

Davis cup team sans Dipu Lal

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's Davis Cup team will be travelling to Iran today, without one of their key Dipu Lal. Bangladesh are playing in Group 3 of the Asia Oceania zone of Davis Cup which will be held from April 25-28 in Tehran.

The other three members who will be flying for Tehran are -- national champion Amol Roy, Ranjan Ram and Henry Prithu Mondal.

The general secretary of the Bangladesh Tennis Federation (BTF) Abdur Rahman said they tried their best, but failed to acquire the Iranian visa for the tennis player. "Despite showing all necessary documents, we could not get his visa on Thursday. The next two days were holidays, so we have failed to get his visa on time."

The other countries in Bangladesh's group are Oman, Iran, Syria, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Vietnam and Kuwait.

Nat'l school football

SPORTS REPORTER

Fasih Ul Ulum Dakhil Madrasa qualified as the second team from Dhaka division for the final round of the National School Football Islami Bank Tournament. Fasih Ul Ulum defeated Dolaipar High School 3-0 in tiebreakers in the final of the qualifying round at the Gazipur Stadium yesterday. Earlier on Friday, Isdair Rabeya Hossain High School booked their ticket becoming champions from the other group played at the Manikganj

Amol, Sarda's double crown

SPORTS REPORTER

Amol Roy of ERC and Sharmin Alam Sarda of NTC won double crown in the Samsung National Tennis Tournament which concluded at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday. Amol defeated Dipu Lal of the Nordic Club 6-1, 6-2 in the men's singles final to complete his double, as he had on Friday won the doubles title pairing with Ranjan Ram.

In the women's singles final, Sharmin Alam Sarda was declared champion after her opponent Ishita Afroz retired midway through the final. Sarda was leading the match by 6-4, 3-2 at that stage. Sarda had on Friday claimed the women's doubles title as well pairing up with Sathi Sarkar.

Later, the prizes were distributed by among the winners by the Secretary for Energy and Mineral Resources Division Mohammad Mezbahuddin and managing director of Smart Technologies, which is the corporate dealer of the IT products of Samsung, Zahurul Islam. Apart from the prize money, the singles champions were also awarded an LED Lapfit Samsung monitors each.

Anamul misses

FROM PAGE 16 Rajin Saleh and Nadif Chowdhury then staged a fightback, adding 85 for the third wicket before the former Bangladesh captain fell to Saqlain Sajib for 43. Nadif was unbeaten on 55 runs from 132 balls.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KHULNA: First innings 618-8 dec in 130.5 overs (Imrul 87, Anamul 193, Taposh 111; Tariq 2-120).

DHAKA METRO: First innings: 118-2 in 30 overs (Tasamul Haque 54 not out, Marshall 31; Dollar 1-15).

RAJSHAH: First innings 387-8 dec in 117 overs (Jahurul 87, Mizanur 105, Sabbir 78 not out; Enamul 6-127).

SYLHET: First innings 152-3 in 61 overs (Nadif 55 not out, Rajin 43; Mukhtar 1-18).



Serbian world No 1 Novak Djokovic hits a forehand return during his Monte-Carlo ATP Masters semifinal victory over Czech Republic's Tomas Berdych in Monaco yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Rafa-Novak final

Tennis

AFP, Monte Carlo

World number one Novak Djokovic is the last man standing between king of clay Rafael Nadal and an incredible eighth straight title at the Monte Carlo Masters.

The top-ranked Serb, playing this week despite his beloved grandfather's death, has won the last seven matches with the Spanish ace -- all of them finals at major events -- but trails 14-16 in their head-to-head series.

Djokovic reached his second Monte Carlo final, having lost one to Nadal in 2009, when he overcame Tomas Berdych 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 in the semi-finals on Saturday.

Nadal kept a victory run at Monte Carlo dating to 2005 alive as he won a 41st match on the trot at the event, defeating French ninth-seeded crowd favourite Gilles Simon 6-4, 6-4.

Djokovic has improved his form after playing three matches while grieving, but is fully prepared for a battle on Sunday in the principality.

"It will be the most difficult match for me in this tournament," said Djokovic, who beat Nadal six times in 2011 and won their six-hour Australian Open final in January. "He's the player to beat here."

