

I think every team has those little bit areas to improve and some areas very strong. You can't be a completely 100% perfect team. Doesn't matter how good a player you will have, throughout the tournament there has been lots of discussion about our middle order and things like that but I feel everyone is stepping up - Rashid Khan

# HC pulls up WFI over decision to declare Vinesh Phogat ineligible

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court on Friday pulled up the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) for its decision to declare celebrated grappler Vinesh Phogat "ineligible" from participation in domestic events and asked the

Centre to constitute an expert panel to evaluate her.

A bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia observed that the WFI's departure from the earlier practice of permitting the participation of reputed athletes "speaks volumes," and asked the Centre to ensure that Phogat, who is seeking

her return from a maternity break, is allowed to participate in the upcoming Asian Games selection trials.

The bench emphasised that motherhood is celebrated in the country, and the federation should not act with "vengeance." It asked the Centre to constitute an expert panel to evaluate Phogat

after the government counsel submitted that the framework provided by the Sports Authority of India permits relaxation of eligibility criteria in certain cases. "Ask the experts to evaluate her chances. Ensure that she participates," the court orally said, as it clarified it would take up the matter at 2:30 pm again to enable the

government counsel to come back with further details with respect to the constitution of the team of expert. The court was hearing Phogat's appeal against a single-judge's order of May 18 refusing her immediate relief on the issue of her participation in the selection trials on May 30-31 for this year's Asian Games despite be-

ing declared "ineligible" by the WFI. Phogat's senior counsel urged the bench to grant her the opportunity to participate in the trials, contending that the show-cause notice issued to her on May 9, a day before her participation in a domestic event in Gonda, showed that "somebody is clutching at straws" to oust her.



# J&K's Aaquib Nabi ignored Scrap Ranji if it doesn't matter: Vengsarkar blasts selectors

Nabi was the primary catalyst in Jammu and Kashmir's Ranji Trophy triumph in the 2025-2026 season with 60 wickets to his name

MUMBAI

CRICKET legend Dilip Vengsarkar has slammed the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee for ignoring Ranji Trophy star Aaquib Nabi for the Afghanistan Test, calling the decision 'absurd' and questioning the value of domestic cricket performances.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India selection committee, led by Ajit Agarkar, has come under scathing attack for the shocking selection calls for the one-off Test against Afghanistan.

Gurnoor Brar, who has done well for India A and in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, was picked ahead of the Ranji Trophy's top wicket-taker, Aaquib Nabi, in the Test squad. Nabi was the primary catalyst in Jammu and Kashmir's Ranji Trophy triumph in the 2025-2026 season with 60 wickets to his name. A consistent performer in red-ball cricket, he also took 44 wickets at an average of 13.27 in the 2024-2025 Ranji season. Cricket legend Dilip Vengsarkar has slammed Agarkar for ignoring a proven performer, asking the BCCI to do away with the Ranji Trophy



if performances in India's premier domestic red-ball event are not even considered.

"The selectors' decision to ignore him is absolutely absurd and baffling. What kind of selection is this? It is just not acceptable. It is an injustice," Vengsarkar told The Times of India newspaper on Thursday. "Can you imagine Nabi's plight right now? He took 60 wickets in the Ranji Trophy. He has worked hard for it and deserves a place ahead of everybody else."

# PBKS seek dramatic turnaround to keep playoff hopes alive

LUCKNOW: Punjab Kings will need something spectacular to arrest a disastrous slide and keep their fading playoff hopes alive when they take on already-eliminated Lucknow Super Giants, in their IPL clash, here on Saturday. Punjab's campaign has unravelled dramatically since their record



Match starts at 7:30 pm

265-run chase against Delhi Capitals on April 25. From remaining unbeaten till the midway stage and looking like genuine title contenders with six wins in seven matches, the last season's runners-up have crashed to six successive defeats, leaving their playoff hopes hanging by a thread. Now placed fifth, Punjab not only need to beat LSG in their final league game here on Saturday but also depend on Sunday's double headers (MI vs RR and KKR vs DC) to earn a place in the playoff. The Shreyas Iyer-led side would hope both Mumbai Indians and Kolkata Knight Riders lose their respective matches. A Rajasthan Royals win over Mumbai would officially end Punjab's hopes, while a KKR victory over Delhi Capitals could bring net run rate into play. At present, PBKS hold a slight edge in NRR over KKR. But before permutations come into the picture, Punjab first need to rediscover their form after a prolonged slump that has exposed flaws across departments. Their aggressive top order of Priyansh Arya, Prabhsimran Singh and Cooper Connolly has failed to provide the explosive starts that defined the first half of their season. Priyansh has managed just one fifty in his last seven innings and was dismissed for a duck in the previous game, while Prabhsimran too has struggled for consistency with only one fifty in his last five innings. Connolly has shown glimpses but has not converted starts into substantial scores.



# Chaliha's impressive run ends in quarters

KUALA LUMPUR: India's Ashmita Chaliha produced a spirited performance before going down narrowly to world No. 23 Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt of Denmark in the women's singles quarterfinals of the Malaysia Masters Super 500 badminton tournament here on Friday.

Returning after an eight-month rehabilitation following a medial meniscus tear in her right knee, the 71st-ranked Indian squandered a hard-fought opening game advantage to lose 23-21 18-21 11-21 to the eighth seed in a contest lasting a little over an hour at the Axiata Arena.

Chaliha started brightly, opening up an 11-6 lead at the interval in the opening game. Line clawed her way back after the break to narrow the gap to 13-12 and later moved ahead 19-18, but the Indian held her nerve in a gruelling battle to pocket the game. The second game followed a similar pattern as Chaliha again surged ahead 10-5 before the Dane restored parity at 13-13. Line then broke away from 15-15 to force the match into a decider.

The final game, however, was largely one-way traffic as Line stamped her authority early with an 8-4 lead and never allowed Chaliha a route back, comfortably sealing the contest to enter the semifinals.

# Pak hockey players complain about pending dues, daily allowance

KARACHI: Pakistani hockey players' financial woes continued as they are yet to receive pending dues from the national federation (PHF) and their daily training camp allowance has also been reduced ahead of the FIH World Cup to be held in the Netherlands and Belgium in August this year. The Pakistan Hockey Federation's (PHF) interim set-up announced that players and officials of the national team will now receive a daily allowance of USD 110 on foreign tours. But the players have complained that their training camp allowance has been reduced from USD 11 (3000 rupees) to USD 3.5 (1000 rupees).

According to a reliable source close to the PHF, the senior players had asked the PHF to confirm about how much allowance they would get for the training camp duration. Pakistan on Thursday named their 20-member squad for next month's FIH Pro League matches in Belgium and England but didn't name the captain, a move that didn't go down well with the players.

Shakeel Ammad Butt has been leading Pakistan since early last year. "They have announced we will get USD 110 daily allowance for foreign tours, including the World Cup qualifying event we had played in Egypt but we will only believe it unless we are paid that amount," one player said on condition of anonymity. He said in the past also the PHF officials had made similar promises but never fulfilled that. "Right now we just want to know whether it is true they will pay us just 1000 rupees daily for the camp duration."



# Maaya to mix Junior, Pro events for smooth transition

NEW DELHI: India's bright teenage tennis prospect Maaya Rajeshwaran Revathy is carefully balancing junior and professional tournaments this season as she prepares for a gradual transition to the senior circuit.

The 16-year-old, who will soon compete at the junior French Open, has largely featured on the junior circuit this year, a move her coaching team says is aimed at building confidence, gaining match expo-

sure and securing a strong junior ranking before taking a bigger leap into professional events. Maaya, who trains full-time in Spain at Rafa Nadal Academy, said the exposure to a more competitive environment in Europe has accelerated her development. "At a certain level, it's more about how you compete. In Europe, you are competing every day with equal players and that gives you a lot of experience," Maaya said during a virtual media interaction facilitated by SAI. She won

a J300 event in France on clay in April apart from finishing semifinalist at a couple of events in Spain and Egypt. "For us every week is an opportunity for improvement. That's been the objective since the start of the year, to just keep getting better, get more matches and feel more comfortable on the tour." Maaya is supported through Target Asian Games Group (TAGG) scheme of the government and has received a sum of Rs 15 lakh

# Ebola surveillance stepped up at Kochi airport after emergency meet

Thermal screening, 21-day travel history verification, and self-declaration forms have been made mandatory for international passengers

KOCHI

AUTHORITIES stepped up Ebola surveillance and precautionary measures at Cochin International Air-

port Limited (CIAL) on Friday following an emergency preparedness meeting between management and the Airport Health Organisation.

A CIAL spokesperson said a 24-hour monitoring system has now been activated at the airport as part of efforts to detect possible symptoms early and strengthen coordinated public health response measures.

"Thermal screening, 21-

day travel history verification, and self-declaration forms have been made mandatory for international passengers," he said in a statement after the meeting.

Passengers arriving from countries including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, and South Sudan will be placed under special health surveillance in view of global alerts over Ebola outbreaks, authorities

said. The meeting was attended by Airport Director Manu G, Airport Health Officer Dr Raphael Teddy, Senior Medical Officer Dr Aysha Manika K A, and representatives from CISE, Immigration, airlines, the Airports Authority, and CIAL.

APHO Public Health Specialist Dr Anna presented the preparedness and response plan covering Ebola prevention, case identification, and

infection control measures.

Officials noted that there is currently no widely approved vaccine or specific treatment for the Bundibugyo Ebola virus (BDBV), one of the five known Ebola virus species.

"The disease can spread from animals to humans and also through direct contact with bodily fluids of infected persons," officials said.

Authorities said the incubation period ranges from 2

to 21 days, while fever, sore throat, headache, and flu-like symptoms are among the early signs of infection.

"Mortality rates can range between 30 and 50 per cent," officials added.

Isolation wards have been arranged at Ernakulam General Hospital, Government Hospital Kalamassery, and District Hospital Aluva as part of the preparedness plan.



