

SPORT

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Schiavone's staying power

Francesca Schiavone saved six match points as she battled to victory in the longest women's match in Grand Slam history...



Mashrafe doesn't need op

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza has been told by Dr David Young to continue conservative rehabilitation to recover from his knee injury.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will receive an official report from the Australian orthopaedic surgeon and Mashrafe will be on the same programme from the time he arrives in the capital today.

Mashrafe flew to Colombo to visit Young who informed him that there wouldn't be a need for an operation although it could become a reality if there's no improvement through this rehab.

"He will be asked to continue with the rehab programme till the second or third week of February," said BCB's sports physician Dr Debashis Chowdhury.

Asked how long it might take the 'Narail Express' to fully recover, Chowdhury said, "It will take him six weeks since the time he got injured which was on December 21."

The physician also said that it would depend on Mashrafe's confidence to regain full fitness.

Mashrafe, who hurt his knee during Abahani's Premier Cricket League match against BKSP last month, recovered quite a lot to bowl off a few paces but was not kept in the 15-man Tigers' World Cup squad.



Yusuf Pathan smites an almighty six over midwicket during his sublime 70-ball 105 against South Africa in the fifth ODI at SuperSport Park in Centurion yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP TALK

'Excitement struck me early'

He is Bangladesh's highest wicket-taker in all World Cups but Abdur Razzak has only played one tournament, the last one in the West Indies. He gave solid performances in each of Bangladesh's victories during the tournament and he shares his views with The Daily Star Sport.

Daily Star Sport (DSS): How did it feel when you heard that you would play the 2007 World Cup?

Abdur Razzak (AR): Well, I was in the team for long and playing well. So, I was sure of being in the side. The excitement struck me first when we started the practice matches.

DSS: How excited were you?

AR: In the initial phase was I was amongst the leading wicket-takers, which was very encouraging for me. Even though I did not finish the highest, but thirteen wickets was a good return for me.

DSS: How was the team atmosphere in South Africa?

AR: The atmosphere was great. Everyone was very excited about each match. As you know we played very well in that World Cup and everyone went to the field each match with a belief that they can win, no matter who the opposi-



ABDUR RAZZAK

tion are. DSS: Recall your sweetest memory.

AR: Everything about the World Cup is a sweet memory for us, because we did so well. I think we played much better than what our potential was, apart from the last game against Ireland.

DSS: How do you explain the defeat against Ireland?

AR: Well, one can't explain it like that. We beat favourites India and South Africa in that World Cup but then lost against less powerful teams like West Indies and minnows Ireland.

It's a matter of who plays better on the day and surely against Ireland we did not play well.

DSS: What is your expectation of the 2011 World Cup?

AR: Whenever I play, I play with to win. And I don't like to single out any opposition as weak or strong. We would be playing every match to win.

SA win series



STAR SPORT DESK

Yusuf Pathan nearly set the cat among the pigeons in Centurion yesterday when he threatened to make short shrift of a near-impossible task, scoring a 70-ball 105 in India's chase of a revised target of 268 in 46 overs.

The top order had failed again, and India were teetering at 119 for 8 in the 23rd over when Zaheer Khan joined Yusuf Pathan.

The next wicket fell a little over twelve overs later, but 100 runs had been added as Pathan fell trying to hit his ninth six, ending an astonishing display of power hitting. By that time the required run rate had shrunk below six, and India pulling off a stunner was

still a slim possibility. Another come from behind victory was denied India when Zaheer Khan holed out to Morne Morkel off Lonwabo Tsotsobe.

Earlier, Hashim Amla (116) took advantage of poor Indian bowling to hit a fine century in a rain-interrupted match. After Graeme Smith fell to his tormentor, Zaheer Khan, Amla and Morne van Wyk (56) put together a 97-run stand. He also added 102 runs for the fourth wicket with JP Duminy, who made 35.

Thereafter, the Indians managed to fight back, especially after the rain break, as Munaf Patel picked three wickets. The target for India would have been even bigger were it not for South Africa losing a clutch of wickets near the end of the innings.

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Federer does a Connors

Schiavone wins a marathon; Sharapova ousted

AFP, Melbourne

like, who is up? She? Me?" Earlier, Federer dropped only his third set against Tommy Robredo in 11 matches before winning 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 to equal US great Jimmy Connors' record of 27 consecutive Grand Slam quarterfinals at the Australian Open Sunday, as Francesca Schiavone won the longest women's match at a major.

While Federer needed four sets against Tommy Robredo, Novak Djokovic stayed in dazzling form and women's top seed Caroline Wozniacki also progressed, as Germany's Andrea Petkovic stunned 2008 winner Maria Sharapova.

However, all attention was on Hisense Arena, Melbourne Park's second-biggest court, where Schiavone and Svetlana Kuznetsova treated the crowd to an epic, 4hr 44min slugfest which outstripped the previous record by 25 minutes.

French Open champion Schiavone saved six match points and needed three of her own before volleying the clincher and raising her arms aloft, and turning her thoughts to a quarterfinal with Wozniacki.

