



Victoria Azarenka of Belarus stretches for a backhand during her win over Julia Goerges of Germany in the BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells in California on Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP

Contrasting Roger & Rafa

Tennis

AFP, Indian Wells

Rafael Nadal breezed into the fourth round at Indian Wells on Tuesday where he was joined by Roger Federer who had to dig deep to fend off rising star Milos Raonic in three sets.

Where world number three Federer had to come from behind to beat Canada's Raonic 6-7 (4/7), 6-2, 6-4, his Spanish rival cruised by Marcel Granollers 6-1, 6-4, to extend his winning run against his compatriots to 10 matches.

Nadal will face Alexandr Dolgoplov in the fourth round of the hardcourt tournament in the California desert.

In the women's draw, defending champion Caroline Wozniacki saw her bid for back-to-back titles fail as she was dumped out 6-3, 6-2 in the night match by former world number one Ana Ivanovic.

Federer also appeared to be facing an early exit after losing the first set to Raonic.

But the 30-year-old Swiss, who won three straight Indian Wells titles from 2004-2006, came back to take the next two sets and continue a strong run of form that has seen him take consecutive wins in Rotterdam and Dubai.

Federer, who was facing the 21-year-old Raonic for the first time, said he had a difficult time adjusting early to what the hard-serving Canadian.

Federer hammered 10 aces and won 88 percent of his first-serve points in the two hour, seven minute match, and afterwards expressed pride in the comeback.

Federer broke Raonic in the seventh game of the third set to go up 4-3. With Raonic serving at 30-30 Federer dug low to snag a 219kmph (136mph) service return, which Raonic then failed to get back over the net.

The Swiss won the game on the next point with a backhand passing shot down the line.

Federer then took his first match point when Raonic pounded a forehand into the net in front of the 15,000-strong crowd at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden.

Raonic, who already has two titles this season, showed why he is considered one of the rising stars on the ATP Tour, earning the praise of his opponent.

Despite the loss, Raonic said he still enjoyed being on centre court against the 16-time Grand Slam winner.

Federer will face Thomaz Bellucci of Brazil in the fourth round, who moved progressed after Russian Nikolay Davydenko pulled out with a virus.

Nadal has been a model of consistency

in Indian Wells and is the lone player in the last six years to have reached the semi-finals or better each time.

He hit four aces and won 79 percent of his first serve points in the 87 minute match against Granollers.

On the women's side of the draw, top seed Victoria Azarenka extended her winning streak this year to 20-0 by beating Julia Goerges 6-3, 6-1.

Azarenka advances to the quarter-finals where she will play number five seeded Agnieszka Radwanska.

Defending champion Wozniacki crashed out of the tournament after losing to the 15th seeded Ivanovic.

Former champion Ivanovic broke Wozniacki five times on her way to a surprisingly easy victory.

The win leaves her (2008) and Maria Sharapova (2006) as the only former Indian Wells champs left in the women's draw.

China's eighth seed Li Na and second seed Sharapova also reached the quarters on Tuesday.

In other men's action, Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro survived six set points en route to a 6-2, 7-6 (8/6) win over Fernando Verdasco.

Fifth-seeded Spaniard David Ferrer exited after losing his third-round match to Denis Istomin in straight sets 6-4, 6-3.

Mathews blow to Sri Lanka

AFP, Dhaka

Sri Lanka suffered a blow on Wednesday when influential all-rounder Angelo Mathews was ruled out for the rest of the Asia Cup due to a calf injury.

The 24-year-old will return home to Colombo to get fit in time for the two-Test series against England starting on March 26, captain Mahela Jayawardene said.

"Angelo has not pulled through fitness tests well, so we made a call to send him back home," Jayawardene said ahead of Thursday's crucial match against Pakistan.

"He will try to get ready for the Test matches. The selectors back home will decide and send a replacement for us."

