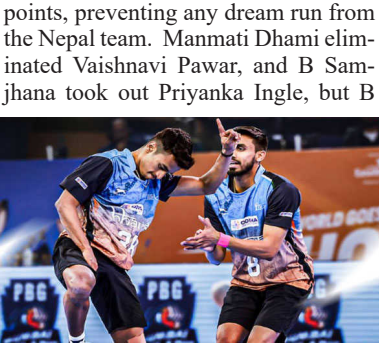


India crowned Kho Kho World Cup champions

NEW DELHI: In a spectacular display of speed, strategy and skill, Team India etched their names in sporting history by clinching the inaugural inaugural Kho Kho World Cup 2025 title in both men and women category at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium on a magical Sunday night.

In the final match of women category, the women in Blue dominated Nepal in a spectacular final, sealing their victory with an emphatic score of 78-40.

A brisk start epitomised Turn 1 as the India attackers took charge of proceedings. Three batches in, the Nepal women were out by simple touches on 7 occasions, with 14 points to India's name. Skipper Priyanka Ingle was in the best of form for her team, collecting multiple touch points, as the Indians made a commanding start. This strong performance took India to 34



points, preventing any dream run from the Nepal team. Manmati Dhami eliminated Vaishnavi Pawar, and B Samjhana took out Priyanka Ingle, but B



India men defeated Nepal with an authoritative 54-36 win in the men's final.

The triumph, led by captain Pratik Waikar and tournament standout Ramji Kashyap, cemented India's dominance in the traditional sport's global debut.

The men's final saw India dominate from the outset. The final whistle sealed India's victory with a 54-36 scoreline, sparking celebrations across the stadium.

Ankita wins ITF W50 doubles title with Naikhta Bains

NEW DELHI: India's top tennis player Ankita Raina won her first doubles title in nine months, triumphing in the final of the ITF W50 event with British partner Naikhta Bains, edging past American fourth seeds Jessie Aney and Jessica Failla in the summit clash. Ankita had made a first-round exit in the singles but made up for the disappointment by bagging the doubles title with Naikhta, winning 6-4 3-6 10-8 in one hour and 42 minutes at the DLTA Complex.

Before title victory, Ankita last won a doubles trophy at the Kashiwa event in Japan in April 2024 when she partnered

Taipei's Chia Yi Tsao. Meanwhile, seventh seed

earlier during the day. Tatiana knocked out



Tatiana Prozorova and second seed Panna Udvardy set up the singles final against each other

Latvian top seed Darja Semeništaja 7-5 6-2 after Hungary's Panna Udvardy comfortably beat

British fourth seed Yuriko Lilly Miyazaki 6-3 6-2 in the first semifinal of the day. In the doubles final, the unseeded Indo-British pair broke their rivals at love in the very first game, with Naikhta closing the game with a forehand winner.

In a dominating start to the match, Ankita and Naikhta logged nine straight points while the Americans struggled to contain unforced errors.

A half-volley pick-up error put the Americans down by another breakpoint and Naikhta cashed in on the chance with a fierce service return winner to open up a comfortable 3-0 lead.

21 Manipur fencers prepare for National Games

IMPHAL: With a high hope of making it to the medal count, the state fencers are raring to go and give their best performances in the upcoming 38th National Games 2025 at Uttarakhand from January 28 to February 14.

Twenty-one fencers including nine women fencers have qualified for the mega event along with six officials from the Manipur team. The Fencing event of the meet will be held at Haldwani from February 9-13, 2025.

Speaking to the MOA Media team, the Manager of the Manipur Fencing team, W.Romendrajit Singh said, "We have already started our practice session at Fencing Hall at Khuman Lampak. For the upcoming 38th National Games, twelve male fencers and nine female fencers have qualified."

"We are taking up a residential coaching camp from January 19

till February 3 to fine-tune our fencers at the same venue. We take it with utmost priority to see that maximum of our players perform well and get the medals" Romendrajit said.

"We are also fortunate to have at least twelve international fencers in the junior category and feel that their presence will egg on the rest of the teammates for the desired results. However we are focusing on it and keeping our fingers crossed to bag as many medals we could lay our hands on in the meet," he added.

The qualified male fencers are L.Tomba, H.Rabikumar Singh, L.Abhinash Meitei, Kh.Rajiv in Men's Foil while K.Drone, N.Santosh Singh, E.Dinikumar, L.Thoungamba Khuman in Men's Epee and Moramba Laishram, S.Biju Meitei, Mexi Thokchom, S. Chingkheingamba in Men's Sabre event.

INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE

Hyderabad, Bengaluru split points

HYDERABAD: Hyderabad FC and Bengaluru FC played out a 1-1 draw at the GMC Balayogi Athletic Stadium in the Indian Super League (ISL) match. Devendra Murgaoankar's first-half strike was neutralised by Sunil Chhetri in the second half. Chhetri, 40, touched the 10-goal mark for the second time in his ISL career, after having netted 14 times in the 2017-18 campaign.

Bengaluru FC held 62.4% of the possession, but had a solitary shot on target, which Chhetri converted to get them a point

out of this match.

