



State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker (C) inaugurates the Advocate Abdur Rab Smriti Summer Open Badminton tournament at the Suhrawardi National Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Kids off to Danone Nations Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Khulna and Tangail, champion of Grameen-Danone Nations Cup in 2009 and 2010 respectively, are scheduled to leave here tomorrow for South Africa to take part in the core competition of Danone Nations Cup, which begins in October simultaneously in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

The boys from remote villages are expected to return home on October 5.

"We have to make sure that the players get a healthy environment and enjoy the festival so that they become interested in the game. The result is not significant here rather our goal is to create enthusiasm among the young booters as they are the future prospect of the country's football," said BFF vice president Kazi Nabil Ahmed at a press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

BFF member Sheikh Mohammed Aslam, General Secretary Al Musabbir Sadi and Grameen Danone Nations Cup acceleration unit's executive Marion were also present.

Vintage duo lifts The Daily Star

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Al Amin set aside his journalistic prowess for a footballing one scoring two goals and setting up another, as The Daily Star thrashed Naya Diganta 3-0 in their second round match of the DRU-Rapid Securities Media football tournament at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

And it wasn't just the sports boss who mesmerised the Big Bowl. The veteran Morshed Ali Khan made a successful return in The Daily Star colours, keeping a constant vigil in defence and providing with a couple of lethal deliveries up-field which ultimately resulted in goals.

The two strikes from Al Amin came in the second half after Najmul Alam Nobin, who slammed a hatrick in their opening game, began the rout for the English daily. The striking duo had a very good understanding throughout the game as they combined for all the three goals.

The best goal of the game came early in the second half when Al Amin took the ball from inside his own half to run past couple of defenders before unleashing a fierce shot into the opposition net.

In the other matches of the day, Janakantha blanked Sangram 5-0 thanks to Arifur Rahman Babu's hatrick while Jugantar beat Baishakhi TV 2-0, and the Daily Destiny beat Independent 2-0.

Div I table tennis begins

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Metropolis First Division Table Tennis League got underway yesterday at the Wooden Floor Stadium with eight teams winning their respective matches on the opening day.

Promising Junior beat Dhaka Wanderers 3-1 while Bangladesh Boys, Dhaka South East TT Club and Combined SC beat Bangladesh Chemical, Dyane and Lalbagh TT Club respectively, all in straight 3-0 sets.

In Group B, Biman and Cynthia SC defeated Amonayan and Mansoor SC respectively in straight 3-0 sets while Banti SC beat Barna TT Club by 3-2 sets. Ekota Shreepur got walkover over Linkon TT club, said a press release yesterday.

Asiad cricket

FROM PAGE 17

Hossain, Nazimuddin, Sohrawardi Shuvo, Dollar Mahmud, Rony Talukder, Nasir Hossain, Mohammad Mithun, Shabbir Rahman and Shuvagata Hom.

WOMEN'S SQUAD

Salma Khatun (captain), Panna Ghosh (vice-captain), Ayesha Akhter, Sathira Jakir, Suktara Rahman, Lata Mondol, Farjana Hoque Pinky, Eumana Ahmed, Champa Chakma, Tithi Rani Sarkar, Jahanara Alam, Tazia Akhter, Chameli Khatun, Mina Khatun Mona, Sultana Yasmin Boishakhi.

Aus gear up for challenge



AFP, Chandigarh

Australia vice-captain Michael Clarke is hopeful his team will be able to counter India's bowling attack in home conditions in a two-Test series starting on Friday.

The hosts' attack has been strengthened with the return of left-arm paceman Zaheer Khan, who was forced to miss a recent three-Test series in Sri Lanka due to an injury.

"Zaheer and (paceman) Ishant Sharma are two very good bowlers of reverse swing. It can be very tough to combat at times and we have experienced that in the past," Clarke told reporters in Chandigarh on Tuesday.

"But we've been training and batting against reverse swing and against spin too. Hopefully, come Friday, we'll be able to do well."

