



PHOTO: AFP

World number one Spaniard Rafael Nadal bites the winner's trophy after beating compatriot David Ferrer in the Monte Carlo Masters final in Monaco yesterday. Nadal won 6-4, 7-5.

Nadal's record 7th in a row

Tennis

AFP, Monte Carlo

Rafael Nadal pronounced himself "a lucky guy" after sweeping to a seventh straight title at the Monte Carlo Masters as he dispatched fellow Spaniard David Ferrer 6-4, 7-5 on Sunday.

"It would have been impossible to imagine a few years ago winning seven titles here," Nadal said after a victory in 2 hours 16 minutes, his 12th of 16 against his good friend. "I'm a lucky guy to have done this by age 24."

"Thanks so much to the life, I'm really enjoying everything."

Nadal faced a few minor challenges on court in postcard-perfect conditions with a sleek, discreet mega-yacht tethered just offshore at the Mediterranean playground.

But it's the clay of the Country club that is officially declared the backyard of Nadal, only man in tennis history to win any event six times - let alone seven.

"This was a very important win for

me," said the somewhat disbelieving champion, who has once again embarked on the road to Roland Garros next month in the best possible way.

"I don't think about defending points from previous years, only about playing well. I just keep trying to improve every day, train humbly and improve. Winning this week was so important."

Nadal was 24 hours removed from his three-hour struggle with an injured Andy Murray, who played their three-set epic on a right elbow injected with pain-killing cortisone.

Murray and his team drove the 600 kilometers to Barcelona on Sunday where he will have a medical visit and decide over the next few days if he can play in the ATP event as second seed behind Nadal.

Nadal has ruled at Monte Carlo since losing his only match in the principality in his 2003 debut year as a 16-year-old. He has now won 37 straight Monte Carlo matches with a 39-1 record at the tournament.

Sunday's win marked the 44th

career trophy for Spain's top player, who now owns a record 19 titles at the Masters 1000 level and has beaten compatriots in the nine of the all-Spanish finals he has played.

Nadal won a 30th clay court trophy, tying him for third place in the post-1968 Open era with Bjorn Borg and Spain's Manuel Orantes. The victory was revenge for Ferrer's straight-sets win over Nadal in an Australian Open quarter-final three months ago.

Nadal and Ferrer duelled as familiar opponents in a 74-minute opening set, with a run of three straight breaks putting Nadal in 3-2 command. The world number one used his edge to take the opener and break for 2-1 early in the second.

But a few errors crept in as Nadal double-faulted and fired an errant backhand to hand the break back for 4-1. That amounted to little as the king of clay broke again for 6-5 and closed it out on his second match point a game later from a Ferrer volley gone wrong.

Nadal struck 22 winners on the afternoon with 30 unforced errors, breaking on four of 11 chances.

Dastagir passes away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Renowned sports organiser Dastagir Chowdhury passed away due to a heart attack on this way to Chittagong from Dhaka yesterday.

The 58-year-old Dastagir was taken to Apollo Hospital in Dhaka after the massive heart attack where doctors declared him dead at around 9.30 am, said BNP Chittagong city unit General Secretary Dr Shahdat Hossain.

He left behind his wife, two daughters and a son.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at 3:00pm at BNP office at Nasiman Bhaban and another will be held at the Jamiat-ul-Falah National Mosque in the port city after Asr prayers today.

Dastagir was the senior vice-president of BNP Chittagong city unit and former deputy Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC). He took part in the liberation war as a freedom fighter, was a former activist of then Biplabi Chhatra Union.

In his illustrious career as a sports organiser Dastagir performed the roles of general secretary of Chittagong District Sports Association (CJKS), general secretary of Chittagong Divisional Sports Association (CDSA). He was a BCB Councillor from 2005 to 2007 and also the former vice-president of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF).

He was appointed as Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Deputy Mayor in 1989 and discharged his duty as General Secretary of City BNP from 1997 to 2005.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board expressed deep sadness and bereavement at the passing away of Dastagir.

