

Caroline Wozniacki's rivalry with Kim Clijsters will see the young Dane take back the world number one ranking from the US Open champion if she can manage a good run at the Dubai Open starting on Monday. Wozniacki lost an exciting three-set final to Clijsters at the year-end WTA Championships in Doha, and then had to relinquish the top spot to Clijsters when the Belgian reached the semifinals of the Paris Open Friday. But Wozniacki's consistency and Clijsters's decision to take a break from competition next week has brought the possibility of the pinnacle changing



SPORT

DHAKA MONDAY FEBRUARY 14, 2011, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

CHANGE THE GAME Sakie to go to Mumbai

SPORTS REPORTER

Some 61 Pepsi consumers on Saturday won tickets of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011 through different competitions, organised by ICC's official sponsor Pepsi, at the Amazon Club in the city.

Of them, Sakie Ebne Aftab was the luckiest one, who won the ticket of the grand final to be held in Mumbai while 60 others won the tickets of group matches, said a press release yesterday.

Pepsi is currently running a massive regional campaign titled "Change the Game" and as a very special part of this campaign, some 150 Pepsi drinkers across the country were invited to take part in a unique consumer promo and they took part in three exciting rounds of different games.

All the participants who were a part of the event were also awarded by gift hampers.

Khurshid Irfan Chowdhury, executive director of Transcom Beverage, its sales operation manager Ashrar Alam and market development manager Arif Hossain were present during the function and gave away prizes.



Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan finally arrives at Hotel Sheraton after their flight ordeal in Chittagong. Shakib's men and the Canada team were stuck in the port city after their morning flight suffered a glitch, resulting in a more than two-hour delay.

PHOTO: STAR

Not two, only one ticket!

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

Latent irregularities marked the first day of selling the World Cup's opening ceremony tickets at various Dhaka Bank branches in the city yesterday.

According to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) a total of 9,700 tickets have been put on sale and the tickets are being sold through 10 branches of the bank.

As of the filing of this report, it was yet unclear whether all the tickets for the opening ceremony had been sold out.

"We have kept the tickets open till the date of the opening ceremony, but based on the response, I think the tickets will be sold out by tomorrow [Monday], if they haven't been already," said BCB's Ticket and Seating Committee chairman, GS Hasan Tamim stating that he had yet to receive official confirmation from Dhaka Bank about how many tickets had been sold.

As was widely expected, the demand for tickets far exceeded the supply as fans thronged to the designated branches of Dhaka Bank well ahead of time. Numerous dedicated followers lined up as much as twenty-four hours beforehand to get the chance to grasp a prized ticket.

But many in queue were left bewildered at a sudden U-turn by the Dhaka Bank authorities, who went back on their original advertised agreement of allowing a maximum of two tickets per individual.

"I lined up since 11:30pm last night [Saturday] to get two tickets for my parents," said Selim, a 25-year-old student who had queued up at the Gulshan Branch.

"But once inside the bank, I was informed that I would only be able to purchase one, instead of the two tickets that was advertised."

Similar stories rang across different other venues as a number of people also complained of Dhaka Bank's about turn in distribution of the tickets.

Rashed, a young professional in his late twenties, who had lined up at the Mirpur Branch also complained that he was unable to exercise his option of two

tickets. "I had lined up since one at night for tickets for myself and my wife, but once inside I discovered that I could purchase only one, which is not what was advertised."

"I stood in line again, but well before my number came up the second time, I was told that tickets had run out," he said.

A Dhaka Bank official at the Mirpur Branch, on condition of anonymity, admitted they had distributed only one instead of the two advertised but said the decision to do such was due to the massive upsurge in demand and based

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PHOTO: STAR

NOT AGAIN: Cricket trageics seen sitting on the footpath in front of Dhanmondi's Dhaka Bank branch at seven in the morning yesterday waiting for a chance to buy tickets for the opening ceremony of the World Cup.

England stand good chance



PHOTO: STAR

England captain Andrew Strauss meets the press soon after his arrival from the airport at the Hotel Sheraton yesterday.

SPORTS REPORTER

Captain Andrew Strauss believes England have a great chance of winning the World Cup even though his side are not among the perceived favourites of the tournament.

The Ashes holders arrived in Dhaka last afternoon and immediately after, Strauss said that it would be the co-hosts who would feel the weight of expectations.

"I don't think there is too much expectation on us. It will be on the Indian and Sri Lankan teams," said Strauss at Hotel Sheraton yesterday.

"On paper, you have to look at India and Sri Lanka. They're going to have a lot of expectation on their shoulders, so that's going to be hard for them to deal with. In my mind, four or five teams can end up winning the World Cup," he said, adding that England will be vying for their maiden trophy.

"We are here to win it, obviously. We feel we have an excellent chance. The way the tournament is structured, any of the eight teams who make it to the quarterfinals are in with a chance.

"The first step would be to get past the group stage and then the team that can handle the pressure best, will walk away with the trophy," added the left-handed batsman.

Here to play two warm-up games against Canada, on February 16, and Pakistan, February 18, Strauss feels strongly that Bangladesh could make an impact in the tournament.

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Kevin not retiring

PTI, London

Top England batsman Kevin Pietersen has dismissed reports that he will be retiring from one-day cricket after the World Cup in the sub-continent to prolong his Test and Twenty20 career.

"Just to set the record straight. I have NO intention of retiring from ODI's after the World Cup!" Pietersen wrote on his Twitter account before boarding the flight to Bangladesh for the World Cup.

Reports had on Saturday claimed that the England batsman was to stop playing in the 50-over format and instead focus on Test, Twenty20 cricket and the Indian Premier League, giving him more time to spend with his family.

"Kevin would like to make it clear he will continue to play ODIs for England as long as he is selected," his agent Adam Wheatley was quoted as saying by Sunday Telegraph.

Akhtar is hurting

SPORTS REPORTER

In any standard discourse on Pakistan cricket, the topic that weighs equally as heavily as the talent of the team is the controversies that surround the players. Pakistan cricket has of late become so much entangled with controversies, that any

press briefing would be incomplete and rather drab if it did not touch on the issue of controversy. So, when the media person in charge of conducting the meet started with: 'Please don't ask any questions on spot-fixing and captaincy', every one was thinking this would be another boring and forgettable affair.

But a man like Shoaib Akhtar, who is almost synonymous with controversy,



PHOTO: STAR

Pakistan's maverick fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar answers a question during yesterday's press conference at Hotel Sheraton.

has been in and out of the side for reasons that had more to do with discipline rather than form, needed no invitation to draw himself on the issues of spot-fixing and captaincy.

"Trust me, we are hurt, for whatever has happened in the last year or so," said Shoaib, calm and collected yet resolute as ever.

The overriding theme of what he said was: We had hit a low and are still hurting because of that, but we are here to redeem ourselves.

"Pakistan needs to win this World Cup to bring cricket back to the country," he said. "People of Pakistan are missing cricket, they are dying to watch players from all over the world playing against the Pakistani team. We are thankful to ICC and people who have helped us a lot over this period."

At 35 years of age and with 160 ODIs to his name, Akhtar knows he is at the twilight of his career, and past his prime too. But if age has caught up with him, it has made him a responsible teammate as well, who acknowledges his position and role in the side.

"Obviously there's a huge difference between when you are 26 and 36. Now what I have is experience. I wish (Mohammad) Aamer was playing right now, I would have retired easily. But it is not happening. That's what motivates

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Rahmatganj's narrow win

SPORTS REPORTER

A brace from Idris Kasirye helped Rahmatganj MFS edge visitors Chittagong Mohammedan 2-1 in a Grameenphone Bangladesh League match at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

With their fifth win in eight matches, Rahmatganj leapfrogged to the third position from fifth with 16 points, one less than second-placed Abahani and three less than leaders Muktiyoddha Sangsad.

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Army reach hockey final

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army moved into the final of the Chowdhury Group Shaheed Smriti Hockey Tournament defeating Usha Krira Chakra 3-2 in their last group match at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

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