Harbhajan Singh leads India's spin

attack, having already given a good account of himself against the Australians with 79 wickets in 14 Tests.

The off-spinner rose to fame in 2001 when he took 32 wickets in three Tests against Steve Waugh's Australians to lead his side to a stunning 2-1 series victory at home.

"Every player plays spin differently. I think individually we all have a plan and it's all about trying to adapt to the pitch conditions and the bowler," said Clarke.

"I have a plan against the spinners and will try to stick to that. Hopefully, it works."

Australia, who lost the last Test series in India in 2008, will play the opening Test in Mohali and the second match in Bangalore (Oct 9-13). The Tests will be followed by three one-day internationals.

Harbhajan, who underwent an MRI scan for sprain on Monday, was expected to be fit for the match.

"I know how much he loves playing against Australia, so I'm pretty confident

he will play," said Clarke.

"I will be very surprised if he doesn't play, so I am going to be preparing like he is going to. But of course, if he doesn't play it's a huge plus for us. He's a very good bowler and he has had a lot of success against Australia."

"He's always tough to face. He's always a great challenge and I really enjoy facing him because I think he is one of the best spinners in the world."

Clarke, who made a century on Test debut against India in Bangalore in 2004, said he had been trying to be more consistent in recent years.

"I think when I first started playing international cricket I wasn't nearly as consistent as I have been over the last 12 to 24 months," said Clarke, who has scored 4,514 runs in 62 Tests.

"That's one part of my game that has improved. I probably took more risks when I was younger, but consistency and shot-selection allow you to have success over a long period of time."

Butt in Eng for legal battle



AFP, Lahore

Pakistan's cricket chief Tuesday left for England, where he is expected to meet lawyers in a bid to clear his players of allegations of spot-fixing and fend off demands for an apology.

"I am leaving for London on an official trip," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ijaz Butt told AFP without giving any details.

Reports said Butt and legal adviser Taffazul Rizvi will meet Elizabeth Robertson, the British lawyer representing Pakistani players and the PCB over the spot-fixing allegations.

Butt is also expected to meet Scotland Yard officials in a bid to expedite the case that saw Test captain Salman Butt and bowlers Mohammad Asif, Mohammad Aamer and Wahab Riaz interrogated.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has provisionally suspended Salman, Aamer and Asif, and have asked them to reply to the sus-

pension notices.

Pakistan's recent tour of England, where they also played Australia in a neutral venue series, was marred by the spot-fixing allegations.

The tour ended in acrimony when Butt alleged England players were paid "enormous amounts of money" to lose the third one-day international at The Oval, sparking a furious row between the two country's cricket boards.

England players and the England and Wales Cricket Board have demanded an unreserved apology from Butt, who has refused, saying he was quoting bookie circles and will reply to the England players through his lawyer.

The ICC has launched a separate inquiry into the September 17 one-day between Pakistan and England after British tabloid The Sun said the scoring pattern of Pakistan's innings in the match was pre-arranged with bookmakers.

Butt also met ICC officials last week in an unsuccessful attempt to get the provisional suspension on the three players lifted.

Women's handball

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani Limited scored a 28-7 victory over Arambagh Krira Chakra in the United Oil Women's Handball League at the Handball Stadium in the city yesterday. The winners led the first half 13-4.

The other match between Azad Sporting and Mariner Youngs was disrupted due to rain. Azad were leading 8-4 when the game had to be stopped, which will be completed today.

Belgian qualifier to face Nadal

AFP, Bangkok

Belgian qualifier Ruben Bemelmans booked a place in the match of his life Tuesday, setting up a second-round contest Thursday against Rafael Nadal at the Thailand Open.

Bemelmans, a 22-year-old ranked 195th, beat fellow qualifier Frederik Nielsen of Denmark 6-2, 6-3 to earn a chance for the first ATP victory of his career.

The underdog has lost in three previous top-level matches this season, in Zagreb, Marseille and Halle, Germany.

