

Five Star XI wins Shaheed Maj Amit Inter-Tehsil T-10 trophy

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: Five Star team won the Shaheed Maj Amit Kumar Thenge Inter Tehsil T-10 Cricket Tournament organized by Army at Mendhar.

The grand trophy to Five Star team and individual prizes were awarded to team members.

The tournament developed cohesiveness amongst the youth of the area and has strengthened existing cordial relationship with army.

On the occasion, Indian Army encouraged the youth for their efforts to make the

Over 3.5 lakh pilgrims take holy dip at Gangasagar on Makar Sankranti

■ AGENCY

SAGAR ISLAND: Over 3.5 lakh pilgrims took the holy dip at the confluence of the Ganga and the Bay of Bengal here on the occasion of Makar Sankranti on Friday, even as officials carried out RT-PCR tests as part of the measures to check the spread of COVID-19.

Those who have taken the double dose of COVID vaccines and found negative for the disease have been allowed to enter Sagar Island for the Gangasagar fair, a senior official of West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district said.

The holy bath began at midnight as pilgrims from different parts of the country gathered at the confluence braving cold and steady drizzle.

They also offered prayers at the Kapil Muni temple here.

According to locals, physical distancing went for a toss during the dip even though disaster management and civil defence personnel, policemen and volunteers were active to maintain COVID protocols.

The district administration claimed it regulated the proceedings to a great extent and most of the pilgrims followed the instructions, an official said.

"We didn't allow anyone without RT-PCR test and double vaccination certification this time. The screening was done at all embarkation points, including Kolkata's Babughat and South 24 Parganas' Namkhana and Lot 8. As of now, an estimated 3.5 lakh pilgrims took the holy dip," he said.

Young Petersen comes of age as South Africa wrap-up series with seven-wicket win

■ AGENCY

CAPE TOWN: A South African team going through one of its toughest transition phases embarrassed a star-studded Indian team with a clinical seven-wicket victory in the third Test to clinch a memorable 2-1 series triumph here on Friday.

The target of 212 wasn't a tough ask and starting the day at 101 for two, young pretender Keegan Petersen (82, 113 balls) along with Rassie van Der Dussen (41 not out) added 54 runs for the third wicket to seal the match before Temba Bavuma (32 not out) helped in putting the final touches.

Petersen walked away with both the player of the match as well as player of the series honours.

Sunil Gavaskar termed it as a "Nightmare for India" as they were not even close to competing in the last two Tests and Dean Elgar's ear to ear grin and the bear hugs that he shared with his teammates said it all.

It was especially sweet for the hosts who lost premier pacer Anrich Nortje to injury before the series and were then hit by Quinton de Kock's sudden mid-series retirement.

The Indian team, meanwhile, lost it in their mind after the contentious DRS review of Elgar that went wrong on Thursday and their focus on using stump microphone more to take digs at broadcaster Supersport instead of focussing on getting Petersen out spelt their doom.

"It's a great spectacle of Tests for everyone to watch; hard-fought series. Great first game



Winner and Runner-up teams posing with army officials after receiving trophies.

best use of such a platform to display their sporting talent and also laid emphasis on the

importance of games and sports for their overall development.

Poonch: Lassana Seri Chowana team wins Inter-block Cricket Cup

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: District Youth Services and Sports Department Poonch organised an Inter-block cricket tournament here at GHSS Seri Khawaja ground.

Final of the cup was played between Panchayat Seri Chowana and Panchayat Kalai teams.

After winning the toss Seri Chowana made 67 runs in 10 overs. Kalai failed to achieve the target and collapsed on 59.

Pyt. Seri Chowana A won the match by 8 runs, Pervaiz Malik Afridi was declared man of the match who played an innings of 21 runs and Took 3 wickets. The PET Iftakhar Bhatti



DYSS Officer Poonch, Ch. Mohammad Qasim posing with teams and other officials.

and Imran Fazali acted as match umpires. Score was managed by Manzoor Ahmed Lone.

District Youth Services and Sports Officer Poonch Ch. Mohammad Qasim was the chief guest, while the

sports event was held under the supervision of ZPEO Surankote Vipin Khajuria.

Anis Ahmed PET, Wasim Akram PET, Iftakhar Bhatti PET, REK's including Shabir Malik, Aijaz Malik, Manzoor Ahmed

lone, Manzoor Rather, Sajjad Rather, Ch Israr, Ch Irfan, Javed Iqbal, Imran Fazli, Shahid Ahmed and Pervaiz Malik Afridi were also present as field staff and officiated the whole tournament.

Organization of Surya Namaskar held at Central Sanskrit University

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: National Service Scheme (NSS) at Central Sanskrit University, Shri Ranbir Campus on Friday performed Surya Namaskar. The program was conducted by Pankaj, Program Officer; NSS. Surya Namaskar was done to the volunteers and teachers and employees of the NSS by Maninder Singh, a Physical Teacher and Yoga Instructor. The vote of thanks was presented by Dr. Yogendra Dixit, Program Officer; NSS. Sharat Chandra Sharma, Kailash Chandra Dash, Vishal Mahajan, Sanjay Mishra, Pradeep Mishra, Akhil Sharma, Praveen Kumar, Suman Chandra Pant, and other teachers and employees of campus along with National Service Scheme volunteers were present in the programme.

DYSS organises Surya Namaskar across J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: As part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSS), J&K on the directions of its Principal Secretary Alok Kumar and Director, Gazanfar Ali organised 'Surya Namaskar' on Friday across all the district headquarters of the Union Territory and the Directorate Office, here.

As per the planning and decision of Government of India, around 75 lakh people across the globe virtually took part in the programme.

The officers, the field staff and the general youth were part of the event.

Bearing chill and inclement weather conditions, the field staff and the youth enjoyed the activity even on snow sur-



Students performing Surya Namaskar in Udhampur on Friday.

faces in Kashmir division and the hilly areas in Jammu division.

It is pertinent to mention here that Surya Namaskar is offered as a salutation to the Sun to exhibit one's gratitude for each of its rays as it nurtures all living being.

Experