



PHOTO: AFP  
David Ferrer of Spain stretches to return the ball against Radek Stepanek of the Czech Republic in the quarterfinal of the Japan Open in Tokyo yesterday. Ferrer won 6-2, 7-6.

## Safina calls it a day

AFP, Moscow

Former world number one Dinara Safina has retired from professional tennis, her elder brother Marat told media on Friday.

"Dinara (Safina) has decided to end her career," Safin said. "She has taken the decision relatively well. She considers it just to be the end of a period in her life."

Safin said the main reason for his 25-year-old sister's retirement was a chronic back injury.

"Everything is all right with her health. She feels good in everyday life, but (the back injury means) she simply can't play tennis professionally any more."

Safina last competed on the women's tour in April in Madrid, losing her round of 32 match to Germany's Julia Goerges.

Safina, who won Olympic silver at Beijing in 2008, played three Grand Slam finals and won 12 singles and nine doubles WTA titles during her career. She climbed to the top of the women's rankings on April 20, 2009.

## Novak to miss Shanghai Masters

BBC ONLINE, London

World number one Novak Djokovic will miss next week's Shanghai Masters after failing to overcome a back problem.

The Serb, 24, aggravated the injury during the Davis Cup semifinal tie against Argentina and was unable to defend his China Open title this week.

He said: "I did another check this week and the results are not good so I need to continue my rehabilitation."

Roger Federer has also pulled out of the Shanghai tournament to "rest and recuperate" after a busy summer.

Djokovic, who first suffered the injury on his way to winning the US Open, has a partial rupture of a back muscle.

## Drearier

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rest was reflected in Sheikh Jamal's massive 26-0 victory over Arambagh and Mohammedan's 12-0 mauling of Farashganj. The fear of such humiliation was another reason behind Brothers Union's withdrawal.

Amer feels that this initiative to start the women's league was a right one, even though it could have been managed more carefully by the Bangladesh Football Federation.

"Someone has to start from some point and hopefully things will get a shape after a few editions and we are sure that Brothers Union will also take part in it in future. However, the football federation could have been more cautious in their effort," said Khan.

# Top four in last four

Tennis

AFP, Tokyo

Defending champion Rafael Nadal fought off a spirited challenge from Colombia's Santiago Giraldo on Friday as the top four seeds including Andy Murray safely reached the semifinals of the Japan Open.

Former world number one Nadal, playing his first ATP tournament since losing in the US Open final last month, struggled to break Giraldo's serve in the first set and needed a tie-break to set him up for a 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 win.

Giraldo fell two games behind in the second set, taking only one point, but rallied in the third to break the 25-year-old Spaniard's serve and make it 1-2.

Nadal took the following decisive game, knocking the Colombian's resolve.

"For me, the mistake was in the third game of the second set at 30-0. That was the moment. After a very tough first set, I had a chance to play more relaxed, more aggressive, but I lost that game," said Nadal.

"He is a very aggressive player. He can hit a winner from every place," said Nadal, adding that his own forehand would have to improve in the semifinals.

# Haider returns to cricket

CRICINFO, Karachi

For the first time since fleeing Dubai on the eve of an ODI, Zulqarnain Haider is back playing first-class cricket. He kept wicket for Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy Division One on October 6 -- taking three catches on the first day of the match against Faisalabad -- and said it felt like he was "starting from scratch".

Haider infamously went missing during Pakistan's series against South Africa in the UAE in November 2010. He later said he had flown to London because he had received death threats from bookies in Dubai and simultaneously announced his retirement from international cricket. However, he returned to Pakistan in April this year and in May said he wanted to abandon his retirement.

Haider is now intent on reviving his career but says he has no regrets about the accusations he made of match-fixing being rampant in cricket. "I know I almost put my career at stake for which I have no regret," he told ESPNcricinfo. "In fact, I have inspired upcoming players to speak up against happenings around them instead of just going with the flow."

After his return to Pakistan, Haider struggled to find a team, with no one wanting to sign him for the Faysal Bank Twenty20 tournament. ZTBL agreed to include him in their squad for the first-class season, and Haider, who is 25 years old, says he is looking for a fresh start and would like to make it back to the international stage. "I have started my career again and it feels like I'm starting from scratch. I don't know what prospects I have at the moment but cricket is my bread and butter and I had to get back to playing for my livelihood. I am young and have already lost plenty of cricket for various reasons. I don't know whether I will be selected for the top

# WI start with big win

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out of which 23 were taken from one Robiul over, but the manner of the wicketkeeper's dismissal left everyone at the ground bemused.

Ramdin miscued a double-bouncing Ashraful delivery into the hands of long-off where Shuvogoto Hom Chowdhury ran in to take a good catch, ending the wicketkeeper's stay. It encouraged the West Indians to see one of them apply

himself, but the T&T man too left too early.

Ashraful's surprise call-up to the attack was prompted as Nafees didn't have Naeem to bowl his remaining overs, but it was productive as his combination of slow cutters got him three wickets in two overs. It was Kapali however who was the pick of the bowlers, the leg-spinner picking up two for 32 from his nine overs.

The two sides next play a

practice Twenty20 at the same venue on Sunday before the series proper begins on Tuesday.

BRIEF SCORES

WEST INDIES: 217-9 in 45 overs (Bravo 47, Samuels 30, Ramdin 30; Ashraful 3-9, Kapali 2-32).

BCB XI: 152 all out in 41 overs (Kapali 41, Ashraful 32; Rampaul 4-23, Samuels 2-28). Result: West Indies won by 65 runs.

On Saturday Nadal will take on American number one Mardy Fish after the fourth seed defeated Bernard Tomic of Australia 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-1.

"I just had to hang in there and fight as hard as I could and try to take advantage of any opportunity I had there late in the second set," said Fish, ranked eighth in the world.

"I think it was 4-4 and I am pretty sure he was up 40-0 with a serve and I came back to win that game... and that was sort of a turning point," he added.

Looking forward to his meeting with Nadal, Fish said it is "always a pleasure" to play the Spaniard.

"He is one of my good friends out here. Hopefully it will be fun."

Second seed Murray, fresh from winning the Thailand Open last weekend, breezed past David Nalbandian of Argentina 6-4, 7-5 in just less than 100 minutes.

Nalbandian double-faulted twice at deuce to lose the fifth game of the first set and never recovered.

Briton Murray will play third seed and 2007 champion David Ferrer of Spain, winner over Radek Stepanek of the Czech Republic, 6-2, 7-6 (7/3).

level or not but right now I am focusing on my game and the rest is up to the selectors.

"My passion for cricket is still alive and I am optimistic that I can put in performances that will catch the selectors' eye. Playing for the country is always an honour and that desire never dies."

After he fled to the UK last year, Haider had claimed he received threats in Pakistan domestic cricket as well, and suggested the ICC tap players' phones since "a lot of people are involved" in match-fixing. The PCB set up a fact-finding committee to investigate the circumstances surrounding Haider's flight to England, and suspended his stipend contract. The ICC's investigative arm, the Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU), had said they wanted to wait for the PCB to finish their probe before getting involved, but the report from the committee said there were no clear motives behind Haider's flight.

"I know to the world I am a fool but to me I did the right thing," he said. "I was well aware I was risking my career but I opted to follow the righteous path. I am not like Afridi and Shoaib who when done with their career are now coming out busting the system. On the contrary I was at the beginning of my career and I raised my voice against the odds, putting my career at risk without any fear."

"Both Afridi and Shoaib have earned a lot of respect and money through the system, and now when they see things are out of their hands they have started lashing out the at entire structure and culture of Pakistan cricket. Why at the end of their career?"

Haider had played just one Test and four ODIs for Pakistan before his departure from Dubai. He got his opportunity in the wicketkeeper's slot after Kamran Akmal's horror tour of England and had helped Pakistan level the series against South Africa in the UAE with a cameo in the fourth ODI.

# Kirsten's take on chokers' tag

Cricket

CRICINFO, Cape Town

Gary Kirsten, the South Africa coach, has said his team needs to "strategise" around the problem of squandering winning positions to lose in crunch matches -- one that has earned it the 'chokers' tag from many quarters ever since the tie against Australia in the 1999 World Cup semifinal.

"You need to have some sort of a strategy around it," Kirsten said in an interview on ESPNcricinfo Weekly. "You can't just be naive to think it's not a problem and doesn't exist. There's been a bit of scarring there and it's been going on for a long time. "But then you need to think cleverly and think smart about how you manage that issue. I think it is something that we'll focus on when we get to those events and work out ways in which we can strategise to cross the line."

## No UDRS for Ind-Eng ODIs

AFP, Colombo

The Umpire Decision Review System (UDRS) will not be used for the upcoming one-day series between India and England, the sport's governing body said on Friday.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) said the system will not be in place because the developers and suppliers of "Hot Spot" technology decided "not to make their infra-red cameras available."

Teams are allowed two television reviews per innings if they feel the on-field umpires have not given the correct decision.

India initially opposed the introduction of review technology in Tests and one-dayers but in July softened its stance to allow the hot spot in games to determine edges off the bat.

But it has vetoed the additional ball-tracker for leg-before decisions in its matches.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) reverted to its original opposition to the entire system after hot spot failed to accurately show edges off the bat on several occasions during India's recent dismal tour of England.

Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni hit out against the UDRS during the tour after star batsman Rahul Dravid fell victim to at least three controversial decisions.

England beat India 4-0 in the Tests to take over as the world's number one side from Dhoni's men and also won the one-dayers 3-0.

The five-match one-day series between India and England opens in Hyderabad on October 14.

## Optimism

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doesn't assist the bowlers, you can't bowl the short ball. We tend to use it a lot, and it'll continue to work for us. The wicket was nice for bowling actually," said Rampaul.

Another challenge he faced was to deal with the two new white balls, an aspect that even some great fast bowlers have not welcomed in the past.

"I think it keeps the ball a lot newer, playing with two balls. It slides on the wicket a little more. So it's probably a good thing for the bowlers, not the batters."