Nadal, the world number one who is finally making his debut on court in the Thai capital after missing the two previous editions through injury, spent a busy day Tuesday while his opposition was slotting into place.

The top seed, refreshed after six days at the beach resort of Hua Hin, took a 20-minute flight back to the town 200 kilometres (125 miles) away to plant a ceremonial tree as part of a project to seed a million trees in honour of the nation's revered king. Recent US Open winner Nadal then returned by air to the Impact area to begin acclimatising to the indoor surface where he will pursue the seventh title of a season in which he has won the last three majors and completed his personal career grand slam sweep.

Three other players booked places in the second round, with German veteran Rainer Schuettler easily dismissing Brazilian Ricardo Mello 6-4, 6-2 and Israeli Dudi Sela defeating Konstantin Kravchuk of Russia 6-3, 6-4. Mello won a previous match with Schuettler five years ago in Munich on clay.

Same weather

FROM PAGE 17

Test series against them both at home and abroad.

It can't be said that New Zealand will face a tough time but it is certain that like England experienced throughout the year against Bangladesh, the Black Caps are certain to have a few flutters in the five-match series.

'Ricky should look to Sachin'



CRICINFO

Ricky Ponting should seek inspiration from Sachin Tendulkar's batting renaissance, according to the former captain of Australia, Mark Taylor. Tendulkar and Ponting are the two leading run scorers in Test history and they will be key men in the upcoming two-Test series in India.

But whereas Tendulkar, 37, has shone over the past year with six Test hundreds and an average of 81.84, it hasn't been as easy for Ponting, 35, who has scored one century and averaged 40.05. Taylor, who endured a memorable lean period during his final years of Test cricket, said life would not get any easier for Ponting.

"He is not getting any better," Taylor told DNA. "He may no longer be the batsman he was in his late 20s but he is still a very good batsman. Honestly, Ponting's best is behind him but he is still capable of scoring big hundreds."

Ponting's form is not unlike that of Tendulkar during 2006 and 2007; during those years Tendulkar averaged 41.72 with two centuries in 17 Tests. Taylor said he was impressed by Tendulkar's return to form, which has also included the first double-century in one-day internationals.

"I think Sachin has had a rebirth," Taylor said. "He is really batting at his best and that can be a sort of inspiration for Ponting. It might be difficult for him to overhaul Sachin's number of centuries because the Indian master is lengthening the gap between them."

"But Ponting has this job of rebuilding the Australian side. The current Australian side is very much his. Seniors like Adam Gilchrist, Glenn McGrath, Shane Warne, Matthew Hayden have all gone. It is a much younger side."

"I think Ponting's focus has moved a little bit away from his personal milestones. In that sense, Sachin is fortunate. He does not have to worry about captaincy. That is probably the reason why he is making hundreds."

Ponting did not make the best start to his tour of India -- he scored 42 and 9 in the warm-up match against the Board President's XI. He will be leading a side that was held to a 1-1 series draw against Pakistan this year and Taylor believes improved consistency is the key for Ponting's group.

"Ponting's is a young Australian side which plays very good cricket but is not consistent," he said. "I'm sure Ponting would be working on this area to reduce the number of bad sessions. They tend to lose five or six wickets in a session when they could do well by losing just two or three."

Kamal sees bright

FROM PAGE 17

Anyway it will not be wise to comment when there was a case filed regarding this issue," he added.

Kamal also said that they have a big plan with women's cricket in the country. "I can assure you that within two-three years we will built a dedicated stadium for the women cricketers. And within this year we will appoint a foreign coach for them. We want to give the same attention to the women's cricket as we havr for the men's," promised Kamal.

"Not only that we are all set to make a stadium financed by BCB in Cox's Bazar. We already spotted three spots there and you know one of our directors (Ahmed Sajjadul Alam) is looking after the matter," he added.

Many had a question about how the BCB-GP Academy is running especially after the resignation of former cricketer Shakil Kashem and Kamal also admitted that they could not

start the Academy as expected.

