TV PICKS

NBA: Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. South Africa vs Sri Lanka: 1st T20I, Sony Ten 3 (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.



Rory McIlroy secures 15th PGA Tour title

Rory McIlroy pocketed his 15th PGA Tour title by winning The Players tournament, carding two under 70 here on Sunday. His final score was 16 under 272, winning The Players tourney for the first time on his 10th trv. World No. 1 Dustin Johnson ended up three strokes off McIlroy's pace, tied with Brandt Snedeker and Tommy Fleetwood. IANS

Embiid takes 76ers into playoffs

LOS ANGELES Joel Embiid scored 40 points and 15 rebounds as Philadelphia 76ers overcame Giannis Antetokounmpo's career-high 52 points to beat Milwaukee Bucks 130-125 and clinch a playoff berth on

The results: Dallas Mavericks 121 bt Cleveland Cavaliers 116; Oklahoma City Thunder 88 lost to Golden State Warriors 110; San Antonio Spurs 108 bt Portland Trail Blazers 103; Washington Wizards 135 bt Memphis Grizzlies 128; Denver Nuggets 102 bt Indiana Pacers 100; Utah Jazz 114 bt Brooklyn Nets 98: New Orleans Pelicans 136 lost to Phoenix Suns 138; Boston Celtics 129 bt Atlanta Hawks 120. AFI

Karman and Ramkumar tumble out

Karman Thandi had to retire with a shoulder injury while trailing World No.77 Viktorija Golubic of Switzerland 6-0, 3-0 in the first qualifying round of the WTA tennis tournament here. Karman gained two WTA points and \$3.395. In the ATP event.

Ramkumar Ramanathan lost 6-4, 6-1 to Lorenzo Sonego. Ramkumar pocketed \$3,395. Prainesh Gunneswaranwas scheduled to face Adrian Menendez-Maceiras of Spain.



Japan's 'Uncle Olympics' passes away

Japanese Olympic mega-fan who attended every summer Games since Tokyo, 1964 has died, just over a vear before his home city hosts its second Olympics. Tokyo businessman Naotoshi Yamada, 92, died on March 9 from heart failure. 'Uncle Olympics', as he came to be known, was an omnipresent fixture for Japanese TV watchers cheering on the Japan team. AFP

Sable sets new steeplechase mark

Arokia Rajiv bests Muhammed Anas in 400m; disappointment for Dutee and Hima



Remarkable effort: Avinash Sable, right, on his way to breaching the 8 minutes, 29 seconds barrier in the steeplechase on Monday. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

FEDERATION CUP

UTHRA GANESAN

For 37 long years, Gopal Saini's 3000m steeplechase National record stood tall. Now, it has been broken twice in less than a year, and Avinash Sable can stake claim to being the best in India by quite a margin.

The 24-year old Armyman bettered his own previous best by clocking eight minutes, 28.94seconds as the 23rd Federation Cup ended on a high - as far as the AFI is concerned – on Monday.

It was the first time anyone in India has run under 8:29.00 - just like Sable was also the first to run under 8:30.00 last year - and was good enough to make the cut for not only the Asian Championships but the World Championships as well.

Also overcoming two vears of frustration and less than satisfactory performances was Arokia Rajiv, qualifying for the Asian meet with his first sub-46sec run in almost a year. That he beat National record holder Muhammed Anas in the 400m was a bonus – the country's premier quartermiler hadn't beaten Anas for the last two

Jinson Johnson was also not at his best but still good enough to win by more than two seconds in the 1500m and achieve the Asian qualifying mark. In fact, the top three all made the cut and, with Manjit Singh already achieving the mark in the Grand Prix earlier, the AFI will have to choose its entries. Manjit pulled out in the first lap itself here.

It was, however, a disappointing outing in the women's track competitions with both Dutee Chand (100m) and Hima Das (400m) failing to make the cut. While Dutee narrowly missed by .05 seconds, Hima was satisfied with her progression through the season so far, managing to go under 53 seconds here.

