

# No Greta Garbo

AFP, Paris



Serena Williams warned her punch-drunk rivals that she is still to realise her potential and that retirement is not on her agenda as she targets adding to her 16 Grand Slam titles.

The 31-year-old American world number one defeated defending champion Maria Sharapova 6-4, 6-4 to capture her second Roland Garros on Saturday, 11 years after her first.

But if her flagging rivals on the tour were desperately hoping that Williams was contemplating quitting, then she told them to think again.

Was she pondering following the example of Greta Garbo, another American diva of a different age and culture who quit Hollywood at the age of 35, at the peak of her powers?

"Wow, what an analogy, me and Greta Garbo. I definitely want to go out in my peak. That's my goal. But have I peaked yet?" Williams teased her audience.

The evidence suggests that as long as she remains fit and motivated into her third decade on the tour, the likes of Sharapova and world number three Victoria Azarenka, the only two who can match the American for power, will continue to have their work cut out.

"I'm really relaxed. I really enjoy every moment that I'm out there. I always said that I felt like I have never played my best tennis," added Williams, the oldest winner in Paris in the Open era.

"I have said that for years, that I feel like I can always do better and play better and I have always wanted to reach that level. Maybe I'm just trying to get there."



PHOTO: STAR

Cricket fans, loyal to a crestfallen former Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful, brought out a procession in front of the BCB headquarters at Mirpur yesterday.

# 'Feels good to be loved'

SPORTS REPORTER

Police dispersed a host of Mohammad Ashraful's fans yesterday morning after they had gathered near the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium to request the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to minimise the cricketer's punishment following his public confession that he had fixed matches in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20.

The fans, who were carrying banners stating 'Forgive Ashraful, he was trapped', 'Minimise punishment, catch the real culprits', had earlier revealed their plans of forming a human chain through a fan page on social media site Facebook.

However, Jashim Uddin, additional deputy commissioner of police in Mirpur division, told reporters that the fans had to be dispersed as they hadn't taken prior permission to hold the programme.

Reacting to the incident, Ashraful told reporters that he was overwhelmed by the show of support. "I don't have any words for them at the moment. But it always feels good to be loved by fans," said Ashraful.

Earlier this week the batsman had sensationally confessed to fixing in the BPL to the media. A disciplinary measure will be taken against the player as per the report of the ICC's Anti Corruption and Security Unit.

# Obsessive Pep learning German

AFP, Berlin

Pep Guardiola could well be fluent in German by the time he gives his first press conference as coach of Champions League winners Bayern Munich his brother Pere told Der Spiegel magazine.

Pere, who is also the former Barcelona coach's manager, said his brother has been taking classes in German in New York, where he has been living in the past year, since last November.

Pere revealed that so determined was his 42-year-old brother to master the language he brought his teacher to Spain when he returned there for the Easter break.

"It's his (Pep's) style, he is stubborn," said Pere.

"Pep always behaves in such a way, he is an obsessive.

"It's absurd. You are with your brother and he doesn't stop talking German with his teacher," added Pere, who was instrumental in drawing up the contract with Bayern which both parties signed in mid-January.

# No fuss from Spain

REUTERS, Miami



World champions Spain held on for a 2-1 win over Haiti in a friendly on Saturday as they warmed up for this month's Confederations Cup.

After Fernando Torres went close with a spectacular volley, Vicente del Bosque's team grabbed the lead in the eighth minute with a low drive from 25 yards by Santi Cazorla.

The Spaniards doubled their advantage in the 19th minute when Juan Mata chipped the ball to Cesc Fabregas, who glanced in a header.

It looked likely to be a one-sided game with Spain strolling around and Haiti, who have struggled in recent years in CONCACAF competition,

chasing the ball in the heat and humidity.

Spain introduced Barcelona midfielders Andres Iniesta and Xavi in the second half and almost made it 3-0 when Roberto Soldado struck the post in the 70th minute.

But Haiti stuck at the task and delighted their fans in the 36,535 crowd at Sun Life Stadium with a goal in the 76th minute.

The ball fell to left back Wilfred Ndidi, who showed electric pace and great composure to burst past the Spanish defence, round substitute keeper Pepe Reina and slot home.

It was just reward for Haiti's efforts but Spain kept their cool in the final minutes to ensure they avoided a potentially embarrassing scoreline.

"In the first half, I think we played to our level, we controlled the ball and created chances," said Del Bosque.

"After the break we put less pressure on, played with less intensity and Haiti were able to see more of the ball and play better, but overall it was a good test for us."

The biggest smile after the game was on the face of Haiti goalscorer Guerrier, who revealed that his son Cristiano, named after Real Madrid winger Cristiano Ronaldo, had been born just a day before the game.

"It was a great honour to play against the world champions and I think we showed that Haiti is not only about the earthquake we had, but we showed that we have talent," said the defender."

# 'Mourinho damaged Spanish football'

REUTERS, Madrid



Jose Mourinho did more harm than good to Spanish football during his controversial three-year tenure as coach of Real Madrid, Barcelona and Spain midfielder Andres Iniesta was quoted as saying on Sunday.

Portuguese Mourinho quit Real three years before the end of his contract after a 2012-13 campaign without major silverware and has returned to former club Chelsea.

His stint in the Spanish capital was overshadowed by a series of ugly incidents and he alienated a significant section of Real's

own fans when he benched club captain and goalkeeper Iker Casillas, a Spain team mate of Iniesta's.

"You just have to look at the facts," Iniesta said in an interview published in Sunday's edition of El Pais newspaper when asked if Mourinho had harmed Spanish football.

"Yes he damaged Spanish football, in general more harm than good," added the 29-year-old.

"But I don't like talking about that person at all. So if you don't mind we'll leave it at that."

Mourinho, 50, was an assistant coach at Barca in the late 1990s and has also managed Porto and Inter Milan.



Italian legend Roberto Baggio (R) and Japanese legend Kazuyoshi Miura share a smile after an exhibition match at the National Stadium in Tokyo yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# AB hopes for Madiba 'ton'

AFP, Birmingham



South Africa one-day cricket captain AB de Villiers said Sunday that just as batsmen always wanted to make a hundred so too did he hope that Nelson Mandela reached a century of birthdays.

Worldwide concerns have been mounting for the health of Mandela after South Africa's first black president, revered for his transformational role in guiding the country from apartheid to multi-racial democracy, spent a second day in hospital on Sunday with a lung infection.

It is the fourth hospital stay since December for the Nobel peace prize laureate, set to turn 95 next month, after he was discharged in April following treatment for pneumonia.

"He's a legend in our country," de Villiers, speaking at the Edgbaston cricket ground in Birmingham, central England, where South Africa play Pakistan in a Champions Trophy one-day international match on Monday, said of Mandela.

"He obviously turned things around for our beautiful nation.

"I just hope he gets better very soon. We all know he's quite old. I think he's 95 right now, and I've still got a few years to get there, but I can only imagine it's not too easy moving around at that age," the 29-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman added.

# Phil Neville retires

REUTERS, London



Phil Neville announced his retirement on Saturday at the age of 36, clearing the way for the former England defender to make a full-time move into coaching.

Neville ended an eight-year spell with Everton, the club he joined from Manchester United in 2005 for a fee of 3.5 million pounds (\$5.4 million), last month and has now decided to hang up his boots.

"When I made a statement that I was leaving Everton everywhere I went I seemed to be getting 'oh you've been brilliant'," he told reporters at the European Under-21 championship in Israel.

"I didn't like it, I didn't want to be seen as an attention seeker. In my heart I knew I wouldn't be playing again at any level, I just wanted to drift away."

Neville, who has been helping England Under-21 manager Stuart Pearce at the European Championship, has been linked in media reports with assistant coaching jobs at United and Everton. He did not lift any silverware during his time at Everton but helped United win six Premier League titles, three FA Cups and the 1999 Champions League.

Neville made 59 international appearances between 1996 and 2007.

# Balotelli sorry for seeing red

REUTERS, Milan



Italy striker Mario Balotelli apologised for his red card and furious reaction in their World Cup qualifier away to the

Czech Republic on Friday with coach Cesare Prandelli telling him he must to get used to being provoked.

"Good morning. Yesterday my reaction was not the right one, I offer an apology," Balotelli wrote on his Twitter account.

"SORRY...to my team...I need to learn...still."

He was dismissed in the second half of the Group B match in Prague for a second bookable offence and reacted by smashing his fist against the perspex wall as he entered the players' tunnel.