"But we are trying and hopefully everything would be okay by next June," he said.

He informed that they are going to bring the "A" team and Academy players under payroll so that they can survive in the game.

"I don't think the national team performance was satisfactory during my one year tenure but we must give the players time. Beating England was the great achievement and our overall performance was also not bad. Most importantly we gave all the facilities to the national team management appointing specialist coaches and a psychologist," he said.

When asked about the whispering about his interference in team selection, Kamal gave a diplomatic explanation regarding the issue.

"Yes, I have involvement in selection but only indirectly because ultimately I have to approve the team," he explained.

Wozniacki in Rd 3



AFP, Tokyo

World number two Caroline Wozniacki powered her way past Greta Arn of Hungary to reach the third round of the Pan Pacific Open women's tennis tournament on Tuesday.

The Danish top seed, put the disappointment of withdrawing through illness in the first round last year behind her with a 6-1, 6-3 victory.

US Open finalist Vera Zvonareva of Russia and French Open champion Francesca Schiavone of Italy safely went through, but last year's French Open champion 10th seed Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia, fell to Andrea Petkovic of Germany 6-3, 7-5.

Second seed Zvonareva, who reached a career-high fourth after the US Open, struggled to hold her serve before serving out for 6-3, 6-3 win over Sara Errani of Italy, while fifth seed Schiavone beat Alexandra Dulgheru of Romania 7-5, 6-3.

Top seed Wozniacki comfortably took the first set as Arn hit seven double faults, one on a break point, and failed to keep her service games three times.

Arn, who defeated Wozniacki when the Dane was ranked 120th in 2007, stopped double-faulting in the second set, but Wozniacki stood firm in her service games and never gave the Hungarian a single break opportunity in the set.

Wozniacki broke the third game when Arn

hit a forehand wide and cashed in on a second match point with Arn's backhand error that landed in the net for another break in the ninth game.

"It's a new tournament every year for me. I always try to do my best and I'm happy that I won and got through this first match," said Wozniacki who won the Japan Open two years ago.

"It's nice for me to get through this one and to get a comfortable win. It's a really fast court and you need to just be focused all the way, because one game can change the match."

