When you get a new role, I take it as a challenge. When this news came (appointed vice-captain), I felt good that I could help the other players as much as possible for the team. So, when I got this role, I was very happy. My mindset is to win as many matches as possible for the team, whether as a player or as vice-captain. In this role, I can help Smriti as much as possible.

-Deepti Sharma, Indian women cricketer

1st T20I-226 chased, records smashed

Samson, Dhir power India to thrilling win over NZ

CHRISTCHURCH

INDIA carried their rich run-scoring vein from the West Indies series into New Zealand, as Sanju Samson's 33-ball 67 and Naman Dhir's late assault of an unbeaten 42 off just 15 balls powered them to hunt down 226, their highest-ever chase in T20Is, and beat New Zealand by four wickets in front of a sell-out crowd at the Hagley Oval on Thursday.

Earlier, on a fresh pitch, Glenn Phillips smashed a 40-ball 82 not out and lifted New Zealand to an imposing 225/4. But the superlative efforts of Samson and Dhir, along with dew coming into the picture, ensured India completed the chase with two balls to spare in a run-fest that produced 455 runs in front of a sell-out crowd.

While India rejoiced over acing a record chase, New Zealand, despite their moments in the field, will rue their inability to stitch tight overs and being erratic in fielding. Being wayward in the powerplay, and conceding 17 extras left them playing catch-up for the rest of the innings. The second game of the series will be played at the same venue on Saturday.

India's chase began explosively, with Abhishek Sharma smashing a six off the final ball of the first over. Ferguson conceded 22 runs in his opening over, while Milne leaked 26 as India raced to 94/1 in the powerplay. Abhishek struck 29 off 12 balls before falling to Michael Bracewell. Samson reached his fifty in 23 balls, hitting eight fours and four sixes, before Mitchell Santner dismissed him for 67.

India then slipped to 122/4 as Tilak Varma and Ishan Kishan departed cheaply. Axar Patel scored 24 off 14 balls, while captain Shreyas Iyer contributed 42 off 28. With 48 needed from 24 balls, Dhir turned the contest around, attacking Santner and Ferguson. Needing eight in the final over, India sealed victory through Dhir's four and six off Matt Henry.

Earlier, Finn Allen smashed 45 off 24 balls, while Daryl Mitchell made 28 and Bevon Jacobs scored 31. Phillips dominated with an unbeaten 82, reaching his 13th T20I fifty. India's bowlers struggled, with Axar conceding 51 runs, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 49 and Arshdeep Singh 45. Arshdeep, playing his 100th T20I, also ran out Jacobs. India's sloppy fielding and dropped catches compounded their problems, while New Zealand's 17 extras proved costly.

The teams meet again at Hagley Oval on Saturday, with India carrying momentum after a record-breaking triumph.

BRIEF SCORES:

New Zealand 225/4 in 20 overs (Glenn Phillips 82 not out, Finn Allen 45; Mayank Yadav 1-40, Arshdeep Singh 1-45) lost to India 230/6 in 19.4 overs (Sanju Samson 67, Naman Dhir 42 not out; Michael Bracewell 2-37, Mitchell Santner 2-39) by four wickets.

French Open badminton

Sindhu, Ashmita cruise into last 8

PARIS

DOUBLE Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and young Indian shuttler Ashmita Chaliha sailed into the women's singles quarterfinals with straight-game wins over Japan's Riko Gunji and Akane Yamaguchi, respectively, at the USD 950,000 French Open badminton tournament here on Thursday.

Unseeded Ashmita was the star of the day, upsetting world No. 2 and third seed Yamaguchi 21-19 21-18 in a second-round match that lasted 37 minutes.

Sindhu then prevailed over Gunji 21-12 21-16 in a match lasting 44 minutes to progress to the quarterfinals.

Earlier in the day, India's Ayush Shetty and Tanvi Sharma bowed out in the pre-quarterfinals of their respective events.

Taking the court first among the Indians, Tanvi was no match for world No. 1 and top seed An Se Young of South Korea, losing 11-21, 14-21 in a 37-minute women's singles match.

Later, Shetty forfeited his match against sixth seed Kodai Naraoka of Japan due to an undisclosed injury while trailing 17-21, 6-11 in a men's singles second-round match.

Shetty had earlier defeated compatriot Kidambi Srikanth in the opening round to progress in the tournament.

Shaunak wins Rapid, Santosh Sai bags Blitz chess title

HYDERABAD: FIDE-rated players Sree Shaunak Chanda and Kandi Santosh Sai Karthik emerged champions in the Rapid and Blitz events, respectively, at the A2H Open Rapid and Blitz Prize Money Chess Tournaments held at A2H Chess Academy, Kukatpally.

Sree Shaunak Chanda and Kandi Santosh Sai Karthik

In an interesting reversal, the two players finished runner-up in each other's events. Shaunak topped the Rapid competition, while Santosh Sai secured second place. In the Blitz event, Santosh Sai claimed the title, with Shaunak finishing runner-up. The tournaments offered a combined prize pool of ₹30,000, with ₹15,000 allocated to each event. The winner in each category received ₹4,000, while the runner-up was awarded ₹3,000.

The Rapid event attracted 66 participants, while 43 players competed in the Blitz tournament, reflecting strong participation in both formats.

In Rapid, Sri Akhil Prasad finished third, followed by G V Srinivasa Rao, Nagavarapu Saket, Shanmukha Pulli, Akhil Repalle, S V C Chakravarthi, N Rohith and Manoj Reddy Maram.

In Blitz, Surya Alakanti secured third place, followed by Sri Akhil Prasad, N Rohith, G V Srinivasa Rao, J Malleswara Rao, Tijil Singh, Akhil Repalle and V U Diwakar.

Asian Para Games

Sheetal's double gold headlines India's 88-medal surge

NAGOYA: Armless archer Sheetal Devi picked up two gold medals in less than two hours to reaffirm her peerless credentials, while the track-and-field contingent remained the biggest contributor to India's tally, which swelled to 88 at the Asian Para Games on Thursday.

The 19-year-old world champion and world number one first teamed up with Toman Kumar to defend the mixed team gold, beating Indonesia's Teodora Audi Ayudia Ferelly and Ken Swagumilang 151-148.

She then overcame a four-point deficit to defeat Singapore's Alim Nur Syahidah 142-139, repeating their individual final result from Hangzhou 2023.

India's medal count stood at 21 gold, 26 silver and 41 bronze. Para-athletics led the haul with 52 medals, including 18 gold. Suvarna Raj opened the day's gold rush by winning the women's F54 discus with a best throw of 15.66m. Shailesh Kumar led an Indian sweep in the men's T63 high jump, setting a Games record of 1.89m. Varun Bhati won silver with 1.84m, while Rahul took bronze with 1.81m. Anjanaben Bumbadiya won the women's T47 400m in 59.97 seconds, ahead of Jayanti Behera (1:00.65). Dilip Mahadu Gavit claimed the men's T47 400m gold in 48.27 seconds, while Dharmaraj Solairaj defended his long jump crown with an Asian record of 7.15m. Tejalben Damor added a silver in the women's T12 400m.

Archery also witnessed history as Swati Chaudhary won India's first Asian Para Games medal in the W1 category, taking silver after losing 4-6 to China's Cen Mengkan.

In swimming, teenage Andhra Pradesh swimmer Ravi Budigina claimed bronze in the men's S13 50m freestyle in 25.89 seconds, completing a hat-trick of medals. Kapil Kumar won silver in the S10 400m freestyle, while Swatik Patil and Tejas Nandakumar secured bronze medals in the SB9 100m breaststroke and S7 100m backstroke, respectively.

India also secured a men's SL3 badminton final between Pramod Bhagat and Nitesh Kumar. Bhagat defeated Korea's Lee Seunghu after a 2-hour-9-minute battle, while Nitesh reached the singles and mixed doubles SL3-SU5 finals with Thulasimathi Murugesan. Naveen Sivakumar entered the SL4 final.

In table tennis, Bhavina Patel and Subham Wadhwa won bronze in mixed doubles XD7 after losing their semifinal to South Korea.

51st National Sub Jr Chess C'ship 2026

Telangana's 10-year-old Divith Reddy clinches title

HYDERABAD: Ten-year-old Telangana chess prodigy Candidate Master (CM) Divith Reddy Adulla clinched the open title at the 51st National Sub-Junior Under-15 Chess Championship 2026, held at Subham Convention Centre, Hyderabad, on October 20. The 35th-seeded player, rated 2,086 Elo, emerged champion with 10 points after 11 rounds, edging out S Madhesh Kumar of Puducherry on tie-breaks.

Divith's fearless, gritty attitude and nerves of steel helped him overcome the challenge in a competitive field. His victory highlighted Telangana's growing presence in junior chess. He received the prestigious title from All India Chess Federation president Nitin Narang, in the presence of P Malla Reddy, general secretary of the Telangana Olympic Association, and Reddyreddy Laxmi Reddy, president of the Telangana State Chess Association.

Niladri Banerjee of West Bengal finished third with nine points, ahead of Madhvendra Pratap Sharma of Madhya Pradesh, also on nine.

In the girls' section, Delhi's Prishita Gupta won the title with 10 points, conceding only two draws. WFM Nivedita V C of Tamil Nadu finished runner-up with nine points, while WFM Maitreyi Mondal took third with 8.5 points. Both champions received ₹90,000 each. AICF head of operations Ajeet Kumar Verma and TSCA secretary A Jayachandra were among those present at the prize distribution. K S Prasad served as tournament director.

Don't need permission to hoist national flag: Bora

NEW DELHI: All India Students' Association (AISA) president Neha Bora on Thursday moved the Delhi High Court challenging a police notice directing her to execute a bond for maintaining peace before a special executive magistrate. Her counsel argued that citizens do not need permission to hoist the national flag.

The argument was made in response to a police notice alleging that Bora had hoisted the national flag without prior permission.

"Question is, does this (notice) have substance? We don't need permission to hoist the national flag. They need a class on law," senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for Bora, told Justice Subramonium Prasad.

Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma, representing the Delhi Police, questioned the maintainability of Bora's petition.

Bora, who has been actively involved in protests over alleged irregularities in the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, has sought the quashing of the notice and a direction restraining the police from taking coercive action against her.

Issued on October 17 under Section 126 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), the notice directed Bora to appear before the special executive magistrate on October 19 and explain why she should not furnish a personal bond of Rs 10,000, along with one surety, to maintain peace during the period of enquiry.

Section 126 empowers a special executive magistrate to require a person to execute such a bond when there is credible information that the person may breach the peace, disturb public tranquillity or commit an act likely to cause such a disturbance.

Bora was taken into preventive detention on October 16 while on her way to join the Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) 'Lehra Do Tiranga' march. She was released the following day.

Raihan Vadra art show row

'Suppressing voice of artists is direct 'attack' on democracy'

JAIPUR

FORMER Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday attacked the BJP government over the Raihan Vadra art show row, calling it a direct "attack" on democracy and clear example of "censorship". Artist and photographer Raihan Vadra, the son of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Robert Vadra, on Wednesday said the Bikaner House administration in the national capital pulled down many of his pictures of the recent Delhi protests ahead of a solo exhibition.

Targeting the BJP government, Gehlot demanded an explanation for the removal of the photographs. "Bikaner House is a property of the Rajasthan government. This means a young artist's creativity was stifled under the BJP government's watch, which is highly condemnable," Gehlot said in a statement. The Congress leader alleged that the BJP government was attempting to suppress images that reflected public dissent. He also praised Vadra for refusing to remove two photographs featuring the national flag, saying his stand demonstrated that there could be no compromise on respect for the tricolour.

"Suppressing the voice of artists is a direct attack on democracy. This is a clear example of censorship," Gehlot said, demanding that the BJP government explain why the photographs were removed.

On Wednesday, Raihan said he was told at 3.30 pm that if the images are not taken down by 5 pm, the show will be cancelled. He said he had shared the detailed proposal and layout of the show well in advance with the Bikaner House management. Bikaner House went ahead and took down some of the pictures.

"They told us at 3.30 pm today if the images are not taken down by 5 pm, the show will be cancelled. They said it is not the right time for such photos to be shown," Raihan had told PTI. He said none of the images "gave out any political message and only documented the protests over the last six months". A Bikaner House official said "they were not authorised to comment". (PTI)

Kanpur horror

Man run-over after being pinned to car roof; 2 held

KANPUR (UP): A 37-year-old man was allegedly pinned to the roof of a car with his hands trapped in its rear window panes and driven for around 1.5 km before being thrown onto the road and run over by the same vehicle in Kanpur, police said on Thursday.

Commissioner of Police Raghubir Lal told PTI that two of the three accused named in the murder case have been arrested. The victim, Biru Singh Badauria, a salesperson with a food products company, was returning home after visiting a Dussehra fair when the incident took place in the Hanumant Vihar area on Tuesday night.

According to a complaint filed by his father, Ram Shankar Singh, the accused intercepted Badauria and assaulted him. When he tried to flee, they allegedly hit him with their car, pinned him to its roof with his hands trapped in the rear window panes and drove at high speed for around 1.5 km.

They then allegedly threw him onto the road and ran over him with the vehicle. Badauria was initially taken to a private hospital and later shifted to Lala Lajpat Rai (LLR) Hospital, where he died during treatment on Wednesday.

The family alleged that the attack stemmed from an earlier dispute between Badauria and two of the accused, Rajveer and Mewa Yadav, residents of Khadepur's Nai Basti.

The victim's brother initially lodged a complaint describing the incident as a road accident, following which a case was registered. The victim's father later filed a separate complaint alleging murder and naming Rajveer, Mewa Yadav and Pintu, according to Lal.

The police are examining CCTV footage and have recovered the vehicle involved in the incident, he said. Rajveer and Pintu have been arrested, while efforts are underway to trace the third accused, Lal said, adding that further action would be taken based on the evidence.

Eviction notice to mosque near PM's residence: Mehbooba slams Centre

SRINAGAR

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday criticised the Centre over an eviction notice to a century-old mosque near the prime minister's residence, and accused the government of having a "blatant disregard" for the religious sentiments of the country's Muslim community. Authorities have served an eviction notice to the Race Course Mosque, which is located in close proximity to the prime minister's residence in the national capital, and disconnected its water and electricity supply.

"Visiting mosques in Muslim countries, praising their grandeur and projecting respect for Islamic sentiments and heritage. Yet at home, a 120 year old heritage mosque near the Prime Minister's residence faces an eviction notice threatening its very existence. This glaring contradiction between admiration for mosques abroad and blatant disregard for the religious sentiments of India's own Muslim community is mind boggling, to say the least," Mehbooba said in a post on X.

According to officials, the mosque management received an eviction notice around October 19 and was given six days to vacate the premises.