

US tennis star Serena Williams makes an animated gesture during her match against Aravane Rezai of France in the Wimbledon Championships at the All England Tennis Club yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Serena comes back strongly

AP, Wimbledon



Returning to Grand Slam tennis after a year out with health problems, Serena Williams opened her Wimbledon title defence Tuesday by beating Aravane Rezai in three sets -- then burst into tears on Centre Court.

After serving her 13th ace to close a 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 victory, Williams buried her face in her towel and sobbed from her courtside chair. She was still crying as she left the court, overcome with emotion after enduring a long layoff that included two foot operations and treatment for blood clots in her lungs.

Williams fought through a midmatch slump, then reasserted command over her French opponent in the third set with a big serve and powerful groundstrokes. She showed why she is still considered a title favourite despite her long absence and her No. 7 seeding.

After losing the second set, Williams took charge in the final set, winning the last five games.

Roger Federer advanced to the second round by beating Mikhail Kukushkin of Kazakhstan 7-6 (2), 6-4, 6-2.

The six-time Wimbledon champion is looking to equal Pete Sampras's seven titles at the All England Club.

In other matches, three-time Wimbledon runner-up Andy Roddick served 30 aces -- including four in a row in one game and beat German qualifier Andreas Beck 6-4, 7-6 (6), 6-3 to

reach the second round. Juan Martin del Potro, the 2009 US Open champion, downed Flavio Cipolla of Italy 6-1, 6-4, 6-3. The 24th-seeded Argentine led Cipolla 6-1, 1-3 when rain suspended play on

Monday, then won 11 of the 15 games played Tuesday. Former top-ranked Jelena Jankovic was eliminated in the first round, losing to Maria Jose Martinez Sanchez of Spain 5-7, 6-4, 6-3. The 15th-seeded Serb reached the fourth round at

the All England Club last year.

Meanwhile, top-seeded Caroline Wozniacki got off to a confident start in her latest bid to win her first Grand Slam title with a 6-2, 6-1 win over Arantxa Parra Santonja of Spain. Wozniacki hit less winners than her opponent, but only made five unforced errors on her way to the easy victory.

Colly gets the chop

Cricket

AFP, Southampton

Paul Collingwood was dropped from both the England Twenty20 and one-day squads announced Tuesday for the upcoming fixtures against Sri Lanka.

The veteran all-rounder retired from Test duty after England's victorious Ashes campaign in Australia but was included in the World Cup squad.

However, upon his return home after England's 10wicket quarterfinal thrashing by Sri Lanka, Collingwood was stripped of the Twenty20 captaincy -- despite leading the side to the World Twenty20 title in the West Indies last year -- and replaced as skipper by leadership novice Stuart Broad.

The 35-year-old Collingwood, a former England oneday captain, only recently returned to county action with Durham following a knee injury.

Meanwhile wicketkeeper Craig Kieswetter and allrounder Samit Patel won recalls to both squads. Kiewswetter replaced Matt Prior, England's

FROM PAGE 16

Test gloveman who played at theWorldCup.

South Africa-born Kiewswetter, also a hardhitting batsman, played a key role in England's World Twenty20 triumph in the Caribbean but then lost form and found himself out of international contention.

Patel, 26, won the last of his 11 ODI caps in November 2008 and has finally accepted calls from the England management to improve his fitness.

SQUADS

Twenty20: Stuart Broad (captain), Ian Bell, Ravi Bopara, Jade Dernbach, Steven Finn, Craig Kieswetter, Michael Lumb, Eoin Morgan, Samit Patel, Kevin Pietersen, Graeme Swann, Chris Woakes, Luke Wright.

ODI: Alastair Cook (captain), James Anderson, Bell, Bopara, Broad, Dernbach, Finn, Kieswetter, Morgan, Patel, Pietersen, Swann, Jonathan Trott, Woakes.

FIXTURES

Jun 25: Lone Twenty 20, Bristol Jun 28: 1st ODI, The Oval Jul 01: 2nd ODI, Headingley Jul 03: 3rd ODI, Lord's Jul 06: 4th ODI, Trent Bridge Jul 09: 5th ODI, Old Trafford

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan finished with seven wickets in Worcestershire's crushing nine-wicket win over Hampshire in the County Championship yesterday.