Delhi's first victory

AFP, Mumbai



three-wicket win in the Indian Premier League on Sunday.

Yuvraj top-scored with an unbeaten 66 to help Pune reach a challenging 187-5 before Delhi achieved the stiff target with four balls to spare for their first victory in three matches in the Twenty20 tournament.

Delhi needed eight to win off the last over after left-arm spinner Yuvraj had finished with 4-29, but Australian James Hopes (13 not out) smashed a six and a four off successive deliveries from New Zealand seamer Jesse Ryder.

Australian David Warner (46) and skipper Virender Sehwag (37) gave Delhi a solid start when they added 75 for the opening wicket before Venugopal Rao (31) and Aaron Finch (25) contributed crucial runs in the closing stages.

Pune, who suffered their first defeat in three games, were earlier indebted to Yuvraj

and Ryder (60) for setting a big target.

Yuvraj cracked five sixes, including three in the last over bowled by seamer Ashok Dinda, in his 32-ball knock and Ryder also hit five sixes in his 27-ball innings.

Ryder played a key role in putting his team on course for a big total, dominating a 54-run stand for the second wicket with Mithun Manhas (20) after the early dismissal of South African opener Graeme Smith (12).

He looked in excellent touch from the beginning as he hit two sixes in the first over of the innings off spinner Rao.

Ryder completed his half-century with an aggressive shot when he lofted left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem over long-on for a six before falling in the same over.

Nadeem and Dinda finished with two wickets apiece.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PUNE WARRIORS: 187-5 in 20 overs (Yuvraj 66 not out, Ryder 60, Manhas 20; Nadeem 2-39, Dinda 2-42)

DELHI DAREDEVILS: 190-7 in 19.2 overs (Warner 46, Sehwag 37, Rao 31, Finch 25; Yuvraj 4-29)

Result: Delhi Daredevils won by three wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Yuvraj Singh.

Honours even in first clash

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then pulled out a direct red card which means that the defender will not be able to play in the final of the Copa del Rey. Mourinho smiled sarcastically. Messi scored his 30th league goal of the season, his 49th in all competitions. It was the first he had scored against a side managed by Mourinho.

There was little reason to suppose Madrid would get back into it, either. This had been a surprisingly flat game but one that the opposition had largely dominated.

Barcelona had much more of the ball but there was a slowness to their play. Mourinho had ordered that the grass be left long and a lack of clarity and fluidity, the ball moved around reduced spaces and deep areas of the pitch, accumulating bodies and passes but not opportunities. For Barca, who knew that a draw would preserve their league advantage, nor did there appear to be much urgency. For Madrid, the urgency came in the speed with which they launched themselves forward from deep, where they lay in wait, and the pressure they applied to their opponents.

In the opening 20 minutes, Barcelona had 83% of the possession. By half-time, Madrid had managed to claw back a bit of possession but not much: they had just 23%, 116 passes to Barcelona's 383. Victor Valdes had made more

passes than Xabi Alonso. Chances were few a Ronaldo free-kick and header, a Messi lob and a strike after a weaving run and those that would not change much. But Madrid had more, if largely speculative shots and both teams appeared comfortable, happy to bide their time. Barcelona seeking space to break through the pass; Madrid seeking the swift diagonal and the break, the chance to suck the rivals in and sprint beyond them.

Barcelona did find one of those passes on 25 minutes. Messi slotted the ball through for Villa. He got to the ball fractionally quicker, turned away from Iker Casillas and turned to seek the contact. He found it too, the goalkeeper catching him, but the referee saw it differently. He would have another chance to point to the spot in the second half and this time did not deny Barcelona a penalty. When Messi scored, Barcelona's huge morale-boosting victory and title-clinching victory looked a certainty. Complete control, already exercised, followed. Definitive, too, it seemed. But then, when it looked so easy for the visitors, another penalty also appeared.

The draw means that Barcelona's league lead remains a virtually unassailable eight points, plus head to head goal difference with six games to go. But 10-man Madrid ultimately, unexpectedly felt like the victory was theirs.

Paul powers Punjab

REUTERS, Hyderabad

Paul Valthaty continued his dream run in the Indian Premier League (IPL) as he shone with both bat and ball as Kings XI Punjab thumped Deccan Chargers by eight wickets on Saturday.

The 27-year-old opener, who struck the first century of this year's IPL earlier this week to rise from obscurity, claimed four wickets with his medium pace and then returned to belt a 47-ball 75 to script the Punjab side's second victory in three matches.

Shikhar Dhawan (45) and skipper Kumar Sangakkara (35) raised Deccan's hopes of a big total but Valthaty (4-29) and his bowling colleagues managed to restrict them to 165-8.

Returning to chase down the target, Valthaty hit eight fours and five sixes and starred in a 136-run opening partnership with skipper Adam Gilchrist (61) to lay the foundation for a win that came with 14 balls to spare.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DECCAN CHARGERS: 165-8 in 20 overs (Dhawan 45, Sangakkara 35, Christian 30; Valthaty 4-29, McLaren 2-33)

KINGS XI PUNJAB: 166-2 in 17.4 overs (Valthaty 75, Gilchrist 61; Mishra 2-28)

Result: Kings XI Punjab won by eight wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Paul Valthaty.

Shakib misses

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Balaji also added Ashok Menaria, who top-scored with 21 off 17 balls (including a four and a six), and Ajinkya Rahane to his scalps while Lee, Iqbal Abdulla and Yusuf Pathan took one each.

Chasing a modest target, the home side lost their in-form South Africa batsman Jacques Kallis for a second-ball duck, the right-hander miscuing an attempted pull off paceman Tait high in the air.

However, Kolkata captain Gautam Gambhir and MS Bisla (9) steadied the ship before the latter was out to a brilliant catch at shot mid-wicket, leaving the score at 31-2. But with only a small target to chase, Kolkata were all but cruising to their second successive win.

Barisal bat

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137.3 overs (Iftekhhar 149, Shahin 104; Rubel 3-90)

DHAKA: First innings 50-3 in 25 overs (Anwar 16; Towhidul 2-14)

SYLHET: First innings 316 all out in 107.2 overs (Rajin 93, Ijaz 63; Taijul 4-87, Farhad 3-53)

RAJSHAHI: First innings 212-7 in 70 overs (Avishek 60, Anisur 58; Nasum 3-69)

Chinese GP Lewis's

AFP, Shanghai



Britain's Lewis Hamilton dramatically ended world champion Sebastian Vettel's dominant start to the 2011 season when he drove to a spectacular victory in a thrilling Chinese Grand Prix on Sunday.

The 26-year-old McLaren driver, world champion in 2008, surged through the field on fresh tyres in the closing stages before brilliantly passing the German with less than five laps remaining.

The win in Shanghai was the 15th victory of Hamilton's Formula One career and brought Vettel's recent winning streak to an end.

"I am absolutely overwhelmed," Hamilton said, after tactically outsmarting the 23-year-old German who had pitted earlier and whose worn-out treads could not keep pace with the Briton.

"It feels like a long time since I was sitting here. I will continue to push and am looking forward to many more (victories) like this," Hamilton added.

Vettel started on pole but lost the lead at the first corner to Hamilton's McLaren team mate and compatriot Jenson Button, who finished an ultimately disappointing fourth.

Vettel admitted that Red Bull's long-stop strategy had failed but he paid tribute to Hamilton's victory.

"We probably tried too hard staying on two stops," said Vettel, winner of the season's opening races in Australia and Malaysia.

"The middle stint should have been longer, but then you find yourself on the hard tyre and I saw Lewis coming closer and closer.

"We made a couple of mistakes and had some problems, but still we finished second so I am very happy for that. Congratulations to Lewis and McLaren."

Vettel leads the title race with 68 points with Hamilton second on 47 and Button third on 38.