The final set alone lasted three hours as the 6-4, 1-6, 16-14 marathon eclipsed the longest Grand Slam women's match of 4hr 19min between Barbora Zahlavova Strycova and Regina Kulikova in Melbourne last year.

"At one stage I was like, what's the score? Who's serving? I was like, what's going on here anyway?" Kuznetsova said. "I had no clue sometimes. It was so hard to count. I was

like, who is up? She? Me?"

Earlier, Federer dropped only his third set against Tommy Robredo in 11 matches before winning 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 to equal US great Jimmy Connors' record of 27 consecutive Grand Slam quarterfinals.

Federer, who last failed to reach a Grand Slam last eight at the 2004 French Open, is gunning for his fifth Australian Open and his 17th major crown, and the chance to stop Rafael Nadal sweeping all of tennis's big four titles.

But the 29-year-old Swiss, who was taken to five gripping sets by Gilles Simon in the second round, again suffered a mid-match lapse

before recovering his famous poise.

"Tommy makes you work extremely hard, he has a great forehand and I'm sweating bullets, and happy the match is over," Federer said.

Wozniacki reached the quarterfinals for the first time when she cruised past unseeded Latvian Anastasija Sevastova 6-3, 6-4, maintaining her hopes of a maiden Grand Slam win.

China's Li Na beat Victoria Azarenka 6-3, 6-3 Sunday to reach her second successive quarterfinal at Melbourne Park and ratchet up hopes of claiming her country's first-ever major singles title.

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Fifteen get BOA scholarship

SPORTS REPORTER

Keeping the 2012 South Asian Games as well as Olympics in mind, Bangladesh Olympic Association awarded one-year scholarships to 15 athletes from different disciplines.

The scholarships have been divided into two categories, the first of which comprises shooters Sharmin Akter Ratna, Abdullah Hel Baki and Sadia Sultana, golfer Dulal Hossain and weightlifter Famida Akter Moina, who will get Tk 10,000 each per month.

The second category consists of 10 athletes boxers Jewel Ahmed, Abdur Rahim, archers Imdadul Haq Milon and Sheikh Sajib, swimmer Mahfizur Rahman, hurdler Sumita Rani, karatekas Morium Khan, Ili Islam of wushu, Sammi Akter of taekwondo and shahanaz Parvin of kabaddi, who all will get Tk 5,000 each.

The 15 scholarships were approved yesterday at the executive committee of Bangladesh Olympic Association after a three-member committee scrutinised a list of 121-athletes from 18 disciplines.

Of the 15 scholarship holders, eight are gold medallists in the 2010 SA Games which was held in Bangladesh and others are also medal holders in SA Games or at international level.

"Before selecting those athletes, we have considered their international and domestic performances and kept their current ages in mind so that they can bring laurel to the nation in the 2012 SA Games in India and 2012 London Olympics," said AK Sarkar, chairman of the selection committee as well as deputy secretary general of Bangladesh Olympic Association.

He said that cricketers and footballers were not considered for the scholarships because they earn well through the

Dull draws in Feni, Cox's Bazar

SPORTS REPORTER

Both matches of the Grameenphone Bangladesh League ended in draws yesterday.

At the Cox's Bazar Stadium, Chittagong Mohammedan came from behind to hold hosts Abahani to a 1-1 draw.

Abahani took the lead in the second minute through Nigerian recruit Akinyele Peter Akinjunmi only to be canceled out by Liberian striker Jerry Odesco seven minutes later. Jerry's fourth goal in five matches puts him jointly on top of the scorer's chart with Muktijoddha Sangsad's Mithun Chowdhury.

This draw put an end to Mohammedan's three-match losing streak after the Black and Whites from the port city had started the league with a win over Feni Soccer Club.

At the Feni Stadium, hosts were held to a goalless draw

WC trophy due Feb 3

SPORTS REPORTER

The ICC Cricket World Cup trophy will land in the capital on February 3 and will be staying in Bangladesh until the opening ceremony.

Part of the ongoing tour to the three participating nations, the trophy will arrive in Bangladesh, which is one of the co-hosts of the mega event alongside India and Sri Lanka.

It was also known that one of the ICC (International Cricket Council) sponsors for the tournament are trying to arrange a roadshow that is supposed to start from the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

For security reasons, the trophy will be kept in an undisclosed location and not displayed.

Bangladesh will host eight matches of the tournament along with the opening ceremony on February 17. The matches start on February 19 and conclude with the final on April 2.

U-15s draw 2-day game

SPORTS REPORTER

The two-day match between Under-15 teams of Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) and Bangladesh Cricket Board was drawn in Krishnanagar on Saturday.

Facing 154 to win in the second innings, the visitors reached 95 for six before the umpires called time after 19 overs.

Earlier on the first day, Sujat's five-wicket haul helped the tourists bowl out CAB side for only 116 runs in 33.4 overs in the first innings, before they were bowled out for 167 all out



Swiss tennis superstar Roger Federer punches the air after winning a point during his fourth round match against Tommy Robredo of Spain on the seventh day of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

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