

1ST ODI TODAY

## India aim momentum

**NAGPUR:** With just three matches remaining before the Champions Trophy, India and England are set to battle it out in a high-stakes ODI series, beginning here today, February 6. The home side, fresh from their ICC triumph in Barbados last year, will look to add another title to their cabinet, while England will aim to regain form after a disappointing T20I series loss. England's Harry Brook has struggled to find his rhythm, making this series crucial for his resurgence.

India has played only six ODIs since the 2023 World Cup but has retained most of its core squad. Captain Rohit Sharma and star batter Virat Kohli return to the 50-over format, aiming to rediscover their best form after challenging Test outings in Australia. Spinners have been included in the squad, while Harshad Rana replaces Jasprit Bumrah, who will miss the first two ODIs due to injury.

Speaking on India's preparations at an event, captain Rohit Sharma expressed confidence in the

team's ability to deliver under pressure. "We will embark on another dream with 140 crore people behind us. When we reach Dubai, we know 140 crore people will support us. We will do everything possible to bring this trophy home," he said.

With Bumrah unavailable, the pace attack will rely on Arshdeep Singh and the returning Mohammed Shami to take charge with the new ball. "Since we are uncertain about player availability, we wanted to ensure balance in the squad.

## England name XI

**NAGPUR:** Joe Root will play his first one-day international since the 2023 World Cup in the opening match of England's series against India today in Nagpur. The 34-year-old has been named at number three in England's XI, behind openers Phil Salt and Ben Duckett. Jacob Bethell has been preferred to Jamie Overton at number seven with Brydon Carse, Jofra Archer and Saqib Mahmood the three-man pace attack. Wicketkeeper Jamie Smith is out with a calf injury.

England XI to play India: Phil Salt (wk), Ben Duckett, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Jos Buttler (capt), Liam Livingstone, Jacob Bethell, Brydon Carse, Jo-

fra Archer, Adil Rashid, Saqib Mahmood

The three-match series, which begins at 08:00 GMT, acts as England's preparation for the Champions Trophy next month. England have lost their past three ODI series but this contest is their first in the 50-over format with Brendon McCullum as their white-ball coach. They lost 4-1 to India in the preceding T20s.

Root's last ODI was the final match of their dismal World Cup defence against Pakistan in Kolkata on November 11, 2023. This series and the Champions Trophy that follows mark the start of the journey towards the 2027 World Cup in South Africa in 50-over cricket.

ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY 2025

## Match officials announced

**DUBAI:** The International Cricket Council (ICC) has confirmed the match officials for the upcoming ICC men's Champions Trophy 2025, set to be held across Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates from February 19 to March 9.

The tournament will take place in four iconic venues: Karachi, Lahore, and Rawalpindi in Pakistan, and Dubai in the UAE.

A distinguished panel of 12 umpires will officiate the 8-team event, with six returning officials from the 2017 edition, including Richard Kettleborough, who stood in the final of the previous Champions Trophy in the UK. Kettleborough, a veteran of 108 men's ODIs, will be joined by fellow

umpires Chris Gaffaney, Kumar Dharmasena, Richard Illingworth, Paul Reffel, and Rod Tucker, who also officiated in the 2017 tournament. Dharmasena will be extending his stint of officiating 132 ODIs at the upcoming tournament, a record for an umpire from Sri Lanka in the One-Day format, an ICC media statement on Wednesday said.

Kettleborough and Illingworth, who both stood together during the ICC men's cricket World Cup

2023 final in Ahmedabad, they are joined by Michael Gough, Adrian Holdstock, Ahsan Raza, Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid, Alex Wharf, and Joel Wilson, all of whom officiated at the World Cup in India.

The panel of match referees will be led by David Boon, Ranjan Madugalle, and Andrew Pycroft, all esteemed members of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees. Boon officiated the 2017 Champions Trophy final, while Madugalle returns after officiating the 2013 final, and Pycroft also featured in the 2017 tournament.

Sean Easey, ICC Senior Manager - Umpires and Referees, commented: "We are pleased to announce this highly credentialed team of match officials for the ICC men's Champions Trophy

2025. Their collective expertise and experience will be invaluable in ensuring the tournament runs smoothly."

T20I TOP RANKING

## Abhishek & Tilak enter top three

**DUBAI:** A pair of India's in-form white-ball players Abhishek Sharma



and Tilak Varma have been rewarded for strong performances during the recent home series against England by making giant strides on the latest ICC men's T20I Player Rankings.

Abhishek produced the

best innings of his fledgling international career when he smashed a quickfire 135 in the fifth and final match of the series in Mumbai and shot up a whopping 38 places on the T20I rankings for batters as a result.

Abhishek's innings came from just 54 deliveries and was the highest individual innings made by an Indian men's player in the shortest format. As a result, the 24-year-old rose to second in the latest rankings for batters.

38TH NATIONAL GAMES

## Archery finalists decided

**DEHRADUN:** After an intense session of archery at the 38th National Games, the finalists across all individual events have been decided. Starting off with the women's Recurve individual event, it was star archer Deepika Kumari beat Gatha Anandrao Khadake in tie-breakers to make her way to the final. Anshika Kumari will join her in the final after pulling off an upset to beat Komalika Bari.

In the men's Compound Individual event, Hritik Sharma and Rajat Chauhan will face-off for the gold medal, after beating Thirumuru Ganesh Mani Ratnam & Kushal Dalal respectively. The two semifinal losers will play for bronze.

## Karnataka dominates aquatics

**HALDWANI:** On the final day of the 38th National Games swimming competitions, held at the Manskhund Swimming Pool, Golapur, here, athletes from across the country delivered exceptional performances.

Leading the charge, Karnataka showcased its supremacy, claiming several gold medals and proving its strength in the sport.

In the women's 100m Breaststroke, Harshita Jayaram H from Kerala emerged victorious, clinching the gold with a time of 1:14.34. Saanvi Yogesh Deshwal from Maharashtra secured the silver at 1:16.37, while Jyoti Bajirao Patil, also from Maharashtra, earned the bronze with

a time of 1:17.36. Vedit Shivshankar J B from Karnataka dominated the Men's 100m Breaststroke, claiming the gold with an impressive time of 1:03.97.

The silver went to Dhanush C Suresh from Tamil Nadu, who finished in 1:04.51, while Rana Deepak Kumar Singh from Jharkhand secured the bronze with a time of 1:04.57.

The women's 100m Freestyle saw Dhinidhi Desingu P S from Karnataka claim gold with a remarkable time of 57.34 seconds. Titiksha Rawat from Delhi followed with silver at 59.38 seconds, and Aditi Satish from Maharashtra bagged the bronze with 59.49 seconds.

## Showdown in track cycling

**RUDRAPUR (UTTARAKHAND):** The second day of track cycling at the 38th National Games brought high-octane action as cyclists battled fiercely across multiple events.

Odisha's Swasti Singh delivered a stunning performance in the women's Elite Individual Pursuit (3KM) event, clinching the gold medal. Maharashtra's Pooja Baban Danole followed closely to claim the silver medal, while Odisha's Rezia Devi Khoiram secured the bronze medal.

A spectacular show of speed and precision in the women's Elite Individual Time Trial (500M) event saw Celestina from Andhra

## Halep announces retirement



**BUCHAREST:** Two-time Grand Slam champion and former world number one Simona Halep has retired from tennis, media reports said.

The Romanian announced her decision on court at the Transylvania Open following her 6-1, 6-1 first-round loss to Lucia Bronzetti, the BBC reported.

The 33-year-old recently said she was considering retirement, external because of a knee injury that forced her to withdraw from Australian Open qualifying last month. This week's event was just her fifth tournament since returning to the WTA Tour following a doping ban, in a case which went on for almost two years, according to a BBC report.

# India services PMI drops to two-year low

**NEW DELHI:** India's dominant services sector slowed down to over two-year low in January 2025 as demand softened during the month, as per a private survey released on Wednesday.

The HSBC India services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) compiled by S&P Global fell to 56.5 in January 2025 from 59.3 in the previous month. The headline figure is the lowest since November 2022.

While a PMI reading above 50 means expansion, the print below 50 shows contraction.

Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC said, "India's services sector lost growth momentum in January, although the PMI

remained well above the 50-break-even level. The business activity and new business PMI indices eased to their lowest levels since



November 2022 and November 2023 respectively."

"That said, new export business partly countered the downtrend and

continued to rebound from a dip in late-2024, in line with official data which showed India's services exports shining in December and capturing a larger share of global trade," added Bhandari.

One of the closely-watched high-frequency economic data, the survey said that in January this year new business intakes rose at the slowest pace since November 2023 curbing the upturn in business activity.

"Nevertheless, rates of expansion remained historically high and more jobs were created. Also, the degree of business sentiment was in line with its trend," it said.

As per the survey findings, several companies linked output

growth to favourable demand conditions, new business wins and investment in technology.

"However, a few firms suggested that activity levels at their units were constrained by a fall in customer numbers," it said.

It further said that service providers in India were confident of a rise in business activity over the course of the coming 12 months.

The HSBC India Services PMI is compiled from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 service sector companies. The sectors covered include consumer (excluding retail), transport, information, communication, finance, insurance, real estate and business services.

## Ajax Engineering IPO to open on Feb 10

**NEW DELHI:** Ajax Engineering Limited has proposed to open an initial public offering (IPO) of its equity share of the face value of Re. 1 each on Monday, February 10, 2025. The anchor investor bidding date is one working day prior to bid/offer opening date, being Friday, February 7, 2025. The offer will close on Wednesday, February 12, 2025.