The opening phase of the game was slightly cagey as both teams struggled to create clear chances. Bengaluru FC attempted to break past the Hyderabad FC defensive line but were not exactly cohesive in their moves. Chhetri was flagged offside twice in the opening 20 minutes.

The home side retaliated soon afterwards, as they embarked on a positive phase of play with Allan Paulista winning a free-kick in the attacking half. Ramhlunchhunga served a pinpoint cross for Deven-

dra Murgaoankar, who was positioned at the centre of the 18-yard box and headed the ball into the bottom right corner to get the lead in the 21st minute.

Murgaoankar operated sharply in the offensive, making the right moves in the Bengaluru FC box to cause troubles to the visitors. Twelve minutes after his goal, Joseph Sunny picked the attacker in a spot on the right side of the penalty area. Murgaoankar did well to exert power behind his shot from that angle, but the ball was saved by Gurpreet Singh Sandhu on the top right corner.

SKI WORLD CUP

Men's winner won over \$3,000

TRONDHEIM: As a reward for finishing first in qualifying at a ski jumping World Cup event, organisers presented the male winner Jan Heurl with 3,000 Swiss francs (\$3,290), and the female winner Selina Freitag with towels and shampoo.

"I received a partner bag with shower gel and shampoo and four hand towels," Freitag told German TV channel BR24 after she finished first in qualifying at the Two Nights Tournament in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany on December 30. "We unfortunately didn't have a spare five hundred (euros) or so."

Skiing's governing body, FIS, told CNN that female winners of qualifying events don't receive prize money like their male counterparts, according to a CNN report.

They said the gift also included a voucher for a weekend of wellness treatments and "was certainly well intentioned, but it is understandable that it may have generated frustration and given a bad impression if seen as formal compensation for the victory. This was not the case."

FIS added that women's ski jumping is still a relatively new sport with less spectator interest and marketing revenues than its male counterpart, and consequently has less prize money available. CNN has contacted the event organiser for comment too.

The discrepancy in prize money available "highlights the inequalities that still exist in sport in sport to this day," Her Sport, an advocacy group for gender equality in sport, posted on X.

TPCODL inaugurates a state-of-the-art PDTC

BHUBANESWAR: TPCODL, a joint venture of Tata Power and Odisha government, unveiled a state-of-the-art Power Distribution Technology Centre (PDTC) in Bhubaneswar, marking a transformative leap in distribution network management and operational excellence.

Deputy Chief Minister K. V. Singh Deo inaugurated the centre. This cutting-edge technology hub integrates advanced Operational Technology (OT) and Information Technology (IT) systems, along with a 24x7 Power System Control Centre (PSCC) that ensures real-time network monitoring, seamless system operations, and uninterrupted power supply across Odisha. It will help to improve the resilience of the power

distribution network while ensuring seamless operations across the state.

"The Power Distribution Technology Centre is a key step in making Odisha a hub of distribution excellence. With advanced infrastructure and technologies, it ensures resilient and reliable power for the state. It reflects our vision for a future-ready energy ecosystem that supports both consumers and industries. I commend Tata Power for its unwavering commitment to strengthening power distribution in Odisha," said Singh Deo.

It is also equipped with Advanced Distribution Management Systems (ADMS), to ensure enhanced network reliability and precise operational control.

MSMEs lacking required infrastructure: IndusLaw

NEW DELHI: IndusLaw, a law firm, has asked the government that it should ensure that it provides sufficient time for implementation for the Invoice Management System (IMS) due to significant technological challenges being faced by MSME retailers.

While the introduction of IMS was designed to strengthen the Goods and Service Tax (GST) compliance process, several unresolved technical and operational issues have risked undermining its successful rollout among small sellers and are posing several challenges, according to IndusLaw, India's top law firm.

The GST Network (GSTN) issued an advisory on 3 September 2024 to introduce the IMS functionality on the GST portal from 1 October 2024 onwards. The introduction of the IMS was expected to facilitate transparency between recipients and suppliers and streamline the reconciliation of Input Tax Credit (ITC), which has been a challenging process since the introduction of GST, IndusLaw said in a statement. Post the initial rollout of the IMS, the API versions for recipient side were released only in mid-October. The government's efforts to streamline compliance through IMS have left small businesses with

insufficient preparation time. This narrow window has left MSMEs struggling to implement essential changes, including modifications to accounting software, overhauls of Accounts Payable (AP) modules, and updates to technological infrastructure.

Commenting on the challenges faces by MSME retailers, Shashi Mathews, Partner, IndusLaw, stated, "Unlike earlier GST reforms, such as e-invoicing, which were introduced gradually over several months or years, the accelerated timeline for IMS does not provide businesses the necessary time to adapt. Therefore, we recommend either ex-

tending the implementation timeline or addressing these technical gaps to ensure that businesses, particularly those with high transaction volumes, can comply without undue hardship. A phased rollout would allow for smoother adoption and maximize the benefits of IMS."

Another significant challenge being highlighted is the delay in release of APIs for the supplier dashboard limiting the ability of businesses to view actions taken by their customers on IMS. Without robust technological infrastructure, even businesses ready to comply with IMS face operational roadblocks.

SBI Life Insurance registers new business premium

KOLKATA: SBI Life Insurance registered a new business premium of Rs.26,256 crores for the period ended December 31, 2024, compared to Rs.26,000 Cr in the year-ago period. The regular premium has increased by 12 percent over the corresponding year-ago period.

SBI Life's protection new business premium stood at Rs.2,792 crores for the period ended December 31, 2024. Protection Individual new business premium stands at Rs.519 crores for the same period. Individual New Business Premium stands at Rs.19,857 crores with 12% growth over the corresponding period ended on December 31, 2023.

SBI Life's profit after tax stands at Rs.1,600 crores for the period ended December 31, 2024.

The company's solvency ratio continues to

remain robust at 2.04 as on December 31, 2024 as against the regulatory requirement of 1.50. SBI Life's Asset Under Management also continued to grow at 19 pc to Rs.4,41,678 crores as on December 31, 2024 from Rs. 3,71,410 crores as on December 31, 2023, with the debt-equity mix of 61:39. 94 pc of the debt investments are in AAA and Sovereign instruments.

The company has a diversified distribution network of 309,590 trained insurance professionals and a wide presence with 1,086 offices across the country, comprising strong bancassurance channel, agency channel and others comprising corporate agents, brokers, Point of sale persons (POS), insurance marketing firms, web aggregators and direct business.

Realme 14 Pro Series 5G unveiled

NASHIK: Realme, the most popular smartphone brand among Indian youth, announced groundbreaking products in their smartphone & AIOT portfolio - the highly anticipated realme 14 Pro Series 5G and realme Buds Wireless 5. The realme 14 Pro Series 5G includes two innovative models: the realme 14 Pro 5G and the realme 14 Pro+ 5G. Both phones are meticulously crafted in collaboration with the renowned Danish design studio, Valer Designers, marking the dawn of the world's first cold-sensitive color-changing smartphones. As the inaugural offering of the newly revitalized realme Number Series, the realme 14 Pro Series 5G aims to popularize flagship features in mid-range smartphones, achieving remarkable breakthroughs in design, imaging, and performance.

The realme 14 Pro Series 5G is a groundbreaking device that boasts several industry firsts. It features the world's first cold-sensitive color-changing phones. Both models change color when exposed to temperatures below 16°C, transitioning

from pearl white to vibrant blue. This unique feature reverts as environmental temperatures rise again. The brand also offers the first vegan suede leather in their segment, providing a skin-friendly touch and a solid yet comfortable texture. Alongside the smartphones, realme is launching the realme Buds Wireless 5 ANC. These wireless earbuds promise superior sound quality and a seamless user experience, enhancing the brand's range of high-quality audio devices.

The realme 14 Pro+ 5G is available in three exquisite colors: Pearl White, Suede Grey, and also introduces an India exclusive color variant, Bikaner Purple and three storage variants: 8GB+128GB priced at INR 27,999, 8GB+256GB priced at INR 29,999 and 12GB+256GB priced at INR 30,999

The realme 14 Pro 5G is available in three striking colors: Pearl White, Suede Grey, and also introduces an India exclusive color variant, Jaipur Pink, priced at INR 22,999 for 8GB+128GB and INR 24,999 for 8GB+256GB

BHARAT NCAP CRASH TEST

Škoda Kylaq secures 5-star rating

NASHIK: Škoda Auto India's Kylaq, its first sub-4m SUV, has achieved the prestigious 5-star safety rating in the Bharat NCAP (New Car Assessment Programme). This makes the Kylaq the first Škoda vehicle to participate in Bharat NCAP testing, continuing the brand's legacy of safety excellence established by the Kushaq and Slavia. Both Škoda Auto India's 2.0 cars have achieved 5-star safety ratings in their respective Global NCAP crash tests for both Adult and Child Occupant protection.

Petr Janeba, Brand Director, Škoda Auto India said, "Safety is intrinsic to the Škoda DNA and since 2008, every Škoda car has been crash-tested globally, and in India, with a 5-star

safety rating. Škoda Auto has been leading the campaign on car safety in India, with a fleet of 5-star safety-rated cars. We were the first brand to score a full 5-stars for adults and children under the Global NCAP tests. And now Kylaq, our all-new sub-4-metre SUV, has topped the charts in its segment, in the Bharat NCAP testing. Kylaq comes with comprehensive safety systems which include a wide range of active and passive safety features as standard, including six airbags.

The use of hot-stamped steel, with a redone crash management system ensures the best possible safety in the Kylaq. This rating is a further testament to our commitment of democratizing European

technology on Indian roads, which includes one of the foundations on which a car should be built, which is safety."

The Škoda Kylaq exemplifies the brand's commitment to passenger safety, featuring over 25 active and passive safety technologies as standard across all variants. Built on the robust MQB-A0-IN platform, the Kylaq combines advanced engineering and innovative features tailored to Indian roads and driving conditions.

With six airbags, Electronic Stability Control, Roll Over Protection, Hill Hold Control, Multi-Collision Braking, and XDS+ included as standard from the base variant, the Kylaq sets a benchmark for safety.

