

Sports

Tearful Sun roars to gold as Peaty crushes world record

The challenge for England is to embrace the hype

GWANGJU: China's Sun Yang captured a record fourth 400 meters freestyle world title in an acrimonious final yesterday, before Britain's Adam Peaty produced an eye-popping world breaststroke record. Sun pumped his fists and let out a visceral roar after a pulsating race brimming with bad vibes and capped by rival Mack Horton's refusal to join the Chinese giant on the podium after the medal ceremony in Gwangju.

"Not everyone likes me — I don't care," growled Sun when asked about Horton's snub. "It's OK if you don't respect me personally, but at the victory ceremony — which is a sincere occasion — you should show respect to my country." The controversial triple Olympic gold medalist slapped the water in delight, pointing to his flag-waving Chinese fans as he savored an emotional victory over Australian Horton and his 10th world championship gold medal.

Sun's latest career milestone comes after fresh allegations in a leaked FINA doping report that claimed the Chinese giant smashed blood samples with a hammer after being visited by testers last year. The defending champion clocked three minutes, 42.44 seconds with Horton taking silver in 3:43.17 and Italian Gabriele Detti bronze in 3:43.23 in a repeat of the 2017 podium in Budapest. As he climbed out of the pool, Sun belatedly at the crowd before breaking down in tears.

The bad blood between him and Horton continued with the Australian refusing to take part in the traditional photo after the playing of the Chinese national anthem. The pair have clashed in the past with the Aussie, before beating him at the 2016 Rio Olympics, calling Sun a "drug cheat" over a three-month suspension for a banned stimulant Sun said he took for a heart condition. "I don't think I need to say anything," sniffed

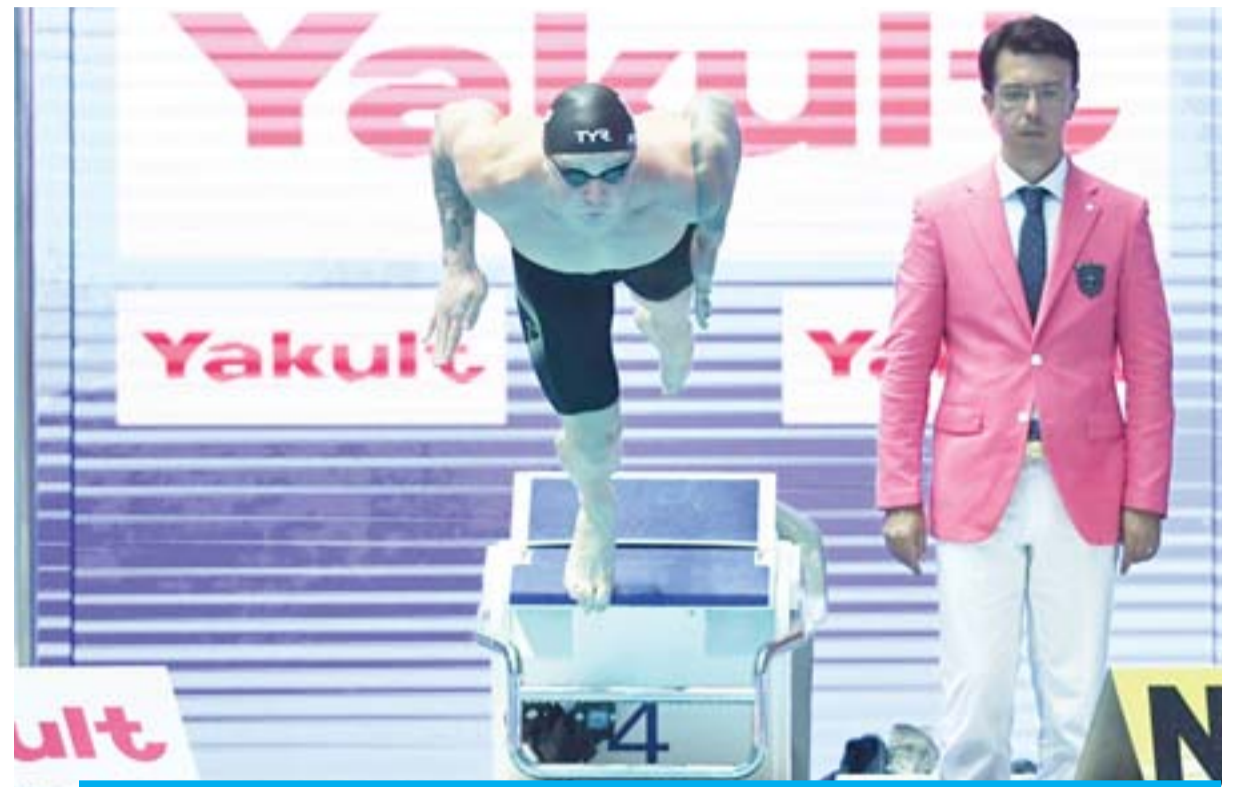
Horton. "I think his actions and how it's been handled speaks louder than anything I could say."

Peaty magic

Peaty smashed his own 100 meters breaststroke world record, the Olympic champion storming home to win his semi-final in a time of 56.88 seconds — becoming the first swimmer to break the 57-second barrier and eclipsing his previous mark by more than two tenths. The tattooed pin-up, who has not been beaten for five years over the 100 meters in major competition, turned 0.12 inside world record pace as fellow Briton James Wilby struggled to keep up.

"There's no other word except for incredible," said Peaty. "I've been chasing that for three years now, ever since I touched that wall in Rio and I knew I could go faster." After the tension of Sun's gold medal — the first of the eight-day pool competition — Aussie teenager Ariarne Titmus stunned American great Katie Ledecky to win the women's 400m freestyle final. The three-time champion looked in complete control until she faded coming off the final turn, allowing Titmus to storm past her to bag her first world title.

"The time wasn't a surprise," said Titmus, who clocked 3:58.76 to beat Ledecky by more than a second. "I knew I probably had that in me but it's pretty surreal at the moment — Katie's a true champion." A deflated Ledecky admitted: "This stings a little. I need to rebound from this, get my fight back." Caeleb Dressel, who swept seven medals at the 2017 world championships, led the American men's 4x100m freestyle team to gold in a meet record of 3:09.06, retaining their title by almost a second from Russia in silver. Hearing of the latest spat between Sun and



GWANGJU: Britain's Adam Peaty dives to compete in the semi-final of the men's 100m breaststroke event during the swimming competition at the 2019 World Championships at Nambu University Municipal Aquatics Center. — AFP

Horton, Dressel said: "I'm sure there's some strong feelings there — swimming's getting intense, jeez!" Cate Campbell anchored Australia to gold in the women's 4x100m free in the evening's final race. — AFP

Asian Boxing Championship preparations praised

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Supervisors at the Asian Boxing Federation lauded preparations for the Asian Boxing Championship, which will be held from Aug 1st until the 9th, under the patronage of President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, during their visit and listened to detailed explanations by heads of sub-committees.

Executive Director of the Asian Boxing Federation Ali Salama, Sports Director Omar Al-Jabri, and Administrative Director Bassam Ghanim toured the hotels where delegations are set to stay, as well as the Kuwait Sports Club hall where the matches will be held. The tour was accompanied by Kuwait Boxing



Federation Chairman Mohammad Al-Enezi.

Al-Enezi lauded the cooperation of AFB in order to ensure the tournament's success, adding that the supervisors did not notice any issues and expressed their appreciation of the preparations. Al-Enezi said Kuwait Boxing Team returned from its foreign camp in Azerbaijan, which was successful as per

the matches held there and contributed to increasing their technical and physical readiness and hoped for good results during the tournament. The technical department selected 14 boxers who will participate in the tournament and will be in a local camp to continue their training until the championship starts.

India look to the future with West Indies squad

NEW DELHI: Indian selectors yesterday announced fresh, young faces for the upcoming West Indies tour following the shock semi-final exit in the recent World Cup, and amid speculation about the future of veteran MS Dhoni. India start a tour of the West Indies on August 3 that includes two Tests, three T20 internationals and three one-day internationals.

Chief selector MSK Prasad said Virat Kohli would continue to lead in all three formats against the West Indies. The tour is seen as the start of India's rebuilding process after the World Cup disappointment. Rishabh Pant, a young and flamboyant wicketkeeper batsman who was also a part of India's recent World Cup campaign, was named in all three squads for the upcoming tour. The other youngsters are Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey and the yet uncapped fast bowler Navdeep Saini, who were included in the white ball T20 and ODI squads.

The selectors also included uncapped leg spinner Rahul Chahar for the T20s. Prasad brushed aside speculation about the future of former skipper and wicket-keeper batsman Dhoni after his form dipped during the World Cup. "Retirement is purely individual. Legendary cricketer like MS Dhoni, he knows when to retire," Prasad said. "We don't need to discuss anything on it, because first of all he is not available. Second, we have already started grooming some youngsters." Reports on Saturday said Dhoni was skipping the West Indies tour to spend two months in the army, but is not planning to walk away from the game. There have been calls from some quarters for Dhoni, 38,



MUMBAI: India's cricket captain Virat Kohli (C) leaves after attending a selection committee meeting. — AFP

to retire. He remains very popular across India for leading the side to 2011 World Cup triumph.

India Test squad

Virat Kohli (captain), Ajinkya Rahane, Mayank Agarwal, KL Rahul, C Pujara, Hanuma Vihari, Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Wriddhiman Saha, R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah, Umesh Yadav

India ODI squad

Virat Kohli (captain), Rohit Sharma (VC), Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant, Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kedar Jadhav, Mohammed Shami, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Khaleel Ahmed, Navdeep Saini

India T20 squad

Virat Kohli (captain), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant, Krunal Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Rahul Chahar, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Khaleel Ahmed, Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Saini — AFP

Fraser-Pryce cruises as Obiri shines in 5000 meters

LONDON: Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce fired a warning to her sprint rivals ahead of the world championships as Hellen Obiri set the fastest time of the year in the 5000 metres at the London Anniversary Games yesterday. Jamaica's Fraser-Pryce got away quickly in the 100m final and never looked like being caught by home favourite Dina Asher-Smith, winning in a time of 10.78 seconds.

World 200m champion Dafne Schippers was disqualified after a false start at the Diamond League event. "It's a long season and I've been training and training," said 32-year-old Fraser-Pryce, who won Olympic 100m gold in 2008 and repeated the feat on the same London track four years later. "To come out here and run 10.78 is a fabulous time. I feel good. The aim is to make sure when I get to Doha (world championships) that I'm on point." No Americans were in the 100m field at the London Stadium because their world championship qualifiers are coming up this week. Kenya's Obiri, world champion in the women's 5000m, posted a time of 14 minutes 20.36 seconds — the best of the year so far. Dutch runner Sifan Hassan, who broke the 23-year-old women's mile record in Monaco last week, had to settle for bronze.

"I am so happy because this is my favourite track and I have done my best and I ran the way I wanted to," said Obiri. "In the last lap I was thinking, work hard and I said to myself when I went past Hassan: 'let me go and see if you can catch me'. I have been training well and this will help when I defend my title in Doha." Britain's Lynsey Sharp was a popular winner in the women's 800m, outlasting Australia's Catriona Bisset to win in a time of 1:58.61. In other women's track events, Jamaica's Rushell Clayton won the 400m hurdles in 54.16 sec. Germany's Malaika Mihambo won the women's long jump with a leap of 7.02 meters. — AFP

Refugee swimmer Mardini rising fast after fleeing war

GWANGJU: Syrian refugee Yusra Mardini, who almost drowned at sea fleeing her war-torn country four years ago, heaved a deep sigh after failing to set a personal best at the world swimming championships yesterday. Representing FINA's independent athletes team, the 21-year-old looked up at the giant scoreboard and winced at her time of 1min 8.79sec in the 100 meters butterfly heats in South Korea. "I'm not very happy actually," Mardini said.

"I had some problems with my shoulder but I'm back in training. I still have the 100m freestyle and I'm looking forward to that." Mardini's time was more than 12 seconds slower than that of reigning champion Sarah Sjöström and 47th overall, but she has come a long way since risking her life crossing from Izmir in Turkey to the Greek island of Lesbos in the summer of 2015. Thirty minutes into that treacherous journey, the motor on their dinghy cut out and the tiny vessel, carrying 20 people rather than the six or seven it was designed for, threatened to capsiz.

As the only people who could swim, Mardini and her sister Sarah jumped into the water to push and pull the stricken dinghy for over three hours until they finally reached the shore. "I arrived in Greece in only jeans and a T-shirt," said Mardini, who also swims in the 100m freestyle later this week. "Even my shoes were gone." Mardini famously competed at the Rio Olympics a year later under the refugee flag.

Rocket strikes

"In the beginning I refused to be in a refugee team because I was afraid people would think I got the chance because of my story," said Mardini, who now lives with her family in Berlin. "I wanted to earn it. But then I realized I had a big opportunity to represent those people — so I took the chance and I never regretted it," she added. "Rio was amazing. It was really exciting to see the reaction of people to the team. Now I'm representing millions of displaced people around the world and it really makes me proud." — AFP



GWANGJU: Syrian refugee Yusra Mardini reacts after competing in a heat for the women's 100m butterfly event during the swimming competition at the 2019 World Championships at Nambu University Municipal Aquatics Center. — AFP

Cricket World Cup final umpire admits 'error'

COLOMBO: The umpire who awarded England six runs from a freak overthrow in the last over of the World Cup final has admitted he made an "error" and should have given one run fewer, a report said yesterday. A throw to the stumps deflected off the bat of a diving Ben Stokes as he tried to complete a second run and raced to the boundary, with Sri Lankan umpire Kumar Dharmasena awarding six.

Three balls later the scores at 50 overs were tied as England reached 241 all out replying to New Zealand's 241-8. It took the nail-biting final to a Super Over which again was tied but England lifted the trophy by virtue of having scored more boundaries. Critics, including former leading umpire Simon Taufel, said England should have been awarded five runs, not six, as the batsmen had not

crossed for the second run at the moment the ball was thrown.

Former Sri Lankan Test player Dharmasena told the Sunday Times he did not have the benefit of television replays which showed the batsmen had not crossed. "I agree that there was an error of judgment when I see it on TV replays now," Dharmasena, who was umpiring the final with South Africa's Marais Erasmus, told the local Sunday Times. "But we did not have the luxury of TV replays at the ground and I do not regret the decision I made."

Dharmasena said he signaled six after consulting the other match officials. "So, I did consult the leg umpire (Erasmus) through the communication system which is heard by all other umpires and the match referee," he told the newspaper. "While they cannot check TV replays, they all confirmed that the batsmen have completed the second run. This is when I made my decision." Taufel had told Fox Sports Australia the umpires made a "clear mistake" as the batsmen had not crossed for their second run. — AFP