

What to WATCH

SONY ESPN & TEN 2
Asian Games
Live from 7:45am
SONY SIX
England v India
Fourth Test, Day-1
Live from 4:00pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & 2
US Open
Round 2
Live from 9:00pm



South Korea's Lee Seung-woo celebrates one of his two goals with captain Son Heung-min. The Reds ran out comfortable winners in the semifinals, defeating Vietnam 3-1 in Bogor. They will face Japan in the final, who defeated UAE 1-0 in yesterday's other semifinal.

PHOTO: AFP

Son's South Korea romp into final

AFP, Cibinong



Tottenham Hotspur's Son Heung-min played a captain's role as South Korea beat plucky Vietnam 3-1 to reach the Asian Games final on Wednesday.

The World Cup star, who is missing the start of the Premier League season to represent his country in Indonesia, is now just 90 minutes away from a gold medal that would spare him a career-threatening spell of military service.

"I don't think I need to say anything," said Son, refusing to be drawn on the subject.

"We're close to winning gold, to making history, and we will fight for it."

A double from Lee Seung-woo and another goal from Hwang Ui-jo sent the Koreans through to this weekend's final, where they face Japan as they chase a record fifth title.

Lee scored after just seven minutes in Cibinong, near Jakarta, following some nifty footwork from Hwang Hee-chan.

Son's clever flick provided the assist for Hwang Ui-jo to extend their advantage just before the half-hour mark. Darting in behind the Vietnamese defence, Hwang -- hat-trick hero of Korea's 4-3 quarter-final win over Uzbekistan earlier this week -- clinically

hooked in his ninth goal of tournament.

Lee stabbed in his second 10 minutes after the interval before Vietnam pulled one back through a dipping free-kick from Tran Minh Vuong with 20 minutes left.

Once heralded as the "Korean Messi" after signing for Barcelona as a 12-year-old, Lee was carried off for treatment after being run over by beefy Syrian referee Masoud Tufayelieh, although little was damaged except his pride.

"It was a difficult game," said Son, who was removed as a precaution after 72 minutes while on a booking. "But we dominated it and deserved to win. We are all ready for the final. I'm trying to make my country happy, make myself happy. It's all positive for me."

However, 26-year-old Son could be called up for almost two years of compulsory military service in the next 18 months if he fails to lead the Taeguk Warriors to gold.

The Spurs forward was selected to play at the 2014 tournament on home soil but his former club Bayer Leverkusen refused to release him -- the Koreans scooped gold.

Nearly every able-bodied South Korean male is required to carry out 21 months of military service before the age of 28, although the government rewards Asian Games gold medals and Olympic medals of any colour with an exemption.

Swapna's dream comes true

SPORTS REPORTER from Jakarta

Swapna Barman wrote her name in history books yesterday after becoming the first athlete from India to win a gold medal in the Asian Games heptathlon event.

The 21-year-old from Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, beat her more fancied competitors, and many an obstacle, to clinch gold at the GBK stadium in Jakarta.

Her story is special as she did not have only poverty to conquer, but also a physical imperfection on her way to success.

Born into poverty with a father who became paralysed five years ago, Swapna's family was run by the pittance managed by her mother who worked at a tea garden.

But that was only part of her struggle as she had to overcome the oddities bestowed on her at birth. She was born with six toes on each foot, which made it hard for her to slip into standard sized shoes. A fifth-place finisher in Incheon four years ago, Swapna had trained for this Asian Games with shoes that were much smaller for her feet.

Her main worry ahead of the games was not



how she would fare in the competition, rather it was getting the right shoe for the high jump, one of the seven disciplines that make up heptathlon.

"I never had customised shoes and I've been managing with a model which is unfortunately no longer available in India. I still have an old pair of them and I'm going to use them in

Jakarta," she had told Reuters during her training in India.

She tried different brands before having to make do with standard-sized shoes.

Every landing with those small shoes was painful and the shoes did not last long either, but she has so far resisted the suggestion to have her extra digits surgically removed.

Knee and ankle injuries kept her out of training for nearly a year before she made a comeback in June.

But fitting shoe or not, the 21-year-old finished top of the pile in high-jump as she did in shot put and javelin throw while finishing second in long-jump. However, she did not do so well in sprint events, which are not her forte.

During the two-day event, Swapna maintained her position among the medal contenders before the final event, the 800m. She finished with a time of 2:21.13, earning 803 points; enough for her to win the event.

The 21-year-old ended the competition with 6,026 points, with China's Wang Qingling winning silver with 5,954 points and Japan's Yuki Yamasaki taking bronze with a tally of 5,873 points.

A PHOTO FINISH



Japan's Yuki Koike (R) and Taiwan's Yang Chunhan both ran the 200m sprint at the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium in 20.23 seconds. After a photo finish, the Japanese was declared the gold medalist.

PHOTO: AFP



Despite gruelling conditions that prompted the first ever mid-match break in Grand Slams, Novak Djokovic overcame Hungary's Marton Fucsovics 6-3, 3-6, 6-4, 6-0 in the US Open first round on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Djokovic, Federer through

AFP, New York

Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic suffered in sweltering US Open conditions Tuesday but battled through to the second round with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-4, 6-0 victory over Hungarian Marton Fucsovics.

Djokovic, playing his first match on Arthur Ashe Stadium since falling to Stan Wawrinka in the 2016 final, received a brutal welcome back to Flushing Meadows as soaring temperatures and high humidity prompted organisers to offer the men a 10-minute mid-match heat break for the first time ever.

Roger Federer, the second seed, escaped the worst of the conditions as

LATEST

Three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka outlasted determined French qualifier Ugo Humbert 7-6 (7/5), 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 on another steamy day at the US Open on Wednesday.

Wawrinka, unable to defend his 2016 title after undergoing two knee surgeries last year, said he wasn't surprised at the challenge produced by 139th-ranked Humbert, who is playing his first four-level event this week after a dominant summer on the developmental Challenger circuit.

he headlined the night session on Ashe. Nor did he meet much resistance from Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka in a 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 victory. Up 5-1 in the final set, Federer was

unable to close out the match against Nishioka's serve, and then was broken on his first attempt to serve it out.

Fourth-seeded German Alexander Zverev kept his time in the sun to a minimum with a 6-2, 6-1, 6-2 victory over Canadian lucky loser Peter Polansky.

And Australian Nick Kyrgios fired 25 aces in a 7-5, 2-6, 6-4, 6-2 victory over Moldova's Radu Albot.

In the women's circuit, Petra Kvitova beat Belgian Yanina Wickmayer 6-1, 6-4 and Madison Keys downed France's Pauline Parmentier 6-4, 6-4.

Maria Sharapova, who won the last of her five Grand Slam titles in 2014, advanced 6-2, 7-6 (8/6) over Patty Schnyder, out of retirement and at 39 the oldest player to qualify for a



JAKARTA JAMBOREE

Dirgahayu Republik Indonesia

ATIQUÉ ANAM from Jakarta

The city of Jakarta has decked up for the Asian Games with banners, posters, digital billboards and all kinds of greetings and decorations. One common greeting that is visible in all parts of the city, though, is, 'Dirgahayu Republik Indonesia', meaning 'Long Live Indonesian Republic', owing to the 73rd Independence Day observed just 13 days ago.

The word Dirgahayu comes straight from Sanskrit, which has lent many words to Bahasa Indonesia, the national language of country. Sanskrit isn't the only subcontinental language to have had an influence on the languages of this country, you will hear a lot of words from Tamil and Hindi once you go to a hotel or out on the streets. The reason is Hindu and Buddhist dynasties have long ruled this country (2nd to 14th century) before the spread of Islam and the colonisation by the Dutch.

Even though the Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms have long vanished from this country and there is a minimal Hindu or Buddhist population remaining, the country still profoundly bears the marks left by those cultures.

Garuda, the mythical bird-like creature of Indian mythology, is part of the national emblem of Indonesia and also the national carrier of the country.

The names and rituals here too have consumed a lot of Indian traditions, such as names of people which bear an affinity to the linguistic roots and greeting people with the traditional namaste, no matter what religion they belong to.

NASI GORENG ALL THE WAY

Being the third largest rice producer in the world, it is no wonder that Indonesians live on rice. They start their day with rice, eat rice for lunch and end their day's meals with rice, of course with various protein and

vegetables as side dishes.

However, the preparation of rice can be of varied nature -- from Nasi Goreng, fried rice with side dishes, to plain rice, accompanied with soup noodles, a Chinese influence.

Nasi means rice and Goreng means fried. The people of Indonesia, certainly of Jakarta, have a passion for fried food. You will see push-carts selling various types of fried foods from morning till midnight and those food carts are always in high demand, especially with the local motorists who are more often than not stuck in the infamous Jakarta traffic jams.



A street-side restaurant selling various items of meat and fish, catering mostly to people with tight budgets.

And then of course there are types of desserts, and beverages, with coffee topping the bill due to it being produced here in abundance. However, the tea (locally called teh) served here is very different from the ones we have in our country. Most people here drink tea cold, with nutmeg or clove to flavour, rather than hot, and there is no milk tea available. Hence, if you go to a street side shop and ask for a cup of milk tea or even liquor tea, you would most likely get a blank stare, with a gesture that says seek elsewhere if

INDIA V ENG 4TH TEST Unsure hosts, resurgent India

AFP, London

England head into Thursday's fourth Test against a resurgent India at Southampton facing several awkward questions.

Whether Jonny Bairstow is fit to play at all, never mind keep wicket, after suffering a broken finger during India's dominant 203-run win in the third Test at Trent Bridge, has still to be decided.

"The swelling has gone down," Bairstow told reporters in Southampton on Tuesday. "I'm going to try and keep wicket in training this afternoon as well."

Even if Bairstow is included purely as a specialist batsman, England, seeking a victory that would see them win the series, will still have to consider whether they need to bolster their fallible top order.

If Bairstow is ruled out completely, James Vince is set for an England recall, with Jos Buttler taking over behind the stumps. But even if Bairstow plays, the in-form Vince could still return in a bid to strengthen the batting.

England also have concerns over the balance of their attack, with pace-bowling all-rounders Ben Stokes and Chris Woakes not yet fully fit.

India have yet to field the same side for two consecutive Tests under Virat Kohli's captaincy. But that could change following a dominant display in Nottingham.

Victory kept alive India's hopes of coming from 2-0 down to win a five-match series, something achieved just once in Test history, by a Don Bradman-inspired Australia against England in 1936/37.