The results: Men: 100m: 1. Gurindervir Singh 10.35s, 2. Harjit Singh 10.48, 3. Siva Kumar 10.50; **400m:** 1. Arokia Rajiv 45.73s, 2. Muhd. Anas Yahiya 45.89, 3. Kunhu Mohd. 46.47; 1500m: 1. Jinson Johnson 3:41.67s, 2. Ajay Kumar Saroj 3:43.57, 3. Rahul 3:44.94; 110m hurdles: 1. Surendra Jayakumar 14.06s, 2. Mohd. Fais C 14.18, 3. Suresh Kumar 14.34; 3000m steeplechase: 1. Avinash Sable 8:28.94s, 2. Shankar Lal Swami 8:34.66, 3. Durga Bahadur Budha 8:46.09; Long jump: 1. Muhd. Anees Yahiya 7.50m, 2. Athistam K 7.46, 3. Siddharth Naik 7.34; hammer throw: 1. Taranveer Singh 64.37m, 2. Gurkirat Singh 60.02, 3. Amar Singh Rana 59.31

Women: 100m: 1. Dutee Chand 11.45s, 2. Archana Suseendran 11.72, 3. Ranga K 11.75; 400m: 1. Hima Das 52.88s, 2. M.R. Poovamma 53.15, 3. Saritaben Gayakwad 53.28; 1500m: 1. Gomathi Marimuthu 4:23.62s, 2. Lili Das 4:23.84, 3. P.U. Chitra 4:24.05; 100m hurdles: 1. S. Pushpanjali 13.88s, 2. Elezabeth Antony 13.96, 3. R. Nithya 14.02; shot put: 1. Navjeet Kaur Dhillon 15.28m, 2. Abha Khatua 14.96, 3. Tunlai Narzary 14.82.

3000m steeplechase: 1. Parul Chaudhary 10:10.31s, 2. Chinta Yadav 10:12.16, 3. Priti Lamba 10:12.59; heptathlon: 1. Swapna Barman 5901 pts., 2. Purnima Hembram 5597, 3. M. Sow-

Gopi qualifies for Worlds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

India's Asian marathon champion Gopi Thonakal has qualified for the World athletics championships to be held in Doha in September-October after finishing 11th in the Seoul International Marathon.

The 30-year-old Gopi clocked his personal best 2 hours 13 minutes 39 seconds on Sunday, bettering the World Championships qualification mark of 2:16:00s.



His earlier best was 2:15:16s

Papic, India's foreign coach

TABLE TENNIS

K. KEERTHIVASAN

Table Tennis Federation of India has appointed, in principle, Dejan Papic of Canada as the coach of the Indian men's and women's teams.

Papic's contract runs till the end of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. He has a rich coaching experience of over three decades. He has coached the Qatar and the Canada National teams. It is reliably learnt that Papic's name was recommended by Glenn Tepper, former Deputy CEO of ITTF and Massimo Costantini, India's previous

"We are happy to appoint Papic as the coach, and are very confident that he will deliver good results," said M.P. Singh, secretary of TTFI, told The Hindu on Monday.

Manjit Dua, National coach, described Papic as a "complete coach in all respects." The former National champion said Papic will be with the team for the World championship in Budapest from April 21 to 28.

Tips from Bolt do the trick for Jamaican sprinters

Jitendra Singh amd Herojit Singh bag golds

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

STAN RAYAN DUBAI

O'Brian McFarlane and DaeShawn Green had the world's biggest star advising and motivating them just before they left for Dubai for the athletics events of the Special Olympics World The two Jamaican sprin-

ters got a few tips from the great Usain Bolt on how to handle the big stage. "He told me, 'soak in the

experience, this is your first time, enjoy yourself and all your races' "I'm doing just that," said

Green at the Dubai Police Stadium here on Monday And the two youngsters had golden results to show

too, for they won the 200m titles in different men's categories. McFarlane lives at Trelawny, the same parish as Bolt,

and often watches videos of the legendary sprinter. "I'm disappointed that he is no longer running and I

don't know who the next Bolt will be but right now I have videos of him, I watch them so that I get inspired every time.

"I also have a big photo of him at home," said the 24year-old.

"I like the confidence in whatever he does and he taught us to be like him. The



Following the GOAT: Jamican sprinters O'Brian McFarlane, left and DaeShawn Green, who won the men's 200m gold in different categories. • STAN RAYAN

more he talks to me, the more I feel inspired."

close to Bolt's heart and World records. once he donated \$1.3 million to the William Knibb Memorial School, his alma mater, apart from many pairs of Puma shoes.

"Sometimes, I go to the William School to train and I'm grateful for all the good he has done for us. And as a 100m and 200m runner, I wish to be like him," said McFarlane.

200m World record tough to beat

He thinks it will be a long time before another Bolt shows up and that the Jamaican superstar's 200m World record will stay a lot longer than his 100m mark.

"I think it's going to be a long time because the re-Home has always been cords that he set are real

'And in Jamaica, I think someone can break his 100m record soon but not the 200.

"The 200m record is very hard because you have to take a lot of speed to come out of the turn and maintain it. It's going to stay for long."

Gold for Jitendra and Herojit

India's 19-year-old Jitendra Singh (M5 category) and 16year-old Herojit Singh (M28) had won 200m gold in two different men's divisions on Sunday. (The writer is in Dubai at

the invitation of the UAE Government).

Thiem stuns Federer

Andreescu gets the better of Kerber

INDIAN WELLS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE INDIAN WELLS

Dominic Thiem denied Roger Federer a record sixth Indian Wells title, winning 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 on Sunday to claim his first ATP Masters 1000 crown. The 25-year-old Austrian, ranked eighth in the world, had fallen in two prior Masters finals, both in Madrid. But he rallied for a third career win over Federer in five meetings.

Thiem earned the crucial break in the 11th game of the final set, connecting on two sharply-angled passing winners to give himself a breakpoint which he converted with a forehand winner.

He sealed the match after two hours and two minutes when Federer's backhand found the net and will now return to a career-high ranking of World No. 4. It was the second year in a row that Federer was denied in the Indian Wells final.

Gritty win

Canadian sensation Bianca Andreescu became the first wild-card to win the title at Indian Wells with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-4

Ontario, Canada

Who is Bianca Andreescu?

Age: 18 Birthplace: Mississauga, Plays: Right-handed **Turned Pro:** 2017

WTA titles: 1 Win/Loss record: 117/46 **CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**

Winner: Indian Wells, 2019 Finalist: Auckland, 2019

The Indian Wells triumph catapulted her to 24 in the latest WT/ rankings, a jump of 36 spots from the previous week

victory over Wimbledon champion Angelique Kerber.

Andreescu, 18, toppled the eighth-ranked German, who hasn't won a title since she beat Serena Williams in last

year's Wimbledon final. The results (final):

Men: Dominic Thiem bt Roger Federer 3-6, 6-3, 7-5. Women: Bianca Andreescu bt Angelique Kerber 6-4, 3-6, 6-4,

Messi hat-trick blows away Real Betis

Rodriguez does the same for Bayern against Mainz

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE MADRID

Even the Real Betis fans were applauding by the end as Lionel Messi scored another spectacular hat-trick to fire Barcelona to a 4-1 victory on Sunday and leave it with one hand on the *La Liga* trophy.

Messi's treble, his second in a month in Seville, fourth of the season and 51st of his career, moves Barca 10 points clear of Atletico Madrid with 10 games left to play.

Luis Suarez, whose superb flick set up Messi's second. scored his own brilliant goal after a scintillating solo run but it was ultimately reduced to a footnote, in what became two of the other teams in the ians back to the top. another night all about his division. Argenuman partner.

Messi now has 29 league goals this season, 39 in all competitions, and together with Suarez's 18 their joint-total of 47 is more than all but

Champions League frustrations on Mainz as James Rodriguez claimed his first Bundesliga hat-trick on Sunday in



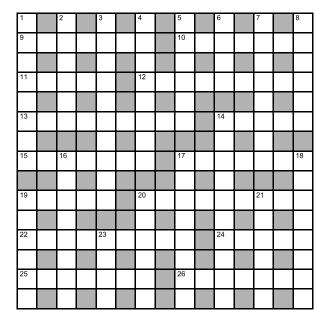
As easy as that: Lionel Messi did what he does best, score by the bucketful, this time against Real Betis. • REUTERS

The results: La Liga: Villarreal 3

88) bt Rayo Vallecano 1 (Mario Suarez 20); Valencia O drew with Getafe O; Real Betis 1 (Moron 82) lost to Barcelona 4 (Messi 18, 45+2, 85, Suarez 63). Serie A: Empoli 2 (Caputo 20pen, Pajac 38) bt Frosinone 1 (Valzania 70); Lazio 4 (Marusic 22, Alberto 26-pen, 38, Lulic 44) bt Parma 1 (Sprocati 77); Atalanta 1 (Ilicic 55) drew with Chievo 1 (Meggiorini 32); Napoli 4 (Younes 17, Callejon 26, Milik 57, Mertens 69) bt Udinese 2 (Lasagna 30, Fofana 36); AC Milan 2 (Bakayoko 57, Musacchio 71) lost to Inter Milan 3 (Vecino 3, De Vrij 51, Martinez 67-pen). Bundesliga: Bayern Munich 6 (Lewandowski 3. Rodriguez 33.

51, 55, Coman 39, Davies 70) bt

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12577



CM YK

ACROSS

9 Short-tail on Australian native bird (7)

10 Mutation of clone embodying male group at a level (7)

11 North-eastern close ally? (5) 12 Childhood years lady recollected (5,4)

13 Stop agreeing so much and shut up (3,2,4)

14 Echoing prayer, receiver of ashes to feel sadness (5)

15 Nothing venerable about American subject (7)

17 Counsel is most comfortable with name-dropping (7)

19 Knocked back magnificent

drink (5) 20 Sort of curry to seek in earnest

22 Special destructive avatar is of

a goddess (9)

24 Do one's best every second in charge (5)

25 Island be turning into hint of very pale colour (3-4) 26 I undo knots bound by

handcuffs, irons primarily (7)

1 Soaks up noise surrounding skating courses (6,2)

2 Toe the line and act out in a dense manner (6)

3 Demanding task rounding up

chartered roll at airport (1,4,5)

(set by Buzzer)

4 Capital font we're developing 5 Costanza perhaps earthy, right

6 Way to pronounce serum (4)

revolting example (6)

7 Delight in unspoiled grassy lands (8)

8 Complete agreement in how dune gets to be done (6) 14 Summon up a cast showcasing

grand work of art (6,4) 16 Attorney-General engaged in changes, changes that are

unexpected (8)

(4,2)

17 Case of kitty sneaking through small window (8)

18 Take flight off Turin, Italy crossing borders (4,4) 19 Look rigid taking one's snap

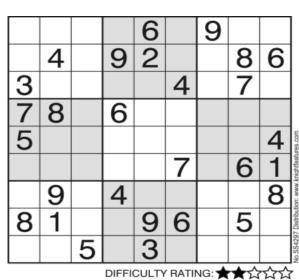
20 Alpine accommodation is robust in cold temperature

21 Remains doubly stoic at first

during defeat (6)

23 Pressure is solid in ball game for one (4)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12576 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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FAITH

A saga of sacrifice

of penance of Tilakavathiyar and the manner in which Divine Will guides her in the role she plays as elder sister and preceptor to Tirunavukkarasar, pointed out Sri B. Damodhara Dikshitar in a discourse. Tilakavathiyar is betrothed to one Kalipakkaiyar, employed in the army. Unfortunately, before the marriage could take place, her parents die one after another. More unfortunate is the death of Kalipakkaiyar in battle. Though only betrothed, Tilakavathiyar considers herself to be already wedded to him and wishes to end her life. But her young brother Marulnikkiyar begs her to live for his sake. He grows up to be an expert in spiritual and secular learning. His mind is drawn to higher truths about devotion, God and the permanent values embedded in this illusory world of Maya. At a time when the Samana faith was gaining popularity he approaches this faith. Impressed by his extraordinary proficiency and scholarship, the leaders confer the title Dharmasena on him. Tilakavathiyar is very much upset that her brother has strayed from Saivism. She leads a pious life of selfless service to the Lord in the temple at Veerattanam in a town called Athikai on the banks of river Kedilam. She fervently prays to the Lord that her brother should be brought back to the Saivism. The Lord assures her that since he is already His devotee and has done penance to attain Him, He will intervene appropriately to strengthen his devotion. So the Lord gives him a terrible colic pain that does not yield to any medicine or mantra. In the grip of this unbearable pain Tirunavukkarasar thinks of Siva and his sister and comes to her. He is healed in the temple precincts in the presence of the Lord and is blessed to sing the precious Thevaram hymns henceforth.

Sekkizhar highlights the extent of devotion, sacrifice and life