

Hattrick beckons Europe

Golf
SPORTS REPORTER

It will be a battle between Europe and the Rest of the World when the two-day Rover Cup, Bangladesh's annual equivalent of the Ryder Cup, kicks off at the Kurmitola Golf Club today.

Steve Wilson, head of Chevron Bangladesh, will captain the European team that will be on the verge of completing a hattrick against the Rest of the World that will be led by Prem Chand, chief executive officer of Nokia Bangladesh.

The opening day will feature team matches of Greensomes and Foursomes while the singles will be held on Saturday.

Wilson, however, was looking forward to completing a treble with his strong middle-order.

"The Rest of the World team clearly have some of the lower handicappers, but Europe has a solid middle order, and morale is high in the camp",

said Wilson.

"However, win, lose or draw, it's the taking part that is important, along with the spirit of the game and the caliber of the people. I'm sure that this year, like previous tournaments, will

be a cracker. We've just all got to hope that the weather doesn't conspire against us," concluded a witty Wilson.

Dhaka Oddball Golf Society holds the tournament every year.



European captain Steve Wilson (R) is looking to put a stranglehold on Rest of World captain Prem Chand.

ASIAN FOOTBALL Bangladesh in Group E

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh have been pitted along with Uzbekistan, United Arab Emirates and Hong Kong in Group E in the football event of the 16th Asian Games which will be held from November 7 to 25 in the Guangzhou province of China.

A total of 24 teams will be vying for football supremacy in the Games. The Bangladesh squad had a month-long training camp in BKSP which consisted of 25 players which will be ultimately trimmed down to 16. Teams in the Games comprise of under-23 players with three players over that age limit allowed.

NCL put off

SPORTS REPORTER

The tournament committee yesterday postponed the ongoing 12th National Cricket League due to inclement weather and unfavourable forecast across the country for the next few days.

"As the venues won't be in playable condition and considering the importance of the next round of matches, we have no other option but to postpone the league for the time being," said committee chairman Sazi Ashraf Hossain.

The committee will soon release a revised schedule for the remaining rounds.

Int'l kabaddi underway

SPORTS REPORTER

Japan beat Bangladesh Police 23-8 with two creditable 'lonas' in the opening match of the Meizan International Club Cup Kabaddi that began yesterday at the Kabaddi Stadium in Palatan.

Earlier, Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation president Khandakar Hasan Mahmud formally inaugurated the three-day meet as chief guest.

Credits go to Gary

PTI, Bangalore

Indian batting icon Sachin Tendulkar, who on Wednesday won the ICC Cricketer-of-the-Year award, credited his and the cricket team's recent success to the efforts put in by coach Gary Kirsten.

"Gary has been instrumental in making our batters play a plenty of deliveries in the practice session. During net practice, he himself bowls thousands and thousands of balls," Tendulkar said after accepting the award at a glittering function here.

"Gary has been an important member of the Indian squad and along with the other support staff, I have enjoyed my game under him. He is really putting a lot of efforts," he added.

The master batsman said he is hopeful of India winning the next year's World Cup, which will be jointly hosted by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

It is a trophy that Tendulkar has not been able to win in his more than two-decade career and he is desperate to guide the team to the title triumph this time.

"It is a big tournament. It is not only my dream but of the entire country. We are working really hard for it. We still have five months to go, we will focus on tournaments before the World Cup and would like to carry the good form to the World Cup."

A Padma Vibhushan awardee, Tendulkar, declined to compare the first ICC award of his career and India's second highest civilian award saying, "I don't want to compare any award which I won."

However, he maintained that to be honoured with Padma Vibhushan was "really special."



BT
Bangladesh v New Zealand
Second ODI
Live from 9:30am

ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

Caroline dethrones Serena

Tennis
AFP, Beijing

Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki claimed the world number one ranking on Thursday when she breezed into the quarterfinals of the China Open, dethroning American tennis superstar Serena Williams.