"He's the best ever in history of the sport on this surface."

"It's an ultimate challenge. I need to play well from the first to the last point. I cannot

have ups and downs. I cannot afford that against Rafa. I'm aware of that. But why not believe that I can win?"

Nadal, the winner of the last seven editions, and who last lost a Monte Carlo match in 2003, has gone through the week without dropping a set, even as he tested a left knee that required a fortnight of treatment earlier this month.

"We are evenly matched. We've played many, many matches against each other," said Djokovic. "We've played many finals against each other in the last 15 months."

"It's going to be an interesting match-up. I've never won this tournament. And he's won 41 matches here."

"He's definitely motivated to win another one. You always know that Rafa is going to come up with his best fight and his best tennis when he needs to."

"That's why he makes another player who plays against him come up with the best tennis, too. So that's something that I have to keep in mind."

Nadal is just pleased to be contending after his two weeks of left knee injury treatment this month.

"I have much less to lose than him, I have everything to win," said the optimistic holder. "That's the most important thing."

Nadal called his eighth consecutive final in the principality "a perfect way to start the clay court season."

"To be in the final without losing a set, it means a lot to start another clay season with a final. Now remains the most difficult thing. I am here to try."

Semenya seals Olympics spot

AFP, Pretoria

Former world champion Caster Semenya won an 800-metre race in one minute 59.58 seconds Friday to secure a place in the South African team for the Olympic Games.

Semenya is considered the best South African prospect for gold at the Games and relished running on a University of Pretoria track where she was boosted by the fast pace set by Namibian Herunga Tjipekapora.

It was third time lucky for the 21-year-old, who conquered the world in Berlin three years ago but was then forced to take gender tests amid accusations from rivals.

She failed to better the 1:59.90 qualifying mark during two previous attempts in South Africa this year, most recently at the national championships in wind-swept Port Elizabeth last weekend.

South African athletes must crack the qualifying time twice -- once at home and once abroad -- before June 30 to be chosen for the London Olympics.

Semenya got her 'abroad' time in South Korean city Daegu last year when finishing second behind Russian Mariya Savinova in defence of the world title after a long spell being hampered by a lower back injury.

The former world champion changed coaches last year, replacing Michael Seme with ex-Olympic 800-metre gold medalist Maria Mutola from neighbouring Mozambique.

Other South African athletes who have booked their places in London are 400-metre hurdlers LJ van Zyl and Cornel Fredericks, women's javelin thrower Sunette Viljoen and decathlete Willem Coertzen.

Pune outclass Delhi

SPORT DESK



A strong batting display led by New Zealand recruit Jesse Ryder and a fine all-round display by skipper Sourav Ganguly powered the Pune Warriors India to a 20-run win over the Delhi Daredevils in their IPL match at the Feroz Shah Kotla in New Delhi yesterday.

Chasing a stiff target of 193, the Daredevils needed to get off to a flier, which they did through a 75-run partnership between Virender Sehwag and Kevin Pietersen after the early wicket of Mahela Jayawardene, caught by Steven Smith off Alfonso Thomas. Pietersen hit three sixes off one over from Angelo Mathews while Sehwag hit two maximums and a boundary off a Ryder over. Pietersen's wicket, bowled by Ganguly for a 23-ball 32, shifted the momentum. Ganguly came back in the next over to snaffle Irfan Pathan.

At that point the Daredevils needed 79 from eight overs, and all rested on Sehwag's shoulders. But that hope too was extinguished when the Delhi skipper offered a hard return catch to Murali Karthik, bringing an end to his 32-ball knock of 57 which featured five fours and four sixes. Thereafter disciplined bowling by Ganguly, Thomas and Aashish Nehra kept the Daredevils to 172 for seven. Thomas was the

pick of the bowlers, taking three wickets for 22.

Earlier, Ryder was the main success story in the Warriors' innings and his 93-run second wicket partnership with skipper Ganguly set them up for an explosive finish. After being inserted on a placid pitch by Sehwag, Ryder and Ganguly settled down after Uthappa's early dismissal wicket to take the game away from Delhi. Singles off almost every delivery and the odd boundary or a six was their mode of operation till the fifteenth over, when Ganguly hit a Morkel delivery straight to long-on for a 35-ball 41.

