

Kabul Express set for 'Test' run in and against India

■ AGENCY
BENGALURU: Statistically, it's a classic David vs Goliath showdown but contextually, it's the beginning of a historic new chapter in international cricket as world No.1 India take on a war-ravaged-but-resilient Afghanistan in their first ever 'Test match, here tomorrow.

While majority of the sports fans, in soul and spirit, will be in Russia enjoying the surreal skills of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, the eternal cricket romantic will try to derive his little pleasures of life watching Rashid Khan trying to hurry Shikhar Dhawan with a flipper or bowl a googly to Ajinkya Rahane.

There is always a nervous anticipation associated with performance of a new team but the politico-social narrative associated with Afghanistan gives the game a different context.

On the surface, it is just another Test match but it is much beyond that.

The Rashids, Mujeeb Zadran and Mohammed Shahzads would like to put their best foot forward in try-



ing to at least provide their countrymen a refuge in sporting success.

India have been Afghanistan's close allies and the BCCI has shown magnanimity in opening their stadiums so that the national team can practice. But come Thursday, Ajinkya Rahane's India will not spare an inch as they are expected to put up a ruthless show.

No wonder the iconic CLR James line is still so relevant "What do they know of Cricket who only Cricket Know." India, sans their regular skipper Virat Kohli along with two frontline bowlers Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Jasprit Bumrah, will look to record a comprehensive win before embarking on their long and grueling tour of

England. For Afghanistan, it will be a battle of attrition that they have never ever faced before. 'Test cricket is a different beast and Rashid's real battle starts now. That he is a brilliant four-over bowler, is a known and acknowledged fact.

However, the acid Test will start when he bowls that fifth over. The intelligence will be tested during the 15th over; patience during the 23rd over and endurance during the 40th over. More importantly, will Rashid be able to maintain his quick arm speed over after. As Afghanistan coach Phil Simmons said, his men won't understand what is 'Test cricket until they get onto the field.

With no pressure of asking rate, a Murali Vijay or a

Chesteshwar Pujara, if set, will play at their own pace. The Indian batsmen in their own backyard are not known to pull back punches.

Can a 17-year-old Mujeeb, who hasn't played a single four-day game in his career, trouble a KL Rahul with whom he shared the IPL dressing room at the Kings XI Punjab?

That's the reason the Indian team management might just prefer a hard bouncy track knowing full well that a rank turner could boomerang on them. The problem with Afghanistan will not be their spinners but their batsmen.

How well Shahzad, Mohammed Nabi negotiate Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja will have a direct impact on the kind of fight Afghanistan will be able to put on.

And even before that they will have to counter the disconcerting bounce generated by Ishant Sharma and the pace worked up by Umesh Yadav.

As Kevin Pietersen said during his MAK Pataudi Lecture yesterday, a lot will depend on their "ability to

take lessons from the nets into the heat of battle". Ireland had put up a respectable fight against Pakistan on their Test debut but again it was Kevin O'Brien who was the silver lining in the batting department.

But whatever be the outcome, "a beautiful journey" has already begun for Afghanistan.

Squads:
India: Ajinkya Rahane (captain), Shikhar Dhawan, Murali Vijay, Cheteshwar Pujara, KL Rahul, Karun Nair, Dinesh Karthik (wk), Hardik Pandya, Shardul Thakur, Navdeep Saini, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja. Kuldeep Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav.

Afghanistan: Ashgar Stanikzai, Mohammed Shahzad, Javed Ahmad, Rahmat Shah, Ihsanullah Janat, Nasir Jamal, Hashmatullah Shahidi, Afsar Zazai, Mohammed Nabi, Rashid Khan, Zahir Khan, Amir Hamza Hotak, Sayed Ahmad Shirzad, Yamin Ahmadzai Wafadar, Mujeeb ur Rahman.

Indian women team begin Spain series with 0-3 defeat

■ AGENCY
MADRID: In a disappointing start to the series, Indian women team was blanked 0-3 by hosts Spain in the opening match of the five-match series at the Consejo Superior de Deportes Hockey Stadium, here on Wednesday.

It was an evenly matched encounter between the two teams but the hosts were helped by the efficient finishing shown by Lola Riera (48', 52') and Berta Bonastre (6') whose goals were enough to secure the victory.

Spain dominated possession in the opening quarter as 26-year-old Bonastre found herself in the right spot to score the opening goal in only the sixth minute.

The hosts looked to add a second goal but India's defence held on throughout the first quarter.

The visitors had chances of their own, but could not produce clear goal-scoring opportunities. Skipper

Rani Rampal had a glorious chance in the 14th minute but her shot ended up going wide.

India started the second quarter fairly well as Anupa Barla's shot in the 19th minute was saved by Spanish Goalkeeper Maria Ruiz. The next minute Rani had her second chance of the match but could not get the equalising goal.

India were awarded a penalty corner in the 24th minute but the resulting shot went just wide of the Spanish post.

Two minutes later, the hosts looked to counter India and forced a reflex save from goalkeeper Savita, who made sure that the visitors went into the half-time break only a goal down.

The Indian shot-stopper was called into action again at the start of the third quarter when she made a save from a penalty corner. At the other end of the pitch, Rani tried to

make amends of the missed opportunities but her shot on goal was saved by Maria Ruiz.

The visitors looked to find an equaliser in the final quarter of the match as they took a more attacking approach and let runners get past the Spanish defenders on the flanks. However, in an unfortunate turn of events for Sunita Lakra, a common-ball hit her head and the referee decided to give a penalty stroke to the hosts, which was well converted by Riera in the 48th minute.

Four minutes later, Riera was awarded her second goal of the match as her drag-flick from a penalty corner was deflected by Sunita Lakra's stick into the back of the net, giving Spain a 3-0 lead.

India tried to find an opening in the latter stages of the match, but the Spanish ensured comfortable victory with sufficient players behind the ball.

Shifali Jamwal to organise 10 km run on June 17

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Shifali Jamwal, daughter of Brigadier R.S Jamwal is going to organise a 10 km run for all health enthusiasts in the city on June 17, 2018.

"The Jammu Run 2018, sponsored by Lakshya Defence Academy, Jammu is open to everyone regardless of their fitness levels and running capacity," Shifali said.

She asked the interested runners to register themselves at Joggers Park, opposite RBI, Bahu Plaza at 5:00 AM and take their marks at 5:30 AM for kick off.

"Registration is free for all unless participants would like to take home Jammu Run 2018 goodies (cap, t-shirt and medal) for which they would have to pay Rs 350," she said.

Workshop on management of various library services held



Library Committee members of GCoE during a workshop.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The Library Committee of Government College of Education on Wednesday organised one-day workshop on 'Management of Various Library Services' under the leadership of Dr. Anuradha Seth, Librarian and Convener of the Committee. Prof. Sangita Nagari, Principal, Government College of Education (GCoE), Jammu was the Chief Guest and Prof.

Poonam Dhawan, Dean of Academic Affairs, Cluster University of Jammu was the Guest of Honour on the occasion.

The workshop was formally inaugurated by the traditional lighting of the lamp and welcome-cum-introduction of the programme was presented by Dr. Anuradha Seth.

The Chief Guest appreciated the efforts of Librarian, who has shown keen interest and prompt-

ness in organising workshop for brushing up and updating the information regarding various library services.

Prof. Poonam expressed that library remained her role model and faithful friend that gave her perfect tranquility of life and shaped her academic career.

She emphasised that today society is knowledge driven an automation and digitisation of Library is the need of the hour and lot of professionalism is required in handling the technology set up.

In valedictory function the vote of thanks was presented by Prof. Sunita Devi. Participants from different institution were felicitated by distributing certificates for participation.

Anchoring of the programme was conducted by Prof. Sunita Devi.

Ganai visits Shrine Board's Sports Complex, interacts with campers

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATRA: Khurshid Ahmed Ganai, Chief Information Commissioner, J&K, on Wednesday visited the Shrine Board's Sports Complex at Katra and viewed the state-of-the-art facilities put in place by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board for the promotion of sports and games in the area.

Ganai, accompanied by Anshul Garg, Additional Chief Executive Officer of the Shrine Board, Dr. Arvind Karwani, Dy. CEO and Ashok Kumar, Director Sports of the Board, went around the various indoor and outdoor facilities in Sports Complex.

Later, Ganai interacted with the Physical Education Teachers of Reasi, Jammu and Udhampur Districts who are presently participating in the eight-day orientation course in sports and sports related fields as well as the students and non-student youth taking part in the



CIC, J&K, Khurshid Ahmed Ganai speaking during a programme.

ongoing summer coaching camp in the disciplines of archery, athletics, basketball, volleyball and shooting at the auditorium of Spiritual Growth at Katra.

He shared his experiences with the campers and observed that academics and sports are complementary to each other and both are equally important for all round personality development.

Referring to the state-of-the-art sports infrastructure created by the Shrine Board and the excellent coaching and training being provided at the

Sports Complex, Ganai complimented the Shrine Board for its laudable achievements at various levels in the sports competitions.

He hoped that such facilities are bound to transform the sports scenario in the area with many of the players being groomed at this complex likely to make a mark at the State, national and international level sports competitions. He was presented a memento on this occasion.

Anshul Garg spoke about salient features of the Shrine Board's Sports

Policy and referred to the organising of talent hunt, arranging of training and coaching to the budding sports persons in the focussed disciplines of archery, athletics, basketball and shooting to groom them on technical and scientific lines.

Dr. Arvind Karwani, Dy. CEO of the Board, presented a vote of thanks and expressed gratitude to Ganai for interacting with the campers and Physical Education Teachers.

Ashok Kumar, Director Sports, SMVDSB, dwelt on the various sports activities undertaken at the Sports Complex, training facilities, calendar of sports activities and various events organised by the Board at its Sports Complex from time to time for the sports persons besides the employees of the Board.

Among those present on the occasion were officers and staff of the Shrine Board.

Shivani to represent India in Asian Wall Climbing C'ship

■ SPORTS REPORTER

JAMMU: Shivani Charak, an ace sport climber of J&K, left on Wednesday for Bangkok to represent India in the Asian Cup (Bouldering and Speed) to be held at Bangkok in Thailand from June 15 to 17, 2018.

Shivani is among the seven sport climbers including two girls selected by Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF), New Delhi for this prestigious international competition.

The other Indian climbers are Adarsh Singh, Abhishek Mehta of Delhi, Shiv Preet Pannu and Sangram Singh of Punjab, Pema Thendup Bhutia of Services and Vicky Bhalerao of Maharashtra. Sushma Malik, a sport climbing



Shivani Charak (center) with other climbers and dignitaries before their departure for Bangkok at IMF, New Delhi.

judge, accompanied the team as a Manager.

The competition is being organised by the Sport Climbing Association of Thailand under the aegis of Asian Continental Council, has the approval of International Federation of Sport Climbing, the apex

body for sport climbing in the world.

It is worth mentioning here that Shivani Charak who was deputed for training to three European countries Switzerland, Italy and Slovenia before her participation in the World cup in Sport Climbing at

Navi Mumbai in June, 2017, has also been selected in the Indian Sport Climbing Team for participation in the 18th Asian Games to be held at Jakarta-Palembang (Indonesia) from August 18 to September two.

In fact, Shivani has the unique distinction of being only the second civilian sports person from J&K during the last 70 years to be selected for participation in the Asian Games.

Meanwhile, General Secretary of Mountaineering Association of J&K Ram Khajuria wished Shivani a great success in the Asian competition and hoped that she would bring laurels for the country and her state of J&K.

Tawi Group of Colleges opens Admission Office

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: To cater to the increasing demand in professional education, Jamwal Group of Educational Institutions (JGEI) on Wednesday opened city office for Tawi Group of Colleges, here in the heart of the city.

The new achievement is set to boost the outreach of the institution towards the masses seeking quality education, the college management said.

The city office inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Zorawar Singh Jamwal, Chairman Jammu was located opposite Red Cross Building, City Palace,



Chief Guest, Zorawar Singh Jamwal, Chairman Jammu receiving memento.

Kachi Chawni here, is going to be the prime destination for young students all over the State striving for a better future in advanced professional fields.

Zorawar inaugurated the city office in presence of Anuj Tidy, Liason Officer, Tawi Group of Colleges, Dinesh Gupta, HoD Computer Science Dept YCET, Loveneesh Talwar, HoD Electrical Engineering Department YCET and Megha Koul, Lecturer IECS Polytechnic.

Zorawar highlighted that the main objective of the

office is to facilitate the process of guidance and career counselling to the talented young brains of the city while extending the philosophy of excellence conjured by Chairman Jamwal Group of Educational Institutions, Vidhi S. Singh and Managing Director, Renu Bangroo.

The centre will work in tandem with the admissions of Tawi Group of College and will aid abet the young talent making career decisions and counsel them towards a better future.

Manika Batra accepts PM's fitness challenge



■ AGENCY
NEW DELHI: Country's new table-tennis sensation Manika Batra today accepted the fitness challenge from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said she will share her fitness video soon.

"I happily accept the challenge and will be sharing my work-out video soon" said Manika, who is in Pune to compete in the Ultimate Table Tennis league. "It is very important to stay fit for a longer and healthier life not only for us - sports persons but also for everyone," she added.

Manika created history in Gold Coast, single-handedly taking India to a maiden team gold before winning a singles gold, another first.

The 22-year-old beat world

number four and triple Olympic medallist, Feng Tianwei of Singapore, twice in the tournament.

She also secured a women's doubles silver alongside Mouma Das and mixed doubles bronze with G Sathiyam.

Earlier in the day, Modi had posted his fitness video on Twitter which showed him meditating, walking on a track inspired by five elements of nature, and doing yoga exercises.

He passed on the fitness challenge to Manika, Karnataka Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy and IPS officers, especially those above 40 years of age. "I am delighted to nominate the following for the #FitnessChallenge: India's pride and among the highest medal winners for India in the 2018 CWG, @manikabatra TT," Modi tweeted.

Sports minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore had launched the #HumFit TohIndiaFit campaign last month, underlining the importance of staying fit.

Ace fencer Shreya to represent India in Commonwealth C'ship

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Shreya Gupta, a class 9th student of Presentation Convent School and an ace fencer of J&K, has been selected to represent India in upcoming Junior and Cadet Fencing Commonwealth Champion ships to be held at Newcastle in England from July 23 to 30, 2018.

Shreya, an international player, secured her place in the team in swashbuckling manner by securing number one ranking in selection trials in Sabre event of Cadet Category held on June 11, 2018 at WTC SAI, Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

She topped both in pool and knockout stages of the selection trials.

Shreya recently brought laurels to the State by representing India in Asian Cadet Fencing Championship held at Dubai from Feb 23 to 26.



Secretary JKSSC, Waheed ur Rehman Parra felicitating Shreya Gupta.

excellent performance in 19th Sub-Junior and 14th Cadet National Fencing Championships held at Gwalior in October, 2017 wherein she won three gold and one bronze medals. Besides, she was also declared as the Best Fencer of the Championship.

Shreya has been continuously winning medals both at National and State levels and thus making the State proud.

Recently she was hon-

oured by J&K State Sports Council Secretary Waheed ur Rehman Parra for her extraordinary achievements.

Shreya gave credit of all her success to J&K State Sports Council coach Shotu Lal Sharma and international player and referee Rashid Ahmed Choudhry.

Meanwhile, J&K Amateur Association congratulated Shreya Gupta on her selection and wished her best of luck for the championship.

World Cup fever builds as fans, teams pour into Russia

■ AGENCY

KAZAN: World Cup fever is finally taking hold in Russia, where wild enthusiasm in provincial centres such as chilly Kazan is filtering through to Moscow ahead of Thursday's opening match in



the capital. While curious locals have clamoured to see the likes of Lionel Messi and Neymar, it has proved a slow build-up to the June 14-July 15 showpiece, which is being held in Russia for the first time.

The tournament opener featuring Russia and Saudi Arabia at the Luzhniki stadium has so far failed to capture the imagination of Muscovites, although they have warmly welcomed foreign fans.

JKCA Premier Cricket Championship NCC registers 129-run win to enters semis

■ SPORTS REPORTER

JAMMU: National Cricket Club (NCC) on Wednesday qualified for the semifinals after they registered a big 129 runs win against New Challenger Cricket Club (NCCC) in the ongoing JKCA Premier Cricket Championship for district Jammu at GGM Science College Hostel Ground, here.

Earlier, NCC, batting first after winning the toss, set a target of 227 runs for three wickets in 27 overs. Aditya Partap Singh played superb innings of unbeaten

77 runs off 55 balls (12x4) while Pranav contributed unbeaten 42 runs off 28 balls (1x4, 3x6). Abid Samad with (36), Sahil Bhawal (32) and Manish Dogra (25) runs were other scorers. Harjeet claimed two and Naresh Kumar one wicket for New Challengers.

In reply, New Challenger could not do well and was struggling at 65 for five at one stage.

With the result, the whole side was bowled out for cheaply for 98 runs in 20.4 overs. Naresh Kumar was the only batsman to face

the opponent bowlers with confidence contributing 32 runs off 21 balls.

Ved added 13 runs to the total while no other batsman could touch the double figure marks.

For NCC, Tamney emerged as most successful with three for 31 in five overs while Sahil Bhawal and Vijay Dogra shared two wickets each.

Aditya Partap Singh was named Man of the Match for his brilliant batting. Sadiq Hussain Malik and Rahul Kumar were Umpires in today's match.