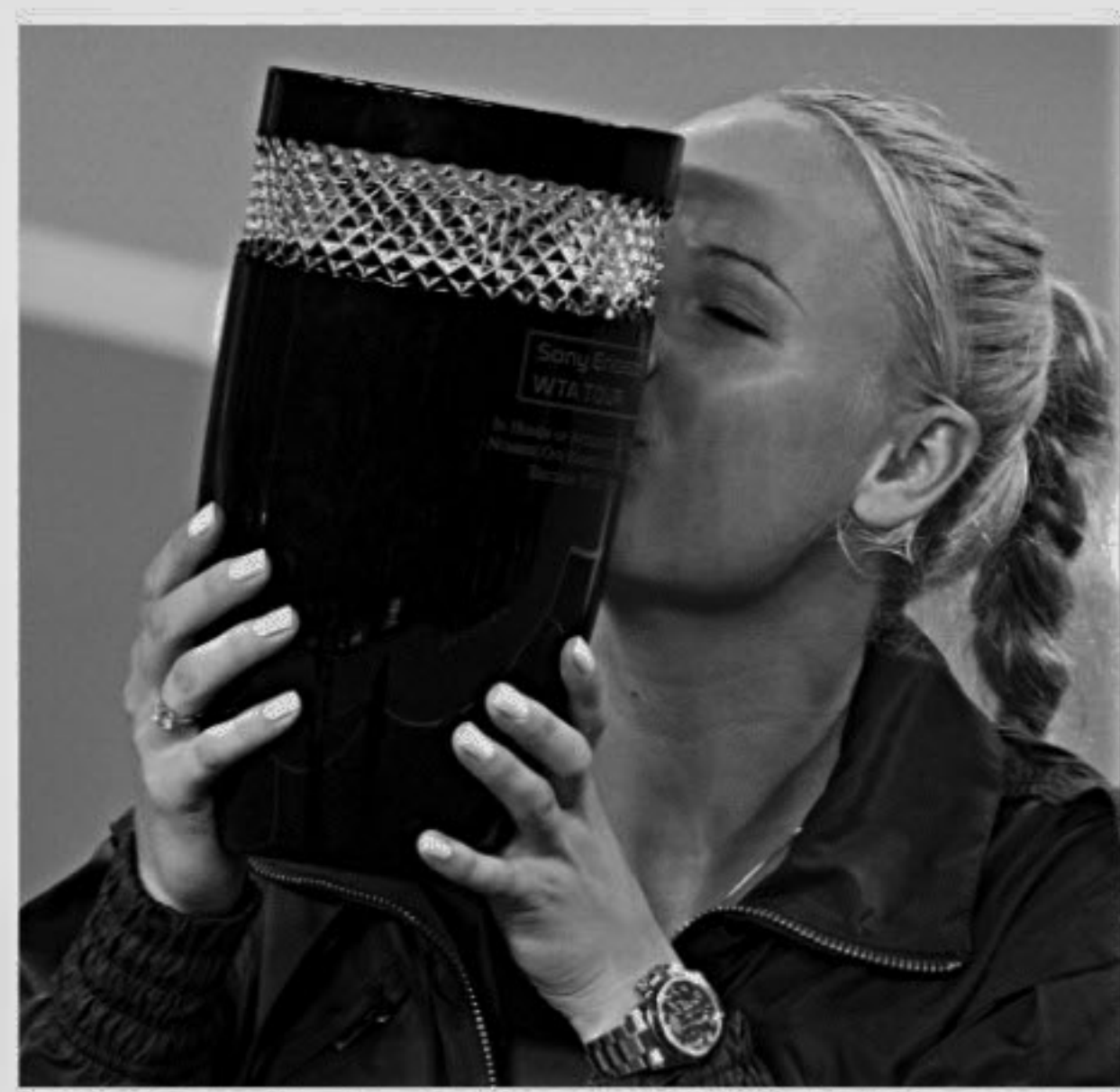
The 20-year-old Wozniacki defeated the Czech Republic's Petra Kvitova 6-3, 6-2 in a third-round clash under the floodlights at the Olympic Green Tennis Centre in Beijing.

Wozniacki -- the first from her country to reign supreme in the tennis world -- will replace Williams, a 13-time Grand Slam winner, atop the WTA rankings when a new list is issued on Monday. She came into the tournament ranked second.

Williams was forced to withdraw from the China Open due to a nagging foot injury suffered shortly after she won her fourth Wimbledon crown in July.

The blonde Dane showed some early jitters, trading two breaks with Kvitova -- who beat her in the round of 16 at

Wimbledon this year -- before finally taking the first set when the Czech dumped a forehand into the net.



Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark kisses the world number one trophy after winning her China Open third round match against Petra Kvitova of Czech Republic at the National Tennis Centre in Beijing yesterday.

In the second set, Wozniacki -- the top seed here -- hit her stride, running the left-handed Kvitova from side to side and battering her with heavy topspin groundstrokes off both wings.

She raised her arms in triumph after serving out the match, as Tina Turner's "Simply the Best" thundered out of the stadium sound system.

Wozniacki is the 20th player in WTA history to earn the top spot -- and the 10th to do so before her 21st birthday.