It was his first first-class game since June 18 last year. He helped the county to earn promotion to Division One last season and this time he's played a hand in their move away from the relegation zone with their second win of the season.

He will be rested for today's one-day game against Sri Lanka with Pakistan off-spinner Saeed Ajmal joining the county.

Shakib took the visitors' final wicket with the second ball of the final day, taking a return catch to dismiss Imran Tahir and set Worcestershire up for an early finish. He ended with 3-85 from 24.2 overs to follow his four wickets and a breezy halfcentury in the first innings.

Worcestershire only lost opener Matthew Pardoe in their chase of 106 runs, skipper Daryl Mitchell hammering an unbeaten halfcentury as they reached the target before lunch.

On the third day, Shakib came late into the game with his left-arm spin. He took the seventh and ninth wicket --Dominic Cork and former Worcestershire player Kabir Ali -- leaving Hampshire at 269-9 at stumps.

Worcestershire new-ball bowler Alan Richardson took five wickets while Jack Shantry took the other two.

Aminul sticks by decision

SPORTS REPORTER

Goalkeeper Aminul Haque yesterday turned down the Bangladesh Football Federation's appeal to reconsider his retirement decision to represent the country in the FIFA World Cup prequalifiers against Pakistan. Bangladesh will play their home match on June 29 before facing Pakistan on July 3 in Lahore.

"I stick to my decision of retirement from the international arena as I discussed the issue with my family members and well-wishers after getting a comeback call from the BFF on Monday," said Aminul yesterday.

The country's number one goalkeeper tendered his retirement on Saturday citing a need to give more time to his family as well as making room for the upcoming players. Despite that he has been retained in the 27-member preliminary squad.

"It would have been a good feeling to call time from the field but I reached the conclusion after a long thought, though the sudden decision did pain me a lot," said Aminul, who started his international career playing against Qatar in two exhibition matches in 1998.

"I am happy to represent Bangladesh in the international arena and I still feel proud of being introduced as a footballer," Aminul said. "I am looking forward to playing domestic football with pride for the next four to five years."

The former Bangladesh captain played his last match against Hong Kong at the Asian Games in 2010.

Sk Russel's first win

strengthened the attack sending veteran Alfaz Ahmed and young Mohammad Biplob in place of Shakawat Hossain Rony and Ibnul Siraji respectively but Alfaz could not rescue the Sky Blues though he should have levelled the margin in the 74th minute. Alfaz saw his placing shot to the far post go nar-

sel goalkeeper Mamun Khan. The things got worse for Abahani when goalkeeper Sohel was sent off after handling the ball outside the box in the 77th minute and Abahani had no option but to send an on-field player under the post and young Mahmudul Haque Liton.

rowly wide much to the relief of Sheikh Rus-

forward Biplob stood under the bar to foil a fine free-kick by Monaem Khan Raju. "It is not that we have been performing

badly since the departure of coach Ali Akbar rather our players like Pranotosh Kumar, Zia and Samad Youssif have been suffering from injuries while Mamun Mia, Robin and Twam Frank were ruled out due to booking," said Abahani manager Sattyajit Das Rupu.

"After losing to Sheikh Jamal and Mohammedan, it was a pleasing result for us, especially we beat three-time Abahani for the first time in the professional football league," said Sheikh Russel coach

Shakib brings luck to Worcs India bowled out cheaply

Cricket

AFP, Kingston

Suresh Raina and Harbhajan Singh struck flamboyant half-centuries, yet India endured a rocky start to the first Test against West Indies on Monday.

Raina hit the top score of 82, and Harbhajan supported with 70, as the Indians, electing to bat, were dismissed for 246 in their first innings about 45 minutes after tea on an action-packed first day at Sabina Park.

Ishant Sharma then set West Indies back with the scalp of Lendl Simmons for three, as the home team reached 34 for one at stumps.

Sharma had Simmons caught at forward short leg off the inside edge, as West Indies faced a difficult 90 minutes before the close. Raina pummelled 15 fours from 115 balls in just over 165 minutes, and Harbhajan

smote 10 fours and one six from 74 balls in just over two hours. They propped up the innings with a seventh wicket stand of 146, after the visitors ran into trouble on 85 for six in the first 15 minutes

after lunch. The World No. 1 however, then lost their last four wickets cheaply.

