



BWF World Championships

Sindhu, Ayush bow out; Treesa-Gayatri into last 8

NEW DELHI: India suffered a big blow at the World Championships as PV Sindhu and Ayush Shetty faced contrasting defeats in the pre-quarterfinals, bringing the country's singles campaign to an end here on Thursday.

Two-time Olympic medalist Sindhu's hopes of winning an unprecedented sixth World Championships medal ended with a gruelling 11-21 21-15 17-21 loss to China's world No. 3 Wang Zhi Yi, who battled severe cramps in both legs to advance to the quarterfinals.

Earlier, Shetty suffered a tame 19-21 11-21 defeat against Indonesian nemesis Alwi Farhan in the men's singles pre-quarterfinals.

The 21-year-old Shetty, who had created a flutter by stunning defending champion and world No. 1 Shi Yu Qi in the opening round, went down to world No. 12 Farhan. It was his



fifth defeat in eight meetings against the 11th-seeded Indonesian, bringing the curtains down on India's men's singles campaign.

Lakshya Sen had bowed out of the premier tournament on Wednesday.

Earlier in the day, India's women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand moved a step closer to a medal by reaching the quarterfinals with a straight-game win over Japanese seventh seeds

Rin Iwanaga and Kie Nakamishi.

The unseeded Indian pair, on a comeback trail after Treesa recovered from an injury, produced a dominant performance to outwit the world No. 7 Japanese pair 21-16 21-12 in a one-sided contest.

It was the first quarterfinal appearance by an Indian women's doubles pair at the World Championships since Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa achieved the feat in 2015.

Chakraborty starts with win, Vignesh held to draw

MUMBAI: Top seed Mayank Chakraborty began his campaign with an impressive win while two leading contenders -- Vignesh Advait Vemula and Akhilbhai Imangali -- were held to a draw by lower-rated opponents in the Asian Junior Classical Championship here on Thursday.

Vignesh was forced to share the point with Neemay Bhanushali, while Imangali of Kazakhstan was held by Rishaan Jain.

The opening round in the girls' section, however, produced a couple of notable upsets. Swara Lakshmi S. Nair

was held to a draw by Vakcheri Mohitha despite enjoying a significant rating advantage, while Aadya Gowda scored an impressive victory over the higher-rated WFM Mrittika Mallick.

Another surprise result saw Liliya Belaya of Uzbekistan defeat the higher-rated Archita Agrawal of India. The Open Championship has attracted a strong field of 85 players representing nine federations.

The tournament features six International Masters and eleven FIDE Masters, making it one of the strongest junior events in Asia. Leading the field

is top seed International Master Mayank Chakraborty of India, rated 2500.

The girls' championship has attracted players from seven federations. The top three seeds, WFM Pratitee Bordoloi of India, WFM Mariya Kholavko of Kazakhstan and WFM Shohradova Lala of Turkmenistan, opened their campaigns with convincing victories to move into the lead group after the first round.

The championship was inaugurated by Grandmaster Vinit Gujrathi, who has been named a recipient of the prestigious Arjuna Award.

"Modern pop singers, if they are asked to do classical singing, ragas, then it will be very difficult. But these people are doing that. It is a mystery to me that the generation of IPL, the generation of T20, how do they play such good Test cricket? In both game of ball and game of gain.

- Sanjay Manjrekar

FIH Women's World Cup

India enter round 2 after goalless draw with England

AMSTELVEEN: The Indian women's hockey team advanced to the second round of the FIH World Cup after being held to a goalless draw by England in their final Pool D match here on Thursday, surviving a dozen penalty corners and late pressure.

India, who needed only a draw to progress, finished second in the pool with one win and two draws from three matches. China topped the group after beating South Africa 5-1 earlier in the day.

The result, however, masked a below-par performance from India, who struggled with passing, ball control and penalty-corner execution. They earned six



penalty corners but failed to convert any, with Deepika and Navneet Kaur unable to make their opportunities count.

India's goalkeepers Savita Punia and Bichhu Devi stood out, particularly as England earned as many as 11 penalty

corners during the match. Bichhu produced the crucial save with just 30 seconds remaining, diving to her left to deny England and preserve India's qualification.

India and China will carry one point each in the second round. India started aggres-

Sinquefield Cup

PRAGG LOSES TO WESLEY SO IN ARMAGEDDON, ENDS SECOND

ST. LOUIS (USA): Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa lost the finals in the Armageddon game against eventual champion American Wesley So to finish second in the Sinquefield Cup here.

After drawing with Anish Giri of the Netherlands in the final Classical game, Praggnanandhaa forced a tiebreaker against Wesley So who was leading the tournament for most of the rounds.

Wesley So was able to play out a draw with black pieces to win the tournament, which is a part of the Grand Chess Tour. The rules clearly stipulated that the tied players would play two rapid games.

If the tie is still unresolved, one final Armageddon, one final five minutes for white and four for black will be played,



wherein black wins the match if he draws. As it happened both the rapid games ended in draws, leaving the score tied at 1-1. In the final Armageddon, Praggnanandhaa had the more difficult chance of winning with white which the Indian could not do and the game ended in a draw.

However, the silver lining for Praggnanandhaa was that he stood first at the end of the last event and has now qualified for the grand finale later this year.

For the records, Praggnanandhaa scored 35.5 in the total tour which was a full point clear of Wesley So.

D Varshith lifts bronze at Jr National Swimming C'ships



Telangana swimmer Dhulipudi Varshith won the bronze medal in the 200m Medley (Male) at the 52nd Junior National Swimming Championship 2026, being held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, from August 18 to 23, 2026. Varshith clocked 2:10.97 seconds to finish third, behind Mongam Theerdhu Samadev (SSCB), who won gold in 2:09.36, and Daniel Paul J (Karnataka), who secured silver in 2:10.60. Varshith has continued his medal-winning run since 2024, when he won silver in the 400m Individual Medley at the Junior Nationals in Bhubaneswar. In 2025, he added gold in the 400m Individual Medley at the 7th Khelo India Youth Games in Bihar. Varshith has trained at Zionsportz Swimming Academy under Chief Coach John Siddiqui since the age of eight.

RSS has decided it knows truth of 1.5 bn people: Rahul

NEW DELHI

LAUNCHING a sharp ideological attack on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Thursday accused the organisation of attempting to impose its version of the "truth" on 1.5 billion Indians, stating that only individuals have the right to define their own paths.

Speaking at the "Hara Bharat Swaraj: A Tribute to Rajiv Gandhi's Vision" programme in the national capital, Gandhi contrasted the RSS's philosophy with Mahatma Gandhi's concept of 'Swaraj' (self-rule).

"What Gandhiji was saying was that every living being is a unique entity with their own path towards the truth. I cannot tell you what your truth is. Today, the ideological battle in India is precisely that. It is not fundamentally about environment, politics, or free media--those are symptoms. The real fight is that a small group of people have decided, because they control the system, that



they know the truth of everyone in this country. That is my problem with the RSS: the RSS has decided that they know the truth of 1.5 billion people. And I say, no. Only 1.5 billion people can know their own truth," Rahul Gandhi asserted.

"And I say, no. Only 1.5 billion people can know their own truth. Even I cannot do that. If I begin to believe that I know your truth, I would be a madman. Because I am not you. I haven't faced what you've faced; I haven't seen what you've seen; I haven't dealt with what you've dealt with. I don't have the same parents, the same friends, or the same life. So how can I

say that I know your truth?" he added.

Noting how Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography was titled 'My Experiments with Truth', and not 'The Truth', he further said, "Please notice, Gandhiji's book was not called 'The Truth' or 'My Understanding of the Truth'. It was titled 'My Experiments with Truth'. I have experiments with my truth; you have experiments with your truth."

Rahul Gandhi further accused the BJP and RSS of creating a sense of exclusion among various communities, stating that such actions are harming "Bharat Mata." (ANI)

Ministers' dogs get better facilities: Dipke on govt schools

LATUR: Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) convener Abhijeet Dipke on Thursday said Maharashtra School Education Minister Dada Bhuse should resign, claiming government schools are in a pitiable condition and that even "ministers' dogs get better facilities" than students.

Dipke, whose group launched the 'School Thik Karo' (improve government schools) campaign last week, visited a Zilla Parishad school at Ujani village in Latour's Ausa tehsil. Later, talking to reporters, he said elected representatives and ministers must be held accountable for the condition of schools, many of which continue to lack basic facilities such as proper classrooms, benches, toilets and safe access roads.

Students in some schools



were being treated "worse than animals", he alleged.

"It is a question of students' lives. When political leaders are not doing anything for students, why should people vote for them? Do people vote for them so that they can only travel in helicopters? People should see in what conditions their children are studying. The dogs of these ministers get better facilities than this," he said.

Dipke also asked people to force the leaders of political parties to work for education first and then come to seek votes.

China destroys residential quarters of monks in Tibet

Serta (Tibet) : China has intensified security restrictions at Larung Gar in Serta, with large numbers of troops deployed inside the religious encampment as authorities continue demolishing residential quarters used by monks, nuns and lay practitioners, Tibet Times reported.

According to Tibet Times, access to Larung Gar has been sharply restricted since the demolition drive began, with a checkpoint on the main access road allowing only a limited number of local residents and tourists to enter under strict supervision. Visitors are reportedly required to use public transport arranged through the checkpoint and are prevented from moving freely around the encampment.

A source cited by Tibet Times said tourists and pilgrims travelling from within



Tibet and other parts of China are now being barred from entering the settlement. Those permitted to enter are confined to designated areas, while troops and security personnel monitor the movements of visitors, residents, and monastics.

The report further said drone photography and filming, previously permitted for those holding authorisation, have been prohibited since the demolitions began last month. Military personnel and plainclothes officers have

Ganga nears danger mark in Varanasi, boat services suspended

VARANASI: The water level of the Ganga river has been rising steadily in Varanasi, prompting the administration to suspend boat operations as a precautionary measure, officials said on Thursday. ACP Atul Anjan Tripathi said the water level of the river stood at 68.35 metres on Thursday and was steadily moving towards the danger mark of 71.26 metres.

"Lakhs of devotees are visiting Varanasi during the month of Sawan. Keeping their safety in mind, boat operations have been suspended as a precautionary measure," Tripathi said.

He said a decision on resuming boat operations would be taken once the water level and the flow of the river return to normal.

RTOs quiz taxi, auto drivers in Marathi, notices sent

MUMBAI: Taxi and autorickshaw drivers in Maharashtra are being put through a 16-question test after the transport department launched a statewide drive on Thursday to check their working knowledge of Marathi.

Teams from Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) are issuing one-month notices to those unable to answer satisfactorily and warning that their badges would be suspended if they fail a subsequent test, officials said.

"Mala CNG bharayche aahe. Thode thambave lage!" (I need to fill up with CNG, we'll have to stop for a while); "majhi rickshaw/taxi sharingchi aahe" (my auto/taxi is a shared one); and "meter chalu kele aahe" (have started the meter) are among the routine responses that officials expect from the drivers.

The exercise, announced by



Maharashtra Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik on Wednesday, is being conducted as part of the state government's move to make working knowledge of Marathi mandatory for drivers of taxis, autorickshaws and app-based cabs.

A senior RTO official said a 16-question questionnaire was received from the Transport Commissioner's office and was based on the Marathi language training imparted to taxi and autorickshaw drivers by the Konkani Sahitya Parishad, which ended on Independence Day. (PTI)

Domicile row

MP HC ends women's 13-yr wait for MBBS degree

JABALPUR: Thirteen years after a woman completed her MBBS, the Madhya Pradesh High Court has cleared the way for her to obtain her degree and pursue medical practice, stalled after her admission was cancelled over a domicile issue.

Treating the petition as a special case, a division bench of Acting Chief Justice Vivek Rana and Justice Pradeep Mittal on Wednesday set aside the June 13, 2013 order cancelling Shailja Pandey's admission and directed Rani Durgavati University, Jabalpur, to issue her marksheet and degree.

Pandey had fairly disclosed all facts about her residence in Madhya Pradesh, the court observed, adding that action could have been taken at the time of her admission rather than after she completed her studies.

"On the basis of this degree, the petitioner will be



entitled to practice in the medical field, but the fact remains that she completed her studies in the year 2013, and now more than 13 years have passed," the court said in its order.

Pandey could not practice during this period because she did not have her degree or registration with the medical regulator, the HC noted.

In her petition, Pandey said the college raised the objection over her domicile midway through the MBBS course, although she had secured admission after furnishing a domicile certificate issued by the competent authority.