



CRICKET P51

'Both sides are under pressure'

Sourav Ganguly says '97 Sahara Cup turned his one-day career



HADRIAN HERNANDEZ/Gulf News

TENNIS In tandem

Virginia Ruano Pascual of Spain (front) returns as doubles partner Paola Suarez of Argentina looks on against Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia and Alicia Molik of Australia during the final of the Dubai Women's Open. Pascual and Suarez rallied to win 6-7 (7), 6-2, 6-1.

Maktoum, Hamdan and Mohammad attend sports events



WAM & Al Bayan

Encouraging presence

His Highness Shaikh Maktoum Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, attended the camel races at Nad Al Sheba yesterday along with Shaikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai and Minister of Finance and Industry. The race is being held as part of the closing ceremony of the camel racing festival. General Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Minister of Defence, meanwhile, attended the Super Saturday horse racing at the Nad Al Sheba in the evening, which is the last card before the World Cup later this month.

Horse racing report on Page 50

TENNIS Pascual and Suarez rally to land doubles title

BY ALARIC GOMES Staff Reporter

Dubai The world No 1 pairing of Virginia Ruano Pascual and Paola Suarez powered their way to a 6-7 (7), 6-2, 6-1 win against Alicia Molik and Svetlana Kuznetsova to pick up their 27th doubles career crown at the Dubai Duty Free Women's Open last night.

Ruano Pascual and Suarez looked a much better team on court and that showed as the match trickled into the second set.

Smiling and enjoying every moment of their time together on court, Pascual and Suarez stuck to their game plan of keeping the Australian and Russian pegged to the back of the court. Kuznetsova looked a bit phased out on her serves, but with Molik keeping her serves low and deep, the pair managed to fight their way to 6-6 to force the tie-break.

They were down 0-4 in the tie-break, but managed to fight through for a 8-7 lead and rightfully it was Molik lending the finishing touches to the set with a deep serve to Suarez's right.

Ironically in the second set, it was a complete turnaround as Pascual and Suarez latched on to some exciting play at the net to earn two service breaks on Molik's serve for a 5-1 lead.

However, Molik and Kuznetsova were far from finished as they fought back for a break on Ruano Pascual's serve to make it 2-5. But with Kuznetsova not showing too much of confidence either in her ground strokes or her net play, she was broken for the first time in the match as Ruano Pascual and Suarez took the set 6-2.

The winners whizzed through the third, getting their breaks in the fourth and sixth games.

"We had come here to win this title," Pascual stated. "We will try to win as many titles as possible during our career," added the pair which has enjoyed one of their best seasons last year.

Davenport gets past battling Jankovic

IT'S OVERWHELMING TO WIN THIS FINAL, SAYS A RELIEVED WORLD NO 1



BY ALARIC GOMES Staff Reporter

Dubai The Dubai Duty Free Women's Open had a worthy new champion in the form of world No.1 Lindsay Davenport as she got past a battling Jelena Jankovic 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 at the Dubai Tennis Stadium last night.

Shaikh Ahmad Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, President of Dubai Civil Aviation and Chairman of Emirates Group, was the chief guest and handed over the trophy to the winners before a packed stadium.

This was a match worthy of a final as crowd favourite Jankovic, ranked 28th in the world, kept her nerve and poise before falling to the world's best player.

"It's overwhelming to win this final," a relieved Davenport stated after picking up the 46th career title of her career.

"It was a close match and it came down to a few points in the end. I wanted to win this final so much," added the 28-year-old American, who is on her 13th year on the tour.

Davenport dictated things early as she broke the Serbian girl for a 1-0 lead. But the American failed to build on this advantage as Jelena broke and then held serve to lead 2-1.

Davenport used her deep ground strokes to maximum utility to break her



Star billing

Lindsay Davenport of the United States holds the trophy after she defeated Serbia's Jelena Jankovic to win the final in the Dubai Open yesterday. Davenport won the match 6-4, 3-6, 6-4.

opponent a second time in the fifth game, and then served out for the set in 37 minutes.

By the start of the second set, Jankovic started getting her rhythm. But it was the American who once again showed the initiative as she broke for a 2-1 lead.

However, Jankovic was not giving up easily as she broke back and then held her serve to lead once again 3-2.

Jankovic, 20, then broke Davenport a second time and then held serve to distance herself for a 5-2 lead. The American, who lost

to Serena Williams in the Australian Open finals this year, held serve to trail 3-5. But with the crowd strongly behind her, Jankovic then served out for the set 6-3.

Going into third set, Jankovic was ready for a great fight. She went after

DUBAI TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS RESULTS
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RESULTS

Women's singles final: Lindsay Davenport (USA) bt Jelena Jankovic 6-4, 3-6, 6-4.
 Doubles final: Virginia Ruano Pascual/Paola Suarez bt Svetlana Kuznetsova/Alicia Molik 6-7 (7), 6-2, 6-1.

everything Davenport sent down, and with the American struggling with her first serves, things seemed to be going the Serbian's way.

The best moment of the match was in the second game when Jankovic balanced two double faults to cap a final rally and hold serve for 1-1. With Davenport's game crumbling, Jankovic broke in the third for a 2-1 lead. But, could not do anything in the next game to hold serve as they remained tied 2-2.

Staying with serves

Both players stayed with their serves till Davenport took the lead in the ninth to be 5-4 ahead. With the long match taking its toll, Jankovic made one crucial unforced error to stay 0-30 in arrears.

Davenport latched on to this and when Jankovic sent a double handed backhand wide, the American threw her arms in relief for such a hard-fought win.

Jankovic paid tribute to her American opponent. "She was simply unbelievable," Jankovic said. "She kind of destroyed me tonight. I couldn't have asked for more from myself," she added.



HADRIAN HERNANDEZ/Gulf News

The X Factor

Jelena Jankovic of Slovakia eyes a return against Lindsay Davenport of the USA during their singles final at the Dubai Tennis Stadium yesterday.



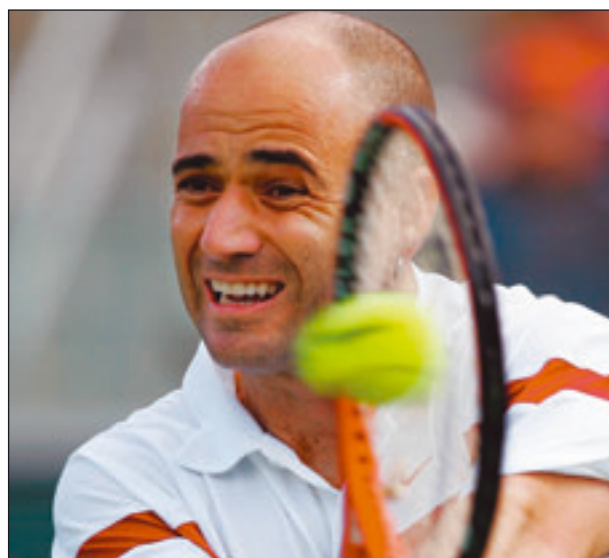
Boris comes to town

Boris Becker, the tennis icon, poses with Saeed Hareb, chairman of Dubai International Marine Club, during a visit at the Hotel Mina Seyahi in Dubai yesterday.



Country calls

Indians Leander Paes (left) and Mahesh Bhupathi congratulate each other after winning their Davis Cup zonal doubles tie against China's Wang Yu (right) and Zhu Ben-Qiang in New Delhi yesterday. The Indian pair, former world No 1 on the ATP Tour, won the match 7-6 (11), 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 to give their country a 3-0 lead.



Reuters

Losing out

Andre Agassi of the US returns a backhand to Croatia's Ivan Ljubicic during their first round singles tie on Friday.

Holdovers Spain out of Davis Cup

Australia build up 3-0 lead over Austria while Roddick helps the US draw level

Bratislava, Sydney, Carson (AFP & Reuters) Davis Cup holders Spain lost their title here yesterday, crashing out in the first round of the Davis Cup World Group as Slovakia took an unassailable 3-0 lead.

The Slovakian pairing of Karol Beck and Michal Mertinak downed Rafael Nadal — a hero of last year's Davis Cup triumph — and former French Open winner Albert Costa in straight sets 7-6 (7/3), 6-4, 7-6 (10/8).

Slovakia — a two-time quarter-finalist — had won the opening day's two sin-

gles rubbers. Feliciano Lopez lost 6-4, 7-5, 6-3 to Karol Beck in two hours and five minutes before Fernando Verdasco fell to Dominik Hrbaty 6-3, 6-4, 6-7 (7/9), 6-3 in two hours 43 minutes.

Left-hander Lopez, ranked 19th in the world, had beaten Beck, ranked 36th, in their only previous meeting on a hard court in Canada two years ago. But the Spanish clay court specialists found it difficult to adapt to the indoor carpet surface here.

Australia clinched their Davis Cup World Group

first round tie when Todd Woodbridge and Wayne Arthurs beat Austrians Jurgen Melzer and Julian Knowle 4-6, 6-3, 2-6, 6-4, 7-5 in the doubles at Sydney for an unbeatable 3-0 lead.

Elsewhere, Andy Roddick defeated Mario Ancic 4-6 6-2 6-1 6-4 to help the US draw level at 1-1 with Croatia in their first round Davis Cup World Group tie after the opening singles on Friday. In the first match, Ivan Ljubicic spoiled Andre Agassi's return to the competition with a 6-3, 7-6, 6-3 win.

RESULTS

WORLD GROUP

First round
 At Bratislava: Slovakia 2 Spain 0
 At Fribourg: Switzerland 0 Netherlands 2
 At Sydney: Australia 3 Austria 0
 At Buenos Aires: Argentina 2 Czech Republic 0
 At Moscow: Russia 1 Chile 1
 At Strasbourg: France 1 Sweden 1
 At Bucharest: Romania 1 Belarus 1
 At Los Angeles: USA 1 Croatia 1



Reuters

Reaching out

Russia's Marat Safin returns to Chile's Adrian Garcia during their Davis Cup clash in Moscow on Friday. The tie was deadlocked 1-1 after the first day's play.