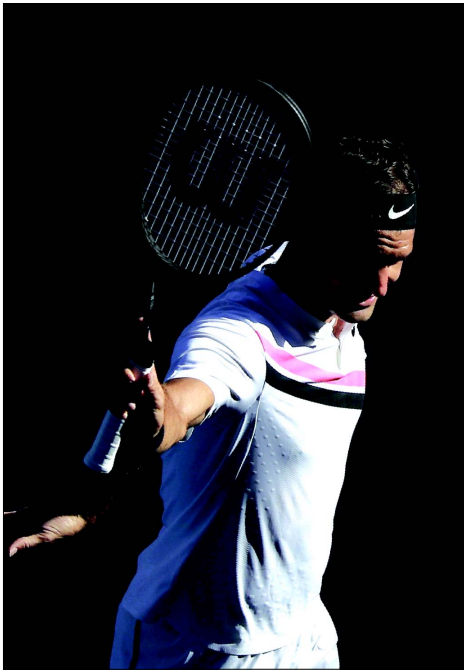


# Cool Federer joins stuttering Kerber in quarters



Roger Federer of Switzerland acknowledges the crowd after winning against Marton Fucsovics of Hungary — REUTERS

MELBOURNE, JAN 22 /- Ice-cool Roger Federer roared into an Australian Open quarter-final with Tomas Berdych today as former champion Angelique Kerber stuttered into an enticing clash with Madison Keys. The defending champion swatted aside one-time training partner Marton Fucsovics 6-4, 7-6 (7/3), 6-2 to make the last eight for an incredible 14th time. The Swiss maestro, 36, has made at least the last eight every year since 2004, but a hiccup in 2015. "He played very well," the 19-time Grand Slam champion said of the Hungarian. "You needed to have quick ideas and execute well today." Second seed Federer will now play fellow veteran Berdych, a semi-finalist in 2014 and 2015 at his most successful major, who demolished Italy's Fabio Fognini 6-4, 6-4, 6-4. The 32-year-old, who is on his way back from back problems, lost to the five-time Australian champion in the third round last year and the odds are heavily stacked against him. Of the 13 quarter-finals Federer has contested in Melbourne, he has won the lot. "I have no choice to choose the opponent and may the better man win," said the 10th seeded Czech. "I am going to get myself ready, it's all I can do, and prepare the best I can." Germany's Kerber is the only Grand Slam champion left among the women, and she was given a big fright as she chases her second Melbourne Park crown after beating Serena Williams in 2016. After crushing Maria Sharapova in the last round, she came up against gritty Taiwanese veteran Hsieh Su-wei who stunned the 21st seed by taking the first set on Rod Laver Arena. At one point Kerber was serving to stay in the match, but she bounced back to win 4-6, 7-5, 6-2. "Credit to her, she played unbelievably. I was running everywhere," said Kerber, who had a poor 2017 after starting the year as world number one. "I was just trying to focus on every point." Hsieh, ranked 88, was always going to be a threat after knocking out world number three Garbiñe Muguruza and the dangerous Agnieszka Radwanska en route to the fourth round. The win set Kerber up with a clash against American Keys, a semi-finalist in 2015 who has found a new lease of life under the guidance of former great Lindsay Davenport. Seeded 17, she flattened French eighth seed Caroline Garcia 6-3, 6-2 in just 68 minutes in the first round. "I feel like I'm playing just solid, consistent tennis," said Keys, a US Open finalist last year. "I think today was a good exam-

ple of that. I think I served well. I think I returned well." The 22-year-old added: "Right now I'm definitely really enjoying my job." Whoever wins that match will have a potential semi-final against world number one Simona Halep, although the Romanian first has to get past Japan's Naomi Osaka on Margaret Court Arena. The final women's match sees sixth seed Karolina Pliskova take on fellow Czech Barbora Strycova, seeded 20. Novak Djokovic is also in action in a night match as he looks to reach the last eight in Melbourne for a 10th time, with a tough test against talented Chung Hyeon. The glasses-wearing South Korean, ranked 58, upset fourth seed Alexander Zverev in five sets in the round of 16 and Djokovic is wary. "He's playing great. He's fit. He doesn't have too many holes in his game," he said. The winner will face either Austrian fifth seed Dominic Thiem or American surprise packet Tenny's Sandgren. (AFP)

## Djokovic knocked out of Australian Open in pre-quarters by Chung Hyeon

MELBOURNE, JAN 22 /- Six-times champion Novak Djokovic bowed out of the Australian Open in the fourth round as relentless South Korean Chung Hyeon ground him down to claim a stunning 7-6(4), 7-5, 7-6(3) victory on Monday. The 21-year-old Chung, ranked 58th in the world, proved an immovable object, absorbing everything the former world number one could throw at him and returning it with interest. Djokovic, grimacing occasionally and flexing his elbow, dropped the opening four games and although he clawed back the deficit, Chung took the opening set on the tiebreak. Chung moved 4-1 ahead in the second set but again Djokovic recovered, only to falter when serving at 5-6, netting a forehand on set point after Chung had shown incredible defensive skills to stay alive in the rally. Again Djokovic battled back from a break down in the third set to force a tiebreak but Chung refused to let the 30-year-old Serb off the hook. Chung hooked a mind-boggling forehand winner past Djokovic to take a 5-3 lead in the tiebreak and when Djokovic netted a return it brought up three match points.



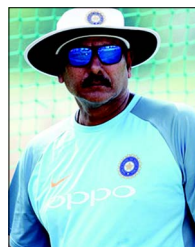
Angelique Kerber of Germany celebrates winning against Hsieh Su-Wei of Taiwan. — REUTERS



Former Indian cricket skipper Sourav Ganguly poses with his daughter Sana in front of Sarawati idol at his residence — Shyamal Maltra

## India vs South Africa: Early arrival in SA would have made a lot of difference, says Shastri

JOHANNESBURG, JAN 22 /- India coach Ravi Shastri said that his team will not complain about the pitch and the conditions which they have been offered but said that in hindsight, another 10 days of practice would have made a lot of difference. "We are not here to moan about the tracks because like I said at the start of the game both teams play on the same surface. The good thing though is people won't critic and moan when matches in India get over in two and a half days. Neither will they ask me that kind of trick as you playing on, in hindsight, I would say another ten days of practice here would have made a difference. But that's no excuse. The pitch we play on, it's the same for both sides and I would rather focus on the 20 wickets we have taken. That has given us a chance in both test matches to win games. Yes on top order, if we can fire, it will be a good test match," said Shastri, addressing the media on Monday. Shastri added that it is something which will be taken care of in the future tours. "Unfortunately, the schedule was such that you had matches. But am sure henceforth in the future when our priorities are made that will be taken into account, there is absolutely no doubt about that. You get there couple of weeks earlier and prepare," he added. The Indian coach rued his team's missed opportunities where they let the chance to put South Africa under pressure slip but was hopeful of a



good showing in the final Test. "They have had chances in both test matches but they didn't make the most of it, so when you believe you have a chance to win then you look forward to a test match, when you don't believe you can win you don't look forward to a test match, as simple as that." Shastri defended the decisions made by the team management, saying the team sticks by the decision it makes. "Chopping and changing overseas is easier in India, you don't need to chop and change because you know what the conditions are. Overseas, you go on current form and you go on conditions and you see which player can adapt to certain conditions quicker

than the other. What are the overhead conditions for which bowler to play as opposed to what kind of track you will get, where you need a bowler with bounce or you need a bowler with swing. So that's where the chopping and changing starts." "That will always be the case. If Ajinkya had played first, and not done well, you would have asked me the same question, why Rohit hasn't played. Rohit played, he didn't do well, you are asking me Ajinkya didn't play the same would have happened with the fast bowlers. So when you have choices, the team management has discussed what is the best option and they stick by it they go by it," Shastri added, when asked about the decision to drop Rahane and pick Rohit in the middle order. He heaped praise on the performance of the bowlers and said that they were many times when his team looked like the no. 1 team. "Our bowlers did a great job. I mean no one expected our bowlers to fire the way they did and take 20 wickets so I rather harp on that because for me that's the biggest positive that has come out of this tour. We are here to live and learn from our mistakes and I like it that is the most positive. Even our top order, we go in with six batsmen, five batsmen and an all-rounder, so it means that responsibility on both sides on the top order is that much more, so you have to gust it out, it won't be easy," Shastri said.

## Bavuma ruled out of final Test against India

JOHANNESBURG, JAN 22 /- South African batsman Temba Bavuma was on Sunday ruled out of the third Test against India owing to a fractured ring finger. The final Test of the three-match series begins at the Wanderers from Wednesday. With convincing wins in the preceding two Tests, South Africa have taken an un-



assailable lead in the series. Bavuma suffered the injury while playing for Cape Cobras in a domestic One-Day tournament this past week, and is expected to be out for three to four weeks. However, despite injury, Bavuma will remain a part of the South Africa Test squad, with the selectors opting not to name a replacement batsman.

## I am not a coward: Khalid Jamil post derby loss to Bagan

KOLKATA, JAN 22 /- Shouts of "Khalid Jamil go back" filled the Salt Lake Stadium after East Bengal's second derby defeat of the I-League season but the defiant coach, while taking responsibility for the reverse, refused to step down. Mohun Bagan forward Dipanda Dicka's magical double strikes inside 34 minutes snapped East Bengal's eight-match unbeaten run as the Mariners claimed the bragging rights by winning both the derby matches of the season. East Bengal's hopes for a maiden title suffered a big blow as the former I-League winning coach of Aizawl FC acknowledged his team's fallacies and took full responsibility of the debacle. "I admit that it was 100 per cent my mistake. I have no excuse. We made mistakes and I take full blame." Jamil said at the post-match conference. "Our preparation was not ideal, we can't tackle their attack. We should have been more defensive. But I am not a coward... I am not stepping down. I accept full responsibility and we will fight back." Asked whether their I-League title hopes went up in smoke, Jamil said: "I can't comment about it right now. But what I can say is that East Bengal do not deserve to be in this situation." The turning point of the game was Dicka's early goal that put East Bengal under pressure as Mohun Bagan put up a dominating display, Jamil said.

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