The price band of the offer has been fixed from Rs. 599 per equity share to Rs. 629 per equity share. Bids can be made for a minimum of 23 equity shares and multiples of 23 equity shares thereafter.

## Sensex down



**MUMBAI:** The BSE Sensex on Wednesday slipped 312.53 points to settle at 78,271.28 on profit booking by local operators.

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) fell 42.95 points at 23,696.30.

Surging over 1300 points on Tuesday, the BSE Sensex rose 121 points to open at 78,704.60. It was further gained 152 points at 78,735.41, day's high. In late trade it was dropped 287 points at 78,216.25, day's low, before closing at 78,271.28, sliding 312.53 points from its previous close. The Nifty registered day's high and low at 23,807.30 and 23,680.45

points respectively. The stocks that dragged the market were Realty by 1.66 pc, FMCG by 1.42 pc and Consumer Durable by 1.21 pc. The Mid cap moved up 0.69 pc and Small cap by 1.42 pc. In 30 scrips, 10 advanced, while 20 declined.

The losers were Asian Paints by 3.36 pc to Rs 2276, Titan by 2.95 pc to Rs 3493, Nestle India Ltd by 2.19 pc to Rs 2249.95 and Hind Unilever by 1.9 2 pc to Rs 2393. The gainers were Adani Ports by 1.75 pc to Rs 1146, IndusInd Bank by 0.90 pc to Rs 1057.55, Tata Motors by 0.89 pc to Rs 717 and HDFC Bank by 0.77 pc to Rs 1735.55.

## SUD Life Guarantee Royale plan introduced

**MUMBAI:** SUD Life has launched SUD Life Guarantee Royale, a non-linked, non-participating individual savings plan that is created to provide guaranteed financial security while helping one achieve life's important milestones. The plan helps one to live worry-free with financial stability.

The plan is more than just a policy, it is a thoughtfully created plan that combines the benefits of a guaranteed lump-sum payout and savings to help you achieve your financial goals. It offers a guaranteed maturity benefit, which includes the sum assured on maturity, along with guaranteed additions and maturity loyalty additions at the

end of the policy term. The plan also provides a special benefit of a 5% discount on the first-year annualised premium for women. Furthermore, the convenience of purchasing the plan online makes it easier to access, and it also comes with added advantages such as an enhanced sum assured at maturity and tax benefits.

Speaking about the launch, Abhay Tewari, MD & CEO of SUD Life, said, "SUD Life Guarantee Royale is designed to offer guaranteed benefits, irrespective of market interest rate movements, providing peace of mind and making it an ideal choice for individuals seeking reliable savings solutions."

## Vitafoods India 2025 commences

**MUMBAI:** The 3rd edition of Vitafoods India, organised by Informa Markets in India, India's leading B2B exhibition organiser, commenced yesterday at Pavilion 1-2, Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai.

Taking place from 5th to 7th February 2025, the event serves as a premier platform tailored to the rapidly evolving Indian nutraceutical market. This year, the event featured 136 domestic and 23 international exhibitors, with over 35 expert speakers offering insights into industry trends. The event drew participation from distributors, procurement managers, R&D specialists, regulatory affairs professionals, and product development experts.

The esteemed expo was graced by distinguished dignitaries, including chief guest Dr. Subrata Gupta, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Govt. of India; Dr. Manoj Nesari, Advisor, Ayurveda, Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India; Dr. Meenakshi Singh, Chief Scientist, Technology Management Directorate, Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR); Natasha Berrow, Execu-

tive Vice President - Food, Informa

Markets; Yogesh Mudras, Manag-

urveda, Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India, said, "The Ayurveda and



ing Director Informa Markets in India and Rahul Deshpande, Sr. Group Director Informa Markets in India among other guests.

Dr. Subrata Gupta, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Govt. of India, said, "The global nutrition market, valued at approximately \$520 billion, is witnessing a growing emphasis on traditional and preventive healthcare. India's share, estimated around \$8 billion, highlights the sector's vast potential, particularly in Ayurveda-based nutraceuticals."

Dr. Manoj Nesari, Advisor, Ay-

urveda, Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India, said, "The Ayurveda and

nutraceutical sector is experiencing unprecedented growth, with the market expanding from \$3 billion in 2014 to \$18.2 billion by 2020 and currently valued at around \$24 billion. With a projected target of \$200 billion over the next decade, this growth is driven by increasing global acceptance, research advancements, and policy support. The industry is evolving beyond conventional supplements to embrace Ayurvedic Aahar, recognizing the immense potential of flavonoids and alkaloids found in medicinal plants and everyday foods."

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