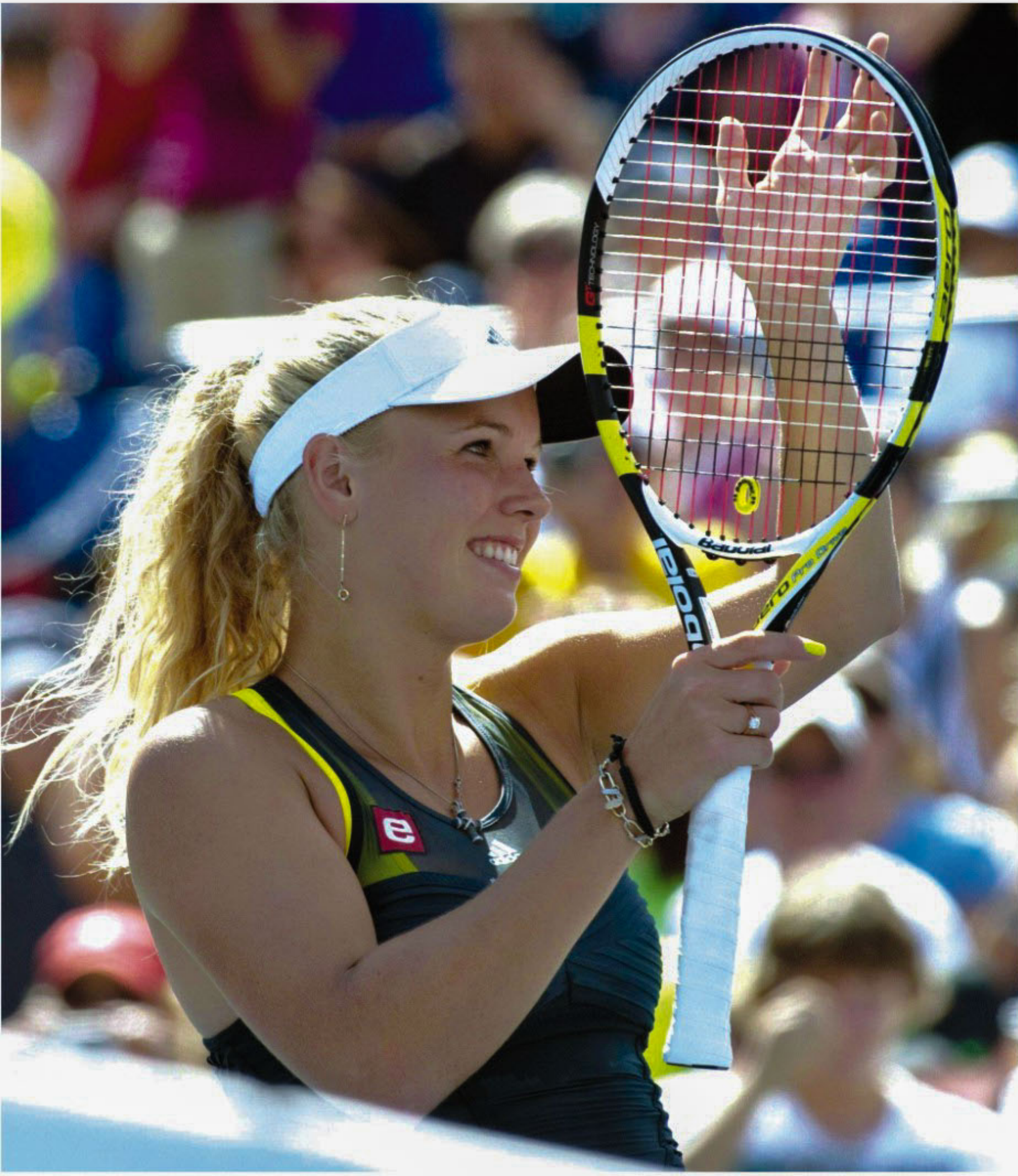


Real's new Zidane

Enzo Fernandez is the toast of Real Madrid's youth teams - for his outstanding skill and because he is the son of Zinedine Zidane. The 15-year-old has the same style and delivers the same accurate passes as his famous father. "This boy is an image of his father," said Jorge Valdano. He doesn't play under his real last name Zidane but that of his mother - Fernandez. However, like his father, Enzo is a playmaker and wears the number 10.



Top seeded Dane Caroline Wozniacki salutes the crowd after beating Yung-Jan Chan of Taiwan in the US Open third round in Flushing Meadows on Saturday. PHOTO: AFP

District leagues caught in DFA-DSA tangles

Football

ANISUR RAHMAN

Two and a half years have gone by since the formation of District Football Association (DFA) in order to keep government officials out of the 2008 Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) election, but most of the DFAs are failing to become functional due to financial constraints and conflict with the government-approved District Sports Associations (DSAs).

After being elected president of the BFF, Kazi Salahuddin declared that he would keep football on the field 10 months in Dhaka. He somewhat succeeded in the first year, but since has been made to sweat to keep his words due to a marathon professional football league in the second season that ended in 10 months.