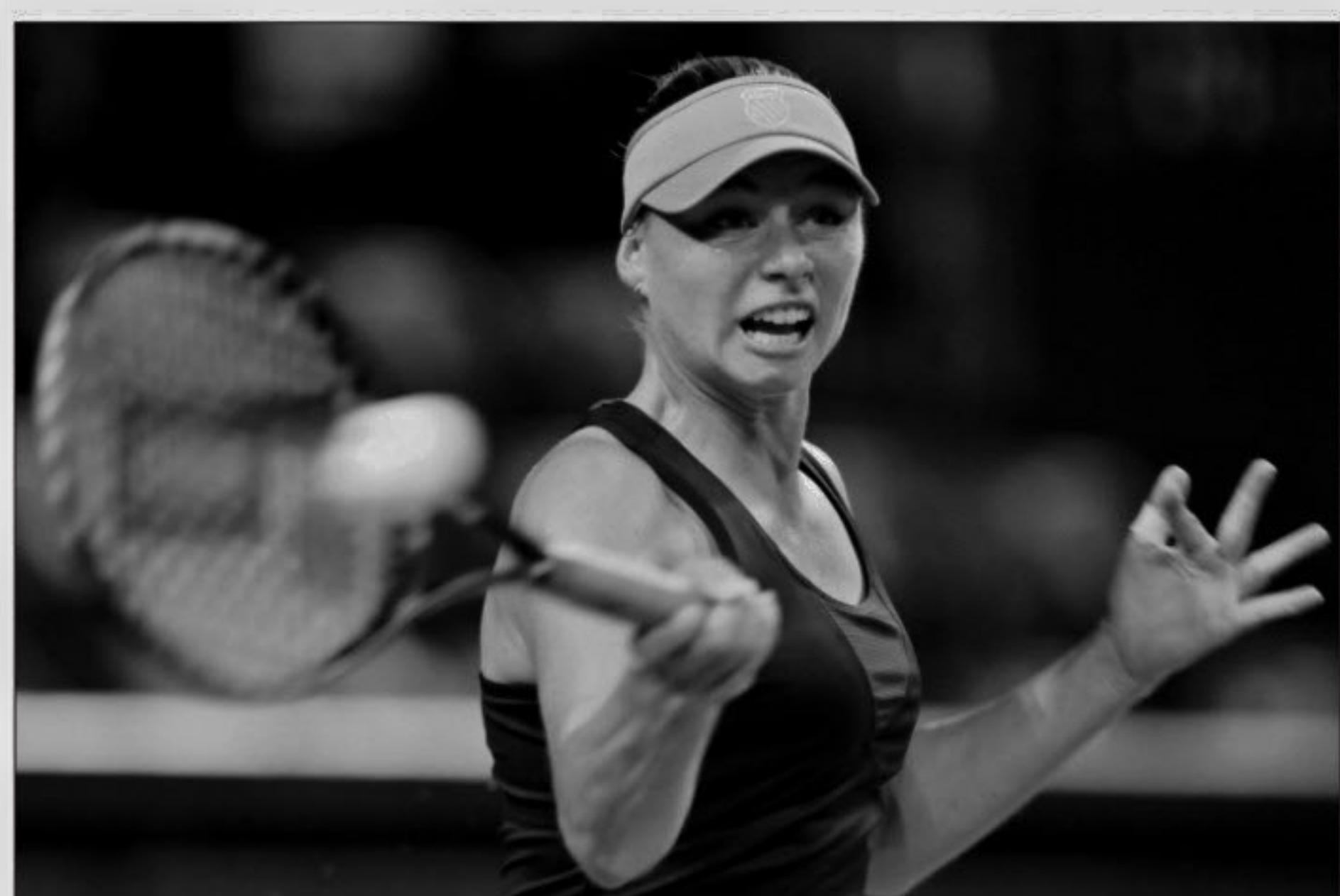
"So I'm happy and now I'm just looking forward to my next match and we have to see what's going to happen," she added.

In the third round, Wozniacki will take on Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of Russia, the winner over Kateryna Bondarenko of Ukraine 6-2, 6-1.

In other second-round action, seventh seed Elena Dementieva of Russia, a gold medallist at the Beijing Olympics in 2008, was an easy 6-0, 6-1 winner over Yaroslava Shvedova of Kazakhstan.

Eighth seed Victoria Azarenka of Belarus, who collapsed in the US Open second round, showed no ill effects to beat Lucie Safarova of the Czech Republic 6-1, 6-3.

Japan's Kimiko Date Krumm, who shocked former world number one Maria Sharapova of Russia on Monday, caused another upset 2-6, 6-0, 4-0 over Daniela Hantuchova when the Slovakian abandoned the match due to shoulder pain.



Vera Zvonareva of Russia plays a forehand return against Sara Errani of Italy in the Pan Pacific Open second round match in Tokyo yesterday. Zvonareva won 6-3, 6-3.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 21 mins and a list of words like MALT, OBIE, RIM, PLEA, GURU, ABA, HAMBURGER, DID, ORES, ARISE, BATOR, ASEA, ERRS, HAM, ILLTON, TEA, SEPIA, JII, HAMSTERS, FONT, PEEL, KINKS, JULEP, OKIE, APE, HAMA, DRYAD, NOR, EDEN, CORA, ENS, NONE, EMMY.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers. Includes the text: DC VBERBPRV CLPZDCGQ, DRLV VNLWN NB ELJR HBG, DQQ, D'F VLH HBG'WR, ORNNDPO PBNDPB VDZJPRVV.

CRYPTOQUIP
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE THAT PERSON GAVE ME GOOD TIPS ABOUT USING AN AROMATIC HERB, I GUESS I GOT SAGE ADVICE.
Today's Cryptoquip clue: P equals N