Of the women in that elite group, half are still active. Wozniacki earlier this week cited two members of the number one club -- Steffi Graf and Martina Hingis -- as her "idols" growing up.

Williams, 29, has held the top spot for a total of 123 weeks over her career. Like Wozniacki, she first reached the top spot when she was 20.

Wozniacki, who joined the tour five years ago, was ranked just 64th in 2007. The following year, she won her first WTA title and has not looked back since.

Clarke, Pearson sprint's best

AFP, New Delhi

Jamaica's Lerone Clarke made the most of Usain Bolt's absence to claim the Commonwealth Games 100m gold on Thursday while Australia's Sally Pearson controversially powered to the women's crown.

Clarke, the only man in the final to have broken 10 seconds in the past two years, dipped over the line in 10.12 to capitalise on world record holder Bolt and fellow Jamaican, defending champion Asafa Powell, choosing not to compete.

It was a powerful run in hot and humid conditions but, ultimately, very slow and a long way off Ato Boldon's Commonwealth record of 9.88 and even further behind Bolt's 9.58 world record.

English hope Mark Lewis-Francis followed up his recent European championship silver with another one here, clocking 10.20 at a half-empty Jawaharlal Nehru stadium.

Trinidad and Tobago's Aaron Armstrong grabbed bronze in 10.24, but there was huge disappointment for promising young Jamaican Oshane Bailey who pulled up injured after the semi-finals and didn't trace the final.

"This means the world to me. I wanted these championships and I got it," said Clarke. "I know I am fast, even if Usain Bolt is not here. I am still here and I am part of the Jamaican team."

Lewis-Francis said he should have won, but his block slipped. "My block slipped, that's why it looks like I'm so far behind. I had to run deep within just to get a medal. There's a lot more there," he said.

Pearson became Australia's first Commonwealth Games 100m champion in 36 years when she crushed the field in 11.28 seconds, although England lodged a protest that could yet see her demoted.

No medal ceremony was



Australia's Sally Pearson (L) and Jamaica's Lerone Clarke celebrate winning the women's and men's 100m gold respectively in the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi yesterday.

held and Australian team officials at the track said England had protested after Pearson was apparently not penalised for a false start.

Instead, England's Laura Turner was held responsible, although after some animated words with judges on the start line she ran the race under appeal, only to finish last.

She held off Nigeria's Osayemi Oludamola (11.32) and Natasha Mayers of St Vincent and The Grenadines

(11.37) for the title.

Canada's Sultana Frizell, meanwhile, threw a new Games record of 68.57 metres to win the women's hammer gold while Canada's Dylan Armstrong won the men's shot put with a Games record throw of 21.02.

In other events, Botswana's Amantle Montsho was fastest into the women's 400m final on Friday in 50.80, almost a second ahead of Guyana's Tabitha Pompey.



Bangladesh swimmer Shahjahan Ali Rony, who reached the men's 50-metre breaststroke semifinals of the Commonwealth Games with a timing of 31.36 seconds at the Dr SP Mukherjee Swimming Complex in New Delhi yesterday. He finished 16th among 27 competitors in the preliminary round to qualify for the 16 men semifinals.

Malik dropped for SA series

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan on Thursday left out former captain Shoaib Malik from their 15-man squad and also delayed naming a captain for their neutral venue series against South Africa starting later this month.

Wicketkeeper batsman Kamran Akmal, who suffered abdominal problems before being hospitalised on Wednesday, will have to pass a fitness test to get into the team.

Pakistan will play two Twenty20, five one-day and two Tests in the series to be hosted by Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

A Test squad will be announced later. Pakistan will have to find a replacement for Test captain Salman Butt who is suspended over charges of violating ICC (International Cricket Council) code of conduct.

Butt, along with bowlers Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer were alleged to have taken money to deliberately bowl no-balls during Pakistan's Lord's Test against England in August. All three were not included in the team.

Veteran batsman Misbahul Haq makes a return to the squad.

Allrounder Shahid Afridi led Pakistan team in the one-day series against England which ended in team's 2-3 defeat last month.

Veteran former captain Intikhab Alam will be the manager after Yawar Saeed stepped down following the tour of England marred by spot-fixing allegations.

Former captain Younis Khan's name was also not considered.

SQUAD
Imran Farhat, Mohammad Hafeez, Mohammad Yousuf, Misbahul Haq, Umar Akmal, Asad Shafiq, Fawad Alam, Shahid Afridi, Abdul Razaq, Shoaib Akhtar, Umar Gul, Saeed Ajmal, Abdul Rehman, Tanveer Ahmed, Zulqarnain Haider.

