



Players of the victorious Khulna side pose for a photograph with the 32nd inter-district cricket championship trophy at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna on Saturday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Kvitova starts with win

AFP, Madrid

Czech Petra Kvitova kicked-started her title defence at the Madrid Masters on Monday with a 6-2, 6-3 defeat of New Zealand's Marina Erakovic.

The third-seeded Wimbledon champion, who defeated Victoria Azarenka in straight sets to lift the 2011 trophy, went through into the second round in 67 minutes, firing five aces and producing 28 winners.

Erakovic, the number 39 who has lifted her game in recent months with a Memphis final and semi-final showing last week on clay in Budapest, was broken five times.

American ninth seed Serena Williams, the former number one now seeded ninth, started out with a victory over Russian Elena Vesnina 6-3, 6-1, the second Madrid win from four matches played for the veteran whose schedule has never been over-taxing.

But the 30-year-old has picked up her pace in recent months, reaching a Miami quarter-final, winning the title in Charleston and travelling to the Ukraine for Fed Cup to insure London Olympics eligibility.

Elsewhere, Czech Andrea Hlavackova out Australian Anastasia Rodionova 6-1, 6-4 while Lucie Hradecka beat China's Peng Shuai 6-4, 5-7, 6-4.

Liu stars in Kawasaki

AFP, Tokyo

Chinese star Liu Xiang clocked 13.09 seconds in winning the 110m hurdles at the IAAF World Challenge meeting in Kawasaki, Japan on Sunday.

Despite heavy rain, the 2004 Olympic gold medalist finished nearly a quarter of a second ahead of second-placed American Omo Osaghae.

"It was my first outdoor race," said Liu, who won world indoor silver over the 60m hurdles in Istanbul in March.

"The track was wet and the wind was strong, but I am satisfied with my time."

Three-time world 200m champion Allyson Felix won the 100m in 11.22sec, saying she did not yet know whether she would race the 200 and 400m at the London Olympics.

Matin takes

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The best start of the day came from Mithun and Liton, with 32 at the front nine, but a 38 at the back nine for Mithun and a 39 at the back nine for Liton, set them off the pace.

A total of 65 professional golfers from hosts Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Nepal are participating in the four-day event which is organized by Bangladesh Professional Golfers' Association and sponsored by Building Technology & Ideas Ltd.

KKR take top spot

INTERNET, New Delhi



Kolkata Knight Riders chased down the target of 154 runs with eight balls to spare and beat Delhi Daredevils by seven wickets in the IPL match at Feroz Shah Kotla in New Delhi.

With this win, now Kolkata are placed at top of the table with 17 points from 12 matches.

McCullum made a swashbuckling 56 and shared 60-run stand with Jacques Kallis (30) to give Kolkata command in chase of 154.

Pacer Varun Aaron gave Delhi first breakthrough by dismissing Gautam Gambhir (36) after a solid opening stand of 68 runs.

Delhi Daredevils didn't fire as a batting unit as Kolkata Knight Riders restricted them to a manageable 153 for nine in the clash of table-toppers.

Opting to bat first, Daredevils started off well with skipper Virender Sehwag blasting 23 off only nine deliveries but failed to convert his good start.

The likes of David Warner (21), Mahela Jayawardene (30) got out just when they looked set, while Ross Taylor (16)'s woeful run with the willow affected Daredevils' chance of putting up a good score.

With Sehwag and Kevin Pietersen doing the bulk of the scoring in the earlier matches,

the Daredevils middle-order were put to test for the first time and they failed miserably.

It was only due to Irfan Pathan's lusty blows that the table-toppers crossed the 150-mark.

As many four batsmen were out in the final over of the innings bowled by 'mystery spinner' Sunil Narine who again had enviable figures of two for 23, while Jacques Kallis (2/20) made telling impact removing both Sehwag and Warner.

Sehwag was again off the blocks in a flash as he hit a couple of boundaries and a huge six over mid-wicket off left-arm seamer Pradeep Sangwan in the second over of the innings.

Warner, who looked scratchy during the first few deliveries, then got his act together as he hit Brett Lee for a straight six and followed it up with a cover drive.

In only 3.2 overs, Sehwag-Warner duo added 40 runs and it looked like KKR bowlers were in for a 'Knightmare' when Kallis provided twin-breakthrough.

First he had Sehwag adjudged leg before when he was trying to work the ball on the leg-side.

BRIEF SCORES

DELHI DAREDEVILS: 153/9 (Irfan Pathan 36, Jayawardene 30; Kallis 2-20, Narine 2-23) **KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS:** 154/4 (McCullum 56, Gambhir 36, Kallis 30; Yadav 2-30)

Biedermann targets Phelps once more

AFP, Berlin



Germany's double world-record holder Paul Biedermann is hoping to produce the race of his career at the London Olympic Games as he looks to again beat US swim superstar Michael Phelps.

