

## Sports

# Yadav fails again as Australia stun India to win ODI series

CHENNAI: Australian spinners Adam Zampa and Ashton Agar turned the match to hand India their first one-day international series defeat at home since 2019 in a thrilling third and final match in Chennai on Wednesday. Left-arm spinner Agar removed in-form Virat Kohli (54) and the world's top-rated Twenty20 batter Suryakumar Yadav for his third consecutive golden duck with the first two balls of the 36th over to leave the hosts reeling at 185-6 with a target of 270 to win.

The visitors won the match by 21 runs after bowling out the hosts for 248 in the last over. The 2-1 win in the series was also important practice on South Asian pitches for Australia before the ODI World Cup in India later this year. Australia's stand-in-captain Steve Smith won the toss and chose to bat first in the series-decider.

India bowled out Australia for 269 and were cruising in the first 10 overs of their chase before skipper Rohit Sharma fell after a 17-ball 30 with the team at 65-1. Sharma's in-form opening partner Shubman Gill fell after a steady 49-ball 37 to leg-spinner Zampa. India's star batters Kohli and KL Rahul struck a busy 69-run partnership before Rahul fell to Zampa for 32.

The hosts' otherwise reliable lower-middle order offered little resistance. All-rounders Hardik Pandya (40) and Ravindra Jadeja (18) also fell to Zampa, who finished with 4-45 in his 10-over spell. Zampa was named player of the match but said his spin-partner Agar, who finished with 2-41, actually "changed the

game". "I probably don't think I deserve this one tonight to be honest," Zampa said after the game.

"Kudos to the guys who bowled before me as well... We always have a lot of trust in each other, trust in our process and trust in our game plan, and we stick to it," he added. Australian pacers Sean Abbott and Marcus Stoinis took one wicket each.

### 'Loss really hurts'

Three wickets apiece from Hardik Pandya and Kuldeep Yadav left India in need of 270 to win the series, which stood at 1-1 going into the final game. Sharma said that Indian batters failed to carry on after getting a start to "take the game deep". "All of us were trying our best to go out and achieve that but it just didn't happen," the Indian skipper said. "Obviously a loss like this really hurts. But again we can understand what we need to do better as a team, as a group," he added.

Earlier, Pandya (3-44) and India's left-arm spinner Kuldeep (3-56) played an important role in restricting Australia to a chaseable 269 in the 49th over. By the eighth over, in-form openers Travis Head and Mitchell Marsh had hit 10 boundaries between them, including three sixes, and looked set for a commanding partnership before Pandya took the quick wickets of Head (33), Smith (0) and Marsh (47).

Yadav had the better of the middle order beginning with David Warner, who made 23 batting at number four on his return from the elbow fracture that forced him out of the second Test in February. Marnus La-



CHENNAI: Australia's players celebrate after winning the third one-day international (ODI) cricket match between India and Australia at the M A Chidambaram Stadium on March 22, 2023. — AFP

buschagne (28) was next but Alex Carey stubbornly held on for another 10 overs before his departure on 38. Left-arm spinner Axar Patel and frontline pac-

er Mohammed Siraj each took two wickets as Sean Abbott (26), Agar (17) and Mitchell Starc (10) added important runs to a below-par score. — AFP

## Blow for British as Raducanu, Murray crash out in Miami

MIAMI GARDENS: Canada's Bianca Andreescu won a first-round battle of former US Open champions, defeating Britain's Emma Raducanu 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 on Wednesday to advance to the second round of the Miami Open. There was further bad news for Britain with two-time Miami winner Andy Murray crashing out in the first round after a 6-4, 7-5 loss to Serbia's Dusan Lajovic.

Andreescu and Raducanu, both born near Toronto and both of whom won the US Open as teenagers, battled for 2.5 hours in an entertaining opening to the WTA and ATP combined tournament's main draw. Andreescu, ranked 31st in the world, struck the ball with confidence and freedom as she dominated the first set, but Raducanu regrouped and fought back in the second.

The 2021 US Open winner went 5-3 up in the set after an epic game which she secured with her seventh break point and went on to force a third set. But Andreescu's power proved to be too much for the tiring Raducanu, who had shown promising signs of an upturn in form by reaching the last 16 at Indian Wells. "I thought it was a very good match from both sides. I think Emma played really well. I think the key for me was just sticking with it, fighting as much as I could," said Andreescu, who struck seven aces.

The Canadian has a tough test in the next round, where she will face seventh seed Maria Sakkari of Greece. For the 20-year-old Raducanu, though, there was yet another injury concern with her re-



MIAMI GARDENS: Andy Murray of Great Britain plays a backhand against Dusan Lajovic of Serbia during the Miami Open at Hard Rock Stadium on March 22, 2023. — AFP

porting pain with her wrist. "It's something I've been managing for some time. I just need to review after this tournament really and figure out what my next steps are," she said, adding that she may get a fresh pair of eyes to look at the problem.