Tigers raring to pounce

FROM PAGE 17

one game for the weather," he explained. "If the match takes place," was the common pre-fix to every question regarding the match and Shakib was presented with that question when asked what their target would be for a game like this?

"Our main target would be to improve performance from the last game. We would hope that we will not make the same mistakes that we did in the last game where we threw away wickets after settling in," said Shakib.

And he believes it would be a great achievement if they can win the series and said that the starting would be important for any game.

"I believe it's possible to make it 2-0. If we could win the first match then what's wrong with the second game," said Shakib adding that Shaiful Islam and Rubel Hossain will operate the new ball in the absence of the injured

Mashrafe and Nazmul Hossain.

Shakib however issued a warning that New Zealand would come hard after the defeat in the first match.

"They will try their best to bounce back in the series. They will be more serious and careful in the next matches," opined Shakib.

But he said that their main strength is that they have so many match winners in the team now, which is a most positive sign for the team.

"We said it earlier that we are not depending on one or two players rather we have number of match winners in the team like Naeem (Naeem Islam), Riyad (Mahmudullah) and Raj (Abdur Razzak) who can all win matches for us. It's something positive that we won the first game without three senior players (Mashrafe, Mohammad Ashraful and Tamim Iqbal)," said an excited Shakib.

Transfers window

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number five, but we have the quality to fight the top."

No foreign players were registered by Mohammedan as yet as they are still assessing their probable foreign recruits.

Sheikh Russel, another big name who has always been threatening the established powers, also expressed their grievances against clubs for allegedly 'poaching' players who took transfer money from them.

Shahabuddin Tipu, general secretary of the club said, they would fight against the players and the clubs as well for poaching away their players.

"The two players [Ashraf Mahmud Linkon and Mamun Mia] have not acted like sportsmen. We paid them money but they have joined other clubs illegally. We will follow the legal course to fight this injustice," exclaimed Tipu.

However the club officials were optimistic about their prospect with a young crop of players they have at their disposal.

Other teams completing registration of local players on the last day were Chittagong Mohammedan, Farshiganj Sporting Club, Chittagong Abahani, Rahmatganj MFS and Arambagh Krira Sangha.

Shakib wants

FROM PAGE 17
decision also about the vice-captain.

According to sources, there has been a strong sentiment that the time has come for the board after Mashrafe's latest injury to take a firm decision about the captaincy.

