

BRIEFLY

Mary to get Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan for Sindhu

New Delhi: Boxer MCMary Kom will be conferred with the Padma Vibhushan, the country's second highest civilian award, while world champion shuttler PV Sindhu will get the Padma Bhushan among eight sportspersons named for the prestigious honours on Saturday. The names of the awardees were announced by the government on the eve of the country's 71st Republic Day. The 36-year-old Mary Kom is an Olympic bronze medallist and six-time world champion, and was conferred with the Padma Bhushan in 2013 and Padma Shri in 2006. She is only the fourth sportsperson in the country to be given the Padma Vibhushan after Viswanathan Anand, Edmund Hillary and Sachin Tendulkar who all got the award in 2008. Sindhu is a silver medalist at the 2016 Rio Olympics and is the only Indian world champion in badminton. Cricketer Zaheer Khan, current Indian women's hockey team captain Rani Rampal, former men's hockey skipper M P Ganesh, ace shooter Jitu Rai, former Indian women's football team captain Oinam Bembem Devi and archer Tarundeep Rai were among the six other sportspersons who figured in the list of the 118 Padma Shri awardees.

Azam, Hafeez fifties power Pakistan

Lahore: Skipper Babar Azam and senior batsman Mohammad Hafeez stroked masterful half-centuries to steer Pakistan to a convincing nine-wicket win over a hapless Bangladesh in the second Twenty20 international in Lahore on Saturday. Babar scored a 44-ball 66 not out for his 13th half-century and Hafeez made an undefeated 49-ball 67 to guide Pakistan to a modest 137-run target in 16.4 overs at Gaddafi stadium, taking an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. Bangladesh again failed to put up a challenging total despite opener Tamim Iqbal's 53-ball 65, managing 136 for 6 in their 20 overs after winning the toss and batting for a second consecutive match. **BRIEF SCORES:** Bangladesh 136 for 6 in 20 ovs (T Iqbal 65; Md Hasnain 2/20) bt Pakistan 137 for 1 in 16.4 ovs (B Azam 66 not out, Md Hafeez 67 not out; S Islam 1/27)

Jordan to now host boxing qualifiers

Lausanne: An Olympic boxing qualifier, which was cancelled in China following the outbreak of a deadly virus that has claimed 26 lives, will be held instead in Jordan, officials said Friday. The International Olympic Committee's Boxing Task Force (BTF) announced that the Asian/Oceania qualifying event for this summer's Tokyo Olympics will be held in Amman from March 3-11. Wuhan was also supposed to host China, Taiwan, Thailand and Australia for the Group B Asian women's football qualifiers from February 3-9. However, the tournament will now be held on the same dates in Nanjing.

Tennis: Souza gets life ban for fixing

Melbourne: Former top-100 tennis player Joao Souza has been banned for life and fined USD 200,000 for match-fixing and other corruption offences, the Tennis Integrity Unit said on Saturday. An investigation found the Brazilian fixed matches at ATP Challenger and ITF Futures events in Brazil, Mexico, the United States and the Czech Republic, the anti-corruption body said. The current world number 742, who reached a career-high ranking of 69 in 2015, also failed to report corrupt approaches, destroyed evidence and "solicited other players to not use best efforts". **AGENCIES**



‘SUPPORT TEAM’

After edging out Russian Karen Khachanov 6-2, 7-6(5), 6-7(6), 6-7(7), 7-6(8) in four hours and 26 minutes, Nick Kyrgios thanked the Melbourne Arena crowd: "I was losing it mentally but my support team just wheeled me over the line, I thought I was going to lose." Kyrgios now faces Rafael Nadal in the fourth-round clash on Monday. *AP*

Aussie hero in good Nick

Kyrgios loses temper, blows two-set lead before raucous crowd puts him back on course for his longest match win

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MELBOURNE, JANUARY 25

NICK KYRGIOS put aside a bloody hand, a hamstring issue, a tiff with the chair umpire and a resilient opponent who saved a pair of match points.

When the Australian Open third-round thriller ended after about 4 1/2 hours Saturday, Kyrgios dropped to his back behind the baseline. Guess what's next for the home-crowd favorite? A much-anticipated matchup with a familiar, but decidedly not friendly, foe: No. 1 Rafael Nadal.

Kyrgios eventually got past No. 16 Karen Khachanov 6-2, 7-6(5), 6-7(6), 6-7(7), 7-6(8) with the help of 33 aces and what sounded like an entire country of supporters in the stands.

"This is just epic, man," Kyrgios said. "Like, I don't even know what's going on." Kyrgios initially was a point from winning at 6-5 in the third-set tiebreaker, then again an hour later at 8-7 in the fourth-set tiebreaker, but he needed yet another hour to pull out the victory when Khachanov pushed a backhand wide.

"I was losing it mentally, a little bit," Kyrgios said. "I thought I was going to lose, honestly."

Along the way, he hit a dive-and-roll backhand, scraped his knuckles and, after wiping the blood, was warned for a time violation. That set off Kyrgios, who explained why play was delayed and said to the chair umpire, "Are you stupid? Well, take it back then."

There are sure to be more fireworks Monday during the eighth edition of Nadal vs. Kyrgios. Even so, Kyrgios tried to downplay the animosity Saturday, saying: "Whatever happens between us, he's an amazing player. Arguably, he's the greatest of all-time."

So far, Nadal holds a 4-3 head-to-head edge, including a contentious win in their last meeting, at Wimbledon last July.

Nadal was not thrilled that Kyrgios hit a ball right at him in that match. Kyrgios took a different sort of shot at Nadal from afar the other day in Melbourne, mimicking the 33-year-old Spaniard's series of mannerisms before he hits a serve. "It's clear, of course, that when he does stuff that in my opinion is not good, I don't like (it). When he plays good tennis and he shows passion for this game, he is a positive player for

our tour, and I want my tour bigger, not smaller. So the players who make the tour bigger are important for the tour," Nadal said. "When he's ready to play his best tennis and play with passion, (he) is one of these guys. When he's doing the other stuff, of course I don't like (it)."

Here's what Nadal loved Saturday: The way he stepped things up during a 6-1, 6-2, 6-4 victory over 27th-seeded Pablo Carreno Busta that required fewer than 100 minutes.

"I needed to improve," Nadal said, "and I improved." His down-the-line lefty forehand was perfectly on-target and "impossible to read," Carreno Busta explained.

"Starting," Nadal said, "to create damage." He won 52 of 62 points on his serve. He never offered his opponent a break chance. He finished with a total of merely seven unforced errors among the match's 125 total points — and six times as many winners at 42.

"My best match of the tournament so far, without a doubt," Nadal said. Against "this Rafa," Carreno Busta said, "you feel a little powerless." "When he plays that comfortably," Carreno Busta said, "there's nothing you can do."

And to think: Nadal did this after staying up late enough to watch on TV as the man he's chasing in the Grand Slam count, Roger Federer, was pushed to a fifth-set tiebreaker before getting through to the fourth round at nearly 1 a.m. That was part of a chaotic Day 5 — including losses by Serena Williams and reigning champion Naomi Osaka, who was ousted by 15-year-old sensation Coco Gauff — and the trend continued on Day 6 on the women's side.

No. 2 Karolina Pliskova, No. 5 Elina Svitolina and No. 6 Belinda Bencic all lost in straight sets, meaning nine of the top 13 seeds already are gone. Pliskova, the 2016 U.S. Open runner-up, lost 7-6 (4), 7-6 (3) to 30th-seeded Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova. Svitolina, a semifinalist at the past two majors, was beaten 6-1, 6-2 by two-time Slam champ Garbine Muguruzza. Bencic, a semifinalist at Flushing Meadows last September, offered even less pushback while being defeated 6-0, 6-1 in 49 minutes by 28th-seeded Anett Kontaveit. Halep, who is seeded fourth, stuck around by beating Yulia Putintseva 6-1, 6-4, and next plays No. 16 Elise Mertens, who ended the Grand Slam return of American CICI Bellis 6-1, 6-7 (5), 6-0.

Nadal vs Kyrgios: A feud of ice and fire

Bad blood between Rafael Nadal and Nick Kyrgios will likely continue as the two face off for the first time this year. Before Monday's season premiere, here's a recap of the previous episodes in the rivalry.

NADAL UPSET

Kyrgios, then 19, announced his arrival with a four-set win over Nadal in the second round of the 2014 Wimbledon. Powerful aces, winners and the usual trick shots for good measure, Kyrgios treated the world No. 1 with borderline disdain, and hinted at the reasons after the match. "I saw an interview with (mother Noriella Kyrgios) saying Nadal was too good. That made me a bit angry and that helped."

ABOUT TIME

The feud was reignited in the first round-meeting at the Acapulco Open last year, when Kyrgios chipped away at Nadal's two great peeves. He kept complaining about Nadal taking too much time before service, and dusted out underarm serves — a ploy long discussed to agitate the Spaniard who stands way behind the baseline. Kyrgios saved three match points, won the match and the tournament. "He lacks respect for the crowd, his opponent and towards himself," said Nadal. "I don't think he's a bad guy, but he lacks a little respect for the public and the rival".

Kyrgios replied: "He doesn't know anything about me. He doesn't know the journey I've been through. So, I'm not going to listen at all."

UNCLE CHIPS IN

Toni Nadal came to nephew Rafa's aid, telling a radio station: "Rafa is totally right. (Kyrgios) lacks education and smartness. He should be fighting for the top-rankings and instead, he is No. 40." In a podcast, Kyrgios went after both. "Nadal is super salty. When he wins, he will credit the opponent. But as soon as I

beat him, he has no respect for me, my fans or the game. And then Uncle Toni comes out and says 'he lacks education'. Bro, I did 12 years at school, you idiot. I'm very educated. I understand you're upset that I beat your family."

SHOTS FIRED

In the heated second-round meeting at 2019 Wimbledon, Kyrgios waged mental warfare against an unusually terse Nadal. He served underarm, was handed a code violation for other antics, and argued with the chair umpire. During a rally, Kyrgios drilled a ball at Nadal's chest and in the press conference admitted that he "wanted to hit (Nadal) square in the chest." "Why would I apologize? I mean, the dude has got how many slams, how much money in the bank account? I think he can take a ball to the chest, bro"

SERVE'S THE PURPOSE

During Thursday's second-round win over Gilles Simon, Kyrgios pulled out his best Nadal imitation. Warned for taking too much time before the serve, Kyrgios tucked imaginary hair behind his ears and picked his shorts — an ode to Nadal's pre-serve ritual. It drew a chuckle from the umpire, and encouraged the Frenchman across the net to try a Rafa imitation of his own. Nadal's reaction: "I am here to play tennis. Honestly, I don't care at all. If it was funny, good."

When asked about the upcoming clash with his arch-rival, Kyrgios said, "Regardless, if we don't like each other or whatever, I think there's a layer of respect. He's one of the greatest of all time. I also read that he thinks I'm good for the sport," he said.

TRAMLINES

Monfils perplexed by 'PlayStation injury'

Great entertainer Gael Monfils charged into the fourth round of the Australian Open on Saturday before rounding on the media for a "made up" story about him injuring his hand while playing video games. The 10th seed ousted Ernests Gulbis 7-6(2) 6-4 6-3 on Melbourne Arena showing no signs of a hand injury French media reports last weekend had said resulted from him hitting the bedboard in frustration while on his PlayStation. "I say this in a funny way but it's a disgrace to be honest with you because I'm fine," the 33-year-old told reporters. "I'm in second week, playing great tennis. I never said I was hurt. Playing PlayStation, this? Come on? And it's easy, because I think I'm a good name to make up a good story like that. Now you know." The Frenchman will face fifth seed Dominic Thiem in the last 16 as he looks to reach the quarter-finals at Melbourne Park for the second time after 2016.

Barty named Young Australian of the Year

Ash Barty was named Young Australian of the Year on Saturday in recognition of her rise to number one in the world and Grand Slam triumph at last year's French Open. Barty was her country's first number one women's tennis player since her fellow indigenous Australian Evonne Goolagong Cawley in 1976 when she first reached the top spot in June last year. "Ash Barty is the world's number one tennis player, a champion athlete and an extraordinary young woman doing our nation proud," said Danielle Roche, who chaired the National Australia Day Council. "Her achievements are inspiring young Australians to follow their dreams." Barty is in Melbourne for the Australian Open and will play American Alison Riske on Sunday for a place in the quarter-finals as she continues her quest to give her country a first homegrown champion at the tournament since 1978. The award, handed out on the eve of the Australia Day national holiday, was also won by Lleyton Hewitt in 2003 - the year after he won his second Grand Slam title at Wimbledon.

ON A ROLL

15 Win-streak for No. 17 Andrey Rublev after finishing the Davis Cup 4-0 last November, winning titles at Doha and Adelaide this month and now reaching the fourth round of the Australian Open.

KEY RESULTS

Men's third round: No. 1 R Nadal beat No. 27 PC Busta 6-1, 6-2, 6-4; No. 5 D Thiem beat No. 29 T Fritz 6-2, 6-4, 6-7 (5), 6-4; No. 10 G Monfils beat E Gulbis 7-6 (2), 6-4, 6-3; No. 17 A Rublev beat No. 11 D Goffin 2-6, 7-6 (3), 6-4, 7-6 (4); No. 23 N Kyrgios beat No. 16 K Khachanov 6-2, 7-6 (5), 6-7 (6), 6-7 (7), 7-6 (8). **Women's third round:** No. 4 S Halep beat Y Putintseva 6-1, 6-4; No. 28 A Kontaveit beat No. 6 B Bencic 6-0, 6-1; No. 30 A Pavlyuchenkova beat No. 2 K Pliskova 7-6 (4), 7-6 (3); No. 17 A Kerber beat C Giorgi 6-2, 6-7 (4), 6-3; No. 16 E Mertens beat C Bellis 6-1, 6-7 (5), 6-0; I Swiatek beat No. 19 D Vekic 7-5, 6-3.

Generally I'm happy outside the court, happy on the court, happy in life. Then I think you play your best. When you have stress outside, when you have stress that I had last year with all sorts of things, you're not going to perform your best. I have a pretty calm life right now, which is nice for me."

ALEXANDER ZVEREV, ON REGAINING CONFIDENCE AFTER LOSING ALL THREE OF HIS SINGLES MATCHES AT THE INAUGURAL ATP CUP

Wood's all-round show puts England in control

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JOHANNESBURG, JANUARY 25

MARK WOOD starred as England took a huge stride towards securing a series win when they dominated the second day of the fourth and final Test against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium on Saturday.

England posted a first innings total of 400 before reducing South Africa to 88 for six by the close. Two century partnerships and a boisterous last-wicket stand of 82 took England to a total which almost certainly put the match beyond the reach of South Africa, who need a win to level the series.

Then it was the turn of the bowlers, led by Wood, as England pushed for a third successive win in a series which they lead 2-1.

South Africa finished the day still 312 runs behind, with Quinton de Kock their only consistent batsman during the series, seeking to give the innings some respectability on Sunday.

Wood made the first breakthrough when he had Pieter Malan caught behind for 15. He followed up with the wicket of the recalled Temba Bavuma, then finished the day on a high when nightwatchman Anrich Nortje was caught at gully in the last over of the day. He had figures of three for 21.

Sam Curran, Ben Stokes and Chris Woakes picked up a wicket each. England's total was built around three big partnerships.

The first two, 107 for the first wicket between Zak Crawley and Dom Sibley and 101 for the fifth wicket between captain Joe Root and Ollie Pope, were compiled by recognised batsmen. The last wicket stand probably hurt South Africa the most. Wood and Stuart Broad, batting at numbers 10 and 11, hit seven sixes between them and put on 82 off only 50 balls.

The Wood-Broad stand was devastating for South Africa as England turned a respectable total into one which by the end of the day looked too big for the hosts, who have yet to make 300 in an innings in the series.

South Africa's bowling, with the exception of Nortje, was largely toothless. Nortje bowled tirelessly at high pace and took five for 110, his first five-wicket haul in Test cricket.

Nortje dismissed both Pope for 56 and Root for 59 after the pair had dominated the first hour of play, adding 66 runs to England's overnight total of 192 for four.

Thanks largely to Nortje, England were reduced to 318 for nine. Then came 41 minutes of mayhem as Wood and Broad indulged themselves against some mediocre bowling when Nortje was out of the attack.

Captain Faf du Plessis resorted to placing



Broad and Wood's last-wicket stand of 82 took England to 400. *Reuters*

most of his fielders on the boundary but Wood (35 not out) and Broad (43) either hit over them or found the gaps.

In contrast, South African openers Dean Elgar and Malan could only score 11 runs in 12 overs before tea as they made a cautious start to their innings. They lifted the tempo after the

interval but Wood's pace undid Malan to end an opening stand of 29. It proved to be South Africa's biggest partnership of a miserable day, while England left the field in high spirits.

Stokes fined

England vice captain Ben Stokes was fined and given a demerit point on Saturday for swearing at a fan as he walked off the field after getting out. The International Cricket Council said Stokes was charged under its code of conduct for "use of an audible obscenity during an international match."

The star all-rounder was fined 15 percent of his match fee. It was his first demerit point in the last two years. Players who accumulate four disciplinary points in a two-year period are banned. Stokes accepted the charge and there was no need for a formal hearing, the ICC said. The incident happened on the first day.

Stokes had been dismissed for 2 and was heading up the players' tunnel when he was heard on live TV coverage hurling two expletives in the direction of a fan. Stokes, clearly angered at something that was said to him, shouted back "come and say it to me outside the ground" before using the two expletives. **BRIEF SCORES:** South Africa 88 for 6 (de Kock 32*, Wood 3-21) trail England 400 (Crawley 66, Root 59, Pope 56) by 312 runs

Versus Kiwis, India aim for two in two at Eden Park

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AUCKLAND, JANUARY 25

INDIA ARE unlikely to change a winning combination but a few changes in the bowling department won't come as a surprise when the visitors take on New Zealand in the second T20 at the high-scoring Eden Park here on Sunday.

Jasprit Bumrah was the only bowler on either side to concede less than eight runs per over at the peculiar shaped ground with short boundaries in the series opener on Friday. Both Mohammad Shami (0/53 in 4 overs) and Shardul Thakur (1/44 in 3 overs) were taken to the cleaners with New Zealand batsmen using their pace to collect boundaries at will.

Since Shami is expected to retain his place in the playing eleven, Thakur might make way for Navdeep Saini. However, Saini, with his extra pace, too could go for big runs at the small ground. It remains to be seen whether India stick to three specialist pacers and two spinners combination or bring in an extra tweaker in Kuldeep Yadav to partner Yuzvendra Chahal and Ravindra Jadeja. Washington Sundar is the other spin option India have. If India do

play an extra tweaker, all-rounder Shivam Dube will be third fast bowling option.

On the batting front, Virat Kohli was a pleased skipper as the much scrutinised middle-order delivered for the team under pressure. Shreyas Iyer solidified at his position at number four with an unbeaten 58 off 29 balls. It was a near perfect start of the tour for the away team which chased down 204 with relative ease to go 1-0 up in the five-match series. Iyer has figured in all of India's 12 T20Is since September last year, averaging 34.14 in 11 innings with two half-centuries and strike-rate 154.19.

As Manish Pandey and Dube alternate in finishing duties, aided by KL Rahul's wicket-keeping skills, India's T20 batting line-up finally seems set in the short term barring unforeseen changes. New Zealand were left pondering about a shortage of 10-15 runs to their total as well as missed chances in the field. In turn, the Black Caps themselves now have to come to terms with India's adaptation if they are to prevent an early 2-0 lead within three days. India had also won here in February 2019, albeit it was a three-match T20I series they had eventually lost 1-2.

LIVE on Star Sports from 1:30pm