

TV PICKS

ICC World Cup: Star Sports 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 3 p.m.
FIFA Women's World Cup: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Thursday)

Veteran coach Lingappa passes away

SPORTS REPORTER
BENGALURU

Veteran athletics coach N. Lingappa, 95, passed away due to age-related illness on Tuesday here. Lingappa, who had trained several international athletes during the course of his over 60-year career, received the Dronacharya Award in 2014.

Lakshmi Sahithi stuns Yubrani

SPORTS BUREAU
CHANDIGARH

Qualifier Lakshmi Sahithi Reddy beat top seed Yubrani Banerjee 7-6(6), 6-1 in the women's pre-quarterfinals of the ₹200,000 AITA ranking tennis tournament here on Tuesday.

Pre-quarterfinals: Men: Mohit Mayur bt Udayan Bhakar 6-3, 6-1; Neeraj Yashpaul bt Garry Tokas 6-4, 6-0; Suraj Prabodh bt LR Balaji 6-2, 6-0; Hardeep Singh Sandhu bt Atharva Sharma 6-4, 6-2; Jagmeet Singh bt Shubham Malhotra 7-6(5), 6-4; Dalwinder Singh bt Sai Kartteek Reddy 7-5, 3-6, 6-3; Puru Upadhyay bt Karan Singh 6-3, 3-0 (retired); VM Ranjeet bt Kavin Masilamani 6-2, 6-3.

Women: Lakshmi Sahithi Reddy bt Yubrani Banerjee 7-6(6), 6-1; Prerna Bhambrani bt Sarah Dev 6-1, 6-1; Sravya Shivani bt Akanksha Nitture 6-4, 1-6, 7-6(4); Avika Sagwal bt Shilpi Swarupa Das 4-1 (ret.); Renne Singha bt Rashi Malviya 6-4, 6-4; Kashish Bhatia bt Anaam Almas 6-3, 6-1; Bhargavi Kalaga bt Rutuparna Choudhary 6-3, 6-1; Salsa Aher bt Ayush Singh 6-0, 6-0.

Heartbreak for Sasi Kumar

SPORTS BUREAU
FERGANA (UZBEKISTAN)

Fifth seed Sasi Kumar Mukund lost his way from the brink of victory and was beaten 3-6, 7-6(2), 6-2 by Altug Celikbilek of Turkey in the second round of the \$54,160 Challenger tennis tournament here on Tuesday.

The results: \$54,160 Challenger, Fergana, Uzbekistan: Singles (second round): Altug Celikbilek (Tur) bt Sasi Kumar Mukund 3-6, 7-6(2), 6-2.

First round: Sidharth Rawat bt Vladyslav Manafov (Ukr) 7-6(2), 6-2.

\$25,000 ITF men, Harare: Singles (first round): Takanyi Garanganga (Zim) bt Rishi Reddy 6-2, 6-2; S.D. Prajwal Dev bt Constantin Bittoun Kouzmine (Fra) 6-1, 6-2; Guy Orly Iradukunda (Bdi) bt Dhruv Sunish 6-4, 6-4; Simon Yitbarek (Swe) bt Ishaque Egbal 7-5, 6-4.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Muzi Sibanda (Zim) & Dhruv Sunish bt Niklas Johansson (Swe) & Anurag Nenwani 6-3, 7-5.

ATK signs Roy Krishna

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Former champion ATK drafted in Fijian striker Roy Krishna as its first international signing ahead of the sixth season of Indian Super League, on Tuesday.

Krishna, who has captained the Fiji national side, had the best part of his club career in New Zealand.

He last played as a striker for Wellington Phoenix FC, which competes in the Australian A-League, and became the top-scorer of A-League scoring 18 goals in 25 appearances.

ATK, which has recalled the Spanish coach Antonio Habas after two failed seasons under English coaches, will be hoping that Krishna continues with his form in his first Asian assignment.

Divij Sharan looks to step on it

He's happy to have qualified for the ATP-500 event in Halle

TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Divij Sharan is totally devoted to his tennis, travelling across the globe. Despite not having regular partners, he has managed to get good results in the professional circuit, in which he feels "doubles is crazy, especially on grass".

Happy to have qualified for the ATP-500 event in Halle, Divij said that he would be partnering Marcelo Demoliner of Brazil till Wimbledon.

"Earlier, players used to make a team for the whole year. Now, in a few weeks or maybe two to three months, players in the top-30 to 40 rankings change partners if things do not work well," said Divij from Halle.

Different world

"It is a different world. We are travelling all the time. Only when I come home briefly,

once in a while, I get to know what is happening," said the 32-year-old Divij, who made it to the Wimbledon quarterfinals last year.

He did start the season well by winning the Pune ATP event with Rohan Bopanna apart from the Davis Cup doubles rubber against Italy in Kolkata. Then, the two opted to part ways in pursuit of higher goals, after the Phoenix Challenger in the second week of March, and ended up facing each other in the first round of the ATP event in Munich.

Quick changes

"In the match tie-break, we were up 8-2 or so and then Bopanna and partner were leading 9-8.

"We managed to pull it off at 12-10. Doubles matches change very quickly," recalled Divij, who went on to make the final in that event with Demoliner, in only their



New arrangement: Divij Sharan will partner Marcelo Demoliner of Brazil till Wimbledon. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

fourth tournament as a pair.

"In Stuttgart, we had 10 match points against Denys Molchanov and Artem Sitak. Eight of them were on their serve. Not that we played bad. We had two match

points on our serve, and they played great points. I take it in my stride. But Demoliner, is quite serious about his tennis and feels the loss more," said Divij.

With Jeevan Nedunchezhi-

yan, Purav Raja, Leander Paes, Sriram Balaji, Vishnu Vardhan being regular on the doubles circuit, there is a strong Indian presence from Challengers upwards.

Good sign

"It is good that we have so many of our players in the tournaments. We get along well. Singles is hard, but Sumit Nagal is getting good results now after being a bit down," said Divij.

"Somdev (Devvarman) had the best fitness and did a great job at this level. Looking at Rafael Nadal, it is amazing how he has been able to cope with it despite all the injuries and still find a way to win the French Open," said Divij.

With the World Cup cricket on, Divij said that he would like to catch up with the action once in England as it was difficult to watch cricket on television in some of the European countries.

What a Matchester!



Inter-State National athletics in Lucknow

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The 59th National inter-State senior athletics championships, scheduled to be held in Kolkata in mid-July, will now be held in Luck-

now from August 27 to 30.

The championships will be the Athletics Federation of India's main qualification event for the World championships in Doha.

IOA heaves a sigh of relief

Sports Ministry guarantees participation to all athletes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The confusion and threat around international sporting events to be hosted by India seems to have abated after the Sports Ministry categorically reaffirmed that all qualified athletes from all recognised countries would be allowed participation regardless of political issues.

Clarifies position

In a letter to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Tuesday, the ministry clarified its position and guaranteed participation to all athletes.

"It is the policy of the government that India will hold international sporting events and will permit all qualified athletes belonging to any NOC recognised by IOC, or any national federation affiliated to the International Federations concerned, to participate.

"Such participation of athletes shall be without prejudice to our principled positions and policies on other political matters, including issues such as international recognition or otherwise of



Narinder Batra. ■ PTI

the country of origin of the athletes," the letter, a copy of which is with *The Hindu*, said.

"This stated policy guarantees the participation of all eligible athletes, sportspersons and officials in international sporting events organised in India under the auspices of the IOC. Such commitment stems from our world view of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', which in essence is also the spirit behind the International Olympic movement," the letter added.

Positive

"The Sports Minister and sports secretary were extremely positive and helpful for an urgent and immediate resolution for this issue. My sincere thanks to the office-

bearers, executive board and all members of the IOA for their unconditional support and trust which motivated and encouraged me," IOA president Narinder Batra said.

It may be noted that India had lost quota places in two events at the shooting World Cup earlier this year due to lack of visas for Pakistani shooters, followed by loss of hosting rights for the Junior Asian wrestling cChampionship in March.

"Last year, there had been trouble after a Kosovan boxer was denied visa for the Women's World Championships.

However, things had eased a bit after the IOC clarified to *The Hindu* in March this year that there was no blanket ban on India's hosting rights in an important sporting year with several Olympic qualifying events scheduled and that every international federation was free to assess the impact and act accordingly regarding events in India.

Nevertheless, IFs and IOC had been insisting on government guarantees for international events.

Kiran Jadhav trumps strong field for air rifle gold

SHOOTING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Kiran Jadhav of Navy beat a strong field, that included the Asian Games gold medalist Deepak Kumar, to win the gold in men's air rifle in the 19th Kumar Surendra Singh shooting championship at the Dr. Karni Singh Range in Tughlakabad on Tuesday.

The brilliance of Jadhav was such that he not only won the gold with a 2.2 point margin over Youth Olympics silver medalist Shahu Tushar Mane, but had also topped qualification with 631.2 ahead of Aishwarya Prapat Singh Tomar, in a field that had 322 shooters.

The youngsters were in energetic form, and endured



On target: Kiran Jadhav struck it rich. ■ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

back-to-back three finals with ease.

Mane looked to have preserved the best for the youth competition, as he beat Dhanush Srikanth by 0.5 point with a fine last shot.

In the women's rifle 3-position event, Olympian Anjali Bhagwat showed that she still could give the young guns a run for their money

by clinching the bronze medal behind former World Champion Tejaswini Sawant and World Cup medallist Lajja Gauswami.

In men's 25-metre standard pistol, Olympian Gurpreet Singh won the gold, with a 581, beating Achal Prapat Singh Grewal and Vijayveer Sidhu by six points.

The results: 10m air rifle: Men: 1. Kiran Jadhav 252.3 (631.2), 2.

Shahu Tushar Mane 250.1 (629.2), 3. Aishwarya Prapat Singh Tomar 228.7 (631.0).

Junior men: 1. Dhanush Srikanth 252.5 (627.1), 2. Aishwarya Prapat Singh Tomar 251.9 (631.0), 3. Surya Prapat Singh 229.1 (623.3).

Youth men: 1. Shahu Tushar Mane 251.1 (629.2), 2. Dhanush Srikanth 250.6 (627.1), 3. Surya Prapat Singh 229.0 (623.3).

50m rifle 3-position: Women: 1. Tejaswini Sawant 455.7 (1155), 2. Lajja Gauswami 451.0 (1149), 3. Anjali Bhagwat 439.3 (1150).

Junior women: 1. Nischal 454.5 (1159), 2. Zenab Hussain Bandoorkwala 446.8 (1136), 3. Yashika Shinde 432.9 (1126).

25m standard pistol: Men: 1. Gurpreet Singh 581, 2. Achal Prapat Singh Grewal 575, 3. Vijayveer Sidhu 575.

Junior men: 1. Vijayveer Sidhu 575, 2. Dilshaan Kelley 572, 3. Anish Bhanwala 569.

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