Fidel Edwards, making a return to the international game after a two-year injury layoff, was the pick of the West Indies bowlers, finishing with four for 56 from 16 overs, justifying his selection ahead of Kemar Roach.

Ravi Rampaul ended with three for 59 from 18.2 overs, and leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo captured three for 75 from 11 overs.

Before lunch, India failed to justify their decision to bat, limping to 69 for four.

The Indians were rocked early on, when Murali Vijay was caught at backward point for

eight slicing a drive off Rampaul, who also bowled debutant left-hander Abhinav Mukund off the inside edge for 11.

V.V.S. Laxman joined Rahul Dravid, and stemmed the fall of wickets for close to an hour, but he was caught at slip for 12 off the first delivery from Bishoo, edging a loose drive, and leaving the visitors on 64 for three.

The rot continued when Virat Kohli, another Test newcomer, was caught behind for four, playing defensively forward to Edwards in the final over before the interval.

After the interval, India suffered two quick setbacks -- both to Bishoo -- in successive overs, and seemed to put West Indies in charge.

Dravid made 40 before he edged a loose drive to Sammy at slip off the spinner, who also had the Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who like Dravid and Laxman were rested for the one-day series, caught at second slip for a two-ball duck.

Enter Harbhajan, and he quickly got into his stride, lofting Bishoo straight for his first boundary, and taking apart the West Indies bowling.

He loosened the home team's grip on the match, and seemed to inspire Raina in a bold counter-attack for the visitors.

They took them to 219 for six at tea, after Harbhajan reached his 50 from 45 balls, patting a Bishoo delivery into the covers for a single, and Raina got to the landmark from 76 deliveries, straight-driving West Indies captain Darren Sammy for boundaries from successive deliveries.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 246 (Dravid 40, Laxman 12, Raina 82, Harbhajan 70; Edwards 4-56, Rampaul 3-59, Bishoo 3-75)

WEST INDIES: First innings 34 for 1 (Barath 26 not out, Sarwan 2 not out)

Attention not sought

the team's top-scorer with 188

runs, Imrul drew praise even

from those who doubted if he

cricketing background.

ending on 73 not out.

brought him notice.

heat of the arc lights.

would last at the top due to his

He held the England side at

bay in Chittagong with his

crucial 60. In the next match

against the Netherlands, he

fulfilled a wish to finish the job,

"I got two man-of-the-

match awards and I was the

highest scorer for Bangladesh.

Those are big achievements and

I always maintained that I won'

say much before the event and

kept that promise," he said

while recalling the knocks that

But Imrul thrives on the

small-town boy role, skirting

extra attention and letting the

star-status fall on others. While

Tamim and Shakib enjoy plenty

of attention these days, the

likes of Imrul, Shafiul Islam and

Mahmudullah Riyad get little

Cup always gives a player like

me a lot of confidence. I really

feel better about my batting

It does make sense; the

after the tournament," he said.

Meherpur lad hitting the inter-

national headlines could be an

unnerving issue but he took all

in his stride and it showed how

tour would be his fourth season

and Imrul maintains that he will

not reveal his targets. "I don't

want to talk about my targets.

know what they are," he said.

The upcoming Zimbabwe

well he handled the attention.

"A big event like the World

FROM PAGE 16 the left-hander matured beau-

tifully into a dependable opener who complements Tamim Iqbal's cavalier ways.

During the World Cup earlier this year, his caution-to-the-wind approach surprised many but after some initial hitches, the Chittagong leg of the tournament brought out the best in him.

Shaheen, Play Pen continue streak

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions BAF Shaheen School & College and Play Pen School maintained their winning run in the boys' group of the Polar Ice Cream 19th School Handball Tournament by winning their respective matches at the Handball Stadium yesterday.

BAF Shaheen School & College beat Scholastica 7-4 while Play Pen managed a 14-12 victory over St Gregory's High School.

In the day's other boys' group matches, Delhi Private School defeated Oxford International School 5-1, Motijheel Govt. Boys High Scholl blanked South Point 6-0, Sunnydale trounced Dhanmondi Tutorial 16-3 and Dhaka Residential Model School secured a comfortable 13-4 victory over Willes Little Flowers School.

In the girls' group, holders Scholastica posted their second successive victory when they crushed South

Point 10-0. In the other matches, Motijheel Govt. Girls School beat Siddheswari Girls School 5-1, Agrani School & College defeated Summer Field 3-2 while Dhanmondi Tutorial beat Green Herald 4-1.

