

## TV PICKS

**All-England Badminton Championships:** Star Sports 3, 3.30 p.m.  
**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6 p.m. & 8.30 p.m.  
**ISL:** (Final): Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



## Czech Olympic champion Dana Zatopkova dead

PRAGUE  
Dana Zatopkova, the 1952 Olympic javelin champion and wife of four-time Olympic champion Emil Zatopek, died at the age of 97 on Friday, the Czech Olympic Committee said. Besides the gold from the Helsinki Olympics, Zatopkova won the Olympic silver in Rome in 1960. In 1958, she set the World record of 55.73m at the age of 35. She was European champion in 1954 and 1958. AFP



## A lovely gesture by Cavaliers' Love

LOS ANGELES  
Cleveland Cavaliers forward Kevin Love has committed \$100,000 to help workers at the team's arena and support staff impacted by the suspension of the NBA season. The dearth of games will be a big financial blow to the legion of ticket-takers, ushers and food vendors who keep the events running but don't get paid when they aren't working. "... I'm committing \$100,000 through the @KevinLoveFund in support of the @Cavs arena and support staff that had a sudden life shift due to the suspension of the NBA season," Love wrote on Instagram. AFP

## Bengaluru races cancelled

BENGALURU  
In view of the notifications, directions, advisories issued by the Government of India and State Government Authorities regarding precautionary measures to be taken for Novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the Stewards of the Bangalore Turf Club Limited have decided to cancel all the remaining Bangalore Winter races (On-course races) and suspend all inter venue betting (off-course) operations from March, 13, 2020. till further notice.

## Mane in joint lead

KOLKATA  
Order of Merit leader Udayan Mane was in joint lead with three others at 10-under 130 at the halfway stage of the Bengal Open golf championship at the Tollygunge Club on Friday.  
**Top scores:** 130-Udayan Mane (67, 63), Khalin Joshi (67, 63), Om Prakash Chouhan (65, 65), Aadil Bedi (65, 65); 131-N.Thngaraja (65, 66), Mukesh Kumar (66, 65), Digvijay Singh (62, 69); 132-Dipankar Kaushal (70, 62); 133-S. Chikkarangappa (68, 65).

## Harika stays in seventh place

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LAUSANNE

Indian Grandmaster Dronavalli Harika drew with Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk in the 10th round to remain seventh on the points table of the FIDE Women's Grand Prix chess tournament here. Harika has five points. Harika, who was in the lead in the middle part of the tournament, is out of contention for the top prize.

**The results: (Tenth round):** D. Harika 5 drew with Anna Muzychuk (Ukr) 5.5; Alina Kashlinskaya (Rus) 5.5 drew with Nana Dzagnidze (Geo) 6.5; Antoaneta Stefanova (Bul) 5 bt Anna Muzychuk (Ukr) 5; Zhansaya Abdumalik (Kaz) 6 bt Pia Cramling (Swe) 4; Alexandra Goryachkina (Rus) 5.5 bt Ju Wenjun (Chn) 4; Marie Sebag (Fra) 3.5 drew with Alexandra Kosteniuk (Rus) 3.5.



Champions: Saurashtra team celebrates after trouncing Bengal in the Ranji Trophy final. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

## Saurashtra wins maiden Ranji title

Unadkat springs into action to put the skids on Bengal's innings

Y.B. SARANGI  
RAJKOT

A magnificent tale of grind and toil came to a halt as Saurashtra, led by an inspiring Jaydev Unadkat, stopped Bengal on the fifth and final day to win its maiden title and bring the Ranji Trophy to its spiritual home on Friday.

At the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium here, Bengal, starting from 354 for six and needing 72 runs to overhaul the host's first innings aggregate of 425 runs, could not hold out against Unadkat's intensity and fell short by 44 runs.

Unadkat took two wickets for 12 runs in seven overs and effected a run out as Bengal could only manage 27 runs in 14 overs to total 381.

The match ended in a draw, with the home side posting 105 for four in its second essay and Saurashtra took the title in its fourth final appearance in last eight seasons on the basis of gaining the first innings lead.

The first 83 minutes of the morning belonged to Unadkat.

## Able leadership

The lanky left-arm seamer exhibited exemplary leadership to inspire his team to win the coveted trophy, named after Ranjitsinhji of Jamnagar.

Unadkat dealt the first blow when he trapped dangerous Anustup Majumdar (63) in front with a beauty in the sixth over of the day. Two

balls later, he ran Akash Deep out freakishly to swing the match in the host's favour.