Then, Steven Smith and Ryder plundered 67 runs off the next 5.2 overs. Smith played a big part in the stand, blasting an unbeaten 34 off 13 balls with four boundaries and two maximums. Ryder finally fell off the fourth ball of the twentieth over, bowled by Morkel for a 58-ball 86 that featured seven hits to the fence and four sixes. A four and a couple off the last two deliveries faced by Angelo Mathews took the Warriors to 192 for three.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PUNE WARRIORS INDIA: 192 for 3 (Ryder 86, Ganguly 41, Smith 34 not out; Morkel 3-50)
DELHI DAREDEVILS: 172 for 7 (Sehwag 57, Pietersen 32, Nagar 24; Thomas 3-22, Ganguly 2-27)
Result: Pune Warriors India won by 20 runs.
Man-of-the-match: Sourav Ganguly

Chennai's last-ball win

PTI, Chennai



Faf du Plessis stroked his way to a 52-ball 73 but Chennai Super Kings had to wait till the very last ball before eking out a seven-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals in a thrilling Indian Premier League match at the MA Chidambaram Stadium yesterday.

Needing two runs off the last ball of the match, skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni clipped Stuart Binny off his pads to help the Super Kings overhaul the target of 147 set by Rajasthan.

Chasing a modest 147, the Super Kings were off to a sedate start as openers du Plessis and Subramaniam Badrinath (15) added 55 runs in eight overs.

Slow left-arm spinner Brad Hogg gave the visitors their first breakthrough when he had Badrinath stumped by Shreevats Goswami with a ball that had a bit of flight.

Du Plessis continued with his attacking game and, along with Suresh Raina, added 61 runs for the second wicket.

Raina scored 26 runs in 24 balls and hit three fours.

Kevon Cooper brought an end to du Plessis's innings having the batsman caught by Goswami.

Cooper then sent back Raina, thanks to Ajinkya Rahane's excellent catch in the deep, but skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Ravindra Jadeja denied the visitors any further

success while taking Chennai home.

Earlier, the Super Kings rode on a disciplined bowling display to restrict Rajasthan to a modest total despite a half century by Owais Shah. Electing to bat on what looked like a slow pitch, the Rajasthan Royals batsmen started off in brilliant fashion, scoring 15 runs off Dwayne Bravo's first over.

Ravichandran Ashwin gave his team a vital breakthrough when he dismissed an in-form Rahane (15) off the third ball of his spell. Rahane's dismissal brought Shah to the middle -- the English recruit took seven balls to open his account before hitting Shadab Jakati over the mid-on fence.

With the scoreboard reading two for 50 after Dravid's dismissal at the end of the eighth over, the onus was again on Shah to take his team to a respectable total.

In the company of Menaria, he stitched a 92-run third-wicket partnership off just 65 balls to help the visitors post a modest total. Shah carried on his good work with yet another substantial knock, which helped his side to a respectable total, but not quite an imposing one.

SCORES IN BRIEF

RAJASTHAN ROYALS: 146 for 4 (Shah 52, Menaria 36, Dravid 26; Jakati 1-12, Kulasekara 1-17, Ashwin 1-19)
CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 147 for 3 in 20 overs (du Plessis 73, Raina 26, Bravo 16 not out; Cooper 2-23, Hogg 1-18)
Result: Chennai Super Kings won by seven wickets.

Yuvi to start training in a week or two!

Cricket

PTI, New Delhi

Desperate to don his India jersey once again, cricketer Yuvraj Singh, who recently returned to the country after undergoing three cycles of chemotherapy in the USA for a rare germ cell cancer, says he is set to start training in a "week or two".

"I'll start training in a week or two. I definitely want to get back on the field as soon as possible and wear my India cap again," Yuvraj said.

As far as getting back to serious cricket is concerned, the left-hander said he would take a call depending on the way his body responds to training.

"I can't really give a time right now, because I'll have to see how my body responds to the training and the workouts," he was quoted as saying in IPL's official website.

Yuvraj, who was last year diagnosed with a malignant tumour between his lungs, returned to the country on April 9 after undergoing treatment in the US.

