

Srikanth enters first final in 6 years at Malaysia Masters

PTI, KUALA LUMPUR: Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth stormed into his first men's singles final of a BWF event in six years with a straight-game win over Japan's Yushi Tanaka at the Malaysia Masters Super 500 badminton tournament, here, on Saturday.

The 32-year-old, a 2021 World Championships silver medalist, dished out a superlative game, showing glimpses of his vintage self with sharp net play and attacking flair to outwit World Number 23 Tanaka 21-18, 24-22 in a thrilling contest.

"I'm pretty happy. It's been a while," Srikanth said after the win.

This is Srikanth's first final appearance on the BWF World Tour since finishing runner-up at the 2019 India Open. A former world number one, Srikanth - currently ranked 65 - has endured a rough patch over the past few seasons due to form and fitness issues.

"Physically I've been feeling well, but also the fact that I haven't played too many matches last year,



playing qualifying, so may be kind of lost that touch of playing matches. And yeah, somehow everything worked out this time."

"I've been working hard last month. It's just these wins, after a very long time, that is what has been my emotions," he added.

A naturally gifted shot-maker, Srikanth became the first Indian to win four BWF titles in 2017 and then led India to their first-ever Commonwealth Games gold in the team event.

But his struggles began

ning all six of his matches, before fading again.

Srikanth had reached the quarter-finals at the Thailand Open Super 300 earlier this year, while his last semifinal appearances came at the Swiss Open and Macau Open in 2023.

Over the past three months, however, he underwent intense training sessions, focused on fitness, and worked on injecting pace into rallies under the watchful eyes of coaches RMV Gurusaidutt and Parupalli Kashyap.

Asked about his plans going forward, Srikanth said: "I haven't really planned anything. It's just about being physically fit, being injury-free, and then playing as many tournaments as possible. I don't really have a target of playing the next tournaments this year."

"So it's just about training and being physically fit and obviously if I play, I will obviously play to win. I really want to give myself enough time to recover, to train, and then play this time."

Pranav wins air rifle bronze

PTI, SUHL (Germany): Teenager Naraen Pranav won bronze in the men's 10m air rifle event to give India their fifth medal in the ongoing ISSF Junior World Cup here on Saturday.

The Khelo India Youth Games champion shot 227.9 in the final to finish behind Braden Peiser (250.0) of the USA, who claimed silver. China's Huang Liwanlin (250.3) won the gold.

Was eagerly awaiting the call, says Nair after India comeback

PTI, JAIPUR: Back in the Indian team after a long gap of eight years, batter Karun Nair on Saturday expressed his delight and said he was "awaiting this call" after amassing big runs in the 2024-25 domestic season.

Having last played in 2017, Nair was dropped from the team soon after becoming the second triple centurion in Tests from India.

"Grateful to get back, happy and proud and fortunate. Found out like all of you found out (about his selection). Was

eagerly awaiting the call, got a lot of messages from close ones," Nair said after playing a pivotal role in Delhi Capitals' six-wicket win over Punjab Kings in the IPL here.

In the Ranji Trophy, he plundered 863 runs in nine matches with four centuries, while in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, he amassed 779 runs in just eight innings, including five centuries, performances that paved the way for his return to the Indian team.

"Really happy and proud. Have been batting well in the

last 12-16 months. It's about keeping my processes the same and do the same things that have worked for me," Nair said.

The 33-year-old batter's performances were instrumental in Vidarbha winning the Ranji Trophy in the 2024-25 season.

Speaking about Saturday's victory which helped Delhi Capitals finish the season on a high note after failing to qualify for the play-offs, Nair said the result showed that they were a good team.

Rizvi, Nair power DC to 6-wkt win over Punjab Kings

PTI, JAIPUR: Young Sameer Rizvi struck a high-quality, maiden half-century after Karun Nair marked his return to the Indian Test team with a vital knock as Delhi Capitals pulled off a six-wicket win over Punjab Kings to end their IPL season on a positive note, here, on Saturday.

Set a stiff target of 207, DC completed the task in 19.3 overs with the 21-year-old Rizvi remaining unbeaten on 58 off 25 balls, which included five sixes and three fours. Nair had earlier contributed 44 in 27 deliveries with two sixes and five fours.

This was after Marcus Stoinis brought his big-hitting abilities to the fore following Shreyas Iyer's sparkling half-century as Punjab Kings posted a challenging 206 for eight.

Given their recent record, it looked like a difficult target for Delhi, but impact sub KL Rahul (35 off 21 balls) and stand-in skipper Faf du Plessis (23 off 15) provided their team with a good start, quickly adding 55 runs in less than six overs to keep them in the game.

Having played some fine shots, including a beautifully-timed boundary through cover-point off Azmatullah Omarzai and a spectacular straight six off Harpreet Brar, Rahul got out to an innocuous delivery as he slipped a slow off-cutter from Marco Jansen for a running Shashank Singh to complete the catch.

Recalled to the Indian Test team after eight years, Karun Nair started his innings with a six over fine leg off Jansen.

Du Plessis wasted his start and in what turned out to be a soft dismissal, the seasoned South African found Priyansh Arya at backward point after failing to keep his cut shot down.



Delhi Capitals' Karun Nair plays a shot during an Indian Premier League match against Punjab Kings, at Sawai Mansingh Stadium, in Jaipur, on Saturday

Leg-spinner Praveen Dube, who dismissed Sediqullah Atal (22 off 16), was hit for four successive boundaries by Nair as DC reached 111 for three in the 11th over. When Nair was

bowled by Brar at a crucial juncture, it looked difficult for DC. Earlier, Stoinis blazed away to a 16-ball 44 not out after Iyer set it up with a 53-run knock off 34 deliveries. Stoinis struck

SCOREBOARD

Punjab Kings: Priyansh Arya lbw b Rahman 6, Prabhsimran Singh b Nigam 28, Josh Inglis st Stubbs b Nigam 32, *Shreyas Iyer c Sharma b Yadav 53, Nehal Wadhwa c du Plessis b Kumar 16, Shashank Singh c Stubbs b Rahman 11, Marcus Stoinis not out 44, Azmatullah Omarzai c Rizvi b Yadav 1, Marco Jansen c Stubbs b Rahman 0, Harpreet Brar not out 7. **Extras:** 9. **Total:** 206-8. **Fall of wickets:** 8-1, 55-2, 77-3, 118-4, 144-5, 172-6, 174-7, 197-8. **Bowling:** Mukesh Kumar 4-0-49-1, Mustafizur Rahman 4-0-33-3, Mohit Sharma 4-0-47-0, Vipraj Nigam 4-0-38-2, Kuldeep Yadav 4-0-39-2.

Delhi Capitals: KL Rahul c Singh b Jansen 35, *Faf du Plessis c Arya b Brar 23, Karun Nair b Brar 44, Sediqullah Atal c Singh b Dube 22, Sameer Rizvi not out 58, Tristan Stubbs not out 18. **Extras:** 8. **Total:** 208-4. **Fall of wickets:** 55-1, 65-2, 93-3, 155-4. **Bowling:** Arshdeep Singh 4-0-35-0, Azmatullah Omarzai 4-0-46-0, Harpreet Brar 4-0-41-2, Marco Jansen 4-0-41-1, Praveen Dube 2-0-20-1, Marcus Stoinis 1.3-0-21-0.

Man-of-the-match: Sameer Rizvi

TODAY'S IPL FIXTURES

Gujarat Titans vs Chennai Super Kings, at the Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium, Ahmedabad, at 3.30 pm

Kolkata Knight Riders vs Sunrisers Hyderabad, at the Arun Jaitley Cricket Stadium, Delhi, at 7.30 pm

four sixes and three fours during his blistering knock.

Opting to bowl, DC enjoyed early success as Priyansh Arya (6) top-edged a Mustafizur Rahman (3/33) short ball that cramped the batter for room and wicket-keeper Tristan Stubbs went few steps backwards to complete a neat catch after the ball went very high.

Josh Inglis picked up a couple of boundaries off Mukesh. Prabhsimran Singh punched one down the ground off Mustafizur for a four before giving the strike back to Inglis, who flicked the left-arm seamer for a maximum over deep backward square.

Prabhsimran found two fours off Mohit Sharma before Vipraj Nigam (2/38) closed out the powerplay with an eventual over in which he was welcomed with a six and a four by Inglis before accounting for the Australian's wicket as the batter was smartly stumped down the leg side by Stubbs after the young leg-spinner bowled a googly.

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GRAND RELEASE IN GOA
 7TH JUNE - ARAMBOL CHURCH HALL - 7.00 PM
 8TH JUNE - RAVINDRA BHAVAN, SANVORDEM - 3.30 PM
 9TH JUNE - RAVINDRA BHAVAN, MARGAO - 3.30 PM
 10TH JUNE - KALA ACADEMY, PANAJI - 7.30 PM
 15TH JUNE - RAVINDRA BHAVAN, VASCO - 3.30 PM

UK TOUR
 15TH & 16TH AUGUST (2 SHOWS) - AT MECA, REGENT CIRCUS, SWINDON - 6.30 PM
 22ND AUGUST - SUDBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL, WEMBLEY - 6.30 PM
 23RD AUGUST (2 SHOWS) - SPRING WEST ACADEMY, FELTHAM 2.30 PM & 6.30 PM

REMEMBER IT'S A MARIANO FERNANDES PRODUCTION

Sanju, Pawan up in Thailand Open boxing

PTI, BANGKOK: National Games bronze medallist Sanju MS and silver winner Pawan Bartwal won their respective bouts at the 4th Thailand Open International Boxing tournament, here, on Saturday.

Sanju relied on her aggression to decimate her Japanese opponent Sari Kokufu 5:0 and reach the quarterfinals of the women's 60kg weight category while Army man and national silver medallist Bartwal mixed his aggressive intent with quality defence to get the better of local challenger Thanarat Saengphet 4:1 in the opening round of the men's 55 kg bout.

Bashir takes 9 wkts, England beat Zimbabwe by an innings

AP, NOTTINGHAM (England): Zimbabwe folded inside three days as expected yet made England sweat for its innings win in their one-off test at Trent Bridge on Saturday.

In reply to England's 565-6 declared, Zimbabwe was all out for 265 and 255.

England won by an innings and 45 runs in a worthy warmup for India's five-test tour starting on June 20. The stark figures don't do justice to a defiant effort by Zimbabwe.

Starting its first test matchup with England in 22 years as a severe underdog, Zimbabwe was further handicapped from day one

when Richard Ngarava, one of its four seamers, suffered a back spasm after bowling only nine overs and took no further part in the match.

England plundered 498-3, its highest ever first-day score in a home test, then declared on the second morning knowing it had to take only 18 wickets without Ngarava batting.

After Brian Bennett's brilliant maiden century led Zimbabwe's fightback on Friday, Sean Williams led the charge on Saturday, making England appear out of ideas about how to stop him from reaching his sixth test hundred.

It took some luck on vid-

eo review when Williams was on 88 from 82 balls.

He was hit on the knee roll trying to sweep off-spinner Shoaib Bashir and given out. A review showed the ball barely nicking leg stump.

Williams left to great applause just before lunch, and Zimbabwe's hopes largely departed with him.

Wickets began falling regularly after lunch. Despite a defiant 68-ball 60 from Sikandar Raza, Zimbabwe lost its last six wickets for 109 runs.

Bashir took 6-81, his fourth test five-for, and a career-best match haul of 9-143.

Man Utd's Onana, Dalot and Maguire to launch United We Play in Mumbai

Initiative aims to promote grassroots football and support young footballers

Team Herald
 sports@herald-go.com

PANJIM: Leading tyre maker Apollo Tyres will bring the current stars of Manchester United Andre Onana, Diogo Dalot and Harry Maguire for their maiden visit to India to launch United We Play 2025, the fifth season of its flagship grassroots football initiative.

This is the second time that Apollo Tyres has got current team players to the country, with David De Gea, Anthony Elanga and Donny van de Beek visiting Goa in December 2022.

The three Manchester United current team players will be in Mumbai on May 29, to officially launch and kick-start activities for the fifth season of the United We Play programme. During their first visit to India, the footballers will also engage with supporters and fans of the club, along with Apollo Tyres' grass-



roots football initiative.

Supported by Manchester United, United We Play is a pan-India initiative by Apollo Tyres to support young footballers in India by giving them a platform to showcase their skills

with the objective of motivating aspiring footballers to continue playing, by engaging with them, and introducing them to global training methods.

Rajesh Dahiya, Vice President, Commercial (India,

SAARC and Southeast Asia), Apollo Tyres Ltd said, "The fourth season of United We Play concluded last year with a visit from Manchester United legend Gary Neville, wherein more than 15,000 young footballers from across the country participated."

"It reached out to 18 cities pan-India and over 100 coaches were engaged through virtual Manchester United Soccer Schools training sessions, ensuring that the teachings and training methods reached every footballer involved in the programme."

Andre Onana, Manchester United's goalkeeper, said: "We are looking forward to engaging with everyone in India to launch the new season of United We Play and promote our sport to the next generation of stars. We are also excited to see the fans over there, to thank them for their passionate and loyal support."