Mathews, a right-arm seamer and hard-hitting batsman lower down the order, had also missed the tri-series finals in Australia earlier this month due to the same problem.

Jayawardene said it was unclear if pace spearhead Lasith Malinga will play against Pakistan after he missed Tuesday's opening match against India

Riyad banks

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was that even his doosra was not effective on this pitch," said an excited Riyad.

He also said that the Tigers panicked at the crunch moment and that was the reason behind their defeat against Pakistan in the opening match.

"We must be patient in crunch situations and I believe we can make it a habit if we win some close matches," said Riyad.

LOCAL snippets

SPORTS REPORTER

Industrialist and cricket lover Mohammad Iqbal Hossain was made the chairman while IT expert AHM Alamgir Shahin was made member secretary when the new cricket committee of Chittagong Mohammedan Sporting Club was formed yesterday. The meeting was presided over by the club's president Shah Alam Babul, said a press release from the club yesterday.

Big clubs in beach football

A two-day Beach Football tournament will be held in the seaside city of Cox's Bazar from March 23 with six clubs taking part.

Country's two most popular clubs; Abahani and Mohammedan, professional league champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, Brothers Union, Team BJMC and Cox's City will take part in the meet, which will be organised by We Are For Football (WAFF), an organisation of former footballers. WAFF organised the inaugural edition of the tournament in 2010.

School football

Chinikol KG High School emerged Joypurhat district champion in the National School Football Islami Bank tournament with a 2-0 win over Khetlal Pilot High School in the final in Joypurhat yesterday.

Apart from Chinikol KG High School, five more schools emerged upazila champions in their respective upazilas to move into the district-level competitions. The champions are Mariamnagar High School of Jhenaigati upazila, Kanial Khata High School of Nilphamari Sadar upazila, PDB High School of Sirajganj Sadar upazila, Nandina Madhu High School of Kamarkhanda upazila and Dhanghara High School of Roysganj upazila.

Northants

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overseas players we are considering," David Capel, Northamptonshire's director of cricket, said. "But it would be premature to say he is definitely coming."

Northamptonshire have already secured the services of Chaminda Vaas as one of their overseas players for 2012.

While Northants were obliged to cancel their plans for an overseas tour of South Africa due to financial constraints, it is understood that a couple of private sponsors have emerged to cover the costs of a second overseas player.

Pakistan

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talking for all of a minute and fifteen seconds and refusing to take any further questions.

Later, Umar Gul talked to the same channel though he too didn't speak to the rest of the media.

This unusual approach from Cheema is a break from what they have done during their series against Bangladesh in December. During that series, Pakistan took part in the preview day media commitments.

BHF calls training camp

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation yesterday cut down the AHF Cup squad to 23 players from 33 as the residential camp gets underway today at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

The BHF, which initially called up 57 players for the camp, will finally reduce the squad to 16 for the final squad as they will have to send the final squad to the Asian Hockey Federation by March 25.

Coach Mahbub Harun informed the players would have two practice sessions during the residential camp where they will work on technique and game plan.

"The fitness level of the players is now better and I will work on their technique at the residential camp," said Harun who however seems to be worried over the position of midfield as a couple of experienced playmakers like Shahidullah Titu and Ehsan Rana are not in the squad.

The backline and forward are well equipped but the midfield is comparatively weaker and the selectors are thinking of bringing back experienced midfielder Titu, added Harun.

Bangladesh, who emerged champions in the 2008 edition, have been placed along with Singapore, Chinese Taipei and Thailand in the 4th AHF Cup which begins on April 16 in Hong Kong.

PCB hopeful

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remained optimistic. "We spoke to him [Kamal] and there was some misunderstanding on match officials. He thought we were arranging our own officials for the series. But it has been made clear to him that only the ICC-approved match officials will supervise the series and hopefully the tour will go ahead," he said.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN CRICKET

India's role vital: Mani

CRICINFO, Karachi

Ehsan Mani, the former International Cricket Council (ICC) president, has urged cricket boards to take responsibility to curb corruption in the sport by engaging with their governments and law enforcement agencies to punish the perpetrators they find.