The BFF boss has often been criticised for not looking after the sport at district levels. The high-ups of 57 DFAs during the token-money distribution in April urged the game's governing body to pay more attention to the district football to revive coun-

try's football. But the fact is that they have been struggling to hold leagues and tournaments round the year since BFF-approved bodies, the DFAs, are not allowed to receive any government allocation.

The effort of distributing Tk 50,000 to each of DFAs in April was a part of BFF's plan to get the bodies out of financial constraints and make them functional, but that plan has never realised.

Of 60 DFAs, only a few such as Chittagong, Meherpur, Sunamganj, Sathkira, Jessore have held leagues after getting financial assistance from the BFF while the rest have hardly taken any steps to get ball rolling on the field.

"We are now separate body, but we still have no ground and office because of lack of coordination between the DSA and DFA. We need ground and office rather than fund because we are often treated like extortionists when we approach the sponsors," said Khulna DFA general secretary Mostaqzaman, adding that they had already completed the Third Division qualifying league and were going to hold the Second and First Divisions after the Eid.

Madaripur DFA could still not hold any competitions since its journey.

"No sponsors showed interest in sponsoring the competitions without DSA and we are really facing problem to convince them," said general secretary Golam Kabir, who however assured of starting the First Division league in the latter part of this month.

Barisal DFA president Alamgir Khan claimed that they could not do anything in the last two and a half years because of poor relation with the then DSA president (Barisal DC), but are now hopeful with the new DSA president.

Rajbari DFA general secretary Shahajan Mia informed that they have been waiting for BFF's response after submitting a budget of Tk 3 lakhs.

Rajshahi DFA general secretary Nurul Haque slammed the BFF for not revealing its calendar.

"BFF should first announce its calendar, then we can follow that to deck up our schedules because we face problem of running the leagues once it clashes with the Dhaka schedules," said Haque adding

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Sraboni, Shahanaz win bronze in Korea

SPORTS REPORTER

Sraboni Biswas and Shahanaz Parvin won bronze medals in the 6th Korea Open International Taekwondo Championship held in Gumi yesterday.

Sraboni defeated a Chinese player to finish third in the 67kg category while Shahanaz Parvin beat Thailand to win the 62kg bronze medal, said a press release yesterday.

Sraboni and Shahanaz will also take part in the 7th Gyeongnam Provincial International Taekwondo Championship to be held in Korea from September 10 to 12.

England draw first blood

REUTERS, Cardiff

World Twenty20 champions England celebrated their first international since winning the World Cup in Barbados this year with a five-wicket win over controversy-hit Pakistan on Sunday.

The Swalec Stadium was only three-quarters full on a humid, overcast day after a dreadful week for Pakistan with further newspaper allegations of corruption in their camp emerging overnight.

England, set 127 to win in the first of two matches scheduled for Cardiff, were struggling on 62 for five at the halfway stage with Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi taking two cheap wickets with his brisk wrist spin.

However, Eoin Morgan was badly dropped at short fine-leg on 13 by Shoaib Akhtar attempting a reverse sweep and England eventually reached their target with 17 balls to spare.

After Paul Collingwood had asked Pakistan to bat following a 30-minute rain delay, England's premier bowler Graeme Swann showed his versatility in all forms of the game with two for 14 from his four overs. Pakistan scored from only 10 of the off-spinner's deliveries.

Michael Yardy was almost as parsimonious from the other

SEE PAGE 18 COL 3

Sky Blues' twin targets Leave for Assam today

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Three-time Bangladesh League champions Abahani leave for Assam this afternoon to take part in the Bordoloi Trophy as part of their preparations ahead of the upcoming season.

Abahani, who are still unaware of their opponents, will start their campaign from the second round as they have been drawn along with two other teams who have come to this stage by playing in the preliminary round. The top two teams will qualify for the semifinals and Abahani's target is to be champions in the tournament, of which they made the semifinals the last time they played in 2007.

The Dhanmondi-based outfit, after losing some key players to newcomers Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and a rejuvenated

Muktijoddha Sansad well before the players' transfer, basically have the intention to gauge their new players during the Bordoloi Trophy before signing them officially in October.

"In the last two weeks we put stress on players' stamina and conditioning but hardly got much time to practice with ball. But I think the players are now in a good shape and the last two days' practice with the ball would help the players a lot before the competitive matches in India," said coach Amalesh Sen yesterday.

Amalesh informed that Abahani have two targets in the tournament: first is to clinch the title to boost the players' moral before the domestic campaigns begin in October, and secondly, to build a good combination as some new players have been included this time.

Abahani have faith on their older players in Nazrul Islam, Ibnul Siraj, Pranotosh Kumar, Mehdi Hasan Ujjal, Abul Hossain, Mohammad

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Maria to meet Caroline

AFP, New York

Top seed Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark will play former champion Maria Sharapova of Russia in the fourth round of the US Open after both scored runaway straight-set victories on Saturday.

Wozniacki defeated Chan Yung-Jan of Taiwan 6-1, 6-0 and has lost just three games in her three outings to date -- the least at the US Open since Chris Evert dropped only two at the same stage in 1976.