Television pictures also showed him

kicking the other wall.

Balotelli also wrote an angry message on Twitter suggesting fans should support another team in the Confederations Cup and telling readers to watch the whole match again.

Prandelli said the maverick striker, who has been relatively well-behaved since joining AC Milan from Manchester City in January, had to get used to provocation.

"He must understand that like all great players he will always be the target of provocation," Prandelli told the ANSA news agency. "If it passes that test, then it gives him an edge against the opponent."

"In the next few days we will also talk about the use of Twitter...Sincerely, I preferred Mario's second message," he added, referring to the apology.

Unbeaten Italy have a four-point lead over Bulgaria in the group with the Czechs a further point back in third place.

# Legends entertain

AFP, Tokyo

Italian football legends attracted tens of thousands of spectators when they gathered in Tokyo Sunday for an exhibition game with their Japanese counterparts celebrating the 20th anniversary of the country's J-League.

Former Azzurri superstars Roberto Baggio, Christian Vieri and Franco Baresi were among those making an appearance at the National Stadium.

Baggio, 46, joined various ceremonies at the game but did not play due to a knee injury despite the entreaties of fans.

But Vieri, 39, scored twice early on in the game.

প্রকাশিত ঢাকা গ্যাডিয়েটস  
এর প্রতিবাদ বিজ্ঞপ্তির প্রতিবাদঃ

গত ০৯-০৬-২০১৩ইং এ বহুল প্রচারিত দৈনিক পত্রিকা ‘দি ডেইলি স্টার’ এর ১৫ নং পাতায় প্রকাশিত ঢাকা গ্যাডিয়েটস এর প্রতিবাদ বিজ্ঞপ্তির ক্রমিক নং-২/এ কর্তৃপক্ষের উল্লেখিত বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় দলের প্রাক্তন অধিনায়ক, ম্যানেজার এবং জাতীয় পুরস্কার প্রাপ্ত ক্রিকেটার জনাব শফিকুল হক হীরার বিরুদ্ধে অনিত্য অভিযোগের তীব্র প্রতিবাদ ও নিন্দা জানাচ্ছি। উল্লেখ্য আমি কখনও কোন টিভি টকশোতে গ্যাডিয়েটস এর বিরুদ্ধে আমার নিজের পাওনা না পাওয়া সম্পর্কে কোন প্রকার অভিযোগ করি নাই। উল্লেখ্য আমি গ্যাডিয়েটসের খেলোয়াড়দের অভিযোগের ভিত্তিতেই তাদের বকেয়া পাওনার কথা বারংবার উল্লেখ করেছি। আমি (হীরা) বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ডে কর্মরত অবস্থায় এবং বর্তমানে ব্যক্তিগত পর্যায়ে সকল প্রকার আয়কর পরিশোধ করেছি, যা রেকর্ডে ভুক্ত। গ্যাডিয়েটস কর্তৃপক্ষ আমার বিরুদ্ধে আয়কর বাবদ ২ (দুই) লক্ষ টাকা বকেয়া পাওনা যে দাবী করেছেন, পূর্বেই তা তারা অগ্রিম আয়কর (আডভান্স ইনকাম ট্যাক্স) হিসেবে কেটে রাখতে পারতেন, যা দেশের আইনের আওতাভুক্ত। গ্যাডিয়েটস কর্তৃপক্ষ আমার যোগ্যতা নিয়ে প্রশ্ন তুলেছেন, যা অত্যন্ত হাস্যকর এবং দুঃখ জনক। উল্লেখ্য যে, আমি দীর্ঘ দশ বছর বিভিন্ন মেয়াদে জাতীয় দলের অধিনায়ক, ম্যানেজার এবং ক্রিকেট ডেভেলপমেন্টে অত্যন্ত সততা, নিষ্ঠা ও যোগ্যতার সাথে দায়িত্ব পালন করেছি যার ফলশ্রুতি হিসাবে ১৯৯৬ সালে মাননীয় প্রধান মন্ত্রীর হাত থেকে জাতীয় পুরস্কার প্রাপ্ত হই। আমার যোগ্যতার প্রমাণ হিসাবে এই জাতীয় পুরস্কারই যথেষ্ট। দেশবাসী এ সম্পর্কে অবগত।

শফিকুল হক হীরা