Akash's run out hampered Bengal's progress and hurt its morale.

Wicketkeeper Avi Barot's throw missed the stumps following Unadkat's delivery. Noticing that Akash was still out of his crease marginally, the Saurashtra skipper picked up the ball and hit the stumps successfully. Television replays showing Akash's lack of effort in putting his bat or foot inside the line baffled many.

Even as Arnab Nandi (40 not out, 126b, 5x4, 1x6) fought a lone battle, Dharmendrasinh Jadeja claimed Mukesh Kumar's wicket and Unadkat had Ishan Porel lbw

to trigger wild celebrations in the home camp.

## The scores:

**Saurashtra — 1st innings:** 425  
**Bengal — 1st innings:** Sudip Gharami c Vishvaraj b Dharmendrasinh 26, Abhimanyu Easwaran lbw b Mankad 9, Sudip Chatterjee c Vishvaraj b Dharmendrasinh 81, Manoj Tiwary lbw b Jani 35, Wriddhiman Saha b Mankad 64, Anustup Majumdar lbw b Unadkat 63, Shahbaz Ahmed b Sakariya 16, Arnab Nandi (not out) 40, Akash Deep (run out) 0, Mukesh Kumar c Vishvaraj b Dharmendrasinh 5, Ishan Porel lbw b Unadkat 1, Extras (b-20, lb-14, nb-1, w-1, pen-5) 41, Total (in 161 overs) 381

**Fall of wickets:** 1-35, 2-35, 3-124, 4-225, 5-241, 6-263, 7-361, 8-361, 9-370

**Saurashtra bowling:** Unadkat 37-10-96-2, Sakariya 28-10-

55-1, Dharmendrasinh 52-14-114-3, Mankad 21-7-45-2, Chirag Jani 23-8-32-1.

**Saurashtra — 2nd innings:** Harvik Desai c Abhishek (sub) b Shahbaz 21, Avi Barot c Shreyan (sub) b Chatterjee 39, Vivhvarajsinh Jadeja c Saha b Akash 17, Arpit Vasavada c Abhishek (sub) b Shahbaz 3, Sheldon Jackson (not out) 12, Extras (b-8, lb-4, nb-1) 13, Total (for three wickets in 34 overs) 105

**Fall of wickets:** 1-38, 2-65, 3-82, 4-105

**Bengal bowling:** Porel 3-1-15-0, Mukesh 12-2-33-0, Shahbaz 14-5-32-2, Akash 4-0-13-1, Chatterjee 1-1-0-1.

**Result:** Saurashtra won on the basis of gaining first innings lead

**Man of the match:** Arpit Vasavada.

## Australia crushes New Zealand

Kiwis restrict Aussie batsmen, but stumble in chase

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SYDNEY

Australia crushed New Zealand by 71 runs in the first One-Day International at an empty Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday.

After New Zealand had kept the home side to 258 for seven, the Australian bowling attack dismissed the visitors for 187.

Cricket Australia barred spectators from the match owing to the coronavirus pandemic, leading to the strange sight of players acknowledging milestones to empty grandstands.

It was also revealed that Australian fast bowler Kane Richardson was in quarantine early in the day and had been tested for the virus after feeling unwell.

However, he was subsequently cleared and returned to the ground to rejoin his teammates.

Australia skipper Aaron Finch chose to bat, and the

home side at one stage was looking at a score in excess of 300 following a superb opening partnership by Finch and David Warner.

But once Warner (67) and Finch (60) were dismissed,

the Australian innings lost momentum and New Zealand clawed its way back into the game, despite a late flourish from Marnus Labuschagne, who made 56 off 52 balls.

## SCOREBOARD

**Australia:** D. Warner c Sodhi b Ferguson 67, A. Finch c Latham b Santner 60, S. Smith b Santner 14, D. Short c Nicholls b Sodhi 5, M. Labuschagne c Taylor b Ferguson 56, M. Marsh c Guptill b Sodhi 27, A. Carey c Bould b Sodhi 1, P. Cummins (not out) 14, M. Starc (not out) 9; Extras (lb-3, nb-2): 5. Total (for 7 wks. in 50 overs): 258.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-124, 2-145, 3-146, 4-165, 5-224, 6-226, 7-248.

**New Zealand bowling:** Bould 10-0-37-0, Ferguson 9-0-60-2, Neesham 7-0-44-0, Santner 10-0-34-2, de Grandhomme 6-0-29-0, Sodhi 8-0-51-3.

**New Zealand:** M. Guptill c Smith b Cummins 40, H. Nicholls c Carey b Hazlewood 10, K.

Williamson b Zampa 19, R. Taylor c Starc b Marsh 4, T. Latham c Short b Hazlewood 38, J. Neesham c Carey b Cummins 8, C. de Grandhomme c Starc b Zampa 25, M. Santner c Cummins b Marsh 14, I. Sodhi (not out) 14, L. Ferguson b Marsh 1, T. Bould c & b Cummins 5; Extras (lb-5, w-4): 9. Total (in 41 overs): 187.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-28, 2-64, 3-69, 4-82, 5-96, 6-147, 7-160, 8-170, 9-180.

**Australia bowling:** Starc 7-0-33-0, Hazlewood 10-0-37-2, Cummins 8-2-25-3, Marsh 7-0-29-3, Zampa 8-0-50-2, Smith 1-0-8-0.

**Toss:** Australia.  
**Man-of-the-Match:** Mitchell Marsh.

Australia won by 71 runs.

## 23 NCOEs to be set up

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Twenty-three National Centres of Excellence (NCOE) will be set up across the country which will merge all existing schemes presently operating in the Regional Centres and Academic Institutions of Sports Authority of India (SAI).

According to the decisions taken at SAI's governing body meeting here on Friday, the government has identified 14 priority sports that will be focused on.

The NCOEs will have state-of-the-art infrastructure, sports science support and diet as per the requirement of an athlete without monetary ceiling.

The SAI press release said that, "The general body also approved the appointment of more than 350 sports science experts and more than 100 specialised mess and kitchen staff, including

chef and nutritionists, in different NCOEs to ensure best quality diet and sports science facilities to all.

"The meeting also approved construction of 25 hostels, creating an additional residential capacity for 8000 people in different NCOEs.

"It also approved sports infrastructure upgradation projects of ₹56 crore for NCOEs at Patiala and Bengaluru and procurement of sports science equipment worth ₹80 crore."

Approval was also granted to club 21 Special Area Games (SAG) Centres under SAI training centres (STCs).

"The funding for NCOEs and STCs will be under the Khelo India Scheme of the Ministry. However, the salary of coaches and administrative staff will continue to be borne by SAI through block grant," the release said.

## I wanted to do it for the team: Unadkat

The side has come a long way playing lots of finals, says the skipper

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
RAJKOT

Saurashtra skipper Jaydev Unadkat on Friday said the self-belief gained from the tough semifinal win over Gujarat helped his side turn the tide in its favour on the last day of the Ranji Trophy final.

Unadkat said Saurashtra, which had some players who were sick, was keen to win its maiden title. "Though the energy levels were down, I think the way we won the semifinal gave us belief.

"We still had a lot of hope and that is why we went through," said an emotionally-charged Unadkat.

## Top achievement

For Unadkat, winning the Ranji Trophy was the top achievement. "It has never gotten bigger than this. Not just my achievement, it's my State's achievement.

"We have had a glorious cricketing legacy to carry as well. The team has come a long way, playing lots of finals."

The left-arm pacer, who topped the bowling chart with 67 wickets, said his hunger was stronger than ever. "I have been working harder than many guys. It was not just the IPL on my mind at any time.

"I wanted to do it for the team. I wanted to prove to myself that I don't want to play the game for something other than cricket."

India Test batsman Pujara, who battled health issues while putting up a crucial century partnership with Arpit Vasavada, said it was a tough innings. "I'm someone who likes to lead from the front, but here I had to bat lower down the order.

## Frustrating

"It was frustrating. On day two when I walked in, it was not easy. I felt a blackout, so it was tough. But you have to be motivated and set a good example.

"This was probably one of my slowest innings in the domestic circuit. It was a tough pitch. Needed to put my head down and play a crucial knock."

On winning the championship, Pujara said, "When we came to finals last year, we had discussed that we had the potential to win. We decided to work hard for the trophy."

Pujara said he expected Unadkat to return to the Indian side. "Jaydev was modest that he would not be thinking about the Indian call but I will be surprised if he is not picked in the Indian team," said Pujara.



The coveted one: Seasoned campaigners Jaydev Unadkat and Cheteshwar Pujara are pleased as punch as they hold the Ranji Trophy. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

## Road to Wimbledon events cancelled

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Road to Wimbledon under-14 tennis tournaments, scheduled to be played in Kolkata and Delhi, for boys and girls in the under-14 age group, from March 14, have been cancelled, owing to the outbreak of coronavirus around the world.

"We will with work the All India Tennis Association in exploring alternative selection options for the Road

to Wimbledon UK Finals in August 2020, currently planned to go ahead," said a release from the All England Tennis Club.

"We were very much looking forward to working with the very best and most promising young players aged under-14 to introduce them to grass court tennis.

"However, the grass courts will still be there and we hope to come back next year instead," the release said.

## ATK and Chennaiyin in the ultimate battle

Both teams have won two titles each and will go for a record third

## ISL FINAL

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA  
FATORDA

Fans constitute an essential part of a football game, the players drawing energy from the passion generated in the stands. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the final of the sixth edition of the Hero-Indian Super League between ATK and Chennaiyin FC at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here will be held behind closed doors. Both sides are going for a record third title.

The teams have taken different routes to the summit clash, adding intensity to the contest.

## More consistent

ATK has been more consistent than its rival, never dropping out of the top four in the league stage. After spending two forgettable seasons, the Kolkata outfit benefited from its decision of recalling Antonio Lopez Habas, the Spanish coach who orchestrated its trophy triumph in the inaugural season.

Under Habas, ATK regained its winning rhythm,



Battlelines drawn: ATK's Roy Krishna, left, and coach Antonio Habas, right, will match wits with Chennaiyin FC's Lucian Goian, second from left, and coach Owen Coyle. ■ AFP

thanks to Roy Krishna and David Williams who proved devastating in the frontline. The Fiji-Australia combination accounted for 22 goals, with Krishna contributing 15.

The final will be a test of the attacking prowess of the two teams. Chennaiyin owes it to the coaching acumen of Owen Coyle for reaching this far. The Irishman inspired one of the most remarkable

turnarounds in the history of the tournament as Chennaiyin was lying in the penultimate spot at one stage.

## Lethal combo

The key to the revival was the strikeforce of Lithuanian Nerijus Valskis (14 goals) and Brazilian Rafael Crivellaro (7), who emerged as one of the most successful combinations. ATK and Chennaiyin

in have met 14 times, the former winning six matches and the latter four. The other four games have ended in draws. In the current season, ATK beat Chennaiyin away but lost 3-1 at home.

The two sides have played two finals each and won on both occasions. It remains to be seen which emerges as the most successful team in the history of the ISL.

## 'Keep a cool head and a fiery heart'

ATK head coach Habas' advice to his players

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA  
FATORDA

ATK head coach Antonio Lopez Habas said keeping "a cool head and a fiery heart" is the mantra to succeed against the challenge of Chennaiyin FC in the ISL final.

"This is a league with playoffs and in this format we have to get our best form in the final.

"So I would advice my team to play with a cool head and a fiery heart to

achieve the target," Habas said on the eve of the final.

When asked about the inconsistencies visible in some of his side's performance, Habas retorted by saying, "If there are no problems then we can do a Liverpool."

## Learn from mistakes

The ATK head coach said this referring to Liverpool FC's outstanding run in the Premier League. "But again, Liverpool lost to Atletico Madrid (in Champions League).

This is football and we have to analyse the mistakes and correct them as far as possible to bring up a better performance," he said.

When it came to motivating the side in a match that will be played closed doors, Habas said football is not bigger than health issues. "This (the Corona Virus scare) is a worldwide problem and health is more important than football. We have to accept that and move on," he said.

## We are not here by accident: Coyle

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
FATORDA

Chennaiyin FC head coach Owen Coyle said his team's hard work has helped it reach the final.

"I think we have worked hard to reach the final and we are not here by accident. We have been a team that had to win every week because of the form of the others... Odisha was winning, Mumbai was winning and obviously the top three teams (ATK, FC Goa and Bengaluru FC) were at the top," Coyle

said. "I think we showed an incredible mentality and we don't want to come this far just to stop there. It has been an exciting season and we want to make sure we finish on a high," he added.

Coyle, who replaced John Gregory as the head coach with Chennaiyin at the bottom of the table after four unproductive rounds, said the team gained momentum after the postponement of the match against NorthEast United FC (scheduled for December 12 but postponed be-

cause of the CAA protests in Guwahati).

"That postponed match gave me a good time to assess my players in the ensuing break," Coyle said. "We managed a 1-1 draw against Jamshedpur FC in the first match under my charge and I would have fielded the same side again but for the break which allowed me to bring the necessary changes in the side to beat Kerala Blasters (on December 20). This has been a key factor in the team's turnaround," said Coyle.