Mani said while the role of the ICC was limited, India's role in this exercise could be "significant" if it found a way to monitor and regulate the illegal betting industry in the country.

"Every time it is the players who are under the radar. The ones who corrupt the cricketers are somehow never punished," Mani told ESPNcricinfo. "One was hoping that the conviction of three Pakistanis and one English cricketer would send out a strong message and frighten players, but this I think is not going to work. In the long run, it is the root-cause that has to be dealt with."

An undercover operation by the Sunday Times stated that two Indian bookmakers had claimed they remained undeterred by the recent prosecutions of professional cricketers, the game continued to offer plenty of opportunities for spot-fixing and that professional cricketers could be easily lured in all forms of the game. In the report the bookies had said that they had recruited players from several countries to throw part or all of international matches,

including the World Cup semi-final between India and Pakistan. The ICC denied there had been evidence to "prompt an investigation into the match."

Mani defended the ICC's actions in the current environment, saying its role was limited as the influence of the illegal betting industry was hard to control. "They don't have the authority to set up the sting operations in any country so the responsibility [should be] laid on the individual boards to follow up. The problem is the illegal bookies in the subcontinent -- most of them are from India and some are in Pakistan. They work in a grey area where there is no control and monitoring."

The Sunday Times reported the bookmaker's laundry list of fixing 'rates' offered. "Tens of thousands of pounds are on offer to fix matches, typically 44,000 pounds (70,000 dollars) to batsmen for slow scoring; 50,000 pounds (80,000 dollars) for bowlers who concede runs; and as much as 750,000 pounds (1.2 million dollars) to players or officials who can guarantee the outcome of a match," the newspaper reported the bookmaker's claims.

The figures did not surprise Mani who said players could be easily tempted when they were offered large sums of money for little effort. "I'm afraid there will be some 600m dollars involved in the

upcoming one match between India and Pakistan on March 18. So for them [illegal bookmakers] investing 5 to 10m dollars on a player is nothing. These days fixing a whole team isn't possible but controlling individual player is viable and it could be common."

The ECB, Mani said, had been proactive in the Westfield case, asking players to come forward to reveal what they knew. They board responded robustly to concerns that the county circuit was as vulnerable to the influence of illegal bookies as the international game. The Indian board, however, Mani said, needed to take cognisance of the newspaper report. Even the BCCI had declined to respond, with the IPL governing council chairman Rajeev Shukla saying, "Newspapers can publish anything, unless we get something concrete from an agency or ICC, I don't think it would be appropriate to react to it."

Mani said India could play a significant role by making betting legal. "These problems will never finish until the Indian government finds a way to regulate illegal book-making. I have seen the ECB showing concern, asking players to come and tell them what they know after Westfield's sentencing. I think it's the member boards who have to step up to engage the law enforcement agencies to work with them to clean up cricket."

Korean Cup golf ends

SPORTS REPORTER

Liton Howlander of Korea Golf Club clinched the title of the Korean Cup Golf Tournament (Pro-AM) which concluded at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday. Liton emerged champion with an aggregate score of eight-under-par 208 while Dulal Hossain finished second with six-under-par 210 in the three-day tournament. Lutfor Rahman trailed Dulal by a stroke to take the third position in the event where more than fifty professional and amateur golfers from across the country took part.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Nizam, an amateur golfer competing for the Building Technology and Ideas Ltd team finished fourth while and three of his other amateur teammates (Musa, Rubel and Liton Miah) finished in the top 12. The event for the members of the Kurmitola Golf Club will start today.

Mahela taking

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what we need to do," he said. Dav Whatmore, Jayawardene's former coach and the new man in charge of Pakistan, has said that they would also think along those lines.

