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AUSSIE JUDGE REMOVED AFTER PHOTO WITH COMPATRIOT SURFER


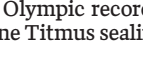
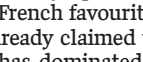
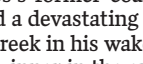
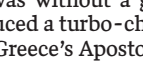
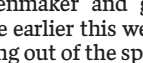


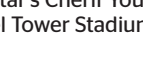

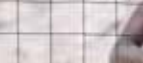
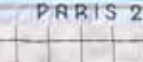




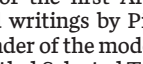
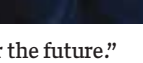
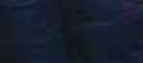











An Olympic surfing judge from Australia has been cut from the panel scoring the competition in Tahiti after a photo showing him posing with Australian surfer Ethan Ewing and the team manager circulated on social media. The sport's governing body, the International Surfing Association, said it was inappropriate for a judge to be interacting with an athlete and their team in such a way. The ISA did not identify the judge, but Benjamin Lowe is the only judge from Australia at the Olympics surfing competition. "This decision is not related to this judge's performance here at the Olympic Games," the ISA said.

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GULF**TIMES**

SPORT



ATHLETICS / 20KM WALK

It's a family affair as Pintado walks off with shock gold

'I WANT MY COUNTRY TO GIVE ME A HOUSE FOR MY CHILDREN'

AFP
Paris

Ecuador's Brian Pintado dedicated the first Olympic athletics gold medal of the Paris Games to his loved ones back home after powering to victory in the men's 20km walk yesterday.

The 29-year-old's beloved family may not have been present in Paris as he strolled to victory in 1hr 18min 55sec but he wore a "necklace of my son running beside me" and "a scarf that my grandmother gave me."

Brazil's Caio Bonfim improved on his fourth from Rio in 2016 taking silver with Spain's world champion Alvaro Martin taking the bronze.

It was Ecuador's second Olympic title in the event after Jefferson Perez's gold medal at the 1996 Atlanta Games, and only the South American country's fourth ever gold.

Pintado clutched a family photograph as he crossed the line before being connected to loved ones via a live link.

"It has been tough to be away from my family, my wife, my kids, for four months and just seeing them through a screen," said Pintado. "But they were with me throughout the race. I have a picture of them with me."

Pintado quipped that he hoped



Gold medalist Brian Daniel Pintado of Ecuador poses on the podium while holding the Olympics mascot the Phryges during the ceremony with silver medalist Caio Bonfim of Brazil and bronze medalist Alvaro Martin of Spain at the Paris 2024 Olympics Men's 20km Race Walk in Trocadero, Paris yesterday. (AFP)

his gold medal would earn him a house from Ecuador's government. "I want my country to give me a house for my children and I don't want anything more," he said.

The race was delayed half an hour due to a thunderstorm but once they started at Trocadero, Bonfim took off as if he wanted to make up for the lost time.

The 33-year-old and his rivals may not have had the time to take it in but for spectators and viewers the race was a splendid spectacle as they did 20 laps,

along the banks of the Seine and passing by the Eiffel Tower as well as Trocadero. He was gradually reeled in but stayed amongst the leaders and was ahead at the halfway mark. He only held a slight advantage and the lead began to change on a regular basis with China's Zhang Jun, defending champion Massimo Stano from Italy and Martin all leading at times.

China's Yang secures women's race walk gold
China's Yang Jiayu claimed gold

in the women's 20km race walk at the Paris Olympics yesterday, pulling away from the field after the 5km mark and barely looking back en route to a victory that fulfilled a promise made to her late father. Yang crossed the finish line in one hour 25 minutes and 54 seconds, Spain's Maria Perez secured the silver medal in 1:26.19 and Australia's Jemima Montag won bronze in 1:26.25.

"I never mentioned this before but I promised him (her father) I would win gold," Yang said. "Now I have finally done it, I am very proud of myself."

OMEGA Ambassador Léon Marchand Secures Two Gold Medals and Sets New Olympic Records

OMEGA ambassador Léon Marchand has done it again!

OMEGA's French swimming ambassador has won two more gold medals and set two more Olympic Records, including:



The Men's 200m Butterfly in a new Olympic Record time of 1:51.21.



