

**25** Depleted New Zealand survive onslaught to win 450th Test

**26** Tearful Sun roars to gold as Peaty crushes world record

**27** Kane 93rd minute stunner earns Spurs the victory over Juventus



LAS VEGAS: Filipino boxer Manny Pacquiao (C) celebrates after defeating US boxer Keith Thurman during their WBA super world welterweight title fight at the MGM Grand Garden Arena on July 20, 2019 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Pacquiao won a 12 round split decision. — AFP photos

## Pacquiao downs Thurman to capture WBA crown

### 40-year-old Filipino legend comes through with a vintage performance

LAS VEGAS: Filipino legend Manny Pacquiao rolled back the years to become the oldest welterweight champion in boxing history with a thrilling split decision victory over WBA champion Keith Thurman on Saturday. The 40-year-old Pacquiao, 10 years older than the previously undefeated Thurman, delivered a vintage performance before a sell-out MGM Grand Garden Arena crowd of 14,356 which included former welterweight king Floyd Mayweather.

Pacquiao floored Thurman with an electrifying combination in the first round and remained on the front foot throughout a pulsating 12-round duel. Although the bloodied Thurman rallied in the later rounds to narrow Pacquiao's lead, the judges scored it in the Filipino's favor. Two judges scored it 115-112 for Pacquiao with the third scoring it 114-113 for Thurman. "It was fun," Pacquiao said afterwards. "My opponent is a good fighter and boxer. He was strong."

Thurman had riled Pacquiao in the build-up to the fight by vowing to "crucify" his deeply religious opponent, and later promising to send the Filipino icon into retirement. Pacquiao, who improved to 62-7-2

with 39 knockouts, was gracious in victory. "I'm not that kind of boxer who talks a lot; we were just promoting the fight," he said. "I want to clap my opponent. He's very tough. He can fight. This guy is a warrior." Pacquiao, who earned an estimated \$20 million from Saturday's fight, is now a major player in the competitive welterweight division once again after capturing Thurman's WBA welterweight 'super' champion belt.

The eight-division world champion said he will now return to the Philippines to resume his work as a senator before deciding on his next move inside the ring. "I think I will fight next year," said Pacquiao, who was due to fly out of Las Vegas for the Philippines shortly after the fight. "I will go back to the Philippines and work and then make a decision."

#### No complaints

Thurman meanwhile had few complaints in defeat, embracing Pacquiao after the final bell in recognition of an epic contest. "I knew it was too close," Thurman said. "He got the knockdown so he had momentum in round one. "This was a beautiful night of

boxing. I wish I had a little bit more output to go toe to toe. I felt like he was getting a little bit tired, but he did have experience in the ring. I would love the rematch."

Official statistics showed Pacquiao landed 195 of 686 punches thrown, while Thurman connected with 210 of 571. "My numbers just weren't up to par to be victorious tonight," Thurman said. "The fight just flew by. I knew I had to do something big in the later rounds but he was just too good." Earlier, a pumped-up Pacquiao had danced into the ring to the strains of Rocky movie anthem "Eye of the Tiger" to bring the crowd to its feet.

Deafening chants of "Manny, Manny" rolled around the packed arena as Pacquiao immediately set about building an advantage. Towards the end of the round, the crowd erupted as Pacquiao sent Thurman crashing to the canvas, uncorking a left to the ribs before detonating a right hand on the American's jaw. That set the tone for the early rounds, with Pacquiao urging Thurman on before using his superior handspeed and footwork to bamboozle his rival.



LAS VEGAS: Manny Pacquiao (R) slams a right to the face of Keith Thurman during their WBA super world welterweight title fight at the MGM Grand Garden Arena.

A dazzling combination wobbled Thurman again at the end of the second, and Pacquiao delighted the crowd with an Ali shuffle as the round closed. Although Thurman improved, Pacquiao was able to control the tempo and had Thurman in

trouble again in the fifth round with blood pouring from his nose. Thurman though was in no mood to surrender and he came back strongly, snapping Pacquiao's head back with a right cross-left jab combination in the seventh round. — AFP

## Zidane is a 'disgrace' over Bale exit comments: Agent

LOS ANGELES: Gareth Bale's agent has branded Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane a "disgrace" after the Frenchman revealed that the La Liga giants were ready to offload the Wales star in a matter of days. Zidane left Bale out of the Real squad for Saturday's 3-1 exhibition loss to Bayern Munich in Houston, and after the match he revealed he had been dropped because the club were "working on his departure", adding that he hoped it happens soon, "for

everyone's sake".

"Zidane is a disgrace, he shows no respect for a player that has done so much for Real Madrid," Bale's agent Jonathan Barnett told AFP. Asked whether Bale is close to leaving Madrid, Barnett added: "We are working on it". Bale has been frozen out in Madrid by Zidane despite helping his side to a Spanish title and four Champions Leagues since arriving from Tottenham Hotspur six years ago. His brace, including a brilliant bicycle kick, sank Liverpool in the 2018 final, but he was shunted aside by Zidane as soon as he returned to the Real bench in early March.

After Zidane's reappointment, Bale played 90 minutes in just three of the remaining 11 matches, was left out completely four times and frequently substituted when he did play. He was denied a chance to say goodbye at the end of last

season when he was left on the bench in a 2-0 loss to Real Betis that saw Zidane's side submerged with boos and whistles. However Zidane insists that his treatment of the 30-year-old forward "is nothing personal", even though Bale would be welcome at some of Europe's biggest clubs.

"There comes a time when things are done because they need to be done," Zidane added after the Bayern defeat. "I've not got anything against him. We have to make decisions and change things, that's all there is to it. "I don't know if this will happen in 24 or 48 hours' time. The situation will change and it's for the best for everyone." Bale joined Real Madrid to much fanfare, a blockbuster transfer fee and a big salary that may prove to be an obstacle for all but the richest teams. He has three seasons left on his deal and has been linked to Tottenham, Manchester United and Bayern. — Reuters



HOUSTON: Real Madrid head coach Zinedine Zidane coaches against Bayern Munich during their International Champions Cup match on July 20, 2019 at NRG Stadium. — AFP