# Doctor rapes patient after sedation; hospital 'sealed'

The doctor allegedly called the patient alone into the operation theatre during treatment and asked the female staff and the victim's father to step outside; victim alleges that the doctor administered an intoxicating injection and sexually assaulted her



LUCKNOW

A doctor at a private hospital here was accused of raping a female student after administering her a sedative injection during treatment, police said on Friday. In the wake of the allegation, the state health minister directed that the hospital be sealed and the doctor's degree be confiscated. The student had been admitted to Tejas Hospital on May 18 after suffering a health episode, officials said.

"According to the complaint, the doctor allegedly called the patient alone into the operation theatre dur-

ing treatment and asked the female staff and the victim's father to step outside.

The victim alleged that the doctor administered an intoxicating injection and sexually assaulted her," Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Twinkle Jain told reporters. The student told the police that she realised what had happened after the effect of the injection subsided, following which her family lodged a complaint.

The doctor, a resident of the Tambaur area in Sitapur district, was detained for questioning, and the alleged victim sent for medical ex-

amination. A case has been registered in connection with the matter, the officer said. Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, who also holds the health portfolio, said on X that directions had been issued to seal Tejas Hospital in the Bakshi Ka Talab area here and suspend the medical licence of the accused doctor, Vijay Giri.

Pathak said instructions had also been given to the Ayurveda department to confiscate the doctor's Ayurvedic medical degree so that he "can never discharge any kind of medical responsibility in future."

# Bengal govt notifies free bus travel for women from June 1

KOLKATA: The West Bengal government has notified free bus travel for women in all state government-run buses from June 1 as part of a scheme aimed at enhancing women's empowerment and improving access to public transport.

According to a notification issued by the state Transport Department on May 21, women commuters will be eligible for free travel in both short-route and long-route state-run buses operating in West Bengal.

The Transport department notification said a smart card with QR code, photograph and beneficiary details will be issued to all eligible women upon application through the BDO or SDO offices concerned.

It said that the smart card shall be issued to women of the state on the basis of supporting documents like

Aadhaar card, elector's photo identity card (EPIC), VB-G RAMG job card, Ayushman Bharat health card, driving license, Pan card, passport, pension document with photograph, identity card of central/state government/psus, identity cards issued by schools/colleges/universities.

Till issuance of the smart cards, women passengers will be allowed to avail the facility on production of valid photo identity documents such as Aadhaar card, voter identity card, driving licence, PAN card, passport and government-issued service identity cards, among others, the notification said.

Conductors will issue 'zero value tickets' to women passengers after verification of identity documents, it said.

The scheme will come into effect from June 1, 2026, the notification added. -- PTI



# Lecturer held for leaking NEET UG physics paper

NEW DELHI: The CBI has arrested a Pune-based lecturer for allegedly leaking the physics paper of NEET UG 2026 to a select group of aspirants, officials said on Friday. The CBI has arrested Manisha Sanjay Havaladar, presently employed with the Seth Hiralal Saraf Prashala in Pune, terming her another "source" for the paper leak. "The CBI has identified another key accused who was the source for the leak of NEET-UG 2026 physics questions," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

The agency alleged that Havaladar was involved in the NEET UG process after being appointed an expert by the Na-



tional Testing Agency (NTA). "She had complete access to the physics question paper."

In April, she shared some of the questions with co-accused Manisha Mandhare," the statement said. The CBI arrested Mandhare, a botany teacher from Pune, in connection with the NEET paper leak on May

16. The agency found that the questions Havaladar shared with the aspirants tallied with the physics paper of NEET UG 2026. "The CBI conducted searches at various locations across the country and seized several incriminating documents, laptops, bank statements and mobile phones. A detailed analysis of the seized items is underway," the agency said.

On May 12, the NTA cancelled the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate), or NEET, held on May 3 for medical admissions amid allegations of paper leak. A re-examination has been scheduled for June 21.

# DMK's 'bent coconut tree' jibe draws retort from VCK

CHENNAI: The DMK on Friday made a sarcastic "coconut tree bending towards a neighbour" remark targeting the VCK and IUML after they joined the TVK government, prompting the VCK to retort that it "did not grow at the mercy of other parties." Aiming to assuage the feelings, DMK chief M K Stalin appealed to party members not to use harsh words as to hurt anyone.

Both Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi and IUML, allies of the DMK till the 2026 Assembly election, announced support to the TVK government which fell short of a simple majority of 118 in the Assembly. VCK leader Vanni Arasu, who emerged victorious from Tindivanam Assembly constituency and A M Shahjahan who was elected from Papanasam were sworn in as ministers by Governor Rajendra Viswanath

Arlekar at the Lok Bhavan here today in the presence of Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay.

Shahjahan was made Minister for Minorities Welfare while Vanni Arasu was made Minister for Social Justice. DMK deputy general secretary A Raja, with a penchant for making controversial remarks, alluded the two parties joining the TVK Cabinet as a "coconut tree bending towards a neighbour".