The Men's 200m Breaststroke in a new Olympic Record time of 2:05.85.

This is Léon's third gold medal and third Olympic Record of these Olympic Games!

SPOTLIGHT

'Cool' Turkish marksman Dikec is unruffled by viral Olympic fame

AFP
Paris

A Turkish Olympic shooting silver medalist said yesterday he was unfazed by his new-found fame, after his casual style with no headwear and a hand in his pocket made him an overnight Internet sensation.

Yusuf Dikec and partner Sevvall Ilayda Tarhan won silver on Tuesday for Turkiye in the mixed team 10m air pistol, losing to Serbia in the gold medal match. But it was Dikec's posture that caught attention as much as the result, with the marksman wearing standard glasses, a team T-shirt and with his left hand casually slung in his pocket.

Other than his pistol, he notably had none of the specialised equipment used by athletes in the hyper-precise event, like headphones, special lenses or a hat.

"Be cool like Yusuf Dikec. Congratulations on winning the silver medal in such a cool way," France's embassy to Turkiye wrote in a post on X in Turkish.

"The name's Dikec. Yusuf Dikec," said posts by other users in reference to cinema icon James Bond. Some memes added a cigarette to his mouth to emphasise the relaxed posture.

Speaking to Turkish channel TGRT



Silver medalists Turkiye's Sevvall Ilayda Tarhan (left) and Yusuf Dikec from the shooting 10m air pistol mixed team event pose before the Eiffel Tower at the Champions Park during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games on Wednesday. (AFP)

Haber, Dikec acknowledged that he had adopted the rare technique of shooting with both eyes open whereas most athletes keep one closed or obscured.

"My shooting technique is one of the rare shooting techniques in the world. I shoot with both eyes open.

"Even the referees are surprised by this," he said.

He said winning a medal was no surprise as "this year we prepared a lot and worked a lot... this success belongs to all of Turkiye."

"Success doesn't come with your hands in your pockets."

Some social media users suggested equal attention should also be given to his shooting partner in the mixed event Tarhan, who images showed adopted an equally casual hand-in-pocket stance, albeit wearing headphones and a visor.

Turkish Sports Minister Osman Askin Bak congratulated Dikec on social media, posting a photo of him recreating his now "legendary pose".

Clutching a Turkish flag and their medals, Dikec and Tarhan both celebrated their victory at the Champions Park at the Trocadero complex in Paris on Wednesday.

Flawless Matsuyama leads, Schauffele close behind

Guyancourt, France: Japan's Hideki Matsuyama grabbed an early lead in the men's Olympic golf tournament with a bogey-free opening round, but defending champion Xander Schauffele of the United States was close behind as he brought his sparkling form to Paris.

The first day of competition at Le Golf National southwest of the French capital drew a buoyant crowd who roared on home pair Victor Perez and Matthieu Pavon. The 60 contenders will all play four rounds in a stroke play format at the 2018 Ryder Cup venue. The weather, a talking point of the Paris Games, shaped the day, with warm morning sunshine giving way to unsettled afternoon conditions that caused two interruptions of play due to lightning risks.

The first round was concluded about an hour later than scheduled at about 7pm (1700 GMT).

Matsuyama, the former Masters champion who just missed out on bronze on home soil three years ago in a playoff, posted an eight under par 63, putting Asia's top-ranked player two ahead of Schauffele, whose 65 featured

seven birdies and one bogey. Schauffele, who won last month's British Open to claim his second major title this year, credited himself with steadying his game after a "clanky" start. "It's Thursday so I'm not really sweating it too much," he told reporters. Tied in third place at five under were Chile's Joaquin Niemann, Argentina's Emiliano Grillo and South Korea's Tom Kim. US world number one Scottie Scheffler was in touch at four under after playing alongside Ireland's world number three Rory McIlroy who finished on three under. Perez hit the opening tee-shot at 9am (0700 GMT) to huge applause, with the atmosphere reaching its peak as fellow Frenchman Pavon arrived to the sound of the crowd bellowing out La Marseillaise.

"I was surprised there were a lot of people out here. Victor was in front of me and you could tell how they were cheering for him. It was pretty cool for the first day," Niemann told reporters.

Japan's Hideki Matsuyama takes a shot out of a bunker in round 1 of the men's golf individual stroke play of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. (AFP)

BOXING

Carini pulls out of the Paris Games, stoking gender row

A distraught Carini fell to her knees in the ring, sobbing and declining to shake Khelif’s hand

Reuters
Paris

Italian boxer Angela Carini pulled out of the Paris Olympics mid-fight yesterday after she sustained a series of crunching blows from her Algerian opponent Imane Khelif, who last year failed a gender eligibility test at the AIBA World Championships. Khelif, whose participation in the Games was permitted by the IOC and had divided boxers, landed multiple punches in the first 30 seconds before a powerful right to Carini’s nose prompted the Italian to raise her hand and return to her corner. Her coach signalled she was withdrawing from the women’s welterweight round of 16 bout. A distraught Carini fell to her knees in the ring, sobbing and declining to shake Khelif’s hand after the referee declared the Algerian the winner. “I am a fighter. My father taught me to be a warrior. When I am in the ring, I use that mindset, the mindset of a warrior, a winning mindset,” Carini told reporters after abandoning the bout. “This time I couldn’t make it.” “I didn’t lose tonight, I just surrendered with maturity.” Khelif and Taiwan’s double world champion Lin Yu-ting were cleared to fight in Paris after the IOC last year stripped the IBA of its status as boxing’s governing body over governance issues, and



Algeria's Imane Khelif after her fight with Italy's Angela Carini in women's 66kg preliminaries round of 16 boxing match during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the North Paris Arena, in Villepinte yesterday. **Right:** Carini cries in the ring after pulling out of the fight. (AFP)



took charge of the Paris 2024 boxing competition. Both had been disqualified at the 2023 World Championships after failing International Boxing Association (IBA) eligibility rules that prevent athletes with male XY chromosomes competing in women’s events. The IOC’s Framework on Fairness, Inclusion and Non-discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sex variations, offers guidelines to federations on ensuring inclusion and fairness in sport,

including athletes with Differences of Sexual Disorder (DSD). DSD are a group of rare conditions involving genes, hormones and reproductive organs. Some people with DSDs are raised as female but have XY sex chromosomes and blood testosterone levels in the male range. Ahead of Khelif’s bout, IOC spokesman Mark Adams defended the body’s decision for Paris 2024. “This involves real people and we are talking about real people’s

lives here,” he told reporters yesterday. “They have lost and they have won against other women over the years.” IBA Chief Executive Chris Roberts, whose organisation’s relationship with the IOC has soured, was disappointed for Carini. “These two boxers are not allowed to box within IBA. So I find it remarkable how the IOC applies a different condition to this event,” he said. Khelif described the bout

as difficult. “For the second fight. I am very prepared because it’s been eight years of preparation,” she told reporters. “I need an Olympic medal here in Paris.” Women’s sports categories exist in most sports in recognition of the clear advantage that going through male puberty gives an athlete. That advantage is not just through higher testosterone levels but also in muscle mass, skeletal advantage and faster twitch muscle. British author JK Rowling, who has become an outspoken figure

on the definition of what it is to be a woman, said Carini’s dreams had been shattered by unjust rules. “A young female boxer has just had everything she’s worked and trained for snatched away because you allowed a male to get in the ring with her,” Rowling wrote on X. “#Paris2024 will be forever tarnished by this brutal injustice,” she added. Italy’s right-wing Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said Carini’s bout against Khelif was not a fight among equals. “I think that athletes who have male genetic characteristics should not be admitted to women’s competitions,” Meloni was quoted as saying by Italian news agency ANSA. “And not because you want to discriminate against someone, but to protect the right of female athletes to be able to compete on equal terms.” Hungarian boxer Luca Anna Hamori, next to face Khelif in the ring, said she was not scared. “I will go to the ring and I will get my win. I trust my coaches and I trust myself,” Hamori said. Carini was left nursing shattered dreams. “I’m out, my dream is over,” she said. “So I felt really sad, with a broken heart. It’s not right for my Olympics to end here, it’s not right for my dream to end here, because an athlete makes so many sacrifices. “I’m not ashamed to say that I gave up, I’m not even afraid to go back to that ring.”

Coe confident of cross-country inclusion in Winter Olympics

PARIS: World Athletics president Sebastian Coe expressed his confidence yesterday that cross-country running would soon be included in the Winter Olympics programme. Coe has long argued that the rightful place for cross-country was at the Winter Olympics, which would open those Games to a large African audience in a hat-tip to diversity the International Olympic Committee (IOC) so heralds. The last time it featured in the Olympics was at the 1924 Paris Games when most of the athletes dropped out due to extreme heat and pollution from a nearby factory. Talks have been ongoing between Coe and his international cycling federation (UCI) counterpart David Lappartient for a joint proposal of cross-country running and cyclo-cross, on the same circuit. “There’s a lot of detail to be sorted,” Coe said. “But we’ve had some good discussions about the thought of sharing the same course with cyclo-cross, which in itself would probably add a little bit of jeopardy into cross-country which is what we’ve welcomed

in the past, particularly around our recent cross-country championships,” Coe said. Coe is a fervent supporter of cross-country running, a long-time proponent of the sport’s training benefits. “For me, there’s one really important element in this: I’ve always wanted to see cross-country back,” said the Briton, who won two Olympic 1500m gold medals in 1980 and 1984. “I think it is obviously more at home in the winter. It is historically, traditionally, a winter sport and it really does give Africa an opportunity to be a really serious part of the Winter Games.” Including cross-country in the Winter Olympics would avoid any dilution, with athletes at the Summer Games considered more likely to focus on individual track glory. But one dilemma to overcome is abiding by Winter Olympic rules that events must be contested on snow or ice. Currently world cross-country championships are held in March, and some have featured snow, which has posed a problem neither for athletes nor organisers.

US CLINCH WOMEN’S FOIL TEAM FENCING GOLD



American fencers Lee Kiefer, Lauren Scruggs, Jacqueline Dubrovich and Maia Mei Weintraub celebrate with flags after winning their gold medal match against Italy at Paris 2024 Olympics in the Women's Foil Team clash yesterday. (AFP)

PARIS: The United States triumphed in the women’s foil team event, knocking out Italy in a nerve-shredding final bout and snatching the gold medal at the Paris Games yesterday. Lee Kiefer, who won individual gold on Sunday, led the US team to their first Olympic title in the event, with a 45-39 win against the world number ones. First-time Olympian Lauren Scruggs, who won silver in the individual, confirmed her breakthrough status. She scored five touches early on against Italy’s Martina Favaretto, giving her team a comfortable lead. She closed the bout by another decisive five touches. The United States won the 2018 world championship and a silver medal at the 2008 Games in Beijing. Japan claimed bronze, beating Canada 33-32 in a tight bout.

TENNIS

Murray’s career ends in doubles defeat at Paris Olympic Games

AFP
Paris

Andy Murray’s trophy-filled career came to an end at the Paris Olympics yesterday as another chapter closed on tennis’s golden generation. The former world number one and three-time Grand Slam title winner slipped into retirement when he and Dan Evans were defeated in the men’s doubles quarter-finals. American pair Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul delivered the knockout blow with a 6-2, 6-4 victory on a packed Court Suzanne Lenglen. The 37-year-old Murray had already announced that the Olympics would be his last event. “An incredible competitor on the court,” said career-long rival Novak Djokovic yesterday. “One of the greatest warriors tennis has seen. His fighting spirit is definitely something that I’m sure is going to inspire many generations to come.” One of the ‘Big Four’ in the sport, Murray joins 20-time Grand Slam winner Roger Federer in retirement after the Swiss great quit in 2022.

Rafael Nadal, the winner of 22 majors but battling more injuries at the age of 38, exited the Paris Olympics on Wednesday and suggested that he had played his last match at Roland Garros where he won 14 of his Slams. Nadal also ef-

fectively ruled himself out of the US Open, sparking more speculation that the great Spaniard is also finished in the sport. That would leave just 37-year-old Djokovic, the winner of a record 24 Grand Slams, still active amongst the sport’s eminent talents who have carved up 69 majors between them. Murray famously ended Britain’s 77-year wait for a men’s champion at Wimbledon when he triumphed in 2013, defeating career-long rival Djokovic in the final. He added a second title in 2016, taking his career majors total to three after breaking his duck at the 2012 US Open. Murray won gold at the 2012 Olympics on an emotional day at the All England Club when he defeated Federer just weeks after he had lost the Wimbledon final to the Swiss on the same Centre Court. Four years later, he defeated Juan Martin del Potro to become the first player, male or female, to win two Olympic singles golds. Murray also led Britain to the Davis Cup title in 2015, the country’s first in 79 years. He has won 46 titles in all and banked around \$65mn in prize money. However, he has been ravaged by injuries in recent years, slumping to 117th in the world. The Scot has played with a metal hip since 2019 and suffered ankle damage earlier this year before undergoing surgery to remove a spinal cyst, which ruled him out of singles at Wimbledon.



Britain's Andy Murray waves goodbye after playing with Britain's Daniel Evans against Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul of the US in their doubles quarter-final at the Roland-Garros Stadium during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, in Paris, yesterday. (AFP)

FOCUS

Inspired De Gennaro grabs kayak gold medal

Reuters
Paris

Italy’s Giovanni De Gennaro pulled out a sensational run to win gold in the men’s Olympic single kayak slalom event in a time of 88.22 seconds yesterday, holding off the world’s top paddlers to top the podium. French teenager Titouan Castryck finished two-tenths of a second behind to take silver in his first Olympics, with Spain’s Pau Echaniz claiming bronze. “I think this is still a dream. I don’t know and I can’t believe it. I just want to see my family,” the 32-year-old De Gennaro told reporters. Echaniz looked good as he opened proceedings, setting a time of 88.87 seconds that forced the rest of the field to dig deep, and despite a slew of Olympic medal winners coming in his wake, only two men proved able to beat his time. The competition caught fire when Italian world number two De Gennaro went out fifth and wasted no time attacking, the crowd roaring its approval as he pivoted through the up-



Italy's Giovanni De Gennaro reacts after competing for the gold in the men's kayak final of the canoe slalom competition in Vaires-sur-Marne during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games yesterday. (AFP)

stream gate at the halfway point before sprinting cleanly through the rest of the course to take the lead. Jiri Prskavec’s time as Olympic champion effectively ended when he collected the second of two two-second penalties by clipping gate 16, with the Czech finishing a disappoint-

ing eighth. Tokyo silver medallist Jakub Grigar of Slovakia suffered a similar fate, slowing up considerably over the second half of the course as his chance of another Olympic medal evaporated. With only three racers left, the 19-year-old Castryck brought the home supporters to their feet as they roared their approval, waving their flags and increasing the volume with every successful move he made. An error at gate 17 robbed him of his momentum, however, and his run was only good enough for second place. Germany’s Noah Hegge struck the poles of gate 16 with the bow of his boat to end his challenge, leaving only 2016 champion Joe Clarke of Britain. He was also unable to match the speed and skill of De Gennaro, and the Italian celebrated wildly when the Briton crossed the line more than a second and a half off the pace. “It means everything. Everybody was on my side,” De Gennaro said. “I had a lot of people supporting me, especially after Tokyo when I couldn’t make my run. “Today I’m just happy that I could be myself and with this result, it’s just a dream come true,” De Gennaro added.

HORSE RACING / QATAR GOODWOOD FESTIVAL

Opera Singer cruises to Qatar Nassau Stakes win



Ambassador of Qatar to UK Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohamed bin Saoud al-Thani and QREC Chairman Issa bin Mohamed al-Mohannadi with the connections of Opera Singer, which won the Qatar Nassau Stakes at the Qatar Goodwood Festival yesterday.

By Sports Reporter
Chichester, UK

Opera Singer claimed the Qatar Nassau Stakes, a Group 1 contest for three-year-old+ fillies and mares over 2000m, as the races of the QREC-sponsored Qatar Goodwood

Festival continued on Day 3 yesterday with 9 races at the Goodwood Racecourse. Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohamed bin Saoud al-Thani, ambassador of Qatar in the UK, in presence of Issa bin Mohamed al-Mohannadi, QREC Chairman, presented the trophies to the winners of the day's feature event. Runner-up of the Group 1 Coronation

Stakes at Royal Ascot on last outing, the three-year-old Opera Singer continued to progress, bouncing back to winning ways since she won the Group 1 Qatar Prix Marcel Boussac on the Qatar Prix De L'arc De Triomphe day last October. Owned by M Tabor, D Smith, Mrs J Magner & Westerberg and trained by Aidan O'Brien, Opera Singer is now a dual Group



Ryan Moore rides Opera Singer to Qatar Nassau Stakes victory at the Qatar Goodwood Festival yesterday. PICTURES: Juhaim

1 winner. With Ryan Moore in the saddle, the Ballydoyle filly was fast away from the stalls and made all. Half a length ahead of Lumiere Rock (Saxon Warrior) entering the final straight but clear of the rest, the superb filly never looked in danger despite the late challenge of See The Fire (Sea The Stars) who finished second. The French raider Sparkling Plenty (Kingman) was an eye-catching third clocking the quickest final furlong. "We were confident she would stay," said trainer O'Brien. "She started late in the Irish Guineas. She was not quite there on ground, which was slow on the day which

was not going to suit her. She ran a super race at Ascot and she won the Boussac over a mile last year, staying on very well." Today, the Qatar Goodwood Festival has seven races on the card, with the feature event being Group 2 King George Qatar Stakes. 13 runners were declared to run, including the listed winner Rogue Lightning, owned by Wathnan Racing; Group 1 winner in Santa Anita (US) Big Evs, presented by Michael Appleby; recent Group 2 winner Believing, who will run in the colours of Highclere T'Bred Racing; as well as Jasour, winner of the Commonwealth Cup Trial Stakes Group 3 at Royal Ascot.

GYMNASTICS

Biles clinches sixth Olympic gold after all-around victory

Defending champion Lee took bronze, ahead of Brazil's Andrade

AFP
Paris

Simone Biles recaptured the Olympic gymnastics all-around crown yesterday, seeing off Brazil's Rebeca Andrade for her sixth Olympic gold and second in Paris. Biles, who famously withdrew from multiple events at the Tokyo Games three years ago with the disorientating "twisties", followed up her team gold with the United States earlier this week. Defending Olympic champion Sunisa Lee took bronze. The 27-year-old Biles became the first gymnast to reclaim the individual title, which she won at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games. She capped her performance with another electrifying floor routine to Taylor Swift's hit song Ready for It, her high-flying tumbling bringing the crowd to its feet. She scored 59.131 points to finish 1.199 ahead of Andrade with 21-year-old Lee sealing bronze with her floor routine, having trailed in fourth going into the final rotation. It was the first time that two women's Olympic all-around champions have gone head-to-head chasing a second crown. The United States have now won the event six times in a row – and a record seven times overall. Biles has won nine Olympic medals including six golds, and donned a silver necklace of a goat after her performance – a nod to her being considered the greatest gymnast of all time. "My GOAT necklace – some people love it, some people hate it," said Biles. "It is crazy I'm in the conversation of greatest of all athletes because I'm just Simone Biles from Spring in Texas. Three years ago I never thought I'd step on a gymnastic court again, but worked hard, mentally and physically, even saw my therapist this morning, just making sure I'm mentally well." She could add three more golds in Paris as she competes in the apparatus finals on the vault, floor exercise and balance beam. Once again the stars were out for Biles, with Team USA basketball stars Kevin Durant and Stephen Curry watching at Bercy Arena along with NBA legend Tony Parker, footballing great Zinedine Zidane and American model Kendall Jenner. On her first rotation, Biles opened with her stunning Yurchenko double pike vault – now known as the Biles II – earning 15.766 despite a big step back, to the delight of the crowd. She pulled 0.666 points ahead of Olympic vault champion Andrade, who scored 15.100 for her perfectly-executed but technically less difficult Cheng. Lee was trailing down in a distant seventh. But Biles dropped to third after her second rotation on uneven bars, scoring 13.733 after



Simone Biles of United States celebrates after winning gold in the gymnastics all-around final at the Paris Olympic Games yesterday. (Reuters)



an error on her weakest apparatus, allowing Andrade to move 0.267 ahead of the American after tallying a mark of 14.666. Algeria's Kaylia Nemour lifted herself into contention after a terrific uneven bars routine, scoring 15.533, to move into second with Lee in fifth at the half-way point. But Biles was back in front after the balance beam, finishing with a massive smile and high-fiving her teammates and coaches as she received a standing ovation for an effort worth 14.566. She had a slim margin of 0.166 on Andrade, who had a few wobbles on the beam, with all to play for heading into the floor routine finale. Biles finished with a flourish on the floor

where she won Olympic gold in 2016, drawing gasps from the crowd with her gravity-defying jumps including two of her own skills. Andrade, 25, knew she had been well beaten and the Brazilian, the Tokyo silver medalist, went over to congratulate and hug her rival even before the winning score of 15.066 flashed up. For Andrade it was a second silver in Paris after helping Brazil to their first Olympic team medal. Biles has returned to the Olympic stage stronger than ever after making her comeback in August last year following a two-year break, winning four gold medals at the world championships in Antwerp. She becomes the third woman to win two Olympic all-around gold after Larisa Latynina of the Soviet Union and Czech Vera Caslavsk.

TENNIS

Swiatek ousted by Zheng, Djokovic still on course for gold



China's Zheng Qinwen reacts after her shock win over Poland's Iga Swiatek in the semi-finals at the Roland Garros Stadium. (AFP)

Reuters
Paris

Iga Swiatek must wait four more years to try and win an Olympic gold medal after the Polish top seed was shocked by China's Zheng Qinwen in the semi-finals but Novak Djokovic's hopes are intact despite a scare yesterday. There will be a first-time Olympic men's singles champion after Tokyo winner Alexander Zverev crashed to a quarter-final defeat against Italy's Lorenzo Musetti. Swiatek was the overwhelming favourite for gold after a third successive French Open title this year confirmed her as the Queen of Clay, but she was outplayed 6-2, 7-5 by sixth seed Zheng on another sultry day at Roland Garros. Serbia's 37-year-old Djokovic, bidding to claim a long-overdue Olympic gold medal, reached the semi-finals for the fourth time as he beat Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3 7-6, although he appeared troubled by his suspect right knee. In snapping Swiatek's 25-match winning run at Roland Garros, dating back to 2021, Australian Open runner-up Zheng became the first Chinese player to reach an Olympic singles final. Zheng, who did not even have to bring her A-game against a badly off-key Swiatek, will face either Slovakia's Anna Karolina Schmiedlova or Croatia's Donna Vekic for the gold medal. Swiatek will have to console herself with a match for a bronze. "I'm so happy that I could make history for Chinese tennis because I always wanted to be one of the athletes who can get a medal for China, for our country," 21-year-old Zheng said. "Right now I'm one of them, but I know the fight is not over it's not the end." With so many big names missing from the Olympic singles and with several seeds having wilted early, Swiatek was odds on to add

the Olympic gold to her five Grand Slam titles. She held a 6-0 career record against Zheng, but the 23-year-old Swiatek picked the worst possible time to produce one of her worst displays of the year, spraying 36 unforced errors. Swiatek was in tears during a TV interview afterwards. "I just had a hole in my backhand. It happens rarely because it is usually my most solid strike," she said. Swiatek looked uncomfortable in the hot and humid conditions, struggling to find her range with shots often missing the lines by metres as the first set slid away. After a bathroom break to re-set she seemed to have regained control in the second as she went 4-0 ahead. But it proved a false dawn as the errors returned and Zheng took full advantage to claw her way back and surpass China's best Olympic result, Li Na's fourth place at Beijing 2008. Djokovic was imperious as he won the first set against Tsitsipas. But he went a break down in the second and more worryingly appeared to have aggravated the knee that required surgery after the French Open. He needed treatment at a change of ends and almost went 5-1 down before recovering and surging back to seal victory. Djokovic will now aim to snap his semi-final curse and beat Musetti, who was a 7-5, 7-5 winner against Zverev. Spain's Olympic debutant Carlos Alcaraz remained on course for gold as battled past American Tommy Paul into the semi-finals, winning 6-3 7-6(7) after saving a set point. Alcaraz will play Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime who beat Norwegian claycourt specialist Casper Ruud 6-4, 6-7(8), 6-3. United States duo Rajeev Ram and Austin Krajicek followed up their defeat of Spain's Alcaraz and Rafa Nadal the previous evening to book their place in the final as they overcame Czech pairing Tomas Machac and Adam Pavlasek 6-2, 6-2.