after that."

"Any batting collapse is concerning and there have been too many of them."

England's top order has been struggling lately, with captain Andrew Strauss, fellow opener Cook, Kevin

Pietersen and Paul Collingwood all averaging under 30 in three Tests against Pakistan.

"As a batting team we need to produce better results, simple as that," Flower said.

"Lord's should provide us with a very good opportunity to put things right and it is the responsibility of all of us to make sure that happens."

Last weekend's defeat ended England's run of six straight Test wins.

"But four of those were against Bangladesh so let's keep it in perspective," said Flower.

"I think we are getting better as an international unit but we are still well down the rankings in Test cricket. As a team, we are very realistic about where we are."

He added: "We know we are a dangerous side and can win international matches and series but we are not the best side in the world and we are working hard to get better."

Manik back

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Asked if winning the league was a realistic target with such a depleted squad, Manik said, "There is not much difference among the local players and I think the foreign collection will make the difference."

Asked whether there would be a communication gap between the high officials and the team management this time as well, Salam Mursheedy said, "We will try to keep our words of what we would make and we will also try our best not to repeat the issues that we saw in the last season."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

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4 Unrivaled
8 Lairs
12 Mound
13 Fairy
14 List-
ending
abbr.
15 "See ya"
17 Island
near
Florida
18 Satan's
specialty
19 Spare
tire's
place?
20 Cut wood
22 Abound
24 Persia,
now
25 Join in
29 Abner's
adjective
30 Wept
31 Cattle
call?
32 Grasp
34 Chamber
35 They
last for
hours

DOWN

1 Favorite
2 George's
brother
3 One-
sided
contest
4 Crystal-
clear
5 October
birthstone
6 Neither
mate
7 Away
from
WSW
8 Leave
suddenly
9 Needle
case
10 Catches
11 Bed-
frame
part
16 Squared
19 Garden
intruder
20 Riverbed
buildup
Solution time: 25 mins.

36 Stoppers
37 Adult
40 Attempt
41 Stromboli
spillage
42 Relax
46 24/7
47 Director
Kazan
48 Last
letter
49 "Big Bang
Theory"
type
50 Captain
Jack
Sparrow
portrayer
51 Kin of
14-Across
21 Met
melody
22 Coin-
toss
call
23 — out
(man-
aged)
25 Helen's
home
26 Pay off
gradually
27 Castle
28 Male
turkeys
30 Sleuth
Charlie
33 1936
abdicator
34 Santa's
runway
36 Inexpen-
sive
37 Singer
Campbell
38 Carry
on
39 Finished
40 Omit
42 Turner or
Nugent
43 Hearty
brew
44 Old
hand
45 Common
Mkt.

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EPIC KEA ONCE
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ACES ROE TOGA
RISE EVE EXIT
MATT TAB DYNE

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CRYPTOQUIP

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I T X A G X C Z C U , X U P G G S U C

L I C R J X Q L K C O I X Q U ' O X Q U .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A GROUP OF THREE

BABIES WERE BORN ON A FAMOUS VEGAS

BOULEVARD, I WOULD NAME THEM STRIPLETS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals B