

Lakshya Sen to spearhead India's challenge at World Junior Badminton Championships

NEW DELHI, OCT 6 /-/- Reigning Asian Junior champion Lakshya Sen will spearhead India's campaign at the BWF World Junior Badminton Championships, to be held in Markham, Canada from November 5-18.

A 24-member squad including 19 boys and 11 girls will represent India in the tournament with junior world No. 5 Jakkha Vaishnavi Reddy leading the girls' squad. The BAI has organised a mandatory preparatory camp for the players selected for the World Juniors in Panchkula from October 16-31. The team members were selected on the basis of ranking points they obtained in the back-to-back All India Ranking Selection Tournaments, the Yonex Sunrise Badminton Tournament at Chandigarh and the Yonex Sunrise Krishna Khaitan Memorial Tournament at Panchkula - in September. The selection committee considered the cumulative points from both the ranking tournaments for picking the players with



Kiran George leading the pack with 700 points among boys. In fact, the Kerala boy was the second spot on head-to-head match-ups. In the women's singles, Malvika Bansod, the winner of both events, from Maharashtra led the points table with 1000 points with Pulella Gayatri Gopichand, the runner-up in Panchkula and a semifinalist at Chandigarh, was placed behind Malvika at 775 points. Men's double campaign will be led by Dhruv Kapila and G

Krishna Prasad with 1000 points under their belt and Sahiti Bandi and R Tanushree in the women's category with 776 points. Whereas mixed doubles team will be led by Karnataka mate, Sai Krishna Sai Kumar and Ashwini Bhatt, who secured 852 cumulative points.

The squads:
Boys: Lakshya Sen (AAP), Kiran George (KER), Alap Mishra (MP), Priyanshu Rajawat (MP), Dhruv Kapila (PNB), G. Krishna Prasad (AP), K. Manjith Singh (MNP), R. Dinu Singh (MNP), Sai Krishna Sai Kumar (KTR), Sai Krishna Sai Kumar Podde (TS), Vishnu vardhan Goud (TS), Navneet Bokka (TS), Akshan Shetty (Mah).
Girls: Jakkha Vaishnavi Reddy (TS), Malvika Bansod (AAI), P. Gayatri Gopichand (TS), Purve Bhat (AI), Sahiti Bandi (TS), R. Tanushree (TN), Aditi Bhatt (UTR), Tanisha Crasto (Goa), R. Ashwini Bhatt (KTR), Shrishti Jupaddi (TS), Rashi Lambe (Mah), (PTI)

CoA meeting: BCCI reduces its complimentary passes to half

NEW DELHI, OCT 6 /-/- The Committee of Administrators on Saturday sanctioned 600 extra complimentary tickets from BCCI's share to the staging units for the remainder of the India series after multiple associations expressed their displeasure. As per new constitution, 90 per cent tickets were supposed to be released for general public with only 10 percent complimentary passes for the staging associations. The BCCI had mandatory five per cent complimentary tickets for its sponsors and broadcasters. The terms and conditions led to an unrest as Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association gave up their hosting rights for Indore ODI on October 24. The CAB and TNCA also expressed their inability to host 100 membership passes comprising life annual and associate members. The CoA feels that aggrieved associations should be happy now.

hosting State Association is maximised." The CoA wrote in a communication to state units which is in possession of PTI. Accordingly, the BCCI will take 184 hospital passes and 420 best category per match during the series. There was relief for CAB as well as membership tickets won't be categorised in the 10 per cent allocation as per the new constitution. "Please note that all tickets sold/allocated to members of the host State Association as per the terms and conditions of their membership will not be counted towards the prescribed 10 per cent limit as mentioned above," the CoA wrote. This particular part was for CAB which has 100 membership passes comprising life annual and associate members. The CoA feels that aggrieved associations should be happy now.

Justin Rose to play with Irish pop star Niall Horan at Hero Pro-Am in London

LONDON, OCT 6 /-/- World No. 2 Justin Rose will play with Irish pop star Niall Horan at the Pro-Am at the British Masters for his selected cause for Cancer Research UK Kids & Teens on October 10. Rose, the tournament host, was thrilled to welcome Horan on board for the Sky Sports British Masters, with the pop star joining the Hero Pro-Am at Walton Heath. A day before the Pro-Am, Rose will be joined by Hero Indian Open champion Matt Wallace, Paul Dunne and Andrew Burt. The two other players for a night of action-packed golf at the Hero Challenge to be staged at the iconic Canary Wharf on October 9.

Vishwakarma stuns favourite Kadhe to emerge champion, Mahak defends title at Fenesta Nationals

NEW DELHI, OCT 6 /-/- An energetic Vishwakarma overpowered his favourite and top seed Arjun Kadhe with his thunderous returns to emerge new national tennis champion while Mahak Jain outlasted Natsasha Pallu to defend her women's singles crown at Fenesta Nationals here Saturday. Left-handed Vishwakarma's impressive run culminated with a 6-2 7-2 win over Kadhe, who is ranked 39th, in a humble 1221st ranking of the new champion. The gap in ranking was huge but there was no gulf as far as quality of tennis is concerned. Vishwakarma emerged in terms of the men's singles final. The 23-year-old from Varanasi moved the Pune-based Kadhe, who was part of the Indian Davis Cup team in Sep, to a reserve member on both sides of the court, with his deep and powerful returns. Kadhe mostly put back short balls, which were easily sent back by Vishwakarma, who also used angles very effectively. Kadhe usually has a solid backhand but it did not work on Saturday with feisty returns from Vishwakarma not giving him the time. He always had to rush to his shots, which did not allow him to hit the ball as fluently as he had been doing in previous matches. "I was very confident in the first set but the energy dropped a bit in the second. I was low on energy, so I did not when I cramping when I was up 4-2. But I am glad I pulled it off," said an exhausted Vishwakarma, who could barely stand after receiving the winner's trophy and even missed the photo shoot due to severe cramps. Kadhe, who ended his runner-up for the third time at the Nationals, said it was a "tough" day for him. "He hit the ball nice and I was good only in patches.

Ahmed Shehzad gets four-month ban over failed doping test

LAHORE, OCT 6 /-/- Pakistan's former Test batsman Ahmed Shehzad has been banned for four months over a failed drug test, authorities said Friday, after he pleaded guilty to violating anti-doping rules. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) punished the 26-year-old after he tested positive for a "prohibited substance" during the domestic Pakistan Cup earlier this year. Shehzad "has been banned for four months effective from 10th July 2018... for violating the board's anti-doping rules", the PCB said in a statement. He "accepts that he has committed the violations of the PCB rules, but had no intent to cheat or enhance his performance," it added. Authorities did not identify the substance over which Shehzad was banned. "I inadvertently consumed a medicine which as an experienced cricketer I should have refrained from," Shehzad said on Twitter after the decision was announced. "This is a lesson for me... and I hope to make a strong comeback from here." The right-handed opener, who was suspended in July over the failed test, will also deliver anti-doping lectures "as part of his rehabilitation process", the PCB said. The Lahore-born Shehzad played 13 Tests, 81 one-day internationals and 87 Twenty20s for Pakistan, but has failed to impress selectors recently. His last appearance for Pakistan was in a T20 against Scotland in June.

Anfield hoodoo haunts City in top-of-table Clash against Liverpool

LONDON, OCT 6 /-/- Billions of pounds of investment from Manchester City's Abu Dhabi owners over the past decade has reaped three Premier League titles and transformed the blue half of Manchester from "noisy neighbours" into the dominant side in the city. However, the Premier League champions travel to Liverpool on Sunday hoping to finally achieve something that has so far been beyond City's cash-rich era - a win at Anfield. City were last victorious at Anfield in 2003 and have lost 12 of their last 17 visits.



The most recent of those saw City's Champions League dreams ended for another year in the cauldron of a European night on Merseyside with a 3-0 quarter-final first leg loss to Liverpool. Just accustomed to losing, City boss Pep Guardiola has been defeated on all three of his last five away trips. Jurgen Klopp faces one of the few managers who can boast a winning record at Anfield. Klopp has won seven games since the Premier League season, no knockout blow can be guaranteed. Just with both sides only separated by City's superior goal difference at the top of the table, Klopp has just two points each so far this season, the clash will go a long way to telling if Liverpool are capable of knocking Guardiola's men

off their perch. "It's very tough, probably the toughest away game of the season in the Premier League," admitted City midfielder Ilkay Gundogan, who worked under Klopp for four years at Borussia Dortmund. "But as a player there is not much more that you can achieve than playing these type of games, because when you play them or when the atmosphere is like that, you know it's a big thing." While City are seeking to consolidate themselves as the dominant force in English football by becoming the first side in a decade to retain the title, Klopp's task is to end Liverpool's near three-decade wait to win the league. When Kenny Dalglish led the Reds to 18th league title in 1989-90,

Klopp believes Napoli loss can spur Liverpool against Man City

LONDON, OCT 6 /-/- Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp reckons a midweek Champions League defeat by Napoli could inspire his side when they face Premier League Cup draw and Manchester City in a top-of-the-table clash at Anfield on Sunday. Liverpool are second on Merseyside on goal difference alone but, for all the talk of Klopp's men, so far this season, the Merseysiders have not won in three games - a League Cup draw and Premier League loss to Chelsea followed by Wednesday's 1-0 defeat by Napoli. But having had time to reflect on that reverse in Italy, Klopp told a pre-match news conference on Friday: "After the game it felt much more clear they deserved to win than after the analysis."



Guardiola vows City will stay on the attack against Liverpool

LONDON, OCT 6 /-/- Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has insisted he will stay true to his attacking beliefs when the English champions visit Liverpool on Sunday despite several defeats by the Reds last season. Guardiola's team beat three times by Jurgen Klopp's men during the 2017/18 campaign, although his side did win the fourth meeting in the league at the Etihad. But despite Liverpool's German boss having such a good record against his Catalan counterpart, Guardiola has insisted he will not adopt a markedly more defensive style when table-toppers City face the Reds, second only on goal difference, at Anfield in the Premier League on Sunday.



"We have to defend but it's not in the approach because it's boring and we have to be ourselves," Guardiola told reporters on Friday. "These kind of games we have to do ourselves," he added. "If we lose then congrats to Jurgen, but we try to improve and go again. Kevin De Bruyne could be involved on Sunday after returning to training a month ahead of schedule. The Belgian star has not played this season, having injured his knee in the summer. De Bruyne was due to be sidelined for three months and, just last week, the City playmaker claimed he was targeting the first Manchester derby - in mid-November - for his comeback. But, just eight weeks after the injury, De Bruyne is back in the squad and Guardiola will make a decision on the eve of the game whether to put him on the bench. "He made a part of the training session today he is training with us. We will see tomorrow," explained Guardiola. Meanwhile Guardiola has teased Liverpool officials to ensure there are no reports of the attack on City's team

against Manchester City, including both legs of a Champions League quarter-final last season. But Klopp rejected suggestions he had some special hold over Pep Guardiola's side. "Obviously we won the last three games against Manchester City. After none of these games you go into the dressing room and think, 'Now we've got it, now we know how to beat Manchester City', because there is no real way, no one thing that you have to do," said Klopp. "You have to be ready, you need a fantastic football team - which thank God I have - with outstanding character, ready to be really brave, ready to make mistakes. Then it can work. That's all we need to know. When somebody's telling me 'Good luck for Sunday', I think always, 'Unfortunately we need it'. But that's no problem; if you work hard, you earn it."

Tim Paine-led Australia look to move on from sandpaper-gate

DUBAI, OCT 6 /-/- Australia's hopes of winning back respect and moving on from a ball-tampering scandal that plunged the team into disgrace face their first test on Sunday when Tim Paine's rebuilding side meets Pakistan in the series-opener in Dubai.

With former captain Steven Smith, and opening batsmen David Warner and Cameron Bancroft, serving suspensions for "sandpaper-gate", the Australians have brought a vastly different squad to the Middle East from the one that was belted 3-1 in South Africa six months ago. A whole third of the squad has changed. The Emirates have yet to play a test, and Paine's side would feature up to four uncapped players who they head out into the Dubai heat against Sarfaraz Ahmed-captained Pakistan. Finishing first supported by a new vice-captain in all-rounder Mitchell Marsh, and a new coach in former test opener Justin Langer.

Change is also in the air back in Australia, with the nation's cricket board announcing its successor to long-serving CEO James Sutherland, even before the release of a review into the board's culture and governance. With a separate review into the culture of the men's team also set to land, Australia will be under a pile of scrutiny during the first test series which finishes in Abu Dhabi.

Paine, who many feel but a caretaker captain until Smith becomes eligible for the role again, has no illusions about the scale of the task. "We want to build a culture that makes people want to get on and play, not only better cricketers but better people," he told news agency. "We can't do that until we have a culture, live that culture,

and guys that want to be involved with carry it through." Australia enjoyed a positive warm-up, an opening Test match, middle-order batsman Travis Head and the Marsh brothers all getting runs in the four match series in the 'A' side. That was enough for Langer to confirm one-day specialist Finch and batsman Marsh as the first test.

There could be further news, however. With Matt Renshaw having suffered a head-cknock when fielding in the tour match, selectors may opt for South Africa-born batsman Marcus Stoinis. Pacer Michael Neser could be a fourth debutant should selectors' oversight of the tour be a support spearhead Mitchell Starc. Pakistan are in the midst of their 100th anniversary of retirements to former skipper Misbah-ul-Haq and Younis Khan, but having to trounce a well-resourced Australia 2-0 in

the last UAE series in 2014, they will fancy themselves to win this one. Little may be expected of Paine's Australia in a series that could see the fans are sleeping, but the 33-year-old skipper is mindful that results, as well as culture, are key to restoring good will. "We are certainly making some changes and it's scary when we're really serious about but we are also aware that we need to be playing a high level of cricket, and we're winning games," he said.