The 25-year-old German set both the 200m and 400m freestyle world records at the 2009 world championships in Rome when he beat Phelps to gold over the shorter distance and took his record in the process.

He broke Phelps' 200m freestyle record, set at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, with a time of one minute 42 seconds dead and the pair are set to clash again over the same distance at London's Aquatic Centre in July.

"The race of my life, I hope, is yet to come," Biedermann told the Frankfurter Allgemeine newspaper.

"I believe the 200m freestyle final will be one of the best there has been.

"There won't be one faster any time soon.

"All eight who qualify for the final in London will have a real chance to become Olympic champion."

Both Phelps and Biedermann were beaten by US swimmer Ryan Lochte in the 200m freestyle final in last year's world championships in Shanghai.

Ahead of London, Biedermann says comparisons between him and Phelps, 26, are inappropriate after the American claimed eight gold medals in Beijing to add to the six gold and two bronze medals he won at the 2004 Athens games.

"How many Olympic medals has he got? 16? I have zero," said the German who also holds the world 400m record of three minutes 40.07 seconds.

"We are worlds apart. I don't think you can compare me to him.

"There will be competition [between us] forever."

Biedermann says he feels Phelps has changed his behaviour towards him since the 2009 world championships, which was the last major event before performance-enhancing polyurethane swimsuits were banned.

"In 2009, I was just a bloke who took his world record away wearing the suit, now I have shown that I am at the top of the world level without it," said Biedermann.

Match fixers at it again? Kenya coach

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may be omitted from the line up with an excuse of injuries or booking. The governing body should check out these things as well as only video footage will not be enough to find out unfair means," said Maruf.

Arambagh KS coach Zahidur Rahman Milon and Farashganj SC coach Kamal Babu echoed the sentiments of the other coaches and urged the BFF to strengthen the monitoring system in the second leg.

"BFF officials do not watch the matches. They should come to the field or at least appoint someone to monitor the matches as bottom clubs are desperate to avoid relegation," said Milon adding that if BFF can't stop the unfair means in the league, they should stop relegating teams.

"I will expect strong steps

from the BFF but I am worried whether they will take any such steps as the club officials hold all top positions in the federation," feared Farashganj coach Kamal Babu.

Apart from inserting a punishment clause, BFF has also formed a special committee comprising five persons from outside the federation, who will decide if any such issues related to match fixing are raised. But unfortunately committee has not even sat together once in the past five months.

There has been suspicion of a fixed match between Brothers Union and Rahmatganj just before the BFF election which has been dubbed as 'election game' by different national dailies, but no steps have been taken as yet by the BFF to investigate the match.

Khulna clinch district title

SPORTS REPORTER

Khulna beat Dhaka by seven wickets on Saturday to clinch the 32nd inter-district cricket championship at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium.

Batting first, Dhaka made 182 runs in 48.2 overs with Ashiqul making 42. Khulna's Rajib took four wickets while Nizamuddin took two.

In reply, the hosts took 44.3 overs and lost just three wickets to reach the target.

Imran made an unbeaten 89 off 128 balls with the help of seven fours and two sixes. He found assistance from Aslam with whom he added 73 runs for the unbroken fourth wicket stand.

State Minister for the Ministry of Labour and Employment Monnujan Sufian distributed prizes among the winners. BCB directors Gazi Ashraf Hossain and Syed Zahid Hossain were also present.

Green Valley ease to win

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Green Valley got a five-wicket win against Dashora Nabojagoron Sangsad in the Colonel Malek Smriti Premier Cricket League at Shahid Miraz-Tapan Stadium in Manikganj yesterday.

Winning the toss, Dashora batted first and were all out for 131 runs in 29.2 overs. Plabon scored 34 runs. Rocky and Palash picked up three wickets each while Sajal took two wickets.

In reply, Green Valley reached their target in 27.5 overs, losing five wickets. Bashar remained not out on 28 runs while Rocky scored 27 runs.

Plabon took two wickets. Retired XI will face Dasara Palli Mangal Samity in the next match on Thursday.

No games

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to use the ground," he said adding that "police and army are responsible to stop the unethical activities at the fair".

"We are trying to get back the playground from Bangladesh army", Elahi said adding that three cases are pending with the higher court for disposal in this regard.

Nurul Abedin Nobel, the former cricketer of the national team, said, "Outdoor games and tournaments should be the main features of the playground and it should not be used for other purposes".

The former opener of national team recalling his own memories at the stadium saying, "I, myself, from my very childhood grew up playing in this field".

Other eminent personalities in Chittagong also urged to bring back the sporting environment of the playground.

Uncertainties shroud WI



AFP, London

West Indies insisted they still have enough time to prepare properly for their upcoming Test series against England and get all their squad on board after another rain-marred day at Hove on Sunday.

