



Winners with organizers celebrate after the Kuwait Indian Badminton Lovers Association (KIBLA) Second Shuttle Badminton Tournament.

George & Asheer crowned doubles champions

Thomas wins KIBLA singles title

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 23: Kuwait Indian Badminton Lovers Association (KIBLA) held its Second Shuttle Badminton Tournament a huge success. The individual events of the tournament in 4 categories begin at the indoor badminton court in Riggai for three nights. Around 65 shuttlers captivated the entire event. The challenging elimination rounds happened during the first 2 nights (Feb 13 & 14). Meanwhile, the quarter-finals to the championship rounds were executed on the 17th.

Binoy Thomas won intermediate singles title defeating Naseer N.K. On the other hand, intermediate doubles crowned were Lijo George & Asheer, champions against Binoy Thomas & Shaji Varghese.

However, Ahmad Shafi made a quick work narrowly won over in straight games from Pramod Surendran in Lower-intermediate singles.

Loel Varghese & Eldhose John closed with a historic win over Ahmad Shafi & Zakariya P.K by 15/10; 15/9 in doubles Lower-intermediate.

Listed below are the tournament winners:

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Intermediate Singles Champion: Binoy Thomas Arakkal
 Runner-up: Naseer N.K
 2nd Runner-up: Lijo George
 Doubles Intermediate Champions: Lijo George & Asheer
 Runners-up: Binoy Thomas & Shaji Varghese
 2nd Runners-up: Najji Hameed & Mohammed Sadiq
 Lower Intermediate Singles Champion: Ahmad Shafi
 Runner-up: Pramod Surendran
 2nd Runner-up: Saji K. John
 Lower Intermediate Doubles Winners: Joel Varghese & Eldhose John
 Runners-Up: Ahmad Shafi & Zakariya P.K
 2nd Runners-up: Leslee Varghese Lalson & Githin Babu



KIBLA Chairman Shabeer Mandoly hands over the trophies to the Doubles Winners Lijo George & Asheer.

Soon after the tiring matches, awarding ceremony and distribution of trophies took place for the winners by KIBLA Chairman Shabeer Mandoly General Secretary Hameed Kurooli and Treasurer Salahuddin. Other organizers Sreekumar Dr Yazir, Jimmy Carandang, Mujeeb Chittari, Wilson, Nabeel, Muthu, and Shervin. Over all the matches umpired by Jimmy, Tito Thomas, Nizar Nandi and Shameem Mandoly.

Besides the success, the camaraderie of the games and the opportunity to compete against other players KIBLA is looking forward for the next upcoming event.

France restore pride with Scotland victory

Crusaders outclass Hurricanes 38-22

PARIS, Feb 23, (Agencies): France, led by a scintillating Romain Ntamack, finally found something to cheer about when they hammered an injury-depleted Scotland 27-10 to claim their first victory in this year's Six Nations on Saturday.

A spectacular second-half implosion against Wales and a 44-8 thrashing by England had left France without a win after two games. However, tries by Ntamack, Yoann Huget and Gregory Alldritt (2), and five points from the boot of Thomas Ramos as well as a Baptiste Serin conversion restored some pride for Les Bleus.

Scotland had only Greig Laidlaw's first-half penalty and a late Ali Price try converted by Adam Hastings to show for themselves.

France, who had lost 10 of their previous 13 matches under coach Jacques Brunel, next travel to Ireland with Scotland hosting Wales.

Brunel gave hope to a weakened Scotland by fielding Ntamack, who usually plays centre, at flyhalf in yet another half-back combination after the coach had omitted Morgan Parra and Camille Lopez following their veiled criticism of the management after the Twickenham rout.

But the 19-year-old Ntamack, paired with scrumhalf Antoine Dupont, produced a sterling performance in Brunel's seventh halfback pairing in 14 tests, with Thomas Ramos winning his first start at fullback.

Scotland, who had not won in Paris since 1999, had been forced to make changes to their line-up with Finn Russell, Stuart Hogg and Willem Nel ruled out injured.

In a packed Stade de France on a spring-like afternoon, France started aggressively while Scotland were their usual playful selves.

After a long spell of domination, Les Bleus went ahead when Ntamack touched down at the end of a brilliant move.

They had their second try disallowed because of an earlier



Scotland's Adam Hastings (left), is tackled by Antoine Dupont of France during the Six Nations rugby union international match between France and Scotland at the Stade de France in Paris on Feb 23. (AP)

knock on after Gael Fickou went over the line following a clever chip from Ntamack.

The hosts lacked discipline but Scotland had only one Greig Laidlaw penalty on the scoreboard at halftime.

A Mathieu Bastareaud chip-and-collect kick tore the visitors' defence and Huget finished the move to give France a perfect start to the second half. The intensity went down but France, who had failed to win six of the last eight times they held a halftime lead, stayed focused and kept their composure.

A third disallowed try was quickly followed by a valid one by Alldritt.

With less than five minutes left, France were sitting on a 17-point cushion, leaving Scotland with no hope of a comeback as Ntamack was replaced after a man-of-the-match display.

The visitors, however, finally scored a try by Price, who made a bee-run to the line to reduce the arrears.

But France continued to play after the clock stopped to get a bonus point when Alldritt touched down again.

In Christchurch, New Zealand, the Christchurch-based Crusaders led 24-0 at halftime and held on to beat the Wellington-based Hurricanes 38-22 in Super Rugby on Saturday, remaining unbeaten after two rounds.

The defending champions ran in four first-half tries against the under-strength Hurricanes, who rallied slightly to outscore the Crusaders four tries to two in the second half.

In another match Saturday, it wasn't nearly as close. The ACT Brumbies led the Hamilton, New Zealand-based Chiefs 33-10 at halftime and won 54-17 in an eight-try winning performance.

After a first-round loss to the Melbourne Rebels, the Brumbies ran in five first-half tries en route to their first victory over the Chiefs since 2014. Winger Chance Peni scored two tries for the

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Brumbies, as did center Tevita Kuridrani.

The Brumbies were playing without Wallaby flanker David Pocock, who sustained a concussion against the Rebels.

Hurricanes coach John Plumtree made the decision to rest several of his leading players, including All Blacks flyhalf Beauden Barrett, and the Crusaders, also missing several All Blacks, drew on their greater depth to outplay the Hurricanes in all phases.

The absence of the All Blacks, which has been a feature of the first two rounds of the tournament in New Zealand, meant a match which is usually one of the marquee contests of the season was played in a half-empty stadium.

The Crusaders took advantage of the Hurricanes' weakness at set pieces and disorganization in defense to score first-half tries through flyhalf Richie Mo'unga – who scored twice – flanker Jordan Taufua and lock Scott Barrett.

The fourth try, just before halftime, resulted from a massive scrum shove by the Crusaders which showed how powerless the Hurricanes were against the nine-time champions. The match lost much of its structure after halftime as both teams ran their benches.

Earlier, the New South Wales Waratahs struggled to a 31-30 win over Japan's Sunwolves in Tokyo.

The Sunwolves were able to repair many of the defensive lapses which saw them lose 45-10 first up to South Africa's Sharks. They stunned the Waratahs with an early try to Ryoto Nakamura and made the pace for most of the game, leading 20-17 at halftime.

The Waratahs moved ahead 24-23 with a try by Jack Dempsey in the 48th minute and extended their advantage to 31-23 with a penalty try in the 63rd minute.

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