

Chinese top seeds pull out

INDIAN OPEN

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI
In a late development on Sunday, the Indian Open badminton championship suffered a serious loss of sheen when World No. 2 and top seeds in singles, Shi Yuqi and Chen Yufei withdrew citing medical grounds.

Shi Yuqi, the 2018 World championship runner-up, is also the defending men's champion. This month, Chen Yufei won her maiden All England title and added the Swiss Open crown.

In the absence of the highest world-ranked Chinese singles players, P.V. Sindhu becomes the ranking favourite for the women's crown, much like the 2017 World Champion Denmark's Viktor Axelsen, in the men's singles.

Saina Nehwal had pulled out due to acute bout of gastroenteritis and mild pancreatitis. The event will be played at the Indira Gandhi Stadium here from March 26 to 31.

Axelsen, the finalist of the All England championship this month, said: "The draw is exciting, although some of the top players are not here. But I don't try to focus too much on the draw. I am looking at playing Misha (Zilberman) in the first round."

India concedes last-minute goal

Mandeep Singh's strike cancelled out by Korea's Jonghyun Jang

AZLAN SHAH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
IPOH

India's perennial problem of conceding goals at the fag end of a match cropped up again as Korea equalised in the final minute for a 1-1 draw in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament here on Sunday.

India took the lead in the 28th minute through Mandeep Singh and looked set to earn its second consecutive win of the six-team tournament, but a defensive error led to Jonghyun Jang scoring from a penalty corner just 22 seconds from the final hooter. The match was stopped in the fourth quarter due to heavy rain with around eight minutes left in the match.

Attacking start

India made an attacking start with midfielder Vivek Sagar Prasad creating space inside the striking circle within the first minute, but the Korean defenders held strong.

The Koreans immediately launched a counter attack, entering India's circle, but defender Surender Kumar tackled well to clear the danger. India got two more scoring opportunities but failed to convert them. A quick-thinking Mandeep Singh gave India the first penalty corner in the 10th minute.



On target: Mandeep Singh's goal was the only celebratory moment for India against Korea. ■PTI

India's next match

■ Against Malaysia, March 26 (Tuesday), 8.35 p.m. (IST)

India won its second penalty corner in the initial minutes of the second quarter but the drag-flick was saved by the Korean goalkeeper.

The following minutes saw Korea execute the full-pressure to limit India's circle entries. Though the tactic was good, Korea lost three players (Kim Hyeonjin, Ji-hun Yang and Lee Namyong) to green cards. The situation

was capitalised by India as it found easy gaps to make circle entries and the experienced Mandeep Singh struck in the 28th minute.

Playing in rain after the third quarter began, a defensive error on India's part saw Korea being awarded its first penalty corner.

But Amit Rohidas did well to ward off the danger and keep India's lead intact.

With a little over eight minutes remaining, the game was stopped due to rain.

When the play resumed, Korea put up an attacking front to win back-to-back penalty corners, but did not get

any success.

With 53 seconds remaining, Korea won another penalty corner, but Jonghyun Jang's powerful drag-flick was brilliantly saved by India goalkeeper P.R. Sreejesh.

A referral by Korea saw another penalty corner being awarded and this time Jang was on target to level the scores.

The results: India 1 (Mandeep 28) drew with Korea 1 (Jong Hyun 60); Canada 4 (Bisset 35, Noronha 47, 59, Johnston 55) bt Poland 0; Malaysia 4 (Saari 3, 25, Rozemi 7, Rahim 53) bt Japan 3 (Murata 17, Watanabe 37, Yamasaki 54).

Women better than men, says Chhetri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India football captain Sunil Chhetri has no qualms in admitting that the National women's team is better than the men's side.

The men are currently ranked 103rd out of 211 countries while the women are 62nd out of 152 nations.

Chhetri praised the women's team for its fifth consecutive SAFF title triumph.

"Extremely proud of all of you. I have always maintained that the women's team is much better than the men," said Chhetri.

AIFF president Praful Patel also congratulated the women's team on its success.

"You have once again proved that you are the true champions," he said.



Chhetri. ■SUDHAKARA JAIN

Ramos helps Spain edge Norway



Saviour: Skipper Sergio Ramos came to Spain's rescue again, his Panenka penalty securing all three points against Norway. ■AFP

EURO QUALIFYING

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Sergio Ramos scored a second-half penalty to help Spain beat a spirited Norway 2-1 in their opening Euro 2020 qualifier, while teenage striker Moise Kean netted in Italy's win over Finland.

Spain was not at its clinical best in Valencia, but got its Group F campaign off to a solid start despite Norway threatening an upset.

Flying start

Italy got off to a flying start in Udine, as Nicolo Barella gave it a seventh-minute lead with his maiden international goal.

The 22-year-old Cagliari midfielder hammered home

a low volley after a free-kick was only half-cleared by the Finnish defence.

The day belonged to Kean, though, as he slotted in the second with 16 minutes to play to mark his full debut in style.

The results: Georgia 0 lost to Switzerland 2 (Zuber 57, Zakaria 80); Gibraltar 0 lost to Republic of Ireland 1 (Hendrick 49).

Group F: Malta 2 (Nwoko 13, Borg 77-pen) bt Faroe Islands 1 (Thomsen 90+8); Sweden 2 (Quaison 33, Claesson 40) bt Romania 1 (Keseru 58); Spain 2 (Rodrigo 16, Ramos 71-pen) bt Norway 1 (King 65-pen).

Group J: Bosnia and Herzegovina 2 (Krunic 33, Milosevic 80) bt Armenia 1 (Mkhitarian 90+3-pen); Italy 2 (Barella 7, Kean 74) bt Finland 0; Liechtenstein 0 lost to Greece 2 (Fortounis 45+1, Donis 80).

Matic set to be new men's coach

BASKETBALL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Veselin Matic, who took Iran to an Asian Games bronze medal in 2010, is set to be appointed as the new head coach of the Indian men's basketball team.

The Serbian's name had been cleared by the sports ministry last week, BFI secretary-general Chandher Mukhi Sharma stated here on Sunday, with only a few formalities left to be completed.

He is expected to arrive by end of April.

A veteran international coach, Matic helped Iran qualify for its first ever World Championship (2010) with victory in the 2009 FIBA Asia Championship.

The 58-year-old has also coached the Polish and Lebanese national teams, and was last with Syria.

"Our plan is for him to conduct regular zonal coaching camps apart from clinics for our coaches," said Sharma.

"The problem we face is

that each zone has its own coaching systems and when players meet for national camps, we lose a lot of time in getting them to adapt to one system. We want to establish a uniform coaching pattern throughout the country."

Meanwhile, Zoran Visic, who previously had taken charge of both the men's and women's teams, will return to coaching the latter.

His appointment was expected to be confirmed soon by the sports ministry, said Sharma.

Younus Ilyas drives to glory

Dean Mascarenhas wins final two stages in a handsome manner

SPRINT DE BENGALURU

RAYAN ROZARIO
BENGALURU

Kerala's Younus Ilyas ruled the night stage the other day and came back in a stronger fashion on the final day to emerge a clear winner of the Sprint de Bengaluru here on Sunday.

The second stage, to be held under the night skies on Saturday, was cancelled due to 'dust hang' though the drivers were prepared to have a go on it. It did not matter much for Ilyas and his co-driver Harish Gowda from Karnataka as they enjoyed a slight ten-second advantage going into the final day.

Representing Race Concepts, the duo looked pretty prepared for any test that came their way. And, they seemed to be running fine in one of the most challenging terrains at the LG Tranquil that had loose soil, gravel, tarmac and steep climbs.

Speed and ability

Dean Mascarenhas had other ideas too despite having a stock car that was not powerful enough to match the speed of the top runner. He believed in speed and ability to take on the best on his day. He showed glimpses of that



Mission accomplished: Younus Ilyas, left, and co-driver Harish Gowda after their successful campaign. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

in the final two stages by winning both of them in a handsome manner.

He made nine and eight seconds in each of the stages but as luck would have it was penalised six minutes for reaching the starting point on Saturday night late. It came as a huge blow as he slipped to the bottom of the table after playing it steady on the stages for most part.

"Call it bad luck as my car failed to start," said Dean and quickly added that he was pleased with his driving skills that can help him through the INRC season.

Dhruva Chandrasekar made the most out of it with his far experienced navigator

Musa Sherif to climb his way up to the second spot in the INRC overall category.

"It was great outing here and I just loved attacking the stages that were both interesting and challenging," said Ilyas, who plans to shift his class and do a much better job this season.

The CEO of Champions Yacht Club Vamsi Merla, the promoter of the INRC, was pretty pleased with the curtain-raiser event.

"For the first time we had the live screening of the stages and also a webcast. This is just the start," he said.

The results: INRC Overall: 1. Younus Ilyas & Harish Gowda; 2. Dhruva Chandrasekar & Musa

Sherif; 3. Sanjay Agarwal & Smitha N. **INRC 1:** Suhem Kabeer & J. Jeevarathinam, 2. Lokesh Gowda & D Uday Kumar;

INRC 2: 1. Younus Ilyas & Harish Gowda, 2. Ritesh Guttedar & Lokaranjan, 3. Lanusanen Pongener & Vinay Kumar PM. **INRC 3:** 1. Dhruva Chandrasekar & Musa Sherif, 2. Chetan Shivram & Dilip Sharan, 3. Aroor Vikram Rao & Somayya AG.

FMSCI CUP & 4WD: 1. Sanjay Agarwal & Smitha N, 2. Avin Nanjappa & Darshan Nachappa, 3. Nikhil J & Arjun Dheerendra.

FMSCI CUP & 2WD: 1. Vaibhav Marathe & Arjun SSB, 2. Avinash DC & Kenith Harsha, 3. Adith KC & Venu Ramesh Kumar.

Ladies Class: 1. Shivani Pruthvi & Deepti Pruthvi, 2. Harshita Gowda & Vidya M.

Sathiyar goes down fighting

OMAN OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUSCAT

G. Sathiyar fought gallantly against Mattias Flack of Sweden before going down 11-8, 7-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9, 9-11, 12-10 in the men's singles semifinals of the ITTF Challenge Plus Oman Open on Sunday.

The top-seeded Swede and the fourth-seeded Indian had the measure of each other with the two winning alternate games to take the issue to the decider. The Swede had the slight advantage until deuce and once he broke Sathiyar to go up, it was all over for the Indian as his opponent wrapped it up with a winner.

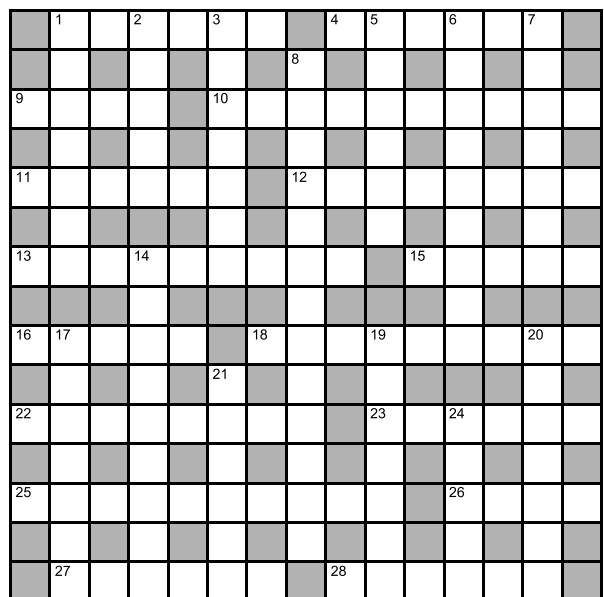
Other results: Quarterfinals: Sathiyar bt Emmanuel Lebeson (Fra) 11-9, 11-7, 11-9, 6-11, 12-10.

Pre-quarterfinals: Sathiyar bt A. Amalraj 6-11, 11-5, 11-7, 11-4, 11-4; Pucar Tamistov (Cro) bt A. Sharath Kamal 12-10, 4-11, 8-11, 11-6, 12-10.

Doubles: Quarterfinals: Denis Ivonin & Vladimir Sidorenko (Rus) bt Sathiyar & Sharath 11-6, 7-11, 11-7, 7-11, 12-10.

Mixed doubles Quarterfinals: Zhe Yu Clarence Chew & Ye Lin (Sgp) bt Madhurika Patkar & Harmeet Desai 11-6, 14-12, 11-5.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12582



ACROSS

- 1 Wishes for direction in tales (6)
- 4 Rest with wine embracing record (6)
- 9 Starts hustling and just joins pilgrimage (4)
- 10 Join friend after Malaga revolution (10)
- 11 Illustration of personality (6)

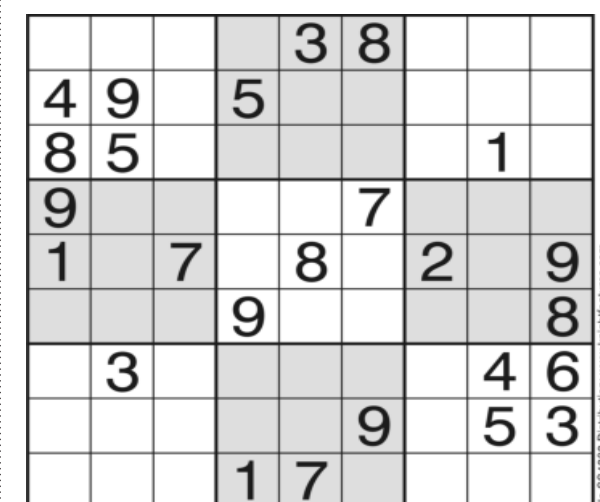
DOWN

- 1 Losing source of respiration, panting while giving birth (8)

(set by Anon)

- 2 Pear found in Afghan journey (5)
- 3 Straightens out new, disorderly senate (7)
- 5 Birds, nearly ageless, confused (6)
- 6 Thus returns man, to broken huts with flowering plant species (9)
- 7 Pull out regular tarp in demand (7)
- 8 Thrift shopper ransacks turbine hangar (7,6)
- 14 Swindling around final jail, running slowly (9)
- 17 Call alien without initial clue of language (7)
- 19 Said no to garbage dumpster's lid (7)
- 20 Shocking regular bomb at spot (7)
- 21 Remove bit of scrap from stamp with thick soup (6)
- 24 Naomi wandering in Australian river (5)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12581

FOLLOW ON AFR AID
U T I A P O N E
R E G I S T E R C O U G A R
O H I T I R B T I E I
R A T E S A C R O P O L I S
E Y I P T A R I O
T E E P E E G L I T T E R
B A R R I C A D E S
L A R C E N Y R I T U A L
S E M I C O L O N A T S L E
I T I A L R E G M P L A
N T M B O C H T U
G U I N E A I N H E R E N T

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

7 2 4 8 5 3 6 9 1
5 3 9 1 6 7 8 2 4
6 1 8 2 9 4 7 5 3
8 7 1 3 4 2 5 6 9
2 5 6 9 8 1 3 4 7
4 9 3 5 7 2 1 8
9 8 7 4 6 2 1 3 6
1 6 2 7 3 9 4 8 5
3 4 5 6 1 8 9 7 2

FAITH

Tradition of Brahma Vidya

True spiritual knowledge is known as Brahma vidya in which is subsumed the different aspects and branches of all forms of knowledge. When caught in worldly activities, sacred or secular, despite one's learning and achievements, a sense of dissatisfaction prevails when the yearning for something more enduring is stirred deep within oneself. In the Mundaka Upanishad, Sage Saunaka represents this thirst or Jignyasa for higher knowledge that is after all the ultimate goal of human existence, pointed out Sri V. Rajagopala Ganapadigal in a discourse. Sage Saunaka is a great rishi. He is reputed for the performance of many yagas. Yet he feels a lacuna and approaches Angiras and wishes to know 'that' through which everything else becomes known. This Upanishad highlights many unique characteristics inherent in the tradition of handing down knowledge of Brahman from guru to sishya. The illustrious guru parampara to which Angiras belongs is stated to establish that he is qualified in every way to impart this vidya. The lineage is traced to Brahma who has received it from the primordial guru Lord Narayana. From Brahma through Atharva, Angi and Satyavaha, it has come down to Angiras. So both preceptor and disciple are worthy of this knowledge. As the instruction begins, Angiras quotes the words of realised rishis who have spoken about Brahman. This modest spirit is ingrained in this method of knowledge transmission. Since the knowledge itself goes beyond the intellect and makes an impact in the inner experience, the sincere seeker is able to imbibe the teaching through the grace of the guru. He is filled with a sense of fullness of Atma Tatva jnana. The realisation thus gained is able to lift one from the mundane reality though one continues to be part of it during one's lifetime.