

## SPORTS

## Sharapova returns to action with a win in Mallorca Open



Maria Sharapova of Russia in action

### Madrid

The former World Number one from Russia, Maria Sharapova gathered a decent crowd on the Center Court of Santa Ponsa Tennis Academy, Mallorca as she stepped on to the professional tennis courts after four months due to a prolonged a shoulder injury.

Maria Sharapova defeated her eleven-year younger opponent, Viktoria Kuzmova from Slovakia, 7-6(8), 6-0 in her opening match at Mallorca Open 2019. In the beginning, Maria Sharapova could take a 2-0, but the Slovak bounced back to maintain the equilibrium in the opening set.

Both of them came up with unplayable forehand winners and the set wasn't tilting towards either of them until the

end. Kuzmova could flip the set, at 6-5 by breaking Sharapova's serve, but the battling to stay in the set, the Russian drove it to the tiebreaker.

Maria Sharapova and Viktoria Kuzmova executed exhilarating tennis in the tiebreaker, and the 21-year-old Slovak also held set points. With Sharapova displaying her experience on the sealed the opening set as Kuzmova netted the ball on Russian's set point.

The second was unconditionally different from the previous one. As Kuzmova came up with a series of double faults and that benefitted the World Number 86, Maria Sharapova, to dominate in the second set. She fed her opponent a bagel and advanced into the second round at the Mallorca Open 2019.

# Chile rout Japan

● Vargas at the double as Copa holders Chile put Japan to the sword

● Sanchez scores first goal in six months

AFP | Sao Paulo, Brazil

Eduardo Vargas scored twice as Chile launched the defense of their Copa America crown with an emphatic 4-0 defeat of Japan in Sao Paulo on Monday.

Vargas, who plays for Mexico club Tigres UANL, netted twice in the second half as Chile gradually overpowered a skillful but limited Japan, who are playing in the South American showpiece as one of two invited teams from Asia.

Erick Pulgar had opened the scoring for Chile in the first half before Vargas doubled the 2015 and 2016 champions' advantage with a deflected second-half strike.

Manchester United's Alexis Sanchez then took his Chilean record goals tally to 42 after diving to head home in the 82nd minute before Vargas scored the pick of the goals moments later with a deft lob over Japan goalkeeper Keisuke Osako.

The win saw Chile join Uruguay at the top of Group C, level on points and goal difference.

"The important thing is that we move on now with humility," said Chile coach Reinaldo



Chile's Alexis Sanchez celebrates scoring their third goal

Rueda.

"This win doesn't suddenly make us a dream team, just as we weren't the disaster that our critics were saying we were before."

The scoreline was harsh on Japan, who had carved out several promising chances but were let down by poor finishing from young striker Ayase Ueda.

"We deserved to score a goal," said Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu. "The difference was that they were clinical and took their chances. We're sad to lose but proud that we really took it to them."



Manchester United's Alexis Sanchez then took his Chilean record goals tally to 42

Japan had started confidently, dominating territory and possession albeit without threaten-

ing the Chile goal.

Their best early chance came after nine minutes when Shoya Nakajima let fly after bursting forward only to see his shot saved by Chile goalkeeper Gabriel Arias.

As the first half wore on, Chile looked increasingly more threatening, and Sanchez sounded the alarm in the Japanese defense in the 35th minute when his low shot flashed just wide.

Sanchez then almost played in Charles Aranguiz but the Bayer Leverkusen midfielder took too long to get his shot away, allowing Japan to deflect behind from a corner.

### Chile dominant

Aranguiz made amends, though, in the 41st minute by delivering the set piece which gave Chile the lead.

A whipped corner from the right caused havoc in the Japanese area, and Bologna midfielder Pulgar leapt high above Yuta Nakayama to head home.

The goal reflected Chile's dominance, but Japan were given a glorious opportunity to equalize just before half-time.

Chile coughed up possession inside their own half and Gaku Shibasaki released Ueda on goal.

The 20-year-old Ueda was unable to make the chance count, though, rounding Arias but failing to find the empty net with his shot from a tight angle.

The half closed with Chile threatening to add to their lead, Sanchez's header from close range saved by Osako.

## BOC to organise CPR course

TDI | Manama

The Bahrain Olympic Committee's (BOC) Bahrain Olympic Academy has announced that registration for the Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) course, scheduled for August 6 and 7, is now underway.

The two-day course, organized in cooperation with the American Base and Interna-

tional Red Crescent Society, and is part of academy's annual plan that aims to qualify and develop national competencies at different sports authorities.