World number one Iga Swiatek of Poland withdrew from the tournament on Wednesday citing a rib injury. Murray has made a reasonably promising start to the year, reaching the final in Doha but he was well below-par as he crashed out to 76th ranked, 32-year-old Lajovic. The Serb took his chances - winning 72 per cent of second-serve points and saved two of the three break points he faced, while converting all three opportunities on Murray's serve.

At 5-4 down in the second, Murray showed his grit to break Lajovic and raise hopes of a comeback but he was quickly broken back as he paid the price for some mis-timed strokes. — AFP

hara took gold with an overall score of 222.16, ahead of Knierim and Frazier in second place on 217.48.

Sara Conti and Niccolò Macii won bronze to claim Italy's first ever world pairs medal on 208.08. Russian skaters have again been banned from the competition because of the war in Ukraine. Miura and Kihara went into the free skate with a whopping six-point lead over Knierim and Frazier, having earned a personal best in the previous day's short program.

A fall from the American pair in the free gave Miura and Kihara some breathing space, but a late slip by Miura left the Japanese skaters sweating on the judges' score. "We didn't know what the score was going to be but I told her to puff her chest and be proud, and just pray for the score," said Kihara. The pair, who have competed together since 2019, broke down in tears once their victory was confirmed. "We have some regrets from the free skate but I'm very, very happy," said Miura.

Knierim and Frazier's preparations for the event were rocked when their coach Todd Sand suffered a heart attack earlier this month. Frazier said the competition had been "challenging and emotional"

would "detect in real time pre-determined events likely to pose or reveal a risk" of "terrorist acts or serious breaches of security", such as unusual crowd movements or abandoned bags. Systems would then signal the events to police or other security services, who could decide on a response.

The government is at pains to reassure that the smart camera tests would not process biometric data and especially not resort to facial recognition, technologies the French public is wary of applying too broadly. "The experiment is very precisely limited in time... (and) the algorithm does not substitute for human judgement, which remains decisive," Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera told MPs.

The interior ministry highlights a February survey for the Figaro daily suggesting that large majorities back using the cameras in public spaces and especially in stadiums. But opponents say the plans overstep the bounds of the French constitution and European law. Digital rights group La Quadrature du Net (QDN) wrote in a report sent to lawmakers that the systems would in fact handle sensitive "biometric" data under a broad 2022 definition from France's rights ombudsman.

As biometric data, those characteristics would be shielded by the European Union's powerful General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), QDN argues. An interior ministry spokesman rejected that finding, insisting that the planned

## MotoGP boss welcomes Asia expansion

PARIS: The new MotoGP season gets underway this weekend in Portugal with Carmelo Ezpeleta, the boss of Dorna, the sport's promoter, relishing the prospect of debut races in India and Kazakhstan. The addition of the two races, taking the season calendar to 21 races, is intended to broaden the sport's appeal from its traditional powerbase - 19 of the 22 riders come from Europe - and open up new markets.

The Kazakhstan race takes place at the Sokol International Racetrack near Almaty on July 9 while the Buddh International Circuit hosts India's first MotoGP on Sept 24. "We are a world championship and while Europe is lucky enough to have most of the riders come from there, that doesn't mean we should only race there," Ezpeleta told AFP. "The place where the motorcycle industry is developing the most is Asia."

"We should be able to have the majority of the Grands Prix in Europe but there is no doubt that for a motorcycle world championship, as well as for the manufacturers, it is important to go to a continent where the stands are full and the TV ratings are very high." The two new races mean 10 of this year's 21 will take place outside Europe but Ezpeleta said there may be room for more non-European races as they aim for a 22-race season in future.

"We do not know yet if there will be 22 but it is possible that there will be fewer in the Iberian Peninsula and more in other countries," he said. "I would especially like to see more nationalities represented among the riders." Another under-represented



Carmelo Ezpeleta

group on the MotoGP grids is women. Ana Carrasco, who has signed for the BOE SKX team in Moto3, will be the only woman competing in any of the three classes this season.

Indeed there have been but a handful of women who have taken part since Beryl Swain broke the mould of the boy racer back in 1962. "We have always wanted men and women to be able to compete in the same category, this has been seen in other disciplines," said Ezpeleta. "We are working on that, to have more. We are thinking of creating a women's world championship, which could then allow some of them to compete with the men. At the moment there are not many women in our championships because there are not many women in the lower categories."

Ezpeleta also maintained that MotoGP wants to "reduce our carbon footprint", something they have started by "trying to group several far away races together so that we don't have to make long trips for one GP". "The issue of ecology is one of our main concerns," he said. "One hundred percent of the fuel used in 2027 will be sustainable, and 40 percent as early as 2024." — AFP

## Japanese skaters aiming to inspire after historic win

SAITAMA: Riku Miura and Ryuichi Kihara said they wanted to inspire a new generation after becoming Japan's first ever figure skating pairs world champions on Thursday. The Japanese duo survived a late slip to hold off Americans Alexa Knierim and Brandon Frazier for the gold in front of an expectant crowd in Saitama, north of Tokyo. The win gave Miura and Kihara an incredible season sweep, the pair having already claimed the NHK Trophy, Skate Canada, Grand Prix final and Four Continents titles.

Kihara said he hoped their latest win would usher in a new era of Japanese pairs success. "I would love it if boys and girls watching this thought that they wanted to try pairs skating themselves and we get more and more Japanese pairs," he said. "I hope people will look back in 10 or 20 years' time and say this was the catalyst for it changing." Miura and Ki-



SAITAMA: Japan's Riku Miura and Ryuichi Kihara react after winning gold medal during the pairs - free skating at the ISU World Figure Skating Championships on March 23, 2023. — AFP

but he and his partner were proud of their performance. "We've had a couple of mistakes here but we held our chins high and we attacked everything," he said. "I'm just so fulfilled with how Alexa and I performed this week." — AFP

processing did not use any biometric data or any facial recognition techniques.

The camera test period is slated by the bill to run to the end of 2024 - well after the end of the games and covering other major events including the Rugby World Cup later this year. Once the law is passed, public authorities such as the emergency services and the bodies responsible for transport security in the Paris region will be able to request its use. The interior ministry said it "should cover a significant number of large events" for "the most complete and relevant evaluation".

But QDN activist Naomi Levain told AFP: "It's classic for the Olympic Games to be used to pass things that wouldn't pass in normal times". "It's understandable for there to be exceptional measures for an exceptional event, but we're going beyond a text aimed at securing the Olympic Games," Socialist MP Roger Vicot told the chamber on Monday. Elise Martin, an MP following the process for hard-left opposition party France Unbowed (LFI), told AFP that the bill was just the latest of a slew of additional security powers introduced under President Emmanuel Macron since 2017. "The way this law is thought out is as if we live in a permanent state of emergency," she said. Meanwhile QDN's Levain highlighted that "many of the leaders in this market are French businesses", calling the bill's provisions a "favor to industry". — AFP

## French MPs battle over AI-assisted Olympics surveillance

PARIS: French government plans to trial surveillance cameras upgraded with artificial intelligence at the 2024 Olympics have opponents fuming at what they say is unnecessary and dangerous security overreach. While the government says such systems are needed to manage millions-strong crowds and spot potential dangers, critics see the draft law as a gift to French industry at the cost of vital civil liberties.

Last week, around 40 mostly left-leaning members of the European Parliament warned in an open letter to French lawmakers that the plan "creates a surveillance precedent never before seen in Europe", daily Le Monde reported. Debates kicked off late Monday in the National Assembly, France's lower parliamentary chamber, with discussions to continue Friday.

Even before the debates started, MPs had already filed 770 amendments to the government's wide-ranging Olympics security bill, many aimed at its Article Seven. That section provides for video recorded by existing surveillance systems or new ones - including drone-mounted cameras - to be "processed by algorithms". Artificial intelligence software

## Scheffler, McIlroy win while Rahm falls at WGC Match Play

WASHINGTON: Top-ranked Scottie Scheffler and world number three Rory McIlroy won while second-ranked Jon Rahm lost to Rickie Fowler in Wednesday's opening group matches at the WGC Match Play Championship. US seventh seed Will Zalatoris and Norwegian eighth seed Viktor Hovland were also among five top group seeds to fall on day one at Austin (Texas) Country Club.

Sixteen winners from four-man groups will advance to weekend knockout rounds. Reigning Masters champion Scheffler, who won the Players Championship earlier this month, sank a 13-foot birdie putt at the 18th hole to edge US 54th seed Davis Riley 2&1. "Fortunate to come away with a win," Scheffler said. "I'm going to remember that putt on the last hole and take that energy into tomorrow."

Scheffler, who never trailed, holed out from 52 feet for eagle to win the par-4 fifth hole and eagled from 24 feet to take the par-4 13th. Riley missed a three-foot birdie putt at the par-5 16th that would have pulled him level but Scheffler missed a 3.5-foot putt at the par-3 17th to win the match. "I got off to a really good start. Outside of that I didn't really play great," Scheffler said. "Fortunately I saw that putt go in on 18."

South Korean Tom Kim edged Sweden's Alex Noren 2&1 in Scheffler's group. Spain's Rahm fell to US 49th seed Fowler 2&1. Rahm, a three-time PGA winner this year, missed a par putt from just inside five feet to drop the 15th. Fowler sank a seven-footer for par at 16 and halved 17 as well to win. "Just had to stay patient and rely on iron play," Fowler said. "I just kept grinding and pushing forward."

It was Fowler's first appearance at the event since 2016 and Rahm's first opening-match loss in six starts. Four-time major winner McIlroy beat American Scott Stallings 3&1 with a new putter and new driver. "It was a good first outing for both those clubs," McIlroy said. "They performed pretty well." The 2015 Match Play winner from Northern Ireland said the event helps prepare him for stroke-play challenges to come. "There's a ton of golf left this season but to get a bit of match play in our lives is good, and to get under pressure," McIlroy said. US 20th seed Keegan Bradley, 4-down after 13, won four of the last five holes, his six-foot birdie putt taking 18 to tie countryman Denny McCarthy in McIlroy's group. — AFP