

# Pratika, Mandhana lead India to record-breaking win



New Delhi, (UNI) India secured a record-breaking victory over Ireland on Wednesday, winning by a massive margin of 304 runs—their biggest-ever in One Day Internationals (ODIs). The emphatic triumph came after India posted an astonishing total of 435/5, surpassing their previous best of 370/5 set just three days ago.

The Indian innings was led by stellar performances from Pratika Rawal and Smriti Mandhana, both of whom scored centuries. Pratika, in particular, was the standout, scoring 154 runs. Mandhana also contributed significantly with a powerful knock of 135 runs, which included seven sixes. The duo shared a dominant

opening partnership of 233 runs, marking India's fourth century partnership in just six innings together. Mandhana's 80-ball performance was a treat to watch, as she continued her rich vein of form, while Rawal's knock was built on impeccable timing and placement, showcasing controlled strokeplay. Richa Ghosh, promoted in the

batting order to maintain momentum, made an impact by scoring 59 off 42 balls. However, after Pratika's dismissal, India's scoring slowed down, with just 48 runs added in the final six overs of their innings.

In reply, Ireland's batting crumbled under pressure, with the visitors bowled out for just 131 in 31.4 overs. Only four Irish batsmen reached double figures, with Sarah Forbes top-scoring with 41 off 44 balls, and Orla Prendergast contributing 36 off 43 balls.

Despite a late 64-run partnership between Forbes and Prendergast, Ireland's hopes were dashed as the remaining eight wickets fell for just 43 runs.

India's bowling was led by Deepti Sharma, who claimed figures of 3-27, playing a crucial role in dismantling the Irish lineup.

The comprehensive win adds another chapter to India's dominance in the format, as they continue to impress with both bat and ball.

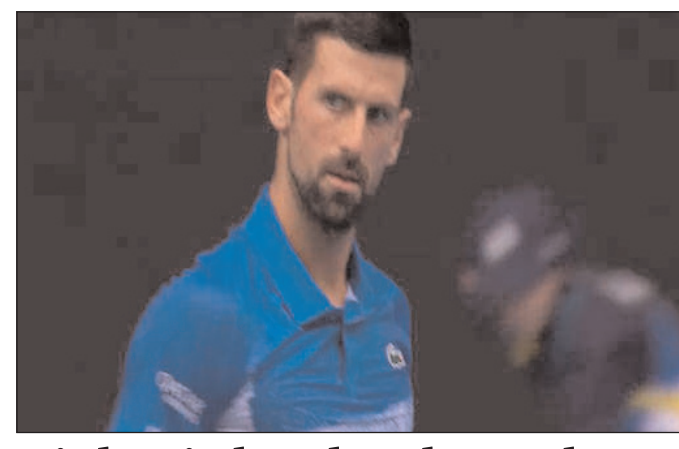
# Cottrill wants Kho Kho included in 2032 Olympics



New Delhi, (UNI) The inaugural Kho Kho World Cup, currently underway at the Indira Gandhi Stadium in the city, has quickly become a major global sporting event. With players from 23 countries converging on the Indian capital, the competition has attracted a stellar lineup, featuring 20 men's teams and 19 women's teams battling it out for the coveted title. Australia's vice-captain, Bridgette Cottrill, expressed her excitement about participating in the World Cup, sharing her hopes of Kho Kho securing a spot in the 2032 Brisbane Olympics. "We had an epic game. The result didn't go our way, but we had the most amazing time. The energy was high. It's actually our first time playing as a full unit. We're from different cities across Australia, so to get together and play is such a good feeling," Cottrill said.

competitive spirit in cricket, soccer, and rugby. "We were expecting them to come out strong, and they have had their national league a lot longer than we have. We knew they'd be good, but no better way to start the series than with such a strong team," she added. Having a wealth of experience in sports such as netball, basketball, and equestrian, Cottrill spoke about her recent introduction to Kho Kho. "I'd never actually heard of Kho Kho before. I had heard a lot about Kabaddi, as AFL players have played Kabaddi, but Kho Kho was new to me. A friend of a friend called me up, and I rallied some friends to form a team. I only learned the rules recently, and we have been training pretty regularly to prepare for the competition."

Drawing on her diverse sporting background, Cottrill highlighted how her skills in long-distance running have contributed to her quick adaptation to Kho Kho.



# Djokovic battles through to Australian Open third round

Melbourne, (UNI): Novak Djokovic overcame a second-set stumble to stay on track for a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam title after a four-set victory over Jaime Faria at the Australian Open.

Open on Wednesday. The 10-time tournament winner defeated the talented 21-year-old 6-1, 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-2 in three hours. Although Faria's hard-hitting play occasionally flustered Djokovic, the Serb's defensive brilliance helped him navigate through the challenges. In the third round, Djokovic will face 26th seed Tomas Machac, who came from behind to beat Reilly Opelka in five sets.

Playing on his favored Rod Laver Arena, the site of many of his most iconic triumphs, Djokovic extended his streak of 18 consecutive second-round appearances in Melbourne.

Ranked 120th, Faria is a rising star, as evidenced by his commanding win over Russian Pavel Kotov in the opening round of his Grand Slam debut. However, the pressure of the center court seemed to get the better of the young player. Djokovic seized the opportunity, raising his level of play after a sluggish opening-round victory over 17-year-old American wildcard Nishesh Basavareddy.

However, the 37-year-old was far from satisfied. Frustrated with his performance, he hit his racket on the table beside his chair during the changeover after the fifth game.

The outburst seemed to fuel Djokovic, who responded by producing clean ball striking and delicate drop shots to seal the first set. The second set appeared to be under control for Djokovic, who broke Faria in the third game with a backhand winner. But errors began to creep into Djokovic's game, including a misfired smash into the net, allowing Faria to win four consecutive games.

# India go down to Hong Kong in women futsal international debut

Yogyakarta (Indonesia), (UNI)

India's tryst with women's futsal in the international arena didn't produce a result to feel too elated about, but the team did display a kind of passion and perseverance that has the ingredients to take the game forward in India.

The Indian girls lost 0-5 to Hong Kong in their debut match in the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup 2025 qualifiers in Group B at Yogyakarta's Among Rogo Sports Hall on Wednesday.

Playing their first ever match, the rookie Indians dished out an encouraging exhibition of cohesive futsal in the 20 minutes of the first half to trail by a goal before finding it difficult in the second session to sustain against a more experienced side that stand 31st in the FIFA rankings.

While skillful Cheung Wai Ki, also a football international, played the key role behind Hong Kong's victory with a classy hat-trick, Wai Yuen Ting and Kung Yuet Charis found the other two goals.

It was definitely a day of reckoning for the Indian girls. Wide-eyed they were because it was their first step on the big stage. At the same time, they rarely lost their focus and remained true to what they were instructed to do. Khushbu Saroj in the middle was a tireless trier and Drishti Pant caught attention because of her clever movement moments after she appeared on the pitch.

They were not just the two, but everyone else tried their best to contribute; they knew they were entering the Indian women's futsal hall of fame that would stay forever.



# Table tennis legend Ryu Seung-min elected as KSOC President

Seoul, (UNI): South Korea's table tennis legend Ryu Seung-min was elected as president

of the country's top sports body Korean Sport & Olympic Committee here. The 2004 Athens Olympics men's singles gold medalist has served as president of the South Korea Table Tennis Association and as an ITTF Executive Board member. His distinguished career also includes serving as a member of the International Olympic Committee from 2016 to 2024.

# Punjab FC host Mumbai City FC in ISL on Jan 16

New Delhi, (UNI)

Punjab FC will host Mumbai City FC at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here in the Indian Super League (ISL) match on Thursday.

Punjab FC will look to complete their first league double over the Islanders, while Mumbai City FC will aim to extend their unbeaten away streak and reclaim defensive strength after recent setbacks.

Punjab FC, currently struggling with form, have lost their last two home games in the league, including a 0-1 defeat to Kerala Blasters FC on January 5. Another loss will mark their longest home losing streak in ISL history, and



failing to score will see them go goalless in back-to-back home games for the first time.

Meanwhile, Mumbai City FC came into this fixture unbeaten in their last five away games (W3 D2), including back-to-back wins on the road. However, the Islanders have conceded multiple goals in each of

their last three games, leaking eight goals in the process, which is a defensive fragility they will aim to address. Punjab FC, sitting ninth in the table with 19 points from 14 matches, have struggled with set-pieces, winning the fewest corners (47) in the league and yet to score from one. Their attacking hopes rest

on Luka Majcen, who contributed a goal and an assist in the reverse fixture on November 26. The Slovenian striker has three goal contributions (2 goals, 1 assist) against Mumbai City FC, the joint-most against any opponent. Mumbai City FC, currently sixth with 23 points from 15 games, will seek to instill some consistency in their form after losing twice in their last five games. Nikolaos Karelis, their top scorer this season with eight goals, is two away from becoming the fifth player in club history to score 10+ goals in a single ISL season. Meanwhile, Lallianzuala Chhangte is suspended for the upcoming game.

# Premier League: Captain Norgaard late goal helps Brentford draw with Man City

Brentford Town (England), (UNI)

Manchester City's hopes of winning a fifth successive Premier League title suffered another blow as they threw away a 2-0 lead to draw here.

The Bees trailed by two goals after 78 minutes, only for Yoane Wissa to pull one back before captain Christian Norgaard's 92nd-minute headed equaliser saw them rescue a point in a thrilling finish, according to a BBC report.

Brentford almost stole the victory in the 95th minute, only for Nathan Ake to head Bryan Mbeumo's curled effort off the goaline.

Pep Guardiola's side went ahead in the 66th minute when Phil Foden leapt to cushion a side-footed volley from Kevin de Bruyne's superb cross from the right.

But Brentford nearly equalised five minutes later, only for Ake to



clear the ball off the line from Wissa's effort after Mbeumo had set up the chance by going around City goalkeeper Stefan Ortega.

That miss looked to have proved costly when Foden scored his second in the 78th minute, reacting first to convert the rebound after Mark Flekken had parried Savinho's

strike. City were on course for a third successive Premier League win but the hosts had other ideas.

Brentford pulled one back when Wissa had space to shoot home from six yards out, a goal that was his 37th for the club in the top flight and one that took him above Ivan Toney as the Bees top scorer in the Premier League.

Then, at the end of a thrilling match at the Gtech Community Stadium, Norgaard delighted the home fans with a powerful header past Ortega. After match Man City boss Guardiola said, "We were close and we had chances, we didn't take the right decisions." "At the end they put a lot in the box and he (Norgaard) was there." "It was an open game with a lot of chances and we were close but unfortunately we could not close it out.

# Sri Lanka revise schedule for Australia's inbound tour

Colombo, (UNI)

The Sri Lanka Cricket Board, in consultation with Cricket Australia, has confirmed the addition of an extra ODI to the schedule for Australia's upcoming tour.

Originally, the tour was planned to consist of just one ODI alongside two Test matches, the latter being a part of the ICC World Test Championship cycle.

With the revised schedule, both teams will now compete in two ODIs and two Test matches. The extra ODI added to the schedule is perfectly timed for Australia, offering the visitors crucial preparation ahead of the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, starting February 19.

Sri Lanka, though, aren't a part of the Champions Trophy for the very



first time in the tournament history after falling short of the qualification criteria, an ICC report said.

The tour will kick off with the first Test match on January 19, followed by the second Test on

February 6, both to be played at Galle.

Sri Lanka will face Australia in the first ODI on February 12, with the newly added ODI fixture scheduled for 14 February 14.

# GR8 Sports emerges as India's flourishing startup ecosystem

Srinagar, (UNI)

GR8 Sports, the manufacturers of Kashmir willow bats, has emerged as a standout in India's flourishing startup ecosystem.

The GR8 Sports, a pioneering startup based in south Kashmir's Anantnag district has achieved recognition for its international-quality Kashmir willow cricket bats and carved a niche for itself on the global stage, showcasing the potential of home-grown talent and resources.

As the country celebrates the success of StartUp India initiative, GR8 Sports, owes part of its success to the robust support provided by government initiatives such as the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme and Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS), an official spokesman said.

These programs have enabled innovative startups to



scale their operations, bolstered further by tax exemptions for recognized startups and platforms like BHASKAR, which simplify access to funding and resources, a government spokesman said.

With 11 years of intensive global research and collaboration with the International

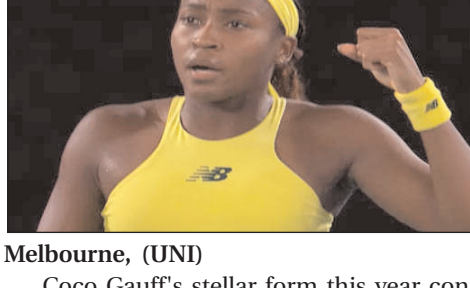
Cricket Council (ICC), cricketers, coaches, umpires, and master craftsmen, the company has redefined the potential of Kashmir willow bats on the global stage. Using cutting-edge AI-based CMC (Computer Monitored Compression) technology as a key differentiator, GR8 Sports India has addressed

long-standing challenges related to balance, ping, stroke, sweet spot, and dimensions that had previously limited the international competitiveness of Kashmir willow bats.

Their innovation was spectacularly showcased during the ICC T20 World Cup 2022 in Australia, where their bat hit the tournament's biggest six, underscoring its exceptional performance and quality.

Since its inception, GR8 Sports has achieved significant milestones, reflecting not only its commitment to excellence but also the broader achievements of India's startup landscape. The company's success story is a testament to the opportunities fostered by the Startup India initiative, which has recognized over 1.54 lakh startups across all states and union territories.

# Gauff survives Burrage challenge, reaches Australian Open Round 3



Melbourne, (UNI)

Coco Gauff's stellar form this year continued at the Australian Open 2025, as the third seed moved into the third round with a 6-3, 7-5 victory over Britain's Jodie Burrage.

The win extended Gauff's impressive seven-match streak to start the season, with no opponent having taken a set from her so far. Despite the convincing scoreline, Gauff faced a tough challenge in the second set. After taking the first set comfortably, she

found herself trailing 3-5 in the second, before rallying to secure the win in 89 minutes.

However, Gauff's serving was less than perfect, hitting seven double faults during the match, a statistic she will look to address ahead of tougher matches in the coming rounds. For Burrage, the defeat came despite a spirited second-set fightback. The 25-year-old, who has battled injury setbacks over the past year, marked her return to Grand Slam action with a commendable performance.

Burrage had previously considered quitting tennis but found fresh hope after winning her opening-round match against Leolia Jeanjean. Gauff will next face Canadian Leylah Fernandez in the third round, with the prospect of a potential clash with Naomi Osaka or Belinda Bencic looming in the last 16. As Gauff eyes another Grand Slam title, the challenges will only grow tougher, but her determination and class on court will keep her in the hunt for further success in Melbourne.