"The doctors haven't given me any medicine. They said the effect of chemo is completely out of my system. It's been about five weeks now and I feel stronger day by day," Yuvraj added.

Yuvraj, who led Pune

Warriors in the last IPL, said the team will pull through under former Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly's leadership in the ongoing edition.

"He's [Ganguly] had a lot of experience as captain for Team India and he'd be the best guy to lead the team at the moment. I just hope that they get into last four, and with his experience the team can really pull through."

"My team [Pune Warriors] is doing really well and it's great to watch them play. It is an exciting experience to watch the matches as a fan for the first time," he said.

Siddikur slips

FROM PAGE 16 before finding a birdie on the third. Later he managed another birdie in the back nine before rain stopped play at the Royale Jakarta Golf Club. Siddikur will be playing the front nine on Sunday morning before starting the fourth round.

Meanwhile, world number three Lee Westwood moved to a 13-under before play was suspended. Zaw Moe of Myanmar was Westwood's closest challenger as he lies on nine-under through four holes.

Lee Sung of Korea played through five holes and was seven-under with Shiv Kapur of India and Bernd Wiesberger of Austria, who both completed four holes.

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Shadhinata KS promoted to Div I

SPORTS REPORTER

Shadhinata Krira Sangha were promoted to the First Division after they drew their last match of the Destiny Group Dhaka Metropolis 2nd Division League against BG Press Sports & Recreation Club at the 1-1 at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

BG Press took the lead on the first minute of the match through Mohammad Titu. And it looked like they were winning before Mohammad Helal scored an 89th minute equaliser.

Vettel claims Bahrain pole

AFP, Manama

Defending double world champion Sebastian Vettel grabbed his first pole position of 2012 on Saturday when he planted his Red Bull car at the top of the times in qualifying for Sunday's controversial Bahrain Grand Prix.

The 24-year-old German outpaced McLaren's Lewis Hamilton by just 0.098 seconds to take the 31st pole of his career following a relatively lacklustre start to the season.

Vettel's Red Bull teammate Australian Mark Webber and fellow-Briton and McLaren teammate Jenson Button occupy the second row after coming in second and third.

This speedy top four were able to push last weekend's maiden F1 victor Nico Rosberg down to fifth with a thrilling final flurry of laps in the closing seconds that left the Mercedes driver, who chose to run only once in Q3, slightly off the pace.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
1 Airport schedule data (Abbr.)
5 Mop the deck
9 Kimono closer
12 Anger
13 Sit for a photo
14 Pal of Wynken and Blynken
15 Ancient Mariner's burden
17 Right angle
18 Theatrical
19 American emblem
21 Performing
22 Mythical lecher
24 Geek
27 — capita
28 Billions of years
31 Away from WSW
32 Raw rock
33 Potential syrup
34 Probability
- DOWN**
13 Eggs
16 Hidden supply (Abbr.)
40 — usual
41 One of The Donald's exes
43 Snare
47 Venusian vessel?
48 Colonial sewer
51 " — Doubtfire"
52 Island neck-wear
53 Arctic diving birds
54 "May-day!"
55 Ticklish Muppet
- 66 For fear that**
20 Favorable vote
22 Wait on
23 Vicinity
24 Ultra-modernist
25 Conclusion
26 Relief provider
27 Milne bruin
29 "Unh-unh"
30 Agent
35 Actor Mineo
37 Star-related
39 Larry the — Guy
40 Whatever number
41 " — the word"
42 Roundish hairstyle
43 Old U.S. gas brand
44 Libertine
45 Requests
46 "Hey, you!"
49 Conger, for one
50 Quarterback Tebow

Solution time: 25 mins.



PHOTO: STAR

Winners in different categories of the Samsung National Tennis Tournament pose with their trophies and plaques at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

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CRYPTOQUIP

XMYV EOGXEZ BMJVMWY EWQ
TCGVQ JMCWVQMCY VM
JZGQOVY. GOBQQB, VIQH IEPQ
PQWH DWMDQW PQV-GTCQVVO.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I HAVEN'T SPRUNG INTO THE AIR EVEN ONE TIME ALL EVENING. I GUESS I'M HAVING A LEAP-LESS NIGHT.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals T