

SHORT SINGLES



Padmini beats Vijayalakshmi to stay on top

New Delhi: Defending champion and International Master Padmini Rout of PSPB remained on course for her second straight title with a finely crafted victory over GM-elect S Vijayalakshmi of Air India in the eighth round of 43rd National Women Premier Chess Championship, here today. With just three rounds to go in the Rs 6,00,000 prize money championship, Padmini took her tally to 6.5 points out of a possible eight and remained a full point ahead of her teammates Soumya Swaminathan and top seed Eesha Karavade. While Soumya and Eesha have 5.5 points apiece, none of the other competitors are in any position to challenge Padmini's supremacy and barring a debacle the Odisha girl is likely to clinch the title from here. Starting with the close Ruy Lopez as white, Padmini seized the initiative in the ensuing middle game.



Sindhu hails move to demonetise Rs 1K, 500 notes

Bhopal: Ace shuttler and Rio Olympic silver medallist P V Sindhu today welcomed Centre's move of scrapping high denomination notes and termed it as a good decision. "I think (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi has taken a good decision... That now the new Rs 2000 notes have come out. It was a good decision, nothing apart," Sindhu told reporters when asked about the government's decision to demonetise Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 notes. She said she will be happy if a biopic on her and her acclaimed coach P. Gopichand comes on the celluloid. "We are also looking at it. Let's see. Thanks to all the fans for so much love. Let see what will happen," Sindhu said when asked whether a biopic on her and her coach as being wished by fans, would come on a big screen.



Barca defender Umtiti out for three weeks

Madrid: FC Barcelona suffered a further injury setback when it was confirmed that central defender Samuel Umtiti will be out of action for three weeks with a muscle injury. Umtiti suffered the injury to his left hamstring while training with the French national team on Wednesday and returned to Barcelona for tests, reports Xinhua. The tests were carried out on Thursday and confirmed he will be sidelined for three weeks, meaning he will miss league matches against Malaga and Real Sociedad, a King's Cup game away to third tier side, Hercules and a Champions League tie away to Glasgow Celtic. Umtiti's goal will be to be fit for the first 'El Clasico' of the season when Barca entertain bitter rivals Real Madrid in the Camp Nou Stadium on December 3. This is Umtiti's second injury since joining Barca from Lyon over the summer and comes at a bad time for the club as Gerard Pique, Jeremy Mathieu, Jordi Alba and Andres Iniesta have all missed the past fortnight with a variety of injuries.

Srikanth aims to regain place in top 10

A few good finishes can get me back to top 8, says the shuttler

New Delhi, Nov. 11: Eyeing a comeback at Macau Open following an injury lay-off, shuttler Kidambi Srikanth says the initial tournaments would be crucial to get the confidence back as he aims to regain his place in the top 10.

A former World No. 3, Srikanth slipped out of the top 10 in March this year. He reached the quarterfinals at the Rio Olympics and then played at the Japan Super Series where he injured his right ankle.

"It was a small injury. It's okay now. I will be playing the Macau Open. I'm skipping China and Hong Kong. I have started training this week. I have to step up the training gradually. I don't want to push myself too much, don't want to do things hurriedly," said Srikanth, who had clinched the 2014 China Open and 2015 India Open.

"I have to keep working. It is tough to be at the highest level consistently so we have to keep working hard and I have been able to play well but sometimes I could not finish matches the way I want to. I have to work much more harder and I hope the comeback will be better.

"I am not thinking about the ranking. I just want to come back strong and perform well. The initial tournaments are really important to get back the confidence. If I play a few events and do well then I have a good chance of coming back into the top 8," said the Indian, currently ranked World No. 13th.

Playing his maiden Olympics, Srikanth had conjured up hopes of reaching the semifinals before losing narrowly to Chinese legend Lin Dan at Rio.

Asked if he has got over the loss, Srikanth, who had beaten Lin Dan at 2014 China Open final, said: "Ya, kind off."

"We play 12 super series events in a year and if you lose early in one, you still know that there is another tournament but for Olympics, it comes every four years and you give your heart out in the tournament, so it was really hard for me to take the loss

"It is tough to be at the highest level consistently so we have to keep working hard and I have been able to play well but sometimes I could not finish matches the way I want to. If I play a few events and do well then I have a good chance of coming back into the top 8"

— KIDAMBI SRIKANTH
Indian shuttler

because I had lost at a close margin. So I didn't talk to anybody then, I wanted to take some time off.

"But anyways, that's how the sport goes. We can't expect to win all the time. One has to win and one has to lose. What is important is to come back hard. If you lose against a particular opponent, you really want to win the next time. You need to train mind to comeback really hard. I was happy with the way I played at Japan but then there was some injury and it aggravated," he said.

The 23-year-old from Guntur said he has to plan his schedule better from next year so that he can maintain a balance between training and competing at the circuit. "It is always very tricky when to take a break. The timing is crucial because you can't really skip tournaments where you have played well in them last year. May be next year I can plan a little more keeping everything in mind, with all the experience that I got this year," he said.

"Before the Olympics I had to rush

because of the ranking so had to play many events. After the Olympics I have been choosing but then I had this injury. Next year I have so many options of choosing tournaments."

Srikanth also feels the top 20 in men's singles are almost at the same level.

"In men's singles, I think all the top 20 are playing well. If you see the last top four tournaments there are different winners, I think it is equally balanced. It is just how well you play on that particular day. Everyone is almost there," Srikanth said.

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) is testing an 11-point best of five format in the scoring system.

"I haven't played the 11-point format. So can't really say the difference much. But I guess it is upto them. If they really implement it then nobody can do anything about it. But that's how it was when the format was shifted from 15 to 21 format. Every one has to get adjusted to it," he said.

Srikanth emerged as the costliest Indian buy at the recent Player's auction when he bought for Rs 51 lakhs by the Awadhe Warriors for the second edition of the Premier Badminton League.

"It will be different. The level will be high this time. There are 16 Olympians participating this year. We will have more tough matches than the last time. I hope we do well as a team," he said. (PTI)

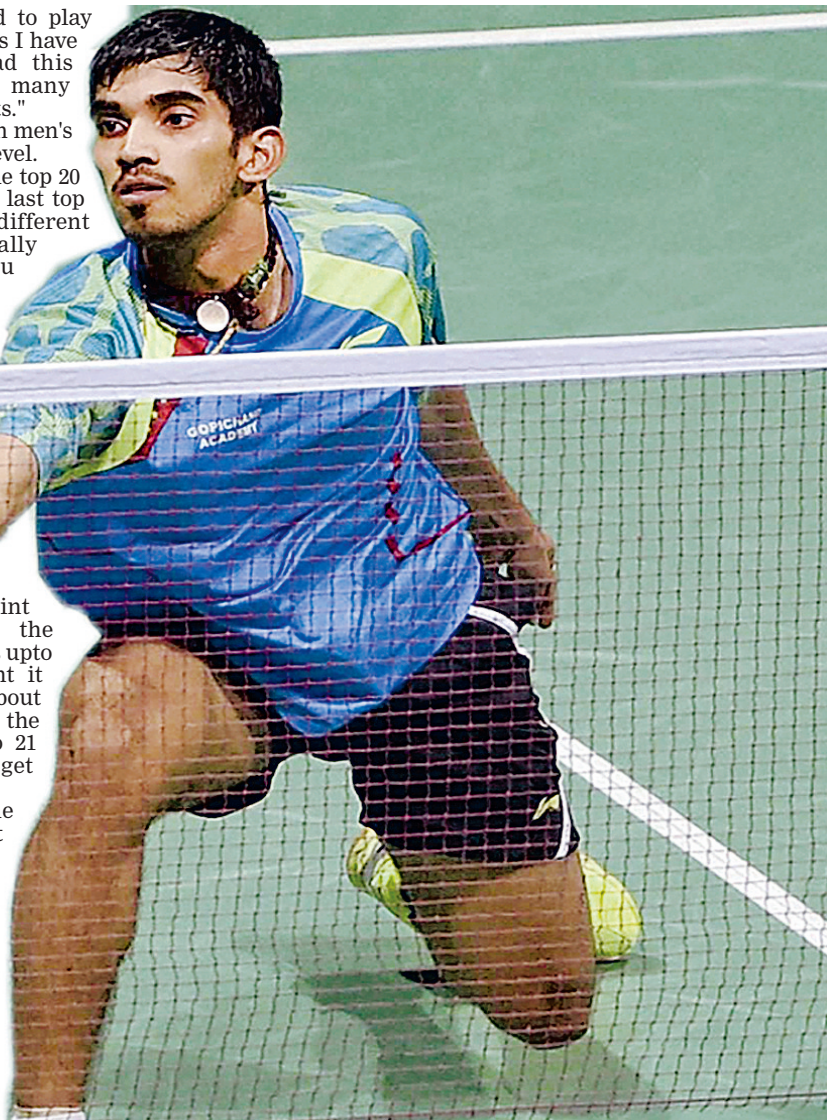


ABB gears up for Aurangabad Heritage Half Marathon

OUR SPORTS REPORTER
AURANGABAD, NOV. 11

The Aurangabad Black Bucks (ABB) is gearing up for the Aurangabad Heritage Half Marathon, which commences on November 27.

Addressing local scribes today, industrialist Mukund Bhogle, who is one of the founder members of the ABB, said the event has evoked very good response with over 1500 runners already confirming their participation. "We expect 2000 entries for the Aurangabad Heritage Half Marathon, which would cover the scenic route from Daulatabad fort to Ellora caves. The idea is to create awareness about the city's heritage and to promote running culture, particularly among the young runners. Aurangabad, being a historical place and a tourist destination, has all the facilities required for runners. The Marathon would be conducted in a professional manner under the guidance of expert marathoners, using electronic timing technology. There would be water stations, volunteers and race

marshals along the route. A team of doctors, physiotherapists and other medical professionals will also provide medical aid to runners during and after the race," said Bhogle.

The runners will be 'tested' in 10 km, 21 kms and 25 kms categories. Bhogle said 10 and 21 kms races

The main objective of holding an event of this magnitude is to create an awareness about the city's heritage and to promote running culture, particularly among young runners

would be mainly for Indian runners, while the 25 kms category would see the participation of foreign runners. Athletes from Spain and Kenya are expected to participate in this category.

Prizes worth Rs 4 lakhs are up for grabs during the event. The runners will also receive T-shirts, medals and certificates.

Bhogle, who had taken part in energy-sapping marathons like

Hyderabad and Mumbai Marathons, is bullish about the Heritage Marathon becoming a huge hit. When the Hyderabad Marathon was first launched a few years ago, there were hardly 500 runners, but one saw over 20,000 runners this year. I'm sure the Aurangabad Heritage Marathon would also become a national-level event in the years to come," added the affable Bhogle, who also had a word of praise for marathoners Dr. Ajit Ghule, Mayuresh, Bhupesh Mishra, Dr. Saoji, Mrs S. Joshi and Akshay Rath (to name a few).

Aurangabad Black Bucks is a group of marathon runners and is a non-profit charitable organization devoted to endurance sports like running, cycling, cross country and other adventure sports. ABB has been successfully organizing a run on the last Sunday of every month. The last three years saw the strength of members in the group increasing from 10 members to more than 500 members and that of marathoners from six to more than 200.

Aurangabad boys reach semis

OUR SPORTS REPORTER
AURANGABAD, NOV. 11

Aurangabad boys stormed into semifinals of the Under-14 State-level Schools Hockey tournament, organised by the District Sports Office under the aegis of Hockey Association of Aurangabad, here today.

In their league match today, Aurangabad rode on Swapnil Borade's brace to beat Latur 2-0.

Aurangabad boys now join Pune, Mumbai and Kolhapur in the last four stage.

In the girls group, Pune, Mumbai,



Kolhapur and Nagpur have made it to the semis.

The top players would represent Maharashtra squads for the National Schools meet, to be held at Rohtak.

Earlier, municipal commissioner Omprakash Bakoria inaugurated the tournament in the presence of the deputy director of sports Rajkumar Mahadwad, vice-president of Hockey

Maharashtra Pankaj Bharsakhale and district Sports officer Urmila Morale.



Municipal commissioner Omprakash Bakoria inaugurating the Under-14 State-level hockey tournament in Aurangabad

Footballers Sabrosa, Dumas suspended

Mumbai, Nov. 11: Indian Super League (ISL) franchise FC Goa were fined Rs.4,40,000 (\$6,537) and two of their footballers Luciano Sabrosa and Rafael Dumas suspended for two matches with immediate effect by the All India Football Federation (AIFF) Disciplinary Committee on Friday.

The franchise and the two players were sanctioned for misdemeanours in the ISL match against Kerala Blasters on November 8. Goa conceded a last-gasp goal to lose the match 1-2 after going down to nine men in the second half.

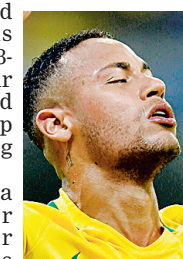
Goa strongly protested several decisions that went against them in the match.

"The disciplinary committee have fined FC Goa Rs. 2,40,000 (\$3,566) and Rs.2,00,000 (\$2,972) for two separate incidents of 'team misconduct' under Article 53 'A' and 53 'B' of the AIFF Disciplinary Code," an ISL statement said.

'Half century' for Neymar as Brazil crush Argentina

Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Nov. 11:

Philippe Coutinho and Paulinho also scored as the goal as Brazil Brazilians made a triumphant return to the Estadio Mineiro, scene of their 7-1 2014 World Cup semi-final humiliation against Germany.



Brazil now head the 10-team round-robin competition with 24 points from 11 games. But the defeat deepens the sense of crisis enveloping Argentina.

Bengaluru, Nov. 11: Goalkeeper P. R. Sreejesh have been left out due to an injury and in his place experienced drag-flicker V R Raghunath will return to the squad to lead the Indian men's hockey team in the four-nation tournament in Australia later this month.

Raghunath, who was rested in last month's Asian Champions Trophy, will captain the 18-member squad in the absence of Sreejesh, who is recuperating from a knee injury sustained during the semi-final of the ACT against Korea in Kuantan, Malaysia.

Defender and drag-flicker colleague Rupinder Pal Singh, who was the top scorer in ACT, will be Raghunath's deputy in the tour Down Under.

Akash Chikte will shoulder the

responsibility of goalkeeping in Sreejesh's absence while Uttar Pradesh's Abhinav Kumar Pandey will be the second custodian in the squad.

Chikte came up with an outstanding performance in the final of ACT to help India clinch the title by beating arch-rivals Pakistan.

"Abhinav has been in and out of the camps. He has had a knee injury for a while but has made a strong comeback and we are pleased with his performance in this camp," said India's chief coach Roelant Oltmans.

Besides Sreejesh, senior strikers SV Sunil and Ramandeep Singh too will miss the tournament due to injuries.

While Sunil is yet to fully recover from the wrist injury he sustained at the Rio Olympics, Ramandeep, who



Abs gym (Prozone mall) members, who have registered for the Lokmat Aurangabad Half Marathon, which begins on December 11. Seen in the pic are: Wasim Hashmi, Kunal Nargulla, Jitendra Autade, Anand Trimukhe, Anand Chabukswar, Gagan Sethi, Gaurav Jeulkar, Meher Bindra, Parmeet Ghai, Namrata Malpani, Satish Kharat and Shaikh Habib.

Raghunath to lead India Down Under, Sreejesh out with injury



replaced Sunil in ACT, too have been sidelined because of health issues.

"Both Sreejesh and Sunil will remain in SAI for rehabilitation. Also Sreejesh has willingly stepped up to spend some time with the junior team goalkeepers. He has already starting working with them and will assist Dave Stanforth who is joining us next week. This is great for the young boys and sharing his experience with them ahead of the Junior World Cup," stated Oltmans, who will work with the junior team while strategic coach Roger Van Gent will accompany the senior team to Australia.

Ace midfielder Manpreet Singh and forward Akashdeep Singh, however, have made comebacks to the squad after being rested in the Asian Champions Trophy.

Besides India and hosts Australia, the four-nation tournament, starting November 23, will feature Malaysia and New Zealand.

The four-nation tournament will followed by a Test series between India and Australia.

Team: Goalkeepers: Akash Chikte, Abhinav Kumar Pandey.

Defenders Rupinder Pal Singh (vice-captain), Pardeep Mor V R Raghunath (captain), Birendra Lakra, Kothajit Singh, Surender Kumar.

Midfielders: Chinglensana Singh Kangujam, Manpreet Singh, Sardar Singh, S K Uthappa.

Forwards: Talwinder Singh, Nikkin Thimmaiah, Affan Yousuf, Mohammad Amir Khan, Satbir Singh, Akashdeep Singh. (PTI)