After seeing the first day of their three-day tour opener against Sussex washed out on Saturday, the tourists struggled to 46 for two in the 18 overs possible at the south coast ground on Sunday.

Meanwhile the West Indies, who currently only have 11 players fit and available with them in England, have yet to hear when visa and transit issues involving Assad Fudadin, Narsingh Deonarine and Marlon Samuels will be resolved.

They are all thousands of miles away, with the two Guyanese in Jamaica awaiting visas and Samuels still to begin his journey from the Indian Premier League. However, a team spokesman said the trio were expected shortly.

"We are not concerned about it," he said. "We are hopeful that they will be here in time for the [England] Lions match."

That four-day fixture in Northampton, central England, starts on Thursday and that means the tourists have a maximum of just five days' competitive play to come before the first of three Tests starts at Lord's on May 17.

And, with more bad weather forecast, they may not even get that.

However, opener Adrian Barath -- bowled

for 16 on Sunday -- said: "I think there's sufficient time.

"Normally we wouldn't have all this time, coming in a week before," the 22-year-old added. "That will serve us well.

"We're looking to grasp the opportunity, and make every opportunity count.

"They're very important. It's good that we're here two weeks before the first Test match."

In typical early season English conditions -- cold and damp, with cloud cover for the seamers -- West Indies lost the toss on Sunday and were sent into bat.

Barath fell when he deflected a ball from 20-year-old Kirk Wernars, a former South African Under-19 international, onto his stumps off the bottom of his thigh pad.

New batsman Kirk Edwards ought to have gone for a second-ball duck, but was dropped at second slip by Luke Wells off Chris Liddle.

But it was not too costly an error with left-arm seamer Liddle dismissing Edwards for eight with the aid of a catch by third slip Chris Nash.

When the umpires abandoned play for the day, Kieran Powell was 19 not out and Darren Bravo one not out.

Barath insisted he and his colleagues were ready to tough it out in what are set to be trying circumstances, even for batsmen used to England in May.

"I don't mind the extreme conditions. It's nice to experience these things," he said.

"We're not surprised about these conditions. It's something we expected."

Del Potro keeps title



AFP, Estoril

Top seed Juan Martin del Potro retained his title here at the Estoril Open on Sunday after inflicting a 6-4, 6-2 defeat on second seed Richard Gasquet.

The Argentine world number 12 became the third man in the tournament's

history to win the clay title in successive years, following in the footsteps of Thomas Muster (1995-1996) and Albert Montanes (2009-2010).

It was also Del Potro's second title of the season after his victory in Marseille in February, and his 11th of a career that includes a US Open success in 2009.

"I just played my game and raised my level all

week," said Del Potro. "Today was my best match. To win two titles here is great.

"I played aggressive all the way and served well. I'm gaining confidence on my forehand, which is important to my game. My confidence is building and I hope to take it even further next week in Madrid.

"I'm moving closer to my best form, but I still need to work to get there. The more matches you win, the more your confidence grows," added the player who has lost only one set in two years at Estoril.

The loss left Gasquet still looking for his first ATP trophy since triumphing in Nice in May 2010.

"He played very well," said the Frenchman. "He's very powerful, has a great service, and a great forehand and backhand. He deserved this win.

"He played better than me. He's very tall and has a good second serve and was hitting the ball very well. He was the better player today.

"It's always disappointing to lose a final. I've lost five times to [Novak] Djokovic and [Roger] Federer [in previous finals]; now Del Potro. They were better than me.

"It's good for me to reach a final. It was a good tournament to prepare for the clay season. I'll get confidence from this tournament."

The final was played in sunny conditions after wind and rain affected the early days of the event at the Estadio Nacional.