Training and Development Programmes head Mahmood Yateem said the CPR course is one of the most significant programmes organized by the academy before.

The academy had already brought up this subject twice

before, with the first held in October 2018 when 30 sports representatives were in the fray, while the most recent course took place on March 19 and 20 and featured 35 participants.

The course attempts to provide knowledge to the athletes and the public alike on cardiac recovery, especially in line with the increasing phenomena of sudden death among athletes in Bahrain over the past year.

## Ex-UEFA boss questioned in 2022 World Cup probe, denies wrongdoing

AFP | Paris

The banned ex-UEFA chief Michel Platini was held for questioning yesterday in connection with a criminal investigation into the awarding of the 2022 World Cup to Qatar.

The French football legend who led European football's governing body from 2007 to 2015 was taken into custody by French anti-corruption police investigating alleged corruption in the 2010 vote to award the competition to the gas-rich Gulf state.

Platini denied wrongdoing



The former Uefa president Michel Platini talks to the press

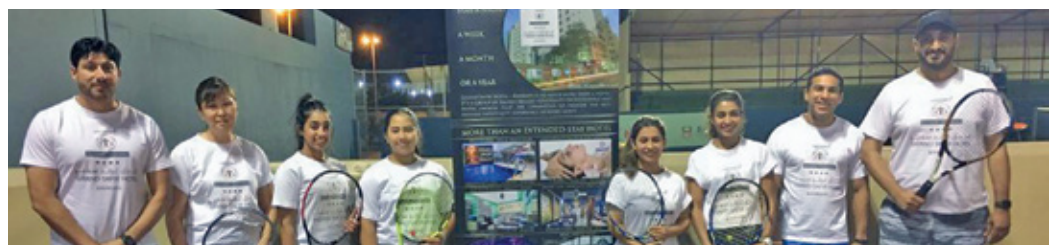
and a statement from his representatives said the facts of the case were "unknown to him."

The decision to name Qatar the 2022 World Cup hosts triggered allegations of corruption that ultimately sparked FIFA's worst ever scandal.

France's Office of the Financial Crimes Prosecutor (PNF) opened a preliminary investigation in 2016 into allegations of corruption, conspiracy and influence peddling surrounding the Qatar vote and also the awarding of the 2018 World Cup to Russia.

According to Sepp Blatter, the FIFA president at the time, Qatar won hosting rights as a result of a deal with France, derailing FIFA's own "diplomatic arrangement" whereby hosting rights would have gone to Russia in 2018 and then to the United States four years later.

## Team Aalya advance to division two finals



Members of Team Aalya after the match

TDI | Manama

Team Aalya defeated Team Ching One in Division Two Semi-Finals of the 15th FCTG Team Tennis Tournament held at Bahrain Tennis Federation courts in Isa Town.

Team Aalya scored 4-1 against Team Ching One when Marianna and Mohammed defeated Alvin and Henry 7-6, 6-4, Ali and Bader won over Len and Kathy 6-3, 6-4, Eyad and

A.Ghaffar scored 3-6, 6-1, 10-6 hard earned victory against Vic and Ebrahim then Enkhee and Khadija ease past Sheng and Mariah 6-3, 6-0

Team Ching One took a consolation win with a walkover.

In another division semi-finals matches, Team Ching Two took the victory with a three straight games when Joy and Ellen defeated Leah and Lloyd 6-3, 6-1, Abby and Chiqui won over Jerry and Chris 7-6, 6-4

then Thess and Cyra beat Felix and Sarah 7-6, 6-2.

Team Leah won two consolation matches when Bushra and Jason defeated Isa and Rey 3-6, 6-2, 10-7 while Bon and Lito beat Vicky and Jo Pre 6-1, 6-4.

Division Two finals will be played on Thursday, 20th June 2019 BTF courts.

The tournament is sponsored by Grand Safir Hotel Bahrain and organized by Filipino Club Tennis Group (FCTG).

## Osaka grinds out opening win on grass

AFP | Birmingham

World number one Naomi Osaka progressed to round two of the Birmingham Classic, but was made to work for a 6-1, 4-6, 6-3 win over Greece's Maria Sakkari.

Osaka admitted in her

pre-tournament press conference that she still does not feel comfortable on grass.

However, she got off to a flying start in her first match since losing in the third round of the French Open.

Osaka broke the Sakkari serve three times in romping through

the first set.

The world number 33 fought back in the second to take the match to a deciding set.

Osaka needed to stave off five break points in the fifth game to take a 3-2 lead but then pounced immediately for the only break in the final set.