Taylor named Kiwi captain

AFP, Wellington

Batsman Ross Taylor was appointed New Zealand cricket captain Tuesday, replacing spin bowler Daniel Vettori, who stepped down in March after the World Cup.

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Taylor served as vicecaptain under Vettori and his appointment was widely expected, with wicketkeeperbatsman Brendon McCullum seen as his main rival for the skipper's position.

The 27-year-old said he was humbled by the appointment and believed New Zealand had the talent to be a force in world cricket.

Jamal on the FROM PAGE 16 Ending the tournament as

Lankan coach Packeer Ali said. "All players are in high spirits and confident of overcoming the last hurdle."

Despite the absence of three key players, Sheikh Jamal will go for full three points though it would be enough for them to get a draw to clinch the league title in their first appearance in the professional football league this season.

Asked whether the matchfixing allegation against them would tarnish their achievement, Packeer Ali said, "On the way to clinch title, many allegations are raised by the supporters from other clubs, but we know how good we are and there is no question of playing fixed match."

Brothers Union are also ready to spoil Sheikh Jamal party and if the Gopibagh-based outfit beat Sheikh Jamal and Muktijoddha Sangsad win against Rahmatganj MFS in their last match, then both of the teams will be equal on 50 points and a play-off match will be needed to decide the title.

To celebrate a maiden league title triumph, the tent of the Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club was seen being decked up with decorative lights and it is expected a good number of Sheikh Jamal spectators will turn up to watch the match like their penultimate game against Mohammedan.

BOB BLAIR (circled) Kiwi courage

In 1953-54, the New Zealand team were still finding their feet at the top level. They had not won any of their 27 Tests till that point, and as expected lost the first Test in Durban by an innings.

On the first day of the second Test against a formidable South Africa, New Zealand's usual army of swing bowlers produced a stellar display to restrict the home team to 259 for 8. Unbeknownst to them, however, fate on that very day was dealing a horrific blow halfway around the world.

On 24 December in New Zealand, a train from Wellington to Auckland fell into the Wangeahu River at Tangiwai, killing 151 passengers.

Back in South Africa, the next day being Christmas was a rest day for the teams. News had not yet reached of the terrible disaster. The players woke up on 26 December to news of Tangiwai, which to one member of the party was life-altering.

The 21-year-old Bob Blair, New Zealand's opening bowler, was crushed by the news that his fiancée had been one of the victims. Inconsolable, he stayed behind in the team hotel while his teammates made their way to the Wanderers, many of them not sure if they also had cause to grieve since the full list of casualties was not yet available.

Things were not about to get easier at the cricket. They managed to skittle out South Africa for 271, but were faced with extreme hostility when it was their turn at the crease. Young South African fast bowler Neil Adcock, who was bowling with electric pace on a fast pitch, and David Ironside blasted out the openers with only nine runs on the board.

That brought Bert Sutcliffe to the crease but he soon had to retire hurt after being hit on the head by an Adcock bouncer. He was taken to hospital where he fainted twice and was joined by Laurie Miller who coughed up blood after being hit in the chest by another Adcock lifter.

Against medical advice, Miller resumed his

innings after the break, and when he was dismissed, the other fallen soldier came to the rescue. Sutcliffe, with his head wrapped in bandages, set about attempting to save the follow-on by going on an all-out attack.

With the ninth wicket falling at 154, he was trudging back to the pavilion thinking it to be the end of the innings. That is when he saw Blair, devastated by the death of a loved one just hours ago, descend the pavilion steps.

Noted New Zealand cricket writer Dick Brittenden had this to say about the scene:

"The New Zealanders (in the pavilion) wept openly and without shame; the South Africans were in little better state, and Sutcliffe was just as obviously distressed. Before he faced his first ball Blair passed his glove across his eyes in the heartwringing gesture of any small boy anywhere in trouble but defiant."

What followed was sensational as the pair smashed 25 runs (including four sixes three by Sutcliffe and one by Blair) off a single over from South African off-spinner Hugh Tayfield.

New Zealand, bowled out for 100 in the second innings, lost that match but it was one of the rare cases when all the glory was for the vanquished.

--Sakeb Subhan

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer ACDOCC

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