There was also joy Sunday for Australia's Mark Webber who started a humiliating 18th on the grid but finished third behind his Red Bull teammate after a near-wondrous final push, before poking fun at his colleague.

"Congratulations to Lewis. It was good that someone finally (beat Vettel)," Webber joked.

German Nico Rosberg, one of several drivers who looked a possible winner after leading during the race, brought his Mercedes home in fifth place ahead of Brazilian Felipe Massa of Ferrari and his team mate, two-times champion Spaniard Fernando Alonso who was seventh.

On a clear day of blue skies and mild temperatures, there was drama for Hamilton before the start when his car failed to fire up in the McLaren garage, forcing it to be rapidly stripped down and repaired. He only made it to the grid with 35 seconds to spare.

But Hamilton remained calm and made a good start from third place on the grid, moving up into second after pole-sitter Vettel struggled to pull away.

As the field jostled for places in the opening laps, Button settled down in front ahead of Hamilton and Vettel.

On lap 14, when it seemed that the McLaren team was delaying too long on a pit-stop, Vettel passed Hamilton on the Shanghai circuit's long straight, before diving into the pits behind Button.



PHOTO: REUTERS

McLaren driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain celebrates on the podium after winning the Chinese Grand Prix at Shanghai International Circuit yesterday.

Moga slams hattrick

FROM PAGE 16

are in scintillating form winning both their matches and scoring eight goals, with their newly recruited foreign brigade adding to the local firepower of Enamul-Emily.

On the other hand, Brothers have won one of their matches and lost the other against Abahani to become runners up in their group.

The Bangladesh League match between the two sides though finished 2-1 in favour of Sheikh Jamal. The Dhanmondi club will be missing the services of injured winger Shahed Ahmed.

In the latter quarterfinal at 8:00pm at the same venue, three-time professional league champions Abahani will take on Farashgonj Sporting Club.

Abahani have won both their matches while Farashgonj have only just made it on better goal difference. However, the Abahani team management were not taking their opponents lightly as they lost to this side in the league.

Tomorrow Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra take on Feni Soccer Club while Mohammedan SC will play against Muktiyoddha Sangsad. Both matches will be played at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

Zulqarnain to return to Pakistan

AFP, Karachi

Former Pakistan wicket-keeper Zulqarnain Haider, who fled to London last year citing death threats from match-fixers, has said he will return home and cancel his application for asylum in Britain.

Zulqarnain was reassured by a meeting with Pakistani interior minister Rehman Malik in London last week, and will seek to resume his cricket career, he said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Close up tight
5 Gravy vessel
9 Fawn's mama
12 Creche trio
13 Actress Jessica
14 Shade source
15 Colorado Springs org.
16 Titanic destroyer
17 Intention
18 Phoenician port
19 Halloween shout
20 Avoir-dupois alternative
21 Bando of baseball lore
23 Parisian pal
25 Adam of "Myth-Busters"
28 Deaden-ing device

DOWN

1 Blue material?
2 Uncompl-icated
3 Culture medium
4 Toroidal candies
5 Talk on and on
6 Margarine
7 Overseas
8 Play-ground game
9 Cher-ish-ed
10 Hodge-podge
11 Actress Rossum
20 Shortcuts
22 Repre-sentative
24 Normand of silents
25 Scatter
26 "The Greatest"
27 YouTube offering, for short
29 Expert
30 Screw up
31 Scoundrel
35 Episodic
36 Wreak havoc on
39 Last writes?
40 Micro-wave, slangly
41 Second-hand
43 Sea eagles
45 On
46 Dalai —
47 Game fans' channel
49 Caustic solution

Solution time: 27 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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LNNVUXWT, ALXT CWVCJW
FVYJB KLJJ IDA L BVNNWU
DXJLF.

Yesterday's Cryptquip: COGNOMEN FOR SOMEBODY WHO ALWAYS WRITES ORCHESTRATIONS ALL BY HIMSELF: THE LONE ARRANGER.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: C equals P