The coach who has been in charge of Bangladesh as well, wants to go through to the final with a win today. "It is very important for both teams. If we win, we are more or less through. The preparation has been okay, a couple of days to lead up to the second match. We had an opportunity to look at the opponent yesterday. We will try and put our best foot forward," he said.

It will also be Sri Lanka's first opportunity to avenge their defeat to Pakistan in the UAE in November last year.

Clarke back for Tests

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Injured Australia captain Michael Clarke will be fit to play the first Test against the West Indies, selectors said Wednesday as they named a squad that saw the return of spinner Michael Beer.

Clarke was ruled out of the one-day series in the Caribbean that starts Friday after injuring his hamstring in a tri-series clash against Sri Lanka earlier this month.

But after intense treatment, he was included in the 16-strong Test squad.

"It is anticipated Michael Clarke will be fully recovered and take his place as captain for the first Test match in Barbados beginning on Saturday April 7," said national selector John Inverarity.

The skipper later tweeted: "Rehab going

really well, should be over in the West Indies in the coming weeks. Can't wait to see the boys."

Shane Watson and James Pattinson were both given recalls after their injury-marred Australian summers, but batsman Shaun Marsh remains out of favour after a run of poor form.

The biggest surprise was the return of Beer, who is yet to add to his one Test against England in January last year.

He joins a squad that includes incumbent spinner Nathan Lyon, batting newcomer Peter Forrest and two wicketkeepers, Brad Haddin and Matthew Wade.

SQUAD

Michael Clarke (captain), Shane Watson (vice-captain), Michael Beer, Ed Cowan, Peter Forrest, Brad Haddin, Ryan Harris, Ben Hilfenhaus, Mike Hussey, Nathan Lyon, James Pattinson, Ricky Ponting, Peter Siddle, Mitchell Starc, Matthew Wade, David Warner.



The four amateur golfers of Building Technology and Ideas Ltd pose for a photograph after their commendable performance in the just-concluded Korean Cup at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday. PHOTO: COURTESY

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Put on layaway, perhaps
 - 5 Fool
 - 8 Capri or Wight
 - 12 Appellation
 - 13 Hockey legend Bobby
 - 14 Blunder
 - 15 Stone-street of "Modern Family"
 - 16 Keanu's "Matrix" role
 - 17 One
 - 18 Bounded
 - 20 Jimmy Carter's Georgia home
 - 22 Angry group
 - 23 Hostel
 - 24 React in horror
 - 27 Loads, as software
 - 32 Id counterpart
 - 33 Old Olds
 - 34 Fine, to NASA
 - 35 Herring's cousin
- DOWN**
- 19 "Forget it!"
 - 21 Torched
 - 24 Jewel
 - 25 Census statistic
 - 26 Ultra-sound image
 - 28 Born
 - 29 Author of "Finishing the Hat"
 - 30 Mauna
 - 31 The air up there
 - 36 Sweethearts
 - 37 "Caught ya!"
 - 38 Spring, for one
 - 41 "As ... sow ..."
 - 42 Brit's blackjack
 - 43 Lecher's look
 - 44 Be an umpire
 - 46 Gambling mecca
 - 47 Decorate
 - 48 Loathe
 - 51 Shell game item
- Solution time: 25 mins.**
- SAFE SIN SPRY
OXEN KOI CLUE
PLEDGING HULLA
METUPE HAMMER
HEITROITC LOB
LOPE RENT IRA
AWL VIDEO NUN
GEO APEX AGED
TAN STEW
MATTES RADIO
IRIS PLANKING
NINE AIL EVIL
GAGA TEE NATE

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CRYPTOQUIP

UIJW ZW JZRJK NLPJW
BPZQNB Z XSXXC PLKJQBQC,
LBSXXFBJ CFS EFSQA BZC
PIJ EZP EFUB PIJ AFR.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF A CERTAIN CAMEL-TOPPED DESSERT, ONE MIGHT SAY YOU'RE A FLAN-ATIC.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals A