

Saina, Kashyap, Praneeth reach pre-quarters at Macau Open

MACAU, NOV 30—/ Top seed Saina Nehwal staved off a tough challenge from little-known Indonesian Hanna Ramadini in a three-game women's singles opening round match to advance to the pre-quarters of the Macau Open Grand Prix Qd badminton tournament here on Wednesday. It turned out to be a good day for Indians as Saina, P Kashyap and B Sai

Praneeth and men's doubles pair of Manu Attri and B Sumesh Reddy made it to the pre-quarters of the event as it was curtains for Hong Kong Super Series finalist Sameer Verma at the USD 120,000 event. Former World No. 1 Saina saw off World No. 44 Ramadini 21-22, 21-14, 21-18 in the opening match that lasted for over an hour. She will next take on another Indonesian Dinar

Dyah Ayustine next. On a comeback trail, Commonwealth Games champion P Kashyap, who recovered from multiple injuries and then took a break after the Denmark Open to work on his fitness and game, defeated Chinese Taipei's Chun-Wei Chen 21-19, 21-8. He will take on Chinese Taipei's Lin Yu Hsien in the next round. Young Sameer, who had an exceptional

campaign at Hong Kong last week, failed to break the defence of M Manjula Baiy Panigrahi of Indonesia and lost 18-21, 13-21 to bow out of the tournament. B Sai Praneeth disposed of China's Sun Feixiang 21-12, 21-15 to set up a match against fifth seed Wong Wing Ki Vincent of Hong Kong. Third seeded men's doubles pair of Manu Attri and B Sumesh Reddy saw

off Hong Kong's Chan Alan Yun Lung and Li Kuen Hon 21-11, 17-19, 21-9. They will take on Singapore's Danny Bawa Chrisnanta and Hendra Wijaya. Kashyap, who is back on the circuit after a month, led 5-0 early on and then entered the lemon break at 11-7. On Tuesday, B Sai Praneeth retired midway in the opening round match after suffering a back injury.

then slowly and steadily made his way back to reach 16-15 of M Manjula Baiy Panigrahi in the opening game with five straight points. In the second game, Kashyap was very dominant as he broke off as early as 5-5 and never looked back as Chun-Wei crumbled under pressure. On Tuesday, B Sai Praneeth retired midway in the opening round match after suffering a back injury.

Boxing: Training hard to bring down Vijender, says Francis Cheka



File photo of Tanzanian boxer Francis Cheka. (Getty Images)

NEW DELHI, NOV 30—/ Promising to his Vijender Singh his first loss in the professional circuit, former world champion Francis Cheka says he is putting himself through a gruelling training regimen for the WBO Asia Pacific Super Middleweight Championship title here on December 17. Cheka says he has been put on a grilling training session that goes up to 40 rounds per day for the fight in which Vijender will defend the title. The 34-year-old resides in Morogoro, Tanzania and has also won the African title and taken world title challengers such as Matthew Macklin and Paul Smith the distance.

He is also a proven puncher with no fewer than 17 of his victories coming by knockout, out of the 43 bouts he has fought. Jay Msangi, trainer of the Tanzanian boxer says, "I am making Cheka do some grilling training

these days, even though he is way more fit than Vijender. He needs to be prepared for anything that is thrown at him, it's a matter of timing the title after all." Cheka said he is confident of bringing down Vijender in his own backyard. "Jay has put me on some crazy training regime. It is increasing my strength and power day by day. Sure Vijender must have won all his professional bouts but his opponent I have played 300 rounds and knocked down 17 of my opponents. Singh has no idea what he is going to face on the 17th of December. I am going to bring him down, like nobody's business," he said. "I don't think he thought I am hard on his face that he will never think of professional boxing again," he added.

Real Madrid striker Gareth Bale undergoes successful ankle surgery

LONDON, NOV 30—/ Real Madrid's Gareth Bale has undergone successful surgery on his right ankle in London, the club said on Tuesday. The Wales international damaged tendons in his ankle during his team's 2-1 Champions League win against Sporting Lisbon on Nov 22. "Our player Gareth Bale has undergone today successful surgery to repair damaged tendons in his right ankle," Real said in a statement. "The operation took place at King Edward VII Hospital in London by doctor James Calder and Real Madrid's medical services." The 27-year-old forward has scored seven goals and set up three more in 16 starts for Real in all competitions this season. No time frame was given for his return to action. Zinedine Zidane's team are six points ahead of Saturday's opponents Barcelona at the top of La Liga.

ICC clears Hafeez's bowling action

KARACHI, NOV 30—/ Experienced all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez could be a late addition to Pakistan's Test squad for Australia tour after the ICC on Wednesday cleared his bowling action following remedial work on his degree level of tolerance permitted under the ICC regulations for the review of bowlers reported with suspected illegal bowling actions. The ICC in its



release also made it clear that the umpires are still at liberty to report Hafeez if they believe he is displaying a suspect action and not reproducing the legal action from the reassessment. To assist the umpires, they will be provided with images and video footage of the bowler's remedied legal bowling action. Hafeez, who was banned from bowling in international cricket for 12 months in June 2015, has been cleared for his bowling action earlier in April, 2015 but was reported again during the Galle Test against Sri Lanka in June, 2015. "I have focussed a lot on my batting since I was stopped from bowling but I have always liked playing for the national team as an all-rounder and bowling as well," Hafeez said. "It has been a tough last few months for me because of the ban and than some fitness issues. But now I am 100 per cent fit and confident of regaining my best form again," he said. The national selectors ignored Hafeez for the home series against the West Indies in the UAE and than for the tour to New Zealand and Australia. But reliable sources confirmed that under an understanding between the national selectors and captain Misbah-ul-Haq, they had a pact that if Hafeez was allowed to bowl again by the ICC he would be considered as a late addition to the touring squad for Australia tour. Pakistan also lost its champion off-spinner Saeed Ajmal to the new crackdown on faulty bowling actions in 2014.

India out of quarterfinal contention after loss to NZ

PARIS, NOV 30—/ India went down 1-2 against New Zealand despite a commendable effort from Dipika Pallikal to be out of race for a quarterfinal spot in the World Women's Team Squash Championship here on Wednesday. Dipika had given the Indian camp moments a great start when she blasted out Megan Craig in straight sets in the opening match. But the joy was shortlived as Joshna Chinappa could not reproduce the magic that had helped her beat Joelle King when the last two met in a tournament in Malaysia last year. She never allowed the Indian to settle and in quick time reeled away two games. Making a late start and showing her wonted touch, Joshna controlled the pace and that helped her gain some ground with the third game. The tussle spilled over the next game with points going neck and neck. However at the end stage, two crucial errors cost the Indian dearly as Joelle squeezed out the win and the match with it. The tie on 1-1, the deciding match was on the young shoulder of Sunayna Kuruvilla against a tough and experienced Amanda Landers Murphy. Inexperience was a big hurdle for Sunayna, and even though she played her hearts out the win proved elusive as New Zealand sealed off the tie. With two defeats in a Pool of four teams, India will now play the 9-17 placings matches. On the last occasion, India had finished 14th. The results: New Zealand by India 2-1 (Megan Craig lost to Dipika Pallikal 6-11, 7-11, 5-11; Joelle King bt Joshna Chinappa 11-5, 11-3, 5-11, 13-11; Amanda Landers Murphy bt Sunayna Kuruvilla 11-9, 11-8, 11-7).

Spotlight on Woods, Bubba says we all want him back

NASSAU (BAHAMAS), NOV 30—/ Tiger Woods will be the cynosure of all eyes when he makes a long-awaited return to the course in the Hero World Challenge, his own tournament - amid firm support from fellow players such as Bubba Watson, who says the fraternity wants him back irrespective of how he fares. The 72-hole PGA Tour tournament, featuring 18 of the world's best golfers, is hosted by the former world number one American, will be held at the Albany Golf Club from December 1 to 4. Even as heavy rain lashed the roof of the makeshift arrangement where Woods was taking showers, he looked relaxed and showed no signs of physical discomfort. About a year ago, though, he was not able to get up on his own from the bed owing to a bad back, and a question mark hung over his future. "I'm a little disappointed," he said, adding, "Not being able to get out of bed, not being able to move, how can I expect to come out here and swing a golf club at 120 miles an hour? That's just two different worlds." Bubba Watson, a three-time PGA Tour winner who will turn 41 next month, played his last competitive round in August 2015, at the Wyndham Championship. He talked about the support he received in making a return from a 16-month layoff, the longest of his illustrious career.

FIH's decision to dump JR team from WC is ridiculous: Pakistan

KARACHI, NOV 30—/ The International Hockey Federation's (FIH) decision to withdraw Pakistan from the Junior World Cup did not go down well with the FIH with its secretary Shahbaz Ahmad terming the move as "ridiculous." "It has come as a big shock to us because we were doing our best to convince the Indian High Commission to issue us visas for the tournament in Lucknow, India," Ahmad told PTI on Wednesday. The FIH on Monday withdrew Pakistan from the list of 16 participating nations in the World Cup due to be held from December 8 to 18, saying the Pakistan Hockey Federation had applied late for the visas and even had not fulfilled confirmation requirements before the given deadline. The FIH has replaced Pakistan with Malaysia in the mega-event. Shahbaz, a former Pakistan cap-

tain, said that the FIH had sent applications for visas to the Indian High Commission on October 24 well before the FIH deadline of November 28 to confirm entries from teams. "Obviously we can't book hotels and make other travel arrangements until the visas are issued which they were not until today," he said. "We had got funds from the government for the tournament so there were no monetary issues at all. It is sad but strange that just after an Indian, Narinder Batra has taken over as FIH President this harsh decision has been made."

Shahbaz said Pakistan at the recent FIH congress in Dubai, FIH has made it clear to the Indian delegation that they wanted cordial ties and resumption of bilateral series. "Unfortunately we get this feeling we were going to be dumped anyways. What are we

supposed to do if the Indian Commission has not issued visas to us. In fact it is now for the FIH to talk to the Indian authorities on the issue of issuing visas to Pakistani teams," he said. The Olympian also pointed out that the Asia Cup and the World Cup were scheduled to be held in India in 2017 and 2018 and keeping the two events in mind they have taken up the matter with the Pakistani government. "We have taken up this matter with our government as well as it could have long term repercussions for us," Shahbaz said. Pakistan's junior team head coach Tahir Zaman said it came as a shock to the players and questioned how visas could be issued to Malaysia in a such a short span while Pakistan team was waiting for the same despite applying for on October 24. "I don't know what to say it is just appointing as we had worked so

hard with our junior squad and were confident of really doing well in the World Cup. It has come as a shock to our players," Zaman said. Pakistan's national team coach at Hockey India and FIH for dropping Pakistan from the World Cup. "If the FIH can't ensure visas are issued to our teams then the FIH should also move away its events from India. But the sad fact is that the FIH is very reliant on Indian sponsors and money for holding its events and now we also have an Indian as the head of the FIH," former captain Ishtiaque said. Former Olympian Samiullah felt Batra had simply taken revenge for the way Pakistan players celebrated their beating India in the semi-final of the 2014 Champions Trophy in India. "He was waiting for this chance to hurt our hockey and he has done that," he added.

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Bangladesh cricket players fined for female guests in hotel rooms: Report

DHAKA, NOV 30—/ The Bangladesh Cricket Board has levied a record fine on two national team players for what it called "serious" breaches of discipline after they reportedly entertained female guests in their hotel rooms.

Pace bowler Al-Amin Hossain and batsman Sabbir Rahman were both fined around \$15,000 for "serious off-field disciplinary breaches" during the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) Twenty20 tournament, said the BCB in a statement late Tuesday. It gave no details of the charges against the players, but the Prothom Alo daily reported online that they had taken female guests to their hotel rooms during the tour. "The players have been reminded of their responsibility as national cricketers and have been warned that any repetition of similar acts of indiscretion in the future will result in harsher penalty," the BCB said. The BPL is modelled on the glitzy Indian Premier League and has been blighted by match-fixing scandals, prompting authorities to suspend the meet for two years.

Virat Kohli says Indian Team got extra motivation after losing Mohali toss

■ 'I was surprised to hear the cheer'

MUMBAI, NOV 30—/ India captain Virat Kohli on Tuesday revealed that his team got the extra motivation for winning the third Test after he lost the toss and therefore the opportunity to bat first on a good wicket. Winning the toss and batting on the opening day is considered as a big advantage in Indian conditions but Kohli and Co overcame it. Felt bad for Karun Nair the debutant but he is a good batsman. I am sure he is looking forward to his next Test," added the Indian captain. England captain Alastair Cook felt being bowled out for 283 in the first innings set them back. "It was a good toss to win but if you get bowled out for 280 you won't win games. You need to get 400 on this pitch at least. We knew from the last time we beat them after getting them out for 300," said Cook. Asked about the positives he could take from the loss, Cook said: "Stokes (Ben) is a brilliant player. He gives balance to the team. He is only going to get better and better. Haseeb (Hameed) showing character was a positive. It has been a frustrating four days. Credit to India, they outplayed us. Unfortunately Haseeb has to go home (due to injury). Showed a lot of character to come out and bat."

show the maturity in his first Tests. He asked me for the feels he wanted. He took their spinners on. "For our quicks (Shami and Umesh) to hurry their batsmen is great too. Shami feels the injury was a blessing in disguise. He has become more hard-working. He has come back fitter and stronger. Very happy with the way the guys have stood up. Felt bad for Karun Nair the debutant but he is a good batsman. I am sure he is looking forward to his next Test," added the Indian captain. England captain Alastair Cook felt being bowled out for 283 in the first innings set them back. "It was a good toss to win but if you get bowled out for 280 you won't win games. You need to get 400 on this pitch at least. We knew from the last time we beat them after getting them out for 300," said Cook. Asked about the positives he could take from the loss, Cook said: "Stokes (Ben) is a brilliant player. He gives balance to the team. He is only going to get better and better. Haseeb (Hameed) showing character was a positive. It has been a frustrating four days. Credit to India, they outplayed us. Unfortunately Haseeb has to go home (due to injury). Showed a lot of character to come out and bat."

India Vs England: Haseeb Hameed sees inspiration in Virat Kohli, takes batting tips



Haseeb Hameed took batting tips from Virat Kohli

MUMBAI, NOV 30—/ England batsman Haseeb Hameed, who has impressed everyone with his skills, took batting tips from India's Test captain Virat Kohli after the third Test ended at Mohali on Tuesday. The teen sensation from Lancashire, who had scored 82 in Rajkot, showed his prowess in Mohali by scoring 59 not out batting as number 8 with his fractured finger. The family members of Hameed were also present to cheer for him at the PCA stadium. BCCI took to Twitter and said: "Inspiring generation next. Young @HaseebHameed97 is all ears to #TeamIndia captain Virat Kohli. England were resolute at 107 for 6 in the second innings of the Test when Haseeb came out to bat with injury. He stood there for almost 44 overs and played 156 balls for his half-century. Though, he could not help his team save the match, his gutsy and gutsy innings was widely appreciated. Virat too lauded his patient knock, and looked impressed with the way the youngster shifted gears when he started to run out of partners. Meanwhile, the 19-year-old has been ruled out of the series and has gone back home for his hand surgery."