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200 mL

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Dark

Cooking

Chocolate

500 g

Chocolate

Chips

Buttons

Batting will hold the key in the battle of bruisers

India's attack has the pace to rattle the Australian top-order; Starc and Cummins are capable of menace and hostility



K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR

World Cups are largely about the macro-vision. It reflects an all-encompassing gaze, blends in a fierce desire to script fresh legacies, and always thrives upon a squad's itch to prove its global credentials. Unfortunately for India and its larger footprint of Twitterati, fans and sections of the media, the focus was solely on an army insignia that M.S. Dhoni flaunted on his wicket-keeping gloves during the match against South Africa Southampton.

The gesture reflected the former India captain's fondness for the army but it violated the International Crick-Council's (ICC) player-apparel rules. The subsequent brouhaha over the ICC's reservations and the vitriolic utterances that marred the digital space, did a disservice to the fact that India had started its campaign on a winning note with a six-wicket triumph over the Proteas. Thankfully the ICC refused to budge and now that the controversy is on the wane, Virat Kohli's men can get back to doing what they do best - play cricket.

It is time to take on Australia at the Oval on Sunday. The venue, with its quaint tiled, red-brick homes around its fringes, has history coursing through its edif-

Staving in the present and fo-

cusing on performance

seems to be Rohit Sharma's mantra Ahead of Sunday's

big match against Australia,

the India vice-captain spoke

to the media at the Oval, and

have to turn up on that day

and play good cricket. What

we have done in the past is

past. As a team we believe

that we have to play better

on that particular day. We

had a good rivalry between

the teams in the last few

months. We played good

cricket in Australia, they

played good cricket in India.

So it's going to be a great con-

test," Rohit said. The opener

In the World Cup, you

he exuded confidence.

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR



Honing their skills: Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan at a net session ahead of their clash against Australia. • AFP

ice. Its corridor-walls feature photographs, most of them black-and-white and harking back to old heroes and their stirring sporting tales. Cut to the present, Saturday was about the teams limbering up in turns, India had an optional hit, and there was the slow assemblage of foodvans outside, promising traditional British cuisine like fish and chips, to be washed down with ale. Also sighted was a Gujarati truck, to tickle the Indian palate.

A few years ago, Indian cricket was like 'when you are bored please play Sri Lanka'. But over the last seven months, that fixation has been centred around Australia. Kohli's men and Aaron Finch's feisty troops have clashed often since December. Down Under, India won

Where they stand

the ODI series 2-1 and when Australia toured, the visitor prevailed 3-2.

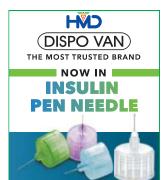
Adding depth

The latest episode has the added weight of Steve Smith and David Warner. The duo returned after serving a oneyear ban following last summer's ball-tampering controversy. The two have added depth and aura to the opposition outfit and played their parts in Australia's winning

Warner remained unbeaten on 89 against Afghanistan while Smith etched a 73 in the contest involving the West Indies. Still, a few chinks have surfaced as Australia's top-order was seen a touch fragile against the short-pitched bowling that the West Indians unleashed

at Nottingham.

India's Jasprit Bumrah fellow-seamers would be keen to probe any vulnerability.



However, in a battle of bouncers, Australia can dish its own version of the 'perfume ball'. Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins can hustle

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the very best and if it is a question of middle-over skirmishes, the Aussies have regularly played spinners Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav in the past.

India's batting has to be top-drawer and thankfully most of its cogs performed at Southampton, especially Rohit Sharma, who was magnificent.

But more needs to be done on a pitch that was kept under wraps during Friday's rains, and was allowed to breathe once the sun peeped past the clouds on the game's eve.

There is a 20 per cent chance of precipitation during the clash and the last thing the captains need is the weather adding its own wicked texture to a storied

India vs Australia - a WC timeline

Like in Chennai

one run despite

made 93 before

being run out by

a direct throw

from Border

India lost by

Azharuddin's

heroics - he

1983 1992 **BRISBANE:**

NOTTINGHAM:

After not crossing swords in 1975 & '79. the two met for the first time in the third edition. Trevor Chappell's 110 powered Australia to 320 and a 162-run win

CHELMSFORD:

In a must-win final league game for both teams. Madan Lal and Roger Binny picked up four wickets each to bundle out Australia for 129. defending 248,

CENTURION: India was shot out for 125 and Australia romped home by nine wickets and qualify for the semifinals

1987 CHENNAI: The M.A. Chidambaram have asked for a better ODI debut A four was change to a six after the umpires were alerted during

the innings breal target of 271, lost by one run! India won the second meeting with Mohd. Azharuddin picking up three

wickets each. India

won by 56 runs

after scoring 289

SYDNEY: Australia ended India's unbeaten run in the event, with a 95-run victory in the semis. Steve Smith's ton had taken the hosts to 328

1996

MUMBAI:

removed a

rampaging

Mark Waugh

made 126 and

Tendulkar with

a clever piece

of bowling as

Australia won

by 16 runs

THE OVAL: Mark Waugh (83) was at

it again before McGrath cleaned up the top-order as India lost by 77 runs

JOHANNESBURG: In the grandest

Ponting's unbeaten 140 powered Aus-

AHMEDABAD:

tralia to a mammoth 359 in the final.

stage of them all, skipper Ricky

India could only manage 234

despite Ajay Jadeja's 100

The teams (from):

India: Virat Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, M.S. Dhoni, K.L. Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja, Kedar Jadhav, Dinesh Karthik, Hardik Pandya, Vijay Shan-Jasprit Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Shami, Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav.

Australia: Aaron Finch (Capt.), David Warner, Steve Smith, Us-

man Khawaja, Jason Behrendorff, Alex Carey, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Pat Cummins, Nathan Lyon, Shaun Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Jhye Richardson, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis and Adam

Umpires: Chris Gaffaney and Ian Gould; Third umpire: Nigel Llong; Match referee: Andy Pycroft.

Match starts at 3 p.m. IST. Winning in India was really important: Finch into a game like this," the

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Aaron Finch declared that he and his team would draw self-belief from the 3-2 victory in the ODI series in India while squaring up against the familiar rival on Sunday.

Winning the last three games (in India) was really important for us. Whenever vou are playing India, vou have to believe that you can beat them because they are a world-class side.

"They have got some alltime great players. So to be able to beat them in their home conditions three times in a row was really important for the confidence of the side, especially going

World Cup when England

was knocked out by Bangla

10 overs

30 over

overs

50 overs

BAN

105/2

170/4

224/5

48/1

desh.

386/6

Australian captain said. The opener also lauded Steve Smith and David Warner. "Steve is the best batter

in the world in my opinion over all three forms of the game. I think when you have David who is so des tructive at the top, it's great for the side. We have always believed that we have a side that can win the World Cup," he said.

As for the Indian threats, be it Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah, Finch felt that "no freebies should be given to the batsmen", and stressed that "due diligence" has been done on the spearhead.



CHOCO CHIPS

Net bowler injured

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A net bowler suffered a freak injury and that caused a scare during Australia's training session at the Oval here on Saturday.

David Warner's fullblooded drive struck Jaykishan on his head and the anguished opener and his teammates briefly halted their practice

schedule.

The bowler was checked immediately and then taken to a hospital as a precautionary measure. Later Finch said: "It's quite rare that somebody gets hit, and it's obviously very unfortunate. The medical staff that were on hand, did a great job. He seemed fine and was actually smiling when they took him to the hospital."



Concerned: David Warner looks on as an injured net bowler receives medical attention • AFP

Team	Mat	Won	Lost	NR	PTS	NRR	
New Zealand	3	3	0	0	6	2.163	
England	3	2	1	0	4	1.307	
Australia	2	2	0	0	4	1.059	
Sri Lanka	3	1	1	1	3	-1.517	
Pakistan	3	1	1	1	3	-2.412	
West Indies	2	1	1	0	2	2.054	
India	1	1	0	0	2	0.302	
Bangladesh	3	1	2	0	2	-0.714	
South Africa	3	0	3	0	0	-0.952	
Afghanistan	3	0	3	0	0	-1.443	
*till the New Zealand-Afghanistan match on June 8							

It's going to be a great contest, says Rohit

admitted that his match-winning hundred against South Africa wasn't a regular aggressive knock but an in-

nings that gave him immense

satisfaction. "It was a massive confidence booster. Talking about the innings, I felt it was not the way I would like to play but obthe conditions, and, at times, the bowlers as well, which is probably the reason I would say that it is one of the best. 'There was something in

viously you have to respect

for the bowlers. You have to try and bat the condition so that was a bit challenging," Rohit recalled his ton. 'I have played more than

200-odd ODIs. Experience teaches you a lot. You want to make sure that you start the innings and finish the innings, as well. When I did that in the first game, the satisfaction you get is something else."

Rohit refused to comment on the controversy involving M.S. Dhoni's wicket-keeping gloves but was quick to support K.L. Rahul's ability: "It South Africa) was as good as getting a 50-plus on that pitch. He looked good and was confident. More often than not he will be coming at number four when the ball will be doing a bit, and being an opener it's an advantage for him to get used to the conditions quickly."

might seem that he didn't get

big runs, but that 26 (against

Among the leading ODI run-scorers for India, Rohit believed that it is an 'external reward' for his performance. "For me, it's always been about going and getting the job done for the team. When I started opening, it was challenging because I have never done that before in international cricket, but I have come a long way.

Roy and Buttler star in England's comfortable win

The former makes 153 and the latter 64; Shakib's century the lone bright spot for Bangladesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Opener Jason Roy smashed his way to a sensational 153 as England scripted a dominating performance to hammer Bangladesh by 106 runs in a high-scoring World Cup match here Saturday.

Sent into bat, England posted a massive 386 for six and then returned to dismiss Bangladesh for 280 in 48.5 overs, despite a superb hundred by all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan (121).

Good foundation

Roy, who blasted five sixes and had 14 hits to the fence in his 121-ball innings, laid the foundation of the big score with two crucial partnerships – 128 with opener Jonny Bairstow (51) and 77 with first-down Joe Root (21).

Jos Buttler then scored a 44-ball 64 laced with four sixes and two fours and added 95 runs with skipper Eoin Morgan (35) as England posted the first 350 plus total of the tournament.

It was also England's best World Cup total, surpassing the 338 for eight against India in the 2011 edition.

Chasing an improbable 387 to win, Shakib added 106 runs with Mushfiqur Rahim (44) after Bangladesh was reduced to 63 for two in 12

Crucial wicket

Shakib took Bangladesh across the 200-mark in 37th over but the Tigers never really looked in the chase and once he departed in the 40th over, it was a mere formality thereafter for the

Next assignment Sri Lanka, Bristol, 3 p.m.

BANGLADESH: June 11 vs **ENGLAND:** June 14 vs West Indies, Southampton, hosts who won their second match. The victory will help to exorcise the ghost of 2015

INNINGS SCAN PROGRESSION BAN Maidens 67/0 28 22 130/1 14 185/1 128 106 275/3

5.73

7.72 RR

TOP SHOW	15				
For	Batting	Bowling			
England	Roy 153 (121b, 14x4, 5x6)	Stokes 3/23 (6) Archer 3/29 (8.5)			
Bangladesh	Shakib 121 (119b, 12x4, 1x6)	Mehidy Hasan 2/67 (10)			



Jason Roy • AFP

SCOREBOARD ENGLAND VS BANGLADESH

ENGLAND

Jason Roy c Mortaza b Mehidy 153 (121b, 14x4, 5x6), Jonny Bairstow c Mehidy b Mortaza 51 (50b, 6x4), Joe Root b Saifuddin 21 *(29b, 1x4)*, Jos Buttler c Sarkar b Saifuddin 64 (44b, 2x4, 4x6), Eoin Morgan c Sarkar b Mehidy 35 (33b, 1x4, 2x6), Ben Stokes c Mortaza b Mustafizur 6 (13b), Chris Woakes (not out) 18 (8b, 2x6), Liam Plunkett (not out) 27 (4x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-3, nb-1, w-7): 11; Total (for six wkts. in 50 overs): 386.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-128 (Bairstow, 19.1 overs), 2-205 (Root, 31.3), 3-235 (Roy, 34.4), 4-330 (Buttler, 45.2), 5-340 (Morgan, 46.5), 6-341 (Stokes, 47.1). BANGLADESH BOWLING

Shakib 10-0-71-0, Mashrafe 10-

0-68-1, Saifuddin 9-0-78-2,

Mustafizur 9-0-75-1, Mehidy 10-

0-67-2, Mosaddek 2-0-24-0. **BANGLADESH** Tamim Iqbal c Morgan b Wood 19

(29b, 1x4), Soumya Sarkar b Archer 2 (8b), Shakib Al Hasan b

kett 44 (50b, 2x4), Mohammad Mithun c Bairstow b Rashid O (2b), Mahmudullah c Bairstow b Wood 28 (41b, 1x4, 1x6), Mosaddek Hossain c Archer b Stokes 26 (16b, 4x4), Mohammad Saifud-

Stokes 121 (119b, 12x4, 1x6),

Mushfigur Rahim c Roy b Plun-

din b Stokes 5 (8b), Mehidy Hasan c Bairstow b Archer 12 (8b, 2x4), Mashrafe Mortaza (not out) 4 (9b), Mustafizur Rahman c Bairstow b Archer O (3b); Extras (lb-9, w-10): 19; Total (in

48.5 overs): 280.

FALL OF WICKETS 1-8 (Sarkar, 3.2 overs), 2-63

(Tamim, 11.6), 3-169 (Mushfiqur, 28.6), 4-170 (Mithun, 29.3), 5-219 (Shakib, 39.3), 6-254 (Mosaddek, 43.1), 7-261 (Mahmudullah, 44.6), 8-264 (Saifuddin, 45.4), 9-280 (Mehidy, 48.2). ENGLAND BOWLING

Woakes 8-0-67-0, Archer 8.5-2-29-3, Plunkett 8-0-36-1, Wood 8-0-52-2, Rashid 10-0-64-1, Stokes 6-1-23-3.

Toss: Bangladesh; MoM: Roy. England won by 106 runs.



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Neesham blows away Afghanistan

His five-for and Ferguson's four-for help the Kiwis outplay Naib's men



Timely strikes: Jimmy Neesham pulled things back for New Zealand with an incisive spell. • ALEX DAVIDSON/GETTY IMAGES

WORLD CUP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

New Zealand speedster James Neesham grabbed his maiden five-wicket haul as he ripped through the Afghanistan batting line-up and bundled it out for 172 on

In reply, Kane Williamson scored an unbeaten 79 as the Kiwis reached the target in the 33rd over, losing three wickets. Ross Taylor contributed 48.

Earlier, Neesham returned with career-best figures of five for 31 from 10 overs, bettering his four for 42. His pace colleague Lockie Ferguson claimed four for

Hashmatullah Shahidi, who top-scored with a 59 off 99 balls, played a lone hand. He was the last man out as Afghanistan folded up in 41.1 overs. Seven batsmen failed to reach double digits

SCOREBOARD AFGHANISTAN VS NEW ZEALAND

AFGHANISTAN

Hazratullah Zazai c Munro b Neesham 34 (28b, 5x4, 1x6), Noor Ali Zadran c Latham b Ferguson 31 (38b, 5x4), Rahmat Shah c Guptill b Neesham O (4b), Hashmatullah Shahidi c Henry b Ferguson 59 (99b, 9x4), Gulbadin Naib c Latham b Neesham 4 (4b, 1x4), Mohammad Nabi c Latham b Neesham 9 (24b), Najibullah Zadran c Latham b Neesham 4 (3b, 1x4), Ikram Alikhil c Guptill b de Grandhomme 2 (22b), Rashid Khan b Ferguson O (4b), Aftab Alam c Latham b Ferguson 14 (10b, 3x4), Hamid Hassan (not out) 7 (11b, 1x4); Extras (lb-6, w-2): 8; Total (in 41.1 overs): 172.

FALL OF WICKETS 1-66 (Zazai, 10.5 overs), 2-66 (Noor Ali Zadran, 11.1), 3-66 (Rahmat, 12.3), 4-70 (Naib, 14.1), 5-105 (Nabi, 23.3), 6-109 (Najibullah Zadran, 23.6), 7-

(Rashid, 33.4), 9-147 (Aftab Alam, 35.4). **NEW ZEALAND BOWLING**

130 (Ikram Alikhil, 32.4), 8-131

Henry 8-0-50-0, Boult 10-0-34-0, Ferguson 9.1-3-37-4, Neesham 10-1-31-5, de Grand-

NEW ZEALAND

M. Guptill c Zadran b Aftab Alam O (1b), C. Munro c Hamid Hassan b Aftab Alam 22 (24b, 4x4), K. Williamson (not out) 79 (99b, 9x4), R. Taylor b Aftab Alam 48 (52b, 6x4, 1x6), T. Latham (not out) 13 (18b, 1x4); Extras (lb-4, nb-1, w-6): 11; Total (for three wkts. in 32.1 overs): 173.

FALL OF WICKETS 1-0 (Guptill, 0.1), 2-41 (Munro, 7.5), 3-130 (Taylor,

AFGHANISTAN BOWLING Aftab Alam 8.1-0-45-3, Hamid Hassan 7-0-30-0, Naib

mat Shah 5-0-21-0. Toss: New Zealand.

Man-of-the-Match: Neesham.

9-1-55-0, Nabi 3-0-18-0, Rah-

New Zealand won by seven

Barty reigns supreme

Ends Australia's 46-year wait for French Open title

The Ashleigh file

Began playing tennis at the age of five

Reached three Grand Casey Dellacqua in 2013 bledon, U.S. Open)

2014, she took a break

Had a successful stint at the Brisbane Heat cricket team in the Worr en's Big Bash League before returning in 2016

 Broke into the top-20 in 2017, clinching her first WTA singles title at Kuala Lumpur as a qualifier

Clinched her second and third WTA singles crowns to finish 2018 ranked 15th in the world



Memorable outing: Ashleigh Barty, who famously took a break from tennis to play professional cricket in 2015, struck 27 winners past an opponent riddled with nerves. • CLIVE BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES

ROLAND GARROS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Ashleigh Barty ended Australia's 46-year wait for a French Open singles title on Saturday by thrashing nervous Czech teenager Marketa Vondrousova in a one-sided women's final.

Eighth seed Barty got off to a strong start and never looked back, winning 6-1, 6-3 after only 70 minutes to

claim her maiden Grand Slam title. She became the first Australian winner at Roland Garros since Margaret Court won the last of her five trophies in 1973.

"It's unbelievable, I'm a little bit speechless. I played the perfect match today. I'm so proud of myself and my team, it's been an incredible two weeks," said Barty.

"It's a special place for Australians here. Sam (Stosur) has done well here before and come so close. It's been a magical two weeks."

Barty, who famously took a break from tennis to play professional cricket in 2015, struck 27 winners.

The 19-year-old Vondrousova saw her bid to become the first teenage Grand Slam champion since Maria Sharapova won the 2006 US Open come to a tame end, as the World No. 38 made 22 unforced errors, against a

Ruturaj and Shubman help India-A win at a canter

The host crosses the finish line with plenty to spare in the second one-dayer

SL-A IN INDIA

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA

Openers Ruturaj Gaikwad and Shubman Gill slammed imperious centuries as India-A made short work of Sri Lanka-A in the second oneday match at the KSCA Stadium here on Saturday. Chasing 243 for victory, the host cruised home in 33.3 overs. with Gaikwad unbeaten on 125 (94b, 14x4, 4x6).

Man-of-the-match who scored an elegant 109 (96b, 14x4, 2x6), retired hurt with cramps with the target 17 runs away. India-A now leads the five-match series

Gill's innings was a visual treat, with an array of delightful shots played all around the wicket. The 19-year-old had been dismissed cheaply in the first one-day match, but he made big amends here. He signalled his intentions early on with a hook shot off Asitha Fernando that sailed 20m over the fine-leg

Lahiru Kumara was coverdriven exquisitely, and Akila Dananjaya slog-swept over cow-corner. Gill got to his half-century with a pair of boundaries off Ishan Jayaratne, a front-foot cover drive followed by a glorious backfoot punch. Gaikwad had been playing

second-fiddle at this stage, but he soon went on the offensive, and overtook Gill to three figures. The 22-year-old from Maharashtra had made an unbeaten 187 in the first one-day game; on this occasion, he notched up a 78-ball



Shubman Gill. • COURTESY BCCI

century. Gaikwad has so far scored 312 runs this series without being dismissed



Ruturaj. • courtesy BCCI

stand, broken only by Gill's retirement after 30 overs, was worth a massive 226. Earlier, Sri Lanka-A col-

lapsed to 81 for six after being put in to bat. Shehan Jayasuriya, centurion from the opening game, rode to his side's rescue yet again, scoring a defiant 101 (139b, 8x4, 1x6).

He found able support in Jayaratne, who hammered an unbeaten 73-ball-79, as the pair added 142 runs for the seventh wicket. Jayasuriya could've been dismissed on 28 when a miscued shot off Shreyas Gopal ballooned towards short third-man, but Ishan Porel failed to move quickly enough.

In the end, though, it would make little difference to the outcome.

The scores: Sri Lanka-A 242 for seven in 50 overs (Shehan Jayasuriya 101, Ishan Jayaratne 79 n.o.) lost to India-A 243 for no loss in 33.3 overs (Ruturaj Gaikwad 125 n.o., Shubman Gill 109

Thiem ends Djokovic history bid

Sets up final against defending champion Nadal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Novak Djokovic's dream of becoming just the second man in history to hold all Grand Slam titles at the same time twice was crushed by Dominic Thiem at Roland Garros on Saturday.

Thiem downed the World No.1 6-2, 3-6, 7-5, 5-7, 7-5 to set up a repeat of last year's final against 11-time winner and defending champion Rafael Nadal.

squandering a 4-1 final set lead and two match points before he sealed his place in "It was an amazing match.

Thiem did it the hard way,

It was my first five-set match at Roland Garros so it was a good one to have," said Thiem after the four hour 13minute match which was played over two days.

The semifinal had been controversially suspended overnight Friday with Djokovic complaining about the 'extreme wind' in the stadium.

When play was halted, with the top seed trailing 1-3 in the third set, there was still around two hours of daylight remaining.

"I congratulate Dominic, he played great, especially in the important moments," said Djokovic. "Obviously, when you're playing in hurricane-like conditions it's hard to play your best."

Good start for France, Germany

WOMEN'S WC

Teenage midfielder Giulia Gwinn scored the only goal on Saturday as Germany opened its World Cup campaign with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over China in Group

Lena Oberdorf came on at half time to become her country's youngest World Cup player at 17 years and 171 days. Earlier on Friday, host

France started its campaign with a 4-0 victory over South

The results: Germany 1 (Gwinn 66) bt China O: Spain 3 (Hermoso 70-pen, 83-pen, Garcia



Ecstatic: Gwinn celebrates after scoring against China. • AFP

89) bt South Africa 1 (Kgatlana 25): France 4 (Le Sommer 9. Renard 35, 45+2, Henry 85) bt South Korea O.

Sunday's schedule: Australia vs Italy (4.30 p.m.), Brazil vs Jamaica (6.30 p.m.), England vs Scotland (9.30 p.m.).

Leonard puts Raptors on the cusp of glory

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE OAKLAND (USA)

Kawhi Leonard hoisted Toronto Raptors onto his back in the third quarter of Friday's NBA Finals game against Golden State Warriors and lifted the team within one triumph of a first championship.

The 27-year-old playmaker scored 36 points and grabbed 12 rebounds to power Raptors over defending champion Warriors 105-92 for a 3-1 lead in the best-ofseven series.

With the game poised on a knife's edge, Leonard opened the third quarter with back-to-back three-

pointers to give the Raptors their first lead and finished with 17 points in the quarter while helping silence Warriors' stars Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson.

Leonard, who was the 2014 NBA Finals MVP in leading San Antonio to a title, was 11-of-22 from the floor, 5of-9 from 3-point range, and 9-of-9 from the free throw

The result: Raptors 105 (Kawhi Leonard 36, Serge Ibaka 20, Pascal Siakam 19) bt Warriors 92 (Klay Thompson 28, Stephen Curry 27, Draymond Green 10, Kevon Looney 10).

2018 redux A look at how Nadal and Thiem stack up before their second successive final in Paris Has won all 11 finals he has com-A triumph will give him an all-time record 12th title at the same Grand Slam, breaking his tie with Margaret Court (11 at the Australian Open) A victory will move him to within two titles of Roger Federer's record of 20 Grand Slams The Spaniard will Has reached his second straight French Open final move to 99 wins at a single Grand and just the third to beat the King A victory will make him Slam, moving of Clay at Roland Garros the second Austrian to win a Slam after Muster's triumph at the 1995 French Open him past Jimmy Connors (98 at the Thiem's all four wins over Nadal US Open) have come on clay

Turning it on: Dominic Thiem squandered a 4-1 final set lead and two match points before sealing his place in the final. • AFP

SUDOKU

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

Reid and his 'culture' challenge

Says the need of the hour is of team first mentality

HSF

UTHRA GANESAN

Having come in with loads of experience and a fair amount of understanding about Indian hockey Graham Reid is still coming to terms with the 'culture' here. That is a word he goes back to when trying to explain the Indian team and the challenges he faces.

"I still need to come to terms with the Indian culture. We need to build a culture of being comfortable enough to perform when it matters but also understand that your performance affects others in the team. We will work that out in the next few months. The team first mentality is what you need," he said in an interaction with *The Hindu* here on Saturday.

The cultural challenges are also one of the reasons he is trying to sort out the switching on-switching off issues in the side. "Back-to-



back games are the hardest because the result of the previous game lingers on. Against Poland, one of the difficult things I had to get them over was the previous 10-0 result between the two.

"A lot of players were still in that mindset. Switching off happens when you either take it too easy or are distracted from what you need to be doing at that time," he tried to explain. Reid, though, isn't sure

about engaging a full-time psychologist just yet. "Sports psychology is more about getting the guys to understand they can count on each other. I need to work

out who we can get and how we can work with them but we have to ensure they fit," he said.

Asked about India suffering due to lack of top-level matches by not playing the Pro League, Reid went back to his Australian experience.

"As coaches, our job is to create a training environment that is equal to the top level of competition. Before the 2014 World Cup we were training by ourselves in Perth and our training matches were 40 % above what we actually ended up playing," he said.

Reid felt any of the teams from the ongoing Pro League and India can win the Olympics but cautioned there were no guarantees.

"I want it to be achievable but it is important to get people to believe that we can get there," he signed off.

USA hammers Mexico

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

USA continued its impressive campaign in the FIH Series Finals, registering its second win in as many games in Pool B with a 9-0 victory against neighbour Mexico here on Saturday.

USA is comfortably on top of the table, making its final league match

against Japan crucial in deciding the semifinalist from the pool. The results:

Pool B: USA 9 (Michael Barminski Jr 2, Sean Cicchi 2, Julian Croonenberghs, Tyler Sundeen, Alberto Montilla, Christian de Angelis, William Holt) bt

Japan 2 (Kentaro Fukuda, Kazuma Murata) bt South Africa O.

Tokyo 2020: IOA eyes a 'double figure' target

SPORTS REPORTER BENGALURU

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has set an ambitious target of "double-figure" medals at the Tokyo 2020 games. India's best performance came at London 2012 when it secured six medals. At Rio 2016 India bagged just two.

Speaking here on Saturday, IOA president Narinder Batra said that a good performance will prove significant in the lead up to India's potential bid for the 2032

Olympics. "The target [for 2020] is double-figure medals," said Batra. "Then, if we have to bid for the 2032 Olympics, the target should be 25 medals in 2024 and 35-40 by 2028. Otherwise they won't even allow you to bid. You have make sure the performance is such."

Let off with warning Back in February, the IOC had put in cold storage In-

dia's prospective bids for all big-ticket events for refusing visas to two Pakistani shooters. In November 2018, the country was let off with a warning for denying visa to a boxer from Kosovo. But Batra was confident that the issues would be resolved

"I have met Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju and I am hopeful. The Pakistan issue is different. Now it is mainly Kosovo. IOC's rules are that all member countries' athletes have to be given visa. "But India doesn't recognise Kosovo. There is now a

discussion, but we can resolve it. Even Russia doesn't recognise Kosovo but it has hosted events. It will be sorted out," he said. "India will be a country

which will host many events. We are looking at 2026 Youth Olympic games, and the IOC Congress in 2021. We have also expressed our interest to host the 2030 Asian Games."