"The two new balls rule out the chance of reverse swing. But it will swing a lot more in the opening overs. One has to be patient enough and hit the right line and length, there will be rewards," he added.

When asked if cricket is now more favored to the batsmen, Rampaul said, "I think it's fair, because of the amount of Powerplay that they [batsmen] have. I agree with it [the new rules]."

But the BCB XI batsmen wouldn't agree. Specially with Kemar Roach still up the visitors' sleeve.

The problem has hit South Africa hard in several major tournaments, including the World Cup this year when they went down to New Zealand in the quarter-final. Kirsten, who was named South Africa coach in June following a successful stint with India that culminated in a World Cup victory, said his aim was to restore the South African team to the top in world cricket.

"We all believe that we're a good enough cricket team to be at the top of the pile," he said. "That's where we're wanting to head. We've got to achieve some good results along the way, make sure that we're competitive in every series we play. There's no doubt there's enough skill and ability in the team to vie for a position at the top of world cricket."

Kirsten also admitted disappointment at India's performance in England, where they were thrashed 0-4 in the Tests and 0-3 in the ODIs. When asked about what

went wrong for them on the tour, Kirsten said: "I'm not sure. I'm not in the environment. It's been a little bit sad to watch them not play well because there was much anticipation around that series in England. Also with Duncan coming in as new coach and he's just been there for a couple of months, he needs to stamp his mark about what he's going to do. I guess it was always going to be a difficult time upfront."

"But it has surprised me. The injuries haven't helped. For me, they're a good enough cricket team that they can come back. It has been a disappointment. They probably lost a bit of momentum."

Kirsten also praised England for their dominance. "England are a quality cricket team. They are well coached, have a good structure, good people, they have stability in their team and are putting India under pressure. I don't think they'd been put under pressure [by India] in the whole series."

# Flavia stuns Caroline

Tennis

AFP, Beijing

Italian Flavia Pennetta stunned world number one Caroline Wozniacki with a fierce 3-6, 6-0, 7-6 (7/2) comeback in the quarterfinals of the China Open on Friday.

The Dane looked to be in control before Pennetta began a fightback, winning the second set to nil, and dominating a third set tie-break. Pennetta, the world number 26, had lost all five of their previous meetings.

Wozniacki has claimed six WTA trophies this season but -- despite her world ranking -- is still searching for her first grand slam crown.

Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska, the 11th seed and a winner last week in Tokyo, reached the final four after Serbian Ana Ivanovic retired with a back injury while trailing 6-3, 3-2.

"I've been struggling with my back since actually beginning of last week in Tokyo," the former world number one said.

"I've been doing lots of treatments on it, but it hasn't been really getting much better."

"I surprised myself that I got to this stage at all."

Giant-killing Romanian qualifier Monica Niculescu fought back from a set down against former champion Maria Kirilenko to reach the semifinals and keep her dream alive.

Niculescu, the world number 57, who knocked out French Open champion Li Na in the first round, recovered from a slow start to win 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

"I'm really confident. I played four rounds at the US



PHOTO: AFP  
Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark reacts after missing a shot against Flavia Pennetta of Italy during their quarterfinal match at the China Open in Beijing yesterday. Pennetta won 3-6, 6-0, 7-6 (7/2).

# SL warned over poor pitches

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Sri Lanka were let off with a warning on Friday for the poor pitch during Australia's Test in Galle last month and were ordered to rectify it before England tour in March.

The International Cricket Council had hauled up Sri Lanka after the dusty wicket at the Galle International Stadium was rated as "poor" by match referee Chris Broad of England.

The Test, won by Australia by 125 runs in early September, saw 40 wickets fall in under four days, 16 of them on the second day.

The ICC, who issued the warning on Friday, directed its pitch consultant to carry out an inspection of the wicket by the end of October and recommend any correc-

tive action that may be required.

Sri Lanka have been asked to confirm that any recommendations have been carried out before it can host the first of two Test matches against England from March 26-30.

ICC official David Richardson, who probed the quality of the wicket with chief match referee Ranjan Madugalle of Sri Lanka, accepted Broad's charge the pitch was poor.

"We have come to a decision that the pitch prepared for the match should be rated as 'poor'," Richardson, a former South African wicket-keeper, said in an ICC statement.

"Whilst we do not wish to see a pitch that is too heavily weighted in favour of the batsmen, in this instance, the balance was just too much in favour of the

bowler.

"However, taking into account that it was the first time that a pitch at Galle has been rated as 'poor', we have decided to impose a warning as the sanction."

## Jurgensen

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a Sheffield Shield final; a feat he accomplished in March 2002. He was also the first bowler to take a first-class hat-trick in Australia, also in 2002.

Jurgensen was the bowling coach for New Zealand from 2008 to 2010 and recently had been the coach with New Zealand Cricket's high performance programme. With the appointment of Jurgensen, BCB fulfilled the coaching staff's quota as they earlier made Stuart Law as head coach of the Tigers and appointed Jason Swift as fielding coach.