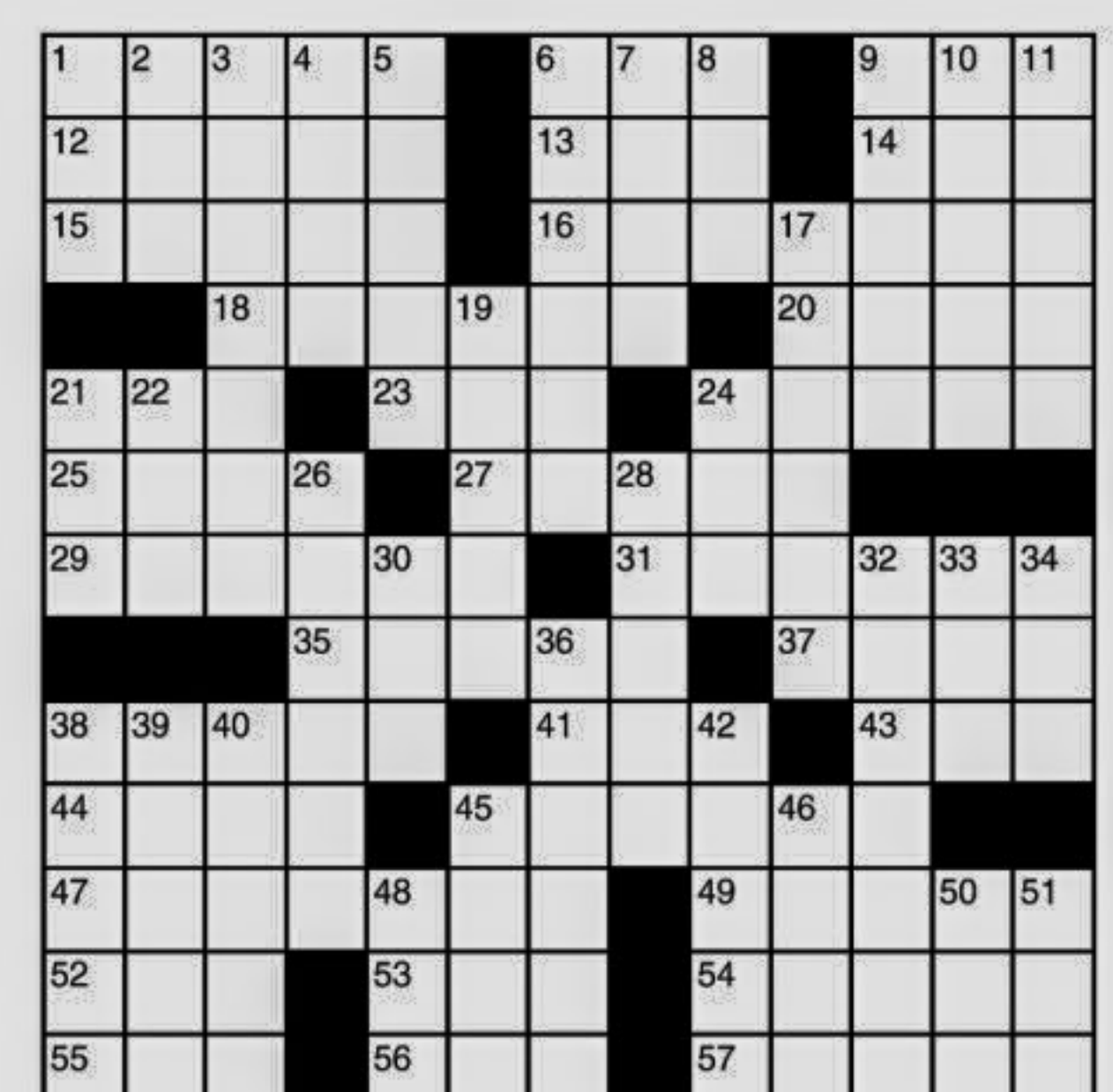
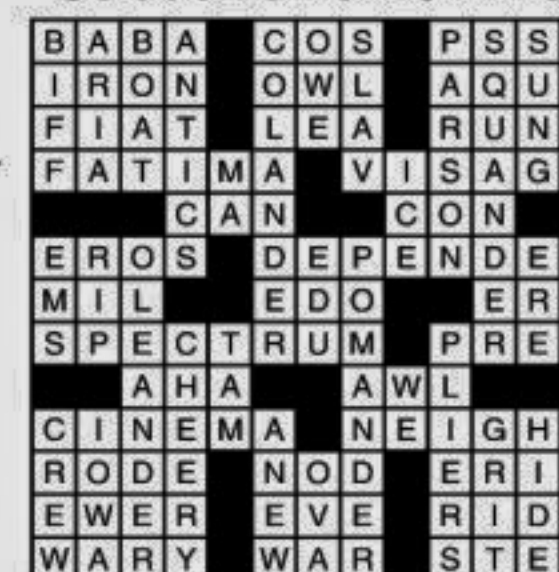
Many believe that it's risky for the team to give Mashrafe some additional burden when he is uncertain about his career.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Morrison's band
6 "Caught ya!"
9 -o-
12 Beginning
13 Sister
14 In vitro cells
15 One showing promise
16 First book
18 Pizza topping, at times
20 Nitty-gritty
21 Insult (SI.)
23 Crony
24 Admits customer's
25 Domingo offering
27 Tag
29 Fight
31 O. Henry-esque
35 Mythical lecher
37 Bigfoot's cousin
38 West Pointer
41 Mag. staffers

DOWN
1 Elmer, to Bugs
2 Yoko of music
3 Effortless assimilation
4 Film holder
5 Denude
6 Bassett or Lansbury
7 Colors
8 Raggedy one?
9 -a fine lady upon a white horse"
10 Re
11 Spars
17 Use
19 Parking lot attendant
21 Lah-di-
22 401(k) alternative
24 -the ramparts...
26 Not liabilities
28 Hitchcock menacers
30 Long. crosser
32 Foe
33 "Who am - judge?"
34 Literary Spanish hero
36 Fermentation fungi
38 They often break Wile E. Coyote's falls
39 For this purpose
40 Blog, so to speak
42 Small pigeon
45 Isinglass
46 Wreck
48 Succumb to gravity
50 Comic Philips
51 Sleep phenom

Solution time: 25 mins.



CRYPTOQUIP

OMJQNB M XCMBM YWFB QSM
MEEWJWMRX QX WJWRU OQYMF
ULLFB, JLNVF GLN BQG
XCMG'SM ESLBXMS JCWVFSMR?

Yesterday's Cryptquip: POPULAR NEW SITCOM ABOUT A PAIR OF ROOMMATES WHO OFTEN GET FLABBERGASTED: "THE AWED COUPLE."
Today's Cryptquip Clue: X equals T