

## Move has pitted reformers against traditionalists

## India dump saris for trousers at Commonwealth Games ceremony

NEW DELHI, Feb 27, (AFP): India's women athletes will for the first time wear trousers and a blazer instead of a traditional sari at the Commonwealth Games opening ceremony in Australia, a move that has pitted reformers against traditionalists.

Many Indian women competitors have welcomed the dark blue blazer and trousers that the Indian Olympic Association said was introduced at the request of the country's athletes' commission.

## CGAMES

But female stars like badminton ace PV Sindhu and wrestler Sakshi Malik, both Olympic medalists, prefer the time-honoured sari, a flowing dress draped around the body.

"We always feel happy and proud when we wear a sari during the opening ceremonies," Malik told the Mail Today newspaper.

Younger athletes feel it will be a change for the better at the opening parade for the 21st Commonwealth Games starting April 4 in Gold Coast, Australia.

Women's hockey captain Rani Rampal told AFP that she "loves" the new uniform



In this file photo taken on Oct 3, 2010, Indian athletes wearing traditional saris wave during the opening ceremony of the XIX Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. (AFP)

at the official launch of the attire in New Delhi on Monday.

"It's very nice. Time to time there should be changes. Girls always used to wear a

sari at the Games but this time it will be different and I love it," said the 23-year-old Rampal.

Fifteen-year-old shooter Manu Bhakar

was relieved not to have to wear a sari, which she finds difficult to wrap.

"I have never worn these typical women dresses, so it was a bit weird when thinking that I would have to wear the sari."

Bhakar told AFP that she always wears trousers and shirts so the new uniform will be "comfortable" for her.

Indian gymnast Pranita Das wore a sari at the 2014 Commonwealth Games but said she thought the trousers would be a better fit for female athletes.

Male athletes have mostly worn blue blazers with grey trousers at major sporting events while women have had to wear the traditional Indian attire.

This time will be more unisex, though the men will have to wear a tie while the women will wear a scarf.

The Raymond company that designed the outfits for the Indian contingent in Australia also said women's modern dress is more practical.

"Traditional Indian costume is definitely a sari but women athletes have themselves said that wrapping a saree is a tedious thing to do," a Raymond spokesman Rohit Khanna told AFP.

"So based on their feedback we created this ensemble for the women athletes which is a white shirt, blazer and trouser with a scarf."

## Too passive

## Japanese judo pair disqualified in final

BERLIN, Feb 27, (AFP): There was an embarrassing twist in the men's heavyweight final of the Duesseldorf Grand Slam as both Japanese judoka were disqualified for being too passive.

No gold medal was awarded in the men's +100kg final in bizarre scenes on Sunday night.

Olympic silver medalist Hisayoshi Hara-sawa and Japanese compatriot Takeshi Ojitani, both 25, were so attack-shy in the final that both were disqualified.

"Our team deemed this contest unacceptable," explained refereeing chief Juan Carlos Barcos.

"There was no intention to fight from either. This is what we decided as there was no judoka worthy of winning in the +100kg final."

Harasawa was fighting for the first time since his shock exit in round two of the World Championships last September, where Ojitani had exited in the third round.

Both were looking to redeem themselves in Duesseldorf, but their bout in the Grand Slam final, the last contest of the competition, degenerated into farce. The Japanese pair both ended up with silver medals while the top step on the medal rostrum was left empty and no winner's national anthem was played.



Mexican wrestler 'Brillo de Luna' (Moonbeam) (left), 42, performs at the de Junio Arena in Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico State, on Feb 4. (AFP)

## Body blows can be all too real

## Mexican women wrestlers wage war of sexes in 'lucha libre' ring

MEXICO CITY, Feb 27, (AFP): The crowd goes wild as the masked wrestlers toss each other around the ring in colorful spandex.

But this is no ordinary Mexican "lucha libre" match: it is the "War of the Sexes," in which three women wrestlers battle three far bigger men.

Mixed matches like this, which emerged on the wildly popular pro wrestling scene some 20 years ago, could be a metaphor for gender relations in Mexico — a country with a deep tradition of machismo, where women are fighting for equal rights even as thousands of them are raped and murdered each year.

"Get back in the kitchen, you damn hag!" yells a fan in the stands in an explosive outburst, as a wrestler called Moonbeam, decked out in a sequined leotard and tall boots, throws a left hook at her hulking opponent, Nazi Warrior.

Instead of getting upset, Moonbeam says it is "very beautiful" when male fans hurl insults at her.

"It means you're doing a good job. You're provoking them and giving them an outlet for their stress," she says.

"They take out their frustration by yelling at you," instead of shouting at or hitting their wives when they get home, she tells AFP.

## WRESTLING

Moonbeam, a 42-year-old mother of three, says she loves fighting in mixed matches, which she sees as a "power struggle."

"We want to show the public and our opponents that we can do this too. You don't have to be a big, strong man. We're skilled, we know how to fight a match, and we can beat them."

Her record backs her up: she has beaten nearly 70 men in her 15-year career. Lucha libre, one of Mexico's most popular spectator sports, falls somewhere between actual sport and entertainment.

With its outlandish masks, costumes and characters, it packs more than a little spectacle. But the results are not predetermined, insist wrestlers like Moonbeam and her fellow "luchadoras" Melisa, Princess Legna and Lilly Star.

And the body blows can be all too real. The women all bear battle scars: bruised arms, scraped legs, back injuries. They also endure sexism and criticism — sometimes from their own families — for pursuing a "masculine" sport. "Four out of five matches on every fight card are for men," says Princess Legna, wearing a turquoise mask.

There are rarely separate dressing rooms for women, and "sometimes you can feel (the male wrestlers) sexually harassing you with their eyes," she says.

Nazi Warrior — who insists he chose his name because it "sounds scary," not for ideological reasons — says he tries to be "less rough" in the ring when he fights with women.

Violence against women "is OK, but only up to a point," he jokes, before climbing into the ring with his own mother, a fellow wrestler who goes by the name Swastika.

## Point scores shootout winner again as Lightning edge Leafs

Kings rally late, beat Golden Knights 3-2 in OT

TAMPA, Fla, Feb 27, (AP): Brayden Point scored the deciding goal in a shootout for the second consecutive game, lifting the Tampa Bay Lightning to a 4-3 victory over the Toronto Maple Leafs on Monday night.

Tyler Johnson, Chris Kunitz and Adam Erne scored in regulation for the NHL-leading Lightning, who played most of the game without Nikita Kucherov after the league's top scorer was injured. Still, the Atlantic Division leaders edged second-place Toronto hours after acquiring defenseman Ryan McDonagh and forward J.T. Miller in a blockbuster deal with the New York Rangers just before the NHL trade deadline.

Tampa Bay parted with forward Vladimir Namestnikov, two prospects and two draft picks — a first-round selection in 2018 and a conditional first-rounder in 2019.

## Kings 3, Golden Knights 2

In Los Angeles, Anze Kopitar tied the game with 10.8 seconds left in the third period and Dustin Brown scored a power-play goal 3:14 into overtime, rallying Los Angeles past Vegas.

Jeff Carter, in his second game back after missing 55 with a cut tendon, scored the Kings' first goal on a power play at 12:28 of the third. Jonathan Quick stopped 37 shots.

Erik Haula and Reilly Smith scored

## ICE HOCKEY

for Vegas. Marc-Andre Fleury made 41 saves.

It was the first victory for the Kings in three games against the expansion Golden Knights. The teams meet again Tuesday in Las Vegas.

## Blue Jackets 5, Capitals 1

In Columbus, Ohio, Seth Jones and Cam Atkinson each had a goal and two assists as Columbus topped Washington.

Columbus scored four goals in the first period two on power plays in winning its second game in three days and first in four tries against the Capitals this season. Artemi Panarin had a goal and an assist, and Sonny Milano and Mark Letestu acquired in a trade Sunday also scored.

Sergei Bobrovsky made 25 saves for the Blue Jackets, who held onto the second wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference with a knot of teams still in contention.

## Flyers 1, Canadiens 0, SO

In Montreal, Sean Couturier scored in the sixth round of the shootout and Philadelphia edged Montreal for its season-best sixth straight victory.

Petr Mrazek, making his third straight start for the streaking Flyers, stopped 28 shots in his fourth shutout this season. Mrazek is 3-0-0 since being acquired from Detroit last Monday.

Philadelphia passed Washington for first place in the Metropolitan Division. The Flyers have earned at least one point in 12 straight games (10-0-2).

Backup goalie Charlie Lindgren made 33 saves for the Canadiens, who have lost eight of nine.

## Avalanche 3, Canucks 1

In Denver, Nathan MacKinnon had two goals and an assist, and Mikko Rantanen added a goal and an assist in Colorado's victory over Vancouver.

Semyon Varlamov made 31 saves and came within 1:16 of his third shutout this season. The Avalanche won for the 11th time in 12 home games and moved within two points of idle Calgary for the second wild card in the Western Conference.



Vegas Golden Knights goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury (right), shoots the puck away as defenseman Luca Sbisa (left), of Italy, battles with Los Angeles Kings left wing Tanner Pearson during the second period of an NHL hockey game on Feb 26, in Los Angeles. (AP)

## NHL Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Feb 27, (RTRS): Results and standings from the NHL games on Monday.

Team	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pts
Columbus	5	1	0	19	10	15
Philadelphia	4	1	0	18	10	12
Tampa Bay	4	1	0	18	10	12
Washington	1	0	0	10	10	3
Montreal (SO)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Toronto (SO)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colorado	3	3	0	16	16	9
Los Angeles	3	3	0	16	16	9
Vancouver	1	3	0	10	16	3
Las Vegas (OT)	1	3	0	10	16	3

  

Western Conference							Eastern Conference						
Central Division							Atlantic Division						
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pts	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pts		
Nashville	38	14	9	196	155	85	Tampa Bay	43	17	3	227	170	89
Winnipeg	37	16	9	208	164	83	Toronto	39	20	6	216	182	84
Minnesota	35	20	7	188	174	77	Boston	37	15	8	195	150	82
Dallas	35	23	4	184	164	74	Florida	28	25	6	175	193	62
St. Louis	34	25	4	173	164	72	Detroit	26	26	10	165	183	62
Colorado	33	24	5	190	186	71	Montreal	23	29	10	157	194	56
Chicago	27	28	8	178	179	62	Ottawa	21	30	10	166	216	52
							Buffalo	19	33	11	151	206	49
Pacific Division							Metropolitan Division						
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		
Las Vegas	41	16	5	217	169	87	Philadelphia	34	19	10	189	178	78
San Jose	33	21	9	182	176	75	Washington	35	21	7	195	189	77
Anaheim	31	21	12	176	178	74	Pittsburgh	36	23	4	206	187	76
Los Angeles	34	24	5	180	157	73	New Jersey	32	22	8	185	188	72
Calgary	32	22	9	182	185	73	Columbus	32	26	5	168	175	69
Edmonton	27	31	4	177	204	58	NV Islanders	29	27	7	207	225	65
Vancouver	24	32	7	168	204	55	Carolina	27	25	10	164	189	64
Arizona	18	34	10	148	205	46	NV Rangers	27	30	6	177	201	60

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)

## Red Sox introduce J. B. Martinez

## Blue Jays sign S. Korean reliever Oh

TORONTO, Feb 27, (RTRS): The Toronto Blue Jays have signed South Korean free agent reliever Oh Seung-hwan to a one-year contract, the Major League Baseball team said on Monday.

The right-hander went 1-6 with 20 saves and a 4.10 earned run average in 62 games for the St. Louis Cardinals last season.

The 35-year-old Jeongeup native

## BASEBALL

and just go out and play baseball," Martinez said.

Seattle right-hander Felix Hernandez left the Mariners' spring training game in pain after being drilled in the upper right forearm by a line drive.

The Chicago Cubs catcher Victor Caratini ripped a pitch back up the middle in the second inning at Mesa, Ariz., and it struck Hernandez on his pitching arm near the elbow. The 31-year-old flinched but was unable to raise his glove in



Oh

time to stop the hard-hit ball.

Baltimore right-hander Kevin Gausman departed the Orioles' spring training game in Sarasota, Fla., in the second inning after sustaining a head injury during a collision at home plate with Detroit Tigers third base-

man Jeimer Candelario.

Gausman was backing up home plate after giving up a run-scoring single to Leonys Martin and was moving toward the third base side as center fielder Adam Jones' throw was off line. Meanwhile, Candelario, the on-deck hitter, was trying to aid Detroit baserunner Jason Krizan, and collided with Gausman.

Logan Morrison agreed to a one-year deal with the Minnesota Twins. The contract includes a vesting option for 2019.

Morrison, who hit 38 home runs with the Tampa Bay Rays last season, is likely to serve as designated hitter and spell Joe Mauer at first base.

The New York Mets signed right-hander A.J. Griffin to a minor league contract with an invitation to major league spring training.

Griffin spent the 2017 season with the Texas Rangers and appeared in 18 games (15 starts), going 6-6 with a 5.94 ERA over 77-1/3 innings. He allowed 20 home runs and struck out 61.