It is also the fewest conceded in reaching the last 16 at any Grand Slam since Mary Pierce at Roland Garros in 1994. Pierce also dropped three games.

Sharapova, who won here in 2006, swatted aside American wildcard Beatrice Capra 6-0, 6-0 to underline her credentials for the title.

The 20-year-old Wozniacki and Sharapova, who is three years older, have played twice previously, each time in 2008, with Sharapova winning both in straight sets.

But since then, the Russian has struggled with injuries and Wozniacki has risen from promising newcomer to being ranked second in the world behind Serena Williams.

Wozniacki, who has won three of the last four WTA tournaments and is 17-1 in games

since Wimbledon, made light of the windy conditions.

"It was tough for both of us as it was pretty windy, but I kind of thought it was fun. It was a little bit different," she said.

On playing Sharapova she said: "She is a good player, a tough match up. But I will take today and tomorrow off and we will see what happens on Monday."

Sharapova agreed the conditions had been "as tough as you can get."

"Experience definitely helps but when you play someone on a good run [Capra], coming up and eager, sometime they can be the most dangerous opponents."

Wozniacki, she said was "playing the best tennis of her career and has been a finalist here. "It will be tough and I am looking forward to it."

But if Wozniacki and Sharapova lived up to their favourites' tags, the same could not be said of fourth seed Jelena Jankovic of Serbia, who screamed in frustration as the blustery conditions blew her normally solid game off course.

The Serb lost 6-2, 7-6 to Kaia Kanepi of Estonia, the 31st seed who will next play Yanina Wickmayer.

The 15th seed from Belgium saved a match point in the final set tie-breaker thanks to a

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Athers's plea to forgive Aamer

Cricket

AFP, London

Former England captain Michael Atherton has urged leniency for Pakistan's Mohammad Aamer in the fixing scandal that has shaken world cricket because the teenager was in "the grip of evil".

Aamer, fellow seamer Mohammad Asif and Test captain Salman Butt have all been charged and provisionally suspended by the International Cricket Council (ICC) after a report in last Sunday's News of the World alleged that they had conspired to deliberately bowl no-balls in last week's fourth Test at Lord's.

England won that match by an innings and 225 runs -- Pakistan's heaviest ever Test defeat -- and with it the series 3-1.

Aamer, 18, Asif, 27, and Butt, 25, were questioned by police about the claims on Friday but were released without charge, their lawyer said. They have denied any wrongdoing.

Left-arm seamer Aamer's figures of six wickets for 84 runs at Lord's were his best in Test cricket.

Atherton, now a journalist and broadcaster, writing in this Sunday's News of the World, recalled how Nasser Hussain, also an ex-England skipper, had summed up the mood at Lord's last Sunday.

"Nasser Hussain, who I once saw walking around the team hotel in Sri Lanka in the early hours of the morning before a Test match unable to sleep, so worried was he about his form, spoke for us all when he said, 'Please don't let it be the kid.'"

Atherton added: "The 'kid' in question was Mohammad Aamer, the young, good-looking and prodigiously-talented Pakistan bowler who had blown England away on the second morning at Lord's with a mesmerizing spell of left-arm bowling and who now, we had been told, had overstepped the front line twice for a few dollars more."

Former opening batsman Atherton said he felt "angry" because underperforming for money is the worst crime any sportsman can commit.

"It is worse than doping, because the fixer is deliberately trying to underperform, so deceiving the paying public."

Atherton suggested Aamer had been

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Pakistan rocked by fresh fixing claims

Cricket

AFP, Cardiff

Pakistan's cricket team prepared to face England in a one-day match Sunday under the shadow of fresh claims about an alleged betting scam and reports that a fourth player

was being investigated.

The News of the World said the International Cricket Council (ICC), which has already charged three Pakistan stars with corruption, was now investigating a fourth player, although the tabloid did not name him "for legal reasons".

It also claimed Pakistan batsman Yasir Hameed had

accused some of his teammates of corruption and suggested the problem of fixing games for cash was widespread in the sport. Hameed denied he had made the remarks.

The News of the World's report last Sunday into the fixing allegations caused a major scandal and led the ICC to charge Test captain Salman Butt and bowlers Mohammad Aamer and Mohammad Asif under its anti-corruption code.

The ICC refused to comment on the newspaper's latest claims Sunday, including that the accused trio were facing 23 charges between them and that a fourth unnamed player was under the spotlight.

At the team's hotel in Cardiff late Saturday, Pakistan coach Waqar Younis also refused to discuss the new revelations.

However, the chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board, Giles Clarke, said the first Twenty20 match between England and Pakistan in Cardiff Sunday would still go ahead. Asked if it would be called off, he said: "No."

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Pakistan batsman Mohammad Yousuf pulls the ball during the Twenty20 against England at the Swalec Stadium in Cardiff yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

SPORTS POLL

TODAY'S QUESTION

Is dropping Asif, Amir and Butt for the ODI series enough to punish them?

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