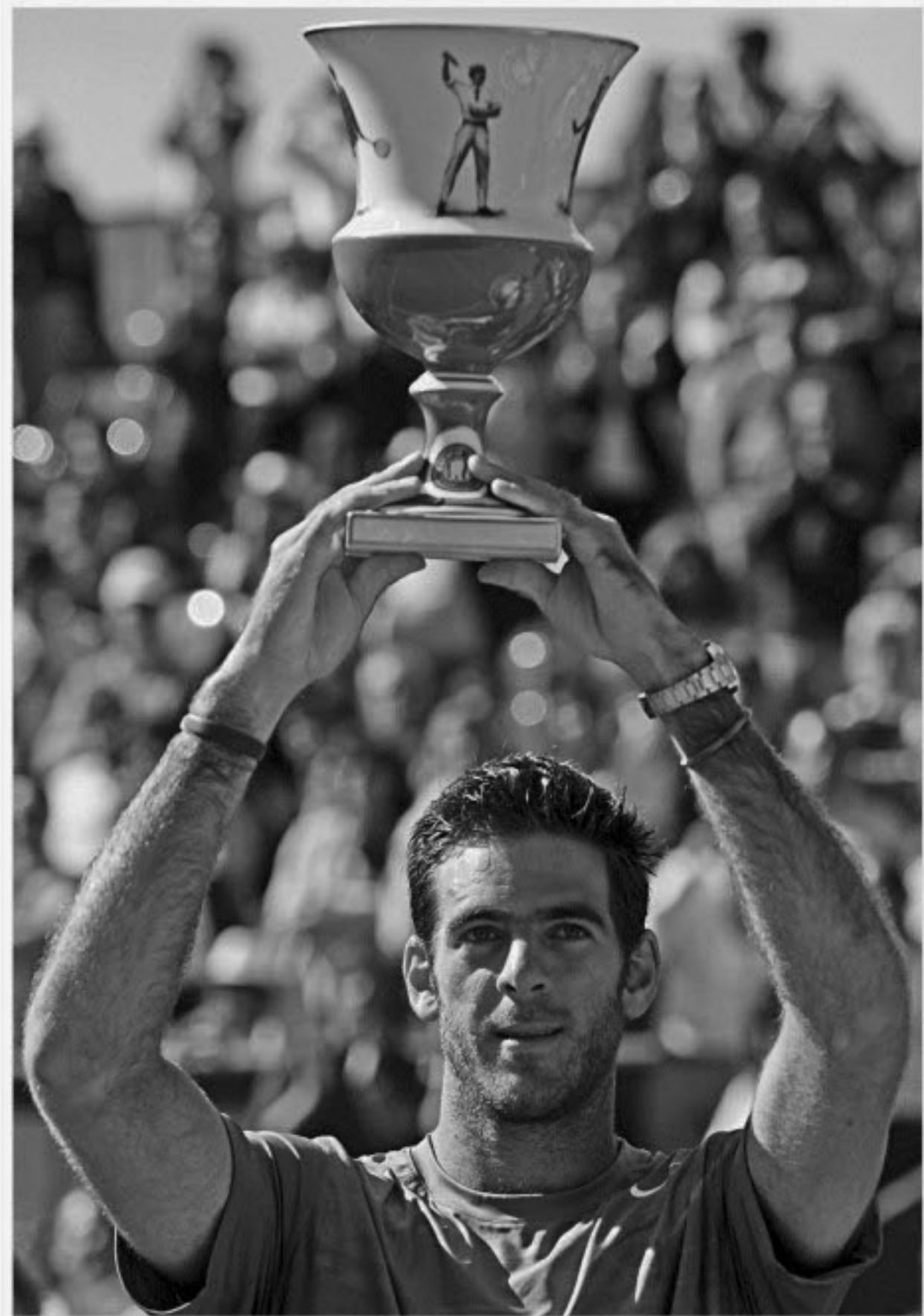


PHOTO: AFP

Argentina tennis star Juan Martin del Potro raises the Estoril Open trophy after his victory over France's Richard Gasquet in the final at Jamor Stadium in Oeiras on Sunday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- Chic, to Austin Powers
- Crooked
- Implement
- Tramcar contents
- Decorative case
- Unslightly
- Relinquish the throne
- Smile
- Squid squirt
- Big-time operator?
- 19-Across, e.g.
- Chart format
- "Eureka!"
- Run-down horse
- Financial advisor
- Teeny bit
- Deviate off course
- Antitoxins

DOWN

- Bygone bird
- Sphere
- Commit (to)
- Signal, as with a nod
- Schedule abbr.
- "Phooey!"
- Traffic jam
- They're in for the long haul
- Shrek is one
- Hodge-podge
- Singer
- Loretta
- Bankbook abbr.

20

- Carnival site
- Moist
- Canton's place
- Shaft of light
- Choke
- Treat
- Asian sea, really a lake
- Appellation
- Spring (from)
- Existed
- Hot tub
- Orna-mental material
- Checker move?
- Buddy
- Muscat's land
- Narc's measure
- Press
- Con
- Press for payment
-
- Moray or conger

Solution time: 25 mins.

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RID	ROUX	PILE
ONE	INTEGRATE	
PSALM	GOY	
IRRETRATABLE	DECAP	
NEO	EXTILE	COO
NAIL	UNDUNDATE	
SPLAT	GLAD	
	DUO	MEANS
IMMIGRATE	FIE	
ROBE	AWOL	ACE
ETAS	MENS	RED

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CRYPTOQUIP

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D N M T N D L E W , M X N K B A X N ' D
M H M B R R A N D I X N K L W E
M X N D I N W N G A .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SINCE MANY CEREAL PLANTS GROW WITHIN THAT DEEP GORGE, THEY NAMED IT THE GRAINED CANYON.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals H