

Rahul Chahar — finding his spot on the big stage

IPL performance for Mumbai Indians earns the leg-spinner the right to wear India colours



Bright talent: Rahul Chahar has been able to absorb pressure, is mentally tough and very accurate, according to Mumbai Indians talent scout Abey Kuruvilla. • FILE PHOTO: K.V.S. GIRI

Another lifeline for Saha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

Wriddhiman Saha will begin his reintegration after a major shoulder injury with his first First Class game in 18 months when India-A takes on West Indies-A in an unofficial Test starting here on Wednesday.

Saha and Hanuma Vihari are the two Test specialists who have been included in the A squad to prepare for the two-Test series starting late August.

Saha, who is only three months shy of his 35th birthday, is returning after a career-threatening injury. Having stayed under M.S. Dhoni's shadow, Saha's injury during the last IPL was a massive blow.

With Rishabh Pant proving his credentials, it's again that phase in his career where he could be seen carrying drinks.

The squad: Shreyas Iyer (Capt.), P.K. Panchal, Abhinav Easwaran, Shubman Gill, Hanuma Vihari, Shivam Dube, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), K.S. Bharat (wk), K. Gowtham, S. Nadeem, Mayank Markande, Navdeep Saini, Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur and Avesh Khan.



Wriddhiman Saha. • FILE PHOTO: BISWARANJAN ROUT

West Indies recalls Narine and Pollard

Board announces squad for first two T20Is; Bramble only new face

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ST. JOHN'S (ANTIGUA)

The veteran duo of Sunil Narine and Kieron Pollard were on Tuesday recalled to a 14-member West Indies squad for the first two games of the three-match T20 International series against India in Florida in the United States.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Anthony Bramble is the only uncapped player in the squad selected for the T20Is to be played on August 3 and 4 at the Broward County Stadium, Lauderdale, Florida.

The panel could make changes for the third T20I on



Sunil Narine.

• FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

August 6 at the Guyana National Stadium, the West Indies Cricket Board said.

The squad, to be led by Carlos Brathwaite, also includes allrounder Andre Russell subject to passing a fitness assessment.

Russell injured

Russell had made an early exit from the World Cup to undergo an operation on his troublesome left knee.

Interim selection panel chairman Robert Haynes said veteran opener Chris Gayle had notified that he was unavailable for the series due to commitments in Canada. This has given John Campbell an opportunity.

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

Rajasthan's Rahul Chahar, just a few days from turning 20, is the latest leg-spinner to break into the India team.

Five months ago, Punjab's 21-year-old Mayank Markande made his India debut in the T20 against Australia in Visakhapatnam. Markande was given the chance after his 14-match appearance for Mumbai Indians in IPL Season-11.

And now, Chahar, after 13 matches for Mumbai Indians in IPL Season-12, has won a call-up for the three-match T20 series against the West Indies. Chahar was MI's main spinner, taking 13 wickets at an economy rate well-under seven.

Mumbai Indians can take credit for spotting talent in both Markande and Chahar and bring them onto the T20 stage where batsmen rule the roost.

After Yuzvendra Chahal (31 matches/46 wks) and Kuldeep Yadav's (18/35) success, Indian cricket is looking more at wrist-spin options. India's previous leg-spinners for T20 Internationals were Amit Mishra (10 matches/16 wks), Piyush

Chawla (7/4), Rahul Sharma (2/3), Karn Sharma (1/1) and Sachin Tendulkar (1/1).

Together they have accounted for 106 wickets at 18.34 and an economy rate of a little over seven.

Former India seamer and MI talent scout Abey Kuruvilla feels the ideal situation would be to perform in First Class cricket and impress the selectors. He cited Anil Kumble as an example.

Talking about wrist spinners getting an early break and also of Rahul Chahar he said: "Leg-spinners bring in the novelty factor and wicket-taking ability. The finger spinners are vanishing in this format, given the smaller boundaries and heavy bats. IPL is a high-pressure competition and Chahar has been able to absorb pressure; he's mentally tough and very accurate."

In all 28 leg-spinners — specialists, part-time and casual — have bowled for India in Test cricket, and 15 in ODIs. Most of them found their way into the Indian team through First Class cricket (Ranji, Duleep, Irani Trophy matches). These days the IPL has become the express lane for leg-spinners.

'Appoint the correct election officer by July 24'

CoA's directive to BCCI members

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

There are hints that another round of tussle between the Committee of Administrators (CoA) and the BCCI members who are not keen on implementing the Lodha reforms is likely to ensue in the coming weeks.

It has been a little more than three years since the apex court accepted the Lodha reforms on July 2016, and then again on August 9, 2018, after which it asked Amicus Curiae P.S. Narasimha to mediate with the State Associations on the irritating issues and bring about a solution.

On Tuesday, the CoA — which, on May 21, after a meeting with the Amicus Curiae outlined a BCCI AGM deadline for October 22, 2019 — asked the BCCI members to fall in line by correcting anomalies in their by-laws that strayed from the BCCI Constitution approved by the Supreme Court.

Proactive

The CoA got proactive in the last few days by sending a list of aspects that some BCCI members needed to correct, failing which the member would lose its rights to attend the AGM and contest for posts in the Apex Council.

The CoA's note to the BCCI members pointed out the inconsistencies in the bylaws on (1) the formation of the Apex Council and Committees; (2) voting rights for international cricketers; (3) appointment of the election officer by July 24 (the timeline set on May 21 had actually set July 1 as the date for appointing the election officer); and a few more like checking out, as in the case of the Mumbai Cricket Association, if any of its cricketers clubs are also Social Clubs.

The BCCI members have been told to appoint, by July 24, a retired Chief Election Commissioner of the State or a Central Election Com-

missioner, as the election officer. "Many States were doing the wrong things. They have been told to rectify," divulged an official who has been in touch with the CoA.

Objection

An official of a State Association countered the CoA move by saying: "Who are they to set deadlines for elections? They are not the Supreme Court. During our meeting with the Amicus [Curiae], certain issues were taken up and the understanding was that the Supreme Court would give its opinion. The CoA is not the Supreme Court."

About 13 members, including Assam and six new members from the North-East, and Vidarbha, have accepted the New BCCI Constitution and hence are receiving their annual subventions.

The CoA has been constantly monitoring the process of Constitutional amendments made by the members in terms with the New BCCI Constitution.

Jurisdiction issue

An official of the Mumbai Cricket Association said: "We have been told to revert with our positions on the territorial jurisdiction for giving voting rights to retired international cricketers, to reveal if any of the clubs are social clubs and also on the appointment of the election officer. The CoA has said that the State should be the territorial jurisdiction for international cricketers, but we feel the jurisdiction is Mumbai city. All our clubs are cricket clubs and we have been searching for a retired Chief Election Commissioner of the State who can be appointed as the Election Officer."

The CoA believes that once the Election Officer is appointed, the election process can start so that the BCCI AGM and Elections can be held on October 22.

Ashes jerseys to have players' names, numbers

ANI
NEW DELHI

Test cricket is all set to undergo a major change as Australia and England will line-up with names and jersey numbers on their Test whites in the upcoming Ashes series.

ODI and T20I jerseys have had personalisation on their backs since a long time, but Test matches had to wait for this change.

Confirmation

England Cricket official Twitter handle confirmed the jersey number of team's Test match skipper Joe Root and wrote "Names and numbers on the back of Test shirts," as the caption.

Earlier this year, there were reports that the Ashes series between England and Australia would bring in modernisation of cricketing kits.



Novelty: Cricket fans are set to witness a spectacle like this, come the Ashes series. • RYAN PIERSE/GETTY IMAGES

Cricketing fans on Twitter seemed divided on this development in Test cricket and made their voices heard on the social-net-

working platform. "Absolutely no problem with numbers 1 to 11 etc., but can't see the benefit of names or random high

numbers on shirts. I guess it's all to do with increasing merchandise sales, hoping a name will sell more. @YorkshireCCC," wrote one fan.

"Names r okay bt never got the idea about these random numbers in cricket... could still live with it in ODIs n T20s bt spare tests... names r fine bt w/o numbers @ICC," another fan tweeted.

"A good addition. Improves both the supporter and media experience of seeing who it is.

On July 14, England scripted history as they managed to win its maiden 50-over World Cup and the side will look to continue its winning momentum going.

England will take on Ireland in a one-off four-day Test from Wednesday and then the team will face Australia in the Ashes, beginning on August 1.

Caleb Ewan wins Stage 16

TOUR DE FRANCE
NIMES

Caleb Ewan beat his sprinting rivals in suffocating heat to win Stage 16 of the Tour de France on Tuesday, with Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe keeping the race leader's yellow jersey.

With temperatures soaring as high as 40 degrees Celsius, Alaphilippe and his main rivals did not attack each other over the 177km mainly flat stage in the Nimes rural hinterland.

Defending champion Geraint Thomas crashed about 40km after the race started from the Roman city but escaped largely unscathed, with a few scratches on his left elbow.

Ewan, a Tour debutant, edged Elia Viviani and Dylan Groenewegen to post his second stage win.



Caleb Ewan. • AFP

No thanks, says Stokes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

England's World Cup hero Ben Stokes, who was nominated for the New Zealand Order of the Year Award, has graciously turned it down, saying Black Caps skipper Kane Williamson is the "worthy recipient" of the accolade.

The 28-year-old Stokes was born in Christchurch but moved to England at the age of 12, going on to establish himself in the England set-up.

"I am flattered to be nominated for New Zealand Order of the Year," he posted on his social media accounts.

"I feel the whole country should align their support to New Zealand captain Kane Williamson. He should be revered as a kiwi legend."

The new Indian fan and why he was angry after the final

This is a welcome change and holds out hope that the aggressive follower of the game is beginning to learn to take defeat



BETWEEN WICKETS
SURESH MENON

The World Cup is done and dusted, the caravan has moved on, the pundits have spoken, the analyses are over. Yet a couple of questions continue to nag. Why, for instance, would umpire Kumar Dharmasena admit to making an error while granting England the extra run in the tied final, and then follow that up with "I will never regret that decision"? The decision was taken in consultation with the other umpire, he tells us, it was a difficult one to make, he assures us, and then ruins that with what

comes across as either arrogance or stupidity.

The second question is the more interesting. Why were Indian fans so angry with the final result? Not merely disappointed or upset, but angry? Can you imagine television debates in England or Australia had India missed out in the manner that New Zealand did?

England skipper Eoin Morgan has spoken to his New Zealand counterpart Kane Williamson "on numerous occasions" since the final, he has said, and neither has been able to get his head around everything that happened. He was quoted as saying, "I'm not sure winning it makes it any easier," adding later, "It would be more difficult to lose, of course."

Waves

In New Zealand, Kane Williamson told a radio station, "It will take a little bit of ti-

me...you get waves. You just forget about it for 10 minutes then it hits you again ... " And importantly, "The rules were there from the start, we have to swallow that and accept it."

One Indian fan told me, "I didn't mind that India lost in the semifinal. It gave us a chance to watch the greatest one-day international ever." He was the exception, as the majority wanted to do something about that final — from a signature campaign asking the International Cricket Council to alter its playing conditions and letting the teams share the trophy to sacking various officials.

Everybody had an opinion, expressed more forcefully and with greater concern than anything articulated on issues such as the country's water shortage, or fudging in the national budget, which should affect us deeply. An umpiring decision made under pressure in a far away land got even the si-

lent majority raising fists in anger.

Love for the underdog

It would have been hilarious if it didn't say something interesting about us. Age and gender were no barrier to dissatisfaction; my uncle in his 80s was as cheesed off as nieces in their teens and twenties. Social media, the arbiter of a country's innermost thoughts, could not tear itself away from the subject. Is everybody angry because New Zealand didn't make it or because England did?

Perhaps it is more of the former, which rules out any colonial hangover. Perhaps it is a genuine love for the underdog, although Indian cricket fans are not renowned for this.

Perhaps Williamson came as a breath of fresh air and we wanted to show our appreciation by fighting his team's battles.

New Zealanders weren't nearly as an-

gry, and Williamson didn't once say anything about luck going against them — an easy enough line to take, particularly since it's true — and handled it all with dignity.

Perhaps once India lost in the semifinals, their fans transferred their considerable energies to New Zealand, and thus found a reason to retain their interest in the World Cup. Traditionally, teams in South Asia, from the schools level to the international, have tended to support the opponents of the team that beat them. Not so this time.

Springs of sorrow

The poet Gerard Manley Hopkins has said that the springs of sorrow are the same. Perhaps it is the same with the springs of anger too. For the course of one match, New Zealand were the India that made it to the final, didn't lose the match but lost the Cup. Blaming the

players was out of the question. Burning effigies didn't make sense. Part of the anger might have risen from the frustration of not being able to do these things. And part from a feeling of 'We wuz robbed'.

The normally demanding Indian fan didn't explode when India lost; didn't question the money the players make outside the field, didn't blame the IPL or the quality of Indian wickets or the standard of domestic matches.

The ones who wanted a change in captaincy were few, and no one called for major changes in the team or asked questions of the Board of Control for Cricket in India. If any players' houses were stoned or effigies burnt, these didn't get any publicity.

All this is new. And welcome. And a sign — let us hope — that the aggressive Indian fan is beginning to learn to take defeat.

Ireland set for landmark Lord's Test

Chance for the Irish to pull a fast one on England

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Ireland's march to becoming a full-fledged member of cricket's elite will reach another important staging post when it plays its first Test against England at Lord's on Wednesday.

The Irishmen made their Test debut last year, suffering a final-day defeat by Pakistan in Dublin. However, they were well beaten by fellow newcomer Afghanistan in their second Test in March this year.

Since the turn of the century, Ireland has become known for their one-day exploits, beating Pakistan (2007) and England (2011) at World Cups.

Highlight

The Lord's match is set to be the highlight of Ireland's year given it did not qualify for the World Cup.

The sport has a long history in Ireland and cricket was hugely popular there in the 19th century. But a rising tide of Irish nationalism and the growth of the Gaelic Athletic Association led to cricket being declared a "garrison" or "foreign" game.

Irish cricket went into something of a retreat although memorable occasions such as a televised win over the touring West Indies in 1969



Prepping for the occasion: Ireland's Simranjit Singh and Lorcan Tucker get ready for their Lord's assignment. • REUTERS

helped to change attitudes.

Several of the present side have played county cricket, including Tim Murtagh, a stalwart for Middlesex, who recently took his 800th First Class wicket.

Fast bowler Boyd Rankin was briefly an England player when that was the only way Irishmen could play Test cricket before switching back. "It is a dream come true, and it is something I

never thought would happen in my playing career," said Rankin, who played just the one Test for England on the ill-fated 2013-14 Ashes tour of Australia.

England will be resting

several of its World Cup stars, including fast bowler Jofra Archer, Ben Stokes and batsman Jos Buttler.

Eoin Morgan, the victorious Dublin-born captain, no longer plays Test cricket

Bring back Asian style: Thakur

'Utilise former players' services to help the National team'

HOCKEY

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

At his peak, Deepak Thakur was a feared forward. Using lightning speed and deft stick work, Thakur gave defenders a horrid time. In general, his Indian team of the noughties played a free-flowing style of hockey. This is in contrast with the 'European style' used now, where the emphasis is on possession and precision technique.

Thakur believes that the 'Asian style' of his era still has its place in modern hockey, and that the Indian team should utilise the services of his former teammates like Prabhjot Singh, Gagan Ajit Singh and Dhanraj Pillay to refine these skills.

'Second pattern'

"Today, all international sides employ the European style of play. When all teams are playing like this, you need a second pattern to break their game-play. This is where you need to be adept at Asian-style skills like dodging, return-passes, and stick work.

"If you can develop these aspects of your game, you will be able to break open the defence.

"This Asian style is missing now, which is hurting Indian hockey," Thakur, the IOCL team coach at the Bengaluru Hockey Association Super Division hockey



Plainspeak: Deepak Thakur says India will gain by merging the Asian and European styles of play. • G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

championship here, said.

"Former players like Prabhjot Singh, Dhanraj Pillay and Gagan Ajit Singh were masters of Asian style hockey. They should be brought in to coach the National team in some capacity. This will be hugely beneficial, as we can get the best of both worlds," Thakur added.

Professional approach

The Arjuna awardee is happy that a more professional approach has entered the sport.

"Money is being invested now. Though top facilities are not available at the grass-root level, it is good that it has come to the elite level.

"Everything is a lot more professional now – players earn good money, and we also have video analysts, physiotherapists and so on,"

Thakur said, "If we had these facilities during our playing days, we could have won Olympic and World Cup medals."

On his electrifying attacking partnership with Prabhjot Singh and Gagan Ajit Singh, Thakur said, "The reason why we were so good together on the field was because we shared a close bond off the field.

"The three of us came up through the junior ranks at the same time.

"And during our senior India days, we spent a lot of time together. In those days, we did not have much entertainment.

"So we played cards together, chatted, and kept each other company.

"This sort of team bonding is missing now, with most players busy with their smartphones."

No loan move for Bale, says agent

FOOTBALL

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Gareth Bale will not be leaving Real Madrid on loan during the transfer window despite falling out of favour under Zinedine Zidane, his agent said on Tuesday.

The Real boss said at the weekend the *La Liga* giant was poised to offload the 30-year-old Wales star.

But his representative, Jonathan Barnett, told Sky Sports News any deal would have to be a permanent one.

"There will be no makeshift deals to get him out of the club," said Barnett, who said previously that Zidane has shown "no respect" for Bale's achievements at Real.

"Gareth is one of the best players on the planet. I can

guarantee you he will not be going on loan to any club."

Bale has been deemed surplus to requirements at Real despite helping his side to a Spanish title and four Champions League crowns since arriving from Tottenham Hotspur six years ago.

His brace, including a brilliant bicycle kick, sank Liverpool in the 2018 final but he was not used as a regular starter by Zidane after the Frenchman returned to the Real bench in early March.

"Gareth is a Real Madrid player and for now he's staying as a Real Madrid player," said Barnett.

"If something comes along that suits us, then things could change and he could be gone in a day or a week. Or he could still be a Real player in three years, when his contract ends."

Ehsan Mani named chief of ICC committee

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KARACHI

Pakistan Cricket Board's chairman Ehsan Mani has been appointed as the head of the ICC's influential Finance & Commercial Affairs committee.

The appointment was carried out during the International Cricket Council (ICC)'s annual conference

last week.

The PCB announced on Tuesday that another PCB official, Salman Naseer, who is its general counsel and barrister, has been included on the ICC's Safeguarding panel.

The PCB said both appointments were made by ICC chairman Shashank Manohar.

Chaudari yearning to lay hands on trophy

PKL

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

It is never easy, even for a lead performer, to brush aside emotions when up against a team for which he played for six seasons. The story was no different for Rahul Chaudari when he debuted for Tamil Thalaivas against former team Telugu Titans in the Vivo PKL Season-7 the other night.

"There were a lot of emotions. I was a bit nervous. I was not sure how things would turn out. Fortunately, we were off to a winning start against Titans," said Chaudari in a chat with *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

"It was a great feeling to be back in Hyderabad and in front of such a vociferous crowd supporting me. I

loved the atmosphere and enjoyed every moment on the court against Titans."

"Honestly, I am just following the guiding principle of my coach – just do well, don't look back. I must say here that there is lot of experience and depth in Thalaivas which was not the case with Titans, where I was the only big player looked up to



Star raider: Rahul Chaudari has already come good for Tamil Thalaivas. • V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

by teammates," said the 26-year-old.

"This in a way should be of great help to me as it is a joy to play alongside such a brilliant raider like Ajay Thakur. He is a huge motivator always telling – *tujhe kahi nahi rokh sakega* (no one can stop you). And, he encourages everyone in the team in a similar way," ad-

ded the star raider.

Depth and balance

"I sincerely hope that we will reach the final as we have the depth, balance and all-round superiority. We are determined to give more than 100 per cent and pay back to the amazing way the management is taking care of players. We were never found wanting for anything," said the Bijnor (Uttar Pradesh) native.

"I am glad that the PKL is no more about only one Rahul or Ajay Thakur. There are so many brilliant players who are now household names. This is good for the sport itself," Rahul said.

"I was never a member of a winning team. So, I am just praying to give me the opportunity of having my hand on the winner's trophy this time around," he added.

Srinivas puts his money on team effort

Pink Panthers delighted with impressive start to season

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

"We don't believe in stardom of players. For us, the only superstar is our owner, Abhishek Bachchan," says coach Srinivas Reddy.

The 42-year-old Hyderabad, who earlier coached Haryana Steelers and Telugu Titans in the ProKabaddi League, is visibly delighted at the impressive start his team made against U Mumba on Monday night when it recorded its first-ever win over the opponent in six seasons.

"This is exactly what we are looking for – team effort. We always tell the boys to work as a unit. The focus in the camps has been on fitness with the owner himself setting the benchmark," he says in a chat with *The Hin-*

do with Joe Root, a fellow World Cup winner, in charge.

Anderson out

But England could still field Test new-ball bowler Stuart Broad, with all-time leading wicket-taker James Anderson ruled out with a calf injury. Somerset's Lewis Gregory and Warwickshire's Olly Stone could come into the attack. As for the batting, England could give a Test debut to World Cup-winning opener Jason Roy.

The match will only last a maximum of four days rather than the standard five, a consequence both of being shoe-horned into the narrow gap between the end of the World Cup and the start of England's five-Test Ashes series against Australia next month and a desire by officials to experiment with "spectator-friendly" playing hours. Certainly an Ireland win would be a huge upset.

"In my generation I don't think any of us expected to be playing a Test at Lord's, so to have the opportunity is great," said Ireland wicket-keeper Gary Wilson. "But we mustn't lose sight of the fact that we have to come here and perform as well. I mean that's what it is about, it's not just turning up and having all the fanfare around Lord's."

IANS
SYDNEY

Former captain Allan Border feels Australia should pick its best six batsmen for the upcoming Ashes series against England beginning on August 1 in Birmingham.

Border revealed his first choice team to foxsports.com.au, naming southpaws David Warner, Marcus Harris and Usman Khawaja as his preferred top three.

"The top three batsmen are left-handers, which is not necessarily the wrong thing," Border said.

"A lot of people jump up and down about picking too many left-handers but if they are your best players then go with them.

"If they were right-handers, no one would say anything," he added.

The former Australia skipper also stated that wicket-keeper-batsman Matthew Wade should come into the side considering his good domestic form.

Nod for Wade

"I'd be very tempted to go with Wade. You talk about picking the guys in form, and he's in great form. (Marnus Labuschagne might get that guernsey in that he can bowl some pretty handy leg-spin and he's good in the field too," Border said.



Border. • FILE PHOTO: M. VEDHAN

A lot of people jump up and down about picking too many left-handers but if they are your best players then go with them

"Wade can bowl some medium-pace. He can get it through alright, you could sling him half a dozen overs if you had to here and there."

The 63-year-old also advised the Australian team to resist from temptation of playing an all-rounder at No. 6 and instead play a proper batsman.

"I wouldn't go the all-rounder at No.6. I'd pick a straight out-and-out batsman.

"England's conditions are a bit softer underfoot and temperature wise. There's not as much physicality and stress on the bowlers," he said.

Chelsea downs Barcelona

Abraham and Barkley fetch the goals, Arrizabalaga stands firm



In you go! Ross Barkley scores Chelsea's insurance goal. • AP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SAITAMA

Goals from Tammy Abraham and Ross Barkley saw Chelsea grab a 2-1 victory over Barcelona on Tuesday in an exhibition match.

Chelsea striker Abraham opened the scoring in the 34th minute, pouncing on a botched clearance by Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets.

Busquets fumbled under pressure from Jorginho and the ball rolled towards Abraham who only had to step past onrushing goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen and gently send it into the net.

Four minutes later, Chelsea midfielder Christian Pulisic showed off his speed and footwork in infiltrating the Barca defence, but his left-footer went just wide.

Barcelona went on the offensive in the second half, with substitute striker Carles Perez leading the way. But superb saves by Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga

repeatedly denied Barca.

In the 55th minute Perez zipped past three defenders but his left-footer was not good enough to get past Arrizabalaga.

A few minutes later, he dashed deep into the left side to feed a high-speed cross to striker Malcom, but Arrizabalaga again denied them.

Chelsea made it 2-0 with less than 10 minutes left as midfielder Barkley picked up a cross in front of the box and curled it into the net, with substitute keeper Neto getting a touch but unable to block it.

Just before injury time, Barcelona got a free-kick just outside the box but midfielder Ivan Rakitic's shot went over the bar.

Rakitic, however, quickly redeemed himself in injury time, picking up a cross and firing a lightning right-footer that went deep into the net for a consolation goal for Barcelona.

Nagal loses to Gasquet

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU
HAMBURG (GERMANY)

Former World No.7 Richard Gasquet beat qualifier Sumit Nagal 6-2, 7-6(2) in the first round of the 1,855,490 ATP-500 tennis tournament in Hamburg, Germany, on Tuesday.

Sumit converted two of four breakpoints that he forced but the Frenchman capitalised on four of ten breakpoints to make it a straight-forward affair, in about an hour and 30 minutes.

Sumit collected 20 ATP points for qualification, as the first round loser does not get any point, and collected €13,065.

In the €250,000 WTA event in Latvia, the 264th-ranked Patricia Maria Tig of Romania proved too hot for Ankita Raina, in racing to a 6-2, 6-1 victory. Ankita who was the last player to be directly accepted into the draw with her rank of 173, collected one WTA point and €1,694.

The results: €1,855,490 ATP-500, Hamburg, Germany: Singles (first round): Richard Gasquet (Fra) bt Sumit Nagal 6-2, 7-6(2).

€ 250,000 WTA, Jurmala, Latvia: Singles (first round): Patricia Maria Tig (Rou) bt Ankita Raina 6-2, 6-1.

\$15,000 ITF women, Tabarka, Tunisia: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Sowjanya Bavisetti & Sravya Shivani Chikalapudi bt Elena De Santis & Francesca Delledera (Ita) 6-4, 6-2.



Coachspeak: Pink Panthers' Srinivas Reddy believes that body language and confidence levels are key factors. • K.V.S. GIRI

du. "It was an unforgettable experience to start on such a winning note in front of my home crowd," he says.

Srinivas, who is into his second season with the Jaipur-based outfit, says his mantra for success to his players is pretty simple – "believe that you are the best, don't look for others as

role models, you should be the ones with your performances".

"I believe that body language and the confidence level are the key factors which play a major role in any sport," says the bank manager.

For someone who played 18 senior Nationals and was

also a member of the 2006 Asian championship gold medal winning Indian team, Srinivas says the first target is to reach the play-offs. The Jaipur coach, who earlier guided India to a gold over Iran in the Dubai Masters championship, reveals that owner Abhishek, despite being a celebrity is a very simple human being, involved in the sport, and takes special care of the players' welfare, especially on the diet front.

"Abhishek keeps reminding us how his father Amitabh continues to work for long hours even now when he can actually take a break and relax. This to emphasise that there is no substitute for work," says Srinivas, who was also the Indian women's team coach in the last Asian where it settled for a silver.

TV PICKS

PKL: Star Sports 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Aussie Horton warned over podium protest

GWANGJU
Australian swimmer Mack Horton has been warned by FINA after he snubbed China's Sun Yang on the podium after the 400m freestyle final in the World Championships. Horton, who took silver behind Sun, refused to pose for photos after the medal ceremony as doping allegations swirl around Sun. **AFP**

Federation Cup basketball in Jan. 2020

CHENNAI
Pondicherry Basketball Association (PBA) will host the Federation Cup after more than two decades, in the third week of January 2020. The Federation Cup will witness the top eight teams from the senior Nationals held at Bhavnagar, Gujarat from January 5 to 12, in action, apart from the host. In the last edition at Noida, Punjab won the men's title while Indian Navy finished second. In the women's section, Eastern Railway emerged triumphant and Tamil Nadu was the runner-up.

TT coach Paptic to join next month

NEW DELHI
The uncertainty over the joining of the National table tennis team's new head coach Dejan Paptic ended on Tuesday when the Canadian accepted the one-year contract offered by the Sports Authority of India (SAI). The Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) had short-listed Paptic back in March but it was only a couple of weeks ago that SAI sent him the contract. "He was travelling and probably that is why the delay in signing the contract. But now he has and he should be in India early next month," TTFI secretary M.P. Singh said. **PTI**

Indians pugilists continue good run

NEW DELHI
Bhagyabati Kachari (75kg) assured India of at least a bronze at the Thailand International boxing tournament by making the semifinals in Bangkok on Tuesday. Bhagyabati defeated Vietnam's Nguyen Huong 5-0 to make the medal round. In men's section, Ashish Kumar (69kg) entered the last-eight after easing past Croatia's Petar Cetinic 5-0 while Mohammed Hussamuddin (56kg) out-punched Botswana's George Motwantwa 5-0. **PTI**

Sun retains 200m freestyle, snubbed again

Bronze medallist Scott refuses to shake hands; King pips Efimova in women's 100 breaststroke

WORLD SWIMMING

ASSOCIATED PRESS
GWANGJU (KOREA)

Sun Yang was in the middle of controversy at the World swimming championships again. Only this time, it wasn't his doing. The Chinese star still got shunned on the medals podium again.

Sun retained the 200m freestyle crown on Tuesday after Danas Rapsys of Lithuania, who finished first, got disqualified for an apparent false start. Sun touched second, but got elevated after Rapsys had already celebrated in the pool.

Sun appeared surprised, clasping his hands to his face, but quickly sat on the lane rope and raised both arms in the air as a mix of cheers and boos rang out.

Katsuhiko Matsumoto of Japan took silver. Martin Malyutin of Russia and Duncan Scott of Britain tied for bronze.

On the podium, Scott wanted no part of sharing the moment with Sun. Scott kept his hands clasped behind his back and refused to shake Sun's hand, standing off on his own while the other medalists joined Sun to pose for photographers.

This action prompted a furious Sun to get in Scott's face and bark "You lose, I



Well done: Lilly King, right, being congratulated by Russia's Yuliya Efimova after the American edged out the latter in the 100m breaststroke. **REUTERS**

win!" as they walked downstairs for their lap of honour.

Sun, who served a three-month doping ban in 2014, is being allowed by FINA to compete in Gwangju ahead of a Court for Arbitration in Sport hearing in September that threatens Sun's career.

American Lilly King and Russia's Yuliya Efimova kept all the drama in the pool in the women's 100 breaststroke.

They were neck-and-neck down the stretch before King got her hand on the wall first, touching in 1:04.93. Ef-

mova was second in 1:05.49. Martina Carraro of Italy took bronze.

Ailing Ledecy withdraws

Without three-time defending champion Katie Ledecy in the field, Simona Quadarella of Italy won the 1,500 freestyle in 15:40.89 well off Ledecy's world record of 15:20.48.

Earlier Tuesday, the American star withdrew from the final because of unspecified illness. Ledecy also dropped out of the 200

freestyle heats.

Olympic and defending world champion Ryan Murphy was upset in the men's 100 backstroke with Xu Jiayu of China winning in 52.43 seconds.

In the women's 100 backstroke, Kylie Masse of Canada won in 58.60, while USA's Kathleen Baker, the world record holder, tied for sixth after being tied for the lead at the turn.

The results:
Men: 200m freestyle: 1. Sun Yang (Chn) 1:44.93s, 2. Katsuhiko Matsumoto (JPN) 1:45.22, 3.

Martin Malyutin (Rus) & Duncan Scott (GBR) 1:45.63.

100m backstroke: 1. Xu Jiayu (Chn) 52.43, 2. Evgeny Rylov (Rus) 52.67, 3. Mitch Larkin (Aus) 52.77.

Women: 1500m freestyle: 1. Simona Quadarella (Ita) 15:40.89, 2. Sarah Kohler (Ger) 15:48.83, 3. Wang Jianjiahe (Chn) 15:51.00.

100m backstroke: 1. Kylie Masse (Can) 58.60, 2. Minna Atherton (Aus) 58.85, 3. Olivia Smoliga (USA) 58.91.

100m breaststroke: 1. Lilly King (USA) 1:04.93, 2. Yulia Efimova (Rus) 1:05.49, 3. Martina Carraro (Ita) 1:06.36.

Sarthak in last eight

TENNIS

SPORTS BUREAU
CHANDIGARH

Sarthak Gandhi defeated fourth seed Ansh Kundu 2-6, 6-4, 6-2 in the boys' under-16 pre-quarterfinals of the AITA Championship series junior tennis tournament at the CLTA Complex on Tuesday.

In another match in the same section, Ajay Kundu beat eighth seed Yogee Panwar 6-4, 6-0.

In the girls' under-16 section, qualifier Suhani Sabharwal beat sixth seed Kristi Boro 6-3, 6-3.

The results (pre-quarterfinals):
Boys: Under-18: Krishan Hooda bt Yogee Panwar 6-0, 6-0; Karan Parashar bt Ajay Kundu 6-3, 7-5; Shashikant Rajput bt Rishi Jalota 6-3, 6-0.

Dhanya Shah bt Ajay Singh 6-4, 6-1; Divanshu Hooda bt Sukhpreet Singh Jhoje 6-2, 6-2; Bhupender Dahiya bt Atul Chhillar 6-3, 6-1.

Torus Rawat bt Manveer Singh 6-3, 6-2; Udayvir Singh bt Sonu Khan 6-0, 6-0.

Under-16: Arjun Kundu bt Akash Deb 4-6, 6-3, 6-3; Ajay Kundu bt Yogee Panwar 6-4,

6-0; Sarthak Gandhi bt Ansh Kundu 2-6, 6-4, 6-2.

Rishi Jalota bt Sarabjot Singh 6-1, 6-3; Ajay Singh bt Samar Bir Singh Sidhu 7-5, 6-1.

Dhanya Shah bt Jitin Kumar Chetry 6-2, 4-6, 6-0; Sukhpreet Singh Jhoje bt Gurust Singh Makkar 6-1, 2-6, 6-2; Kartik Saxena bt Gaurav Kumar 6-1, 6-0.

Girls: Under-18: Lakshmi Prabha Arunkumar bt Kristi Boro 6-1, 6-1; Harleen Kaur bt Ridhima Mehra 6-0, 6-1; Sandeep Singh Rao bt Shreya Chakraborty 6-4, 6-2.

Tanushri Pandey bt Sai Bhoyar 6-4, 6-3; Paavanii Pathak bt Ameek Kiran Batth 7-5, 6-4.

Kaavya Sawhney bt Kaavya Palani 6-1, 6-0; Aditi Singh bt Catherine Bhangu 6-1, 6-1; Vanshika Choudhary bt Kaashvi Thapliyal 6-1, 6-0.

Under-16: Sai Bhoyar bt Aditi Singh 6-1, 6-0; Kaavya Palani bt Vishita Jhorar 6-0, 6-2.

Lakshmi Prabha Arunkumar bt Mahika Amit Gupta 6-2, 6-3; Paavanii Paathak bt Catherine Bhangu 6-0, 6-0.

Suhani Sabharwal bt Kristi Boro 6-3, 6-3; Tanushri Pandey bt Kuhoo Atrey 6-2, 6-1.

Nandini Dixit bt Snigdha Sran 7-5, 6-0; Sanvi Ahluwalia bt Maitreyi Phogat 6-1, 6-0.

Bhakti beats top seed Soumya

Moves in to sole lead; Vantika in second spot

NATIONAL CHESS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KARAIKUDI

Former Asian champion and second seed Bhakti Kulkarni defeated top seed Soumya Swaminathan in the seventh round to emerge the sole leader with 6.5 points in the 46th National women's chess championship here on Tuesday.

Pawn advantage

Playing white in a Grünfeld Defence game, Bhakti got a pawn advantage on the 23rd move and exerted pressure on the open queenside of her rival.

Under time pressure, Soumya blundered on the 39th move to give a minor piece advantage to Bhakti and resigned immediately.

Vantika Agrawal held the upper hand for most part against Pratyusha Boddha, but failed to capitalise and shared the point with her opponent. Vantika, with six points, now holds the sole second spot.

After the sixth round,



Stalemate: Pratyusha Boddha held Vantika Agrawal, who had the upper hand for most part. **SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

Bhakti and Vantika remained joint leaders with 5.5 points.

Important results (seventh round, TN unless specified):

Bhakti Kulkarni (AI) 6.5 bt Soumya Swaminathan (PSPB) 5; Pratyusha Boddha (AP) 5.5 drew with Vantika Agrawal (Del) 6; Michelle Catherine 5.5 drew with P.V. Nandhidhaa 5.5; S. Meenakshi (AI) 5.5 bt Swati Ghate (LIC) 5; Harshita Gudanti (AP) 5 drew with Srija Seshadri 5; Mary Ann Gomes (PSPB) 5 bt Priyanka Nutakki (AP) 4.5; J. Saranya 4 lost to Di-

nya Deshmukh (Mah) 5; S. Vijayalakshmi (AI) 4 lost to Potturi Saye Sreerza (TS) 5.

Kiran Manisha Mohanty (LIC) 5 bt M. Mahalakshmi (Rly) 4; Aarthie Ramaswamy (AI) 4.5 drew with Nisha Mohota (PSPB) 4.5; K. Priyanka 5 bt C.H. Meghna (Rly) 4; Isha Sharma (Kar) 4.5 drew with Rutuja Bakshi (Mah) 4.5; P. Bala Kannamma 5 bt Parnali S. Dharia (Mah) 4; Y. Saranya 4 lost to Nityata Jain (MP) 5; V. Nanditha (TS) 4 lost to Bagyasree Thipsay (Mah) 5; Mrudul Dehankar (Mah) 5 bt V. Rindhiya 4.

Chanda apna lehrayega!



Agni primed to sizzle

HYDERABAD: Agni, who is in fine trim, may score in the Major Mir Mujtaba Hussain Memorial Cup (1,200m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Wednesday (July 24).

1. RANI LAXMI BAI PLATE (DIV. I), (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only (Cat. II), (Terms), 1-30 p.m.: 1. Blazing Jupiter (II) Kuldeep Singh 56, 2. Brave Syera (7) Aneel 56, 3. Dimension (I3) Rohit Kumar 56, 4. Mehrzad (6) S.G. Prasad 56, 5. Prince Valiant (8) Ajeeth Kumar 56, 6. Son Of Sardar (10) Suraj Narredu 56, 7. Sun Dancer (3) Kunal Bunde 56, 8. Tremendous Desire (12) Santosh Raj 56, 9. Angel Tesoro (1) P. Sai Kumar 54.5, 10. Augenstein (9) R. Ajinkya 54.5, 11. Flying Queen (ex: Remember Forever) (2) B.R. Kumar 54.5, 12. Her Legacy (5) N. Rawal 54.5, and 13. Silver Set (4) Harinder Singh 54.5.

1. SON OF SARDAR, 2. MEHRZAD, 3. HER LEGACY
2. CUPID PLATE (1,100m), 5-y-o & over, rated upto 25 (Cat. III), 2-00: 1. Invasion (I) Ashhad Asbar 60, 2. Recumbentibus (5) R. Ajinkya 60, 3. Composure (7) C.P. Bopanna 59.5, 4. Dippy Dip (10) G. Nareish 59, 5. Agilis (3) A.A. Vikrant 58.5, 6. All Star General (12) Deepak Singh 58.5, 7. Cowboys Delight (2) Umesh 57.5, 8. Royal Dancer (8) Ajit Singh 57.5, 9. Silver Dollar (4) Gaurav Singh 56.5, 10. Negress Princess (11) P. Sai Kumar 56, 11. Golden Adara (9) Afroz Khan 53.5 and 12. New Hope (6) B.R. Kumar 50.

1. INVASION, 2. AGILIS, 3. COWBOYS DELIGHT
3. RANI LAXMI BAI PLATE (DIV. II), (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only (Cat. II), (Terms), 2-30: 1. Born Creek (12) R. Ajinkya 56, 2. City Of Blossom (II) Deepak Singh 56, 3. Golden Faraska (8) P. Sai Kumar 56, 4. Premier Action (5) Umesh 56, 5. Rathasapthami (3) Kuldeep Singh 56, 6. Sterling King (6) S.G. Prasad 56, 7. Tough And Go (2) Rafique Sk. 56, 8. Vijays Maestro (7) Gopal Singh 56, 9. Aristocrats Charm (II) Ajeeth Kumar 54.5, 10. Flamingo Fame (10) N. Rawal 54.5, 11. Red River (4) Nakhath Singh 54.5, 13. Royal Gift (9) Ajit Singh 54.5, 13. Top Saga (13) Suraj Narredu 54.5.

1. RED RIVER, 2. TOP SAGA, 3. VIJAYS MAESTRO
4. FOND HOPE PLATE (DIV. II), (1,400m), 3-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 3-05: 1. Warrior Supreme (3) Kiran Naidu 60, 2. Yanga (8) B.R. Kumar 59.5, 3. Somerset (4) Umesh 58.5, 4. Mozambique (I) Ashhad Asbar 58.5, 5. N R I Symbol (7) Kuldeep Singh 56, 6. New State (2) G. Nareish 56, 7. Hope Is Eternal (9) Ajeeth Kumar 54.5, 8. Vancouber (10) R.S. Jodha 54.5, 9. Shandaar (6) Ajit Singh 54 and 10. Euro Zone (5) C.P. Bopanna 53.5.

1. MOZAMBIQUE, 2. YANGA, 3. N R I SYMBOL
5. WARANGAL PLATE (1,600m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 3-35: 1. Egyptian Prince (16) Surya Prakash 61, 2. Amazing Script (2) Ajeeth Kumar 60, 3.

1. AGNI, 2. LAZER BEAM, 3. ROYAL DYNAMITE
8. ARISTOCRACY PLATE (1,400m), 3-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 5-05: 1. Havlock Cruise (6) Kiran Naidu 60.5, 2. Consigliori (9) Surya Prakash 60, 3. Crimson Fire (II) Rohit Kumar 59.5, 4. Darshish (3) S.G. Prasad 59, 5. Southern Meteor (15) Gaurav Singh 59, 6. Spice Up (5) Nakhath Singh 58.5, 7. Zamora (14) Ashhad Asbar 58.5, 8. Snow Castle (1) B.R. Kumar 57, 9. Supurinto (4) Ajit Singh 56, 10. Handsome Duo (12) Ajeeth Kumar 52.5, 11. Moka (13) Jitendra Singh 52.5, 12. Super Act (7) Harinder Singh 52.5, 13. Wood Bridge (10) Gopal Singh 52.5, 14. Yagastha (8) Afroz Khan 52.5, 15. Ursula (16) B. Nikhil 52 and 16. Just Like That (2) P. Sai Kumar 51.

1. CONSIGLIORI, 2. HAVLOCK CRUISE, 3. CRIMSON FIRE
Day's best: **AGNI**
Double: **MOZAMBIQUE - CONSIGLIORI**
Jkt: 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8; Mini Jkt: 5, 6, 7 & 8; Tr (I): 1, 2 & 3; (II): 3, 4 & 5 (III): 6, 7 & 8; Ta: All races.

AITA Trust to announce scholarship

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

After four days of matches in tough conditions, as rain had increased the humidity percentage in the atmosphere, the young tennis players had fruitful sessions apart from undergoing physical fitness assessment on Tuesday at the DLTA Complex here.

"We had a very nice awareness session with the expert Dr. Ankush Gupta from National Anti Doping Agency. We had the parents also attending the session, as it is an important subject. It was a very interesting session that went on for an hour," said Prashant Menon, who was coordinating the scholarship scheme for the AITA Trust.

Apart from the anti doping awareness session, the players also had the benefit of listening to a diet and nutrition expert from the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

It was indeed a struggle for some of the under-14 kids on Monday to play two matches, in high humidity, and after three days of matches. However, there was an assurance that the results would not count

as much as the way the players conducted themselves.

With the physical fitness assessment being conducted by Dharmendra Pratap Singh, affectionately called in the tennis circles as Abhimanu, who has worked with some of the best players like Somdev Devvarman and Yuki Bhambri, it was a challenge for the young players to retain their enthusiasm and energy.

The matches were played in the best of 13-game format, which effectively meant one set. It was equally hard on the three members of the selection panel - Balram Singh, Vishaal Uppal and Ankita Bhambri - to keep track of all the players, spread over 11 courts.

There will be a final fitness assessment on Wednesday morning, both on court and in the gym, before the final list of eight boys and eight girls are announced.

The first instalment of ₹50,000 is also expected to be presented to the selected players. The players are scheduled to get ₹100,000 a year, to meet their tennis requirements through the season.