

Sports

Photo of the Day



Mohammed Jaffar races during Rally Dakar 2021 from Wadi Ad-Dawasir to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Sheikh Ali Shooting Tournament kicks off today

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The late Sheikh Ali Sabah Al-Sabah Shooting Tournament kicks off today at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex in the skeet and trap events, with the participation of club and National Guard shooters of both genders. The women's tournament will start in the skeet and trap events. Participants will go through three rounds for each event shooting at a total of 75 targets, then there will be two rounds of 50 each the next day to determine the qualifiers for the final round.

Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi lauded the contributions of the late Sheikh's family towards Kuwait Shooting Sport Club. He also commended the continued support by Interior Minister Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah for the shooting community and his keen interest in keeping the annual tournament as one of the important events in the club. Osaimi said the tournament attracted around 80 shooters. The closing ceremony will be held Saturday at 5:30 pm at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex.



Obaid Al-Osaimi

Depleted India out to breach Australia's Gabba fortress

Jadeja out, Bumrah questionable for tomorrow's final

BRISBANE: Injury-hit India head to Australia's Gabba fortress for tomorrow's final Test with high hopes of retaining the Border-Gavaskar trophy after securing an epic draw in Sydney to leave the series locked at 1-1. The visitors only need to avoid defeat in Brisbane after their heroics in Sydney, when they batted out the final day against Australia's much-vaunted bowling attack.

Australia have come under fire for captain Tim Paine's sledging and accusations that Steve Smith deliberately scuffed up batsman Rishabh Pant's guard during the tense fifth day. Allegations of racist abuse from the crowd also overshadowed the Test. But Australia will be optimistic of snatching a series win at the Gabba, where they are unbeaten in more than three decades, especially as India have been hit by succession of injuries.

All-rounder Ravindra Jadeja became the latest ruled out yesterday after dislocating his left thumb in Sydney, while Indian media reported that fast-bowling spearhead Jasprit Bumrah could miss out with an abdominal strain. The visitors were already without experienced quicks Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav and Ishant Sharma, and batsman KL Rahul, while captain Virat Kohli is on paternity leave.

If Bumrah cannot play, their already inexperienced attack will be led by Mohammed Siraj, who has only played two Tests, alongside Navdeep Saini who made his debut at Sydney plus one of the uncapped T. Natarajan or Shardul Thakur. They also have doubts over the fitness of number six batsman



SYDNEY: Australia's captain Tim Paine (center) and Steven Smith (right) celebrate the dismissal of India's Rishabh Pant during the fifth day of the third cricket Test match between Australia and India at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) in Sydney on January 11, 2021. — AFP

Hanuma Vihari, who tore his hamstring during his 161-ball vigil for 23 runs that helped earn the unlikely draw on Monday.

Fellow Sydney hero Ravi Ashwin, who spent more than three hours at the crease with Vihari in an unbroken sixth-wicket stand to save the game, has a back issue. Despite the horror injury-run, India's former great Sunil Gavaskar believes they can win in

England are resuming a Sri Lankan tour that was aborted in March as the coronavirus pandemic fall-out spread. Root, who led England to a 3-0 sweep in Sri Lanka in 2018, said his batsmen should be ready to adapt on spin-friendly South Asian tracks as they look to repeat their success.

"That's one of the big challenges of coming and playing in Sri Lanka, and in the sub-continent, is that the rhythm of the game is so different to playing in English conditions," he said. "There is a lot more spin, a lot more double spin and that's part and parcel of playing in this part of the world. Last time we felt like whoever adapted quickest and grabbed those big moments in the game won. And hopefully we can repeat that this time around."

'Reverse swing, hostile spell'

However the star batsman said seamers could become a weapon in the wet conditions. "Throughout the winter we will definitely try and exploit that as a tactic in these conditions, whether it is reverse swing or a slightly more hostile spell of bowling," said Root. "I do think with the weather

"I came here to play some matches after one month of just preparation. I played six matches and it's really important and I'm really happy I could play that long and to win this title," Sabalenka told reporters in Abu Dhabi. "I'm going to Australia, I'm confident with only one thing, that I'll do everything I can to win matches and that's the only confidence I have right now."

Sabalenka, who ended her 2020 season by clinching back-to-back titles in Ostrava and Linz, is also riding an 11-match winning streak in the Middle East, having triumphed in Doha on her last previous visit to the region 11 months ago. She now has nearly three weeks before the start of the Australian Open which begins February 8, where she'll be considered one of the top contenders.

Sabalenka has already arranged for an exercise bike to be set up in her hotel room in Melbourne so she can still work out during the two-week quarantine period. In that 14-day window, players can only leave their rooms for five hours per day to practice.

"I will keep improving my game, keep working on

Brisbane, where crowds will be capped at 50 percent to guard against possible coronavirus infections. "I know that the Gabba in Brisbane is Australia's fortress but India have the ability to take on the Australians," he told Indian media this week. "They (Australia) have not lost there since 1988 but there is always a first time. If Ajinkya Rahane and company do it, I won't be surprised at all." — AFP

around that we have had - we have had quite a lot of rain and there is a lot of moisture around - so seam might play a bigger part."

James Anderson, Stuart Broad, Olly Stone and Mark Wood lead the visitors' pace choices for the first Test. Chris Woakes is unlikely to play after being in isolation because of his close contact with Moeen Ali who tested positive for Covid-19 and is still under quarantine. There are six spinners in the England party — Dom Bess, Jack Leach and Moeen in the main squad, supplemented by reserves Mason Crane, Matt Parkinson and Amar Virdi. Sri Lanka skipper Dimuth Karunaratne praised the opposition spinners but believes the hosts have learnt from their past mistakes.

"We never underestimate their bowlers," said Karunaratne. "We know how the conditions are and have a few plans against them. We play our normal, fearless game. We have learnt a lot from the previous series and we will not do that mistake again." Karunaratne also held back his team for the game but said Angelo Mathews and Dinesh Chandimal will play. — AFP

some things. It's not just staying in shape," she said. "As soon as you stop working on improving your game, you'll start losing, and I think that's the key of successful people," she added.

In the Abu Dhabi final, Sabalenka drew first blood, breaking for a 4-2 advantage by using the same suffocating kind of tennis that has kept her undefeated since the French Open third round last October. She took a comfortable one-set lead in 26 minutes.

It was one-way traffic for the 22-year-old until Kudermetova finally managed to end a six-game losing run by breaking the Sabalenka serve for 1-2 in the second set. The fourth seed retaliated immediately though to reclaim control of the contest and it was all over in 65 minutes.

Despite her defeat, Kudermetova can take many positives from her week in the UAE into her Australian Open campaign after making it to her first WTA final and rising to a career-high 36 in the world. "Now I have confidence, I beat good players here in Abu Dhabi and I feel OK before Australia," said the 23-year-old Russian. — AFP

Palestine-Kuwait sports movement pioneer passes away

By Ramy Rashid

KUWAIT: Khalil Rayyan, one would say the father of Palestinian journalists in Kuwait, left us on Friday, January 8, 2021. The following are highlights from Rayyan's illustrious life.



Khalil Rayyan

•Born in Jaffa 1932.

•He was educated in Al-Amriya in Jaffa, and attended courses during his work at the American University in Beirut.

•Moved to Gaza in Nakba in 1948.

•Worked at UNRWA relief and employment agency as social services observer.

•Took part in the armed struggle during the 1956 war.

•He organized sports activities and competitions and Palestinian entries in the Arab Sports Course in Cairo in 1965.

•He moved to Kuwait in 1966 and worked in Al-Rai Al-Aam newspaper as the first full-time sports journalist in the daily sports journalism field.

•He joined Al-Qabas after its establishment in 1972 as head of the sports department, and headlined pages as a solo writer for several years.

•He worked as a referee in the Kuwaiti Basketball and Volleyball Federation, managing important matches, among them the most famous volleyball match between China and Kuwait, which Kuwait won.

•He covered many local, continental and global sporting activities.

•Participated in the establishment of the Association of Sports Editors at the Kuwait Journalists Association.

•Supported local sports activities for the Palestinian community in Kuwait.

•Participated in the seventh Asian Games in Iran, which saw the expulsion of the Zionist entity from the sports family. He made interventions and contributions to it with the Kuwaiti delegation.

•He worked as the editorial secretary of Al-Qabas from 1987 until 1990, and left Kuwait at the end of August 1990 to reside in Damascus.

What I know and many have assured me was that he was always with the martyr Sheikh Fahd Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Both chased the Zionist enemy in all sports forums, may God have mercy on them. God's mercy and satisfaction be upon you, and may your honorable people have patience and solace.

NOTE: Ramy Rashid is a Palestinian writer based in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The article was translated by Nadeen Rayyan, granddaughter of Khalil Rayyan.

Galle rain keeps England's Root guessing on Sri Lanka selection

GALLE: Dark clouds and the threat of rain caused doubts for England captain Joe Root in choosing his side for the opening Test in Sri Lanka starting today. The southern coastal city has seen several days of wet weather and more is predicted for the first of the two Tests leaving the tourists wondering whether to use more pace on the usually spin friendly wicket.

"We have to consider conditions again, we've had quite a lot of rain over the last 24 hours, so we'll have another look at the wicket and make sure we're really clear on the XI we want to go into the game with," Root told reporters yesterday.

Sabalenka takes third straight title with Abu Dhabi win

ABU DHABI: Aryna Sabalenka heads to next month's Australian Open brimming with confidence after she captured a third consecutive title by outclassing Veronika Kudermetova 6-2, 6-2 in the Abu Dhabi final yesterday to extend her winning streak to 15 straight matches.

The 22-year-old from Belarus is the in-form player at the moment on the WTA tour and will be looking to translate her success from the smaller events into the majors, where she has yet to make it past the fourth round. Sabalenka added a ninth singles trophy to her collection and will rise to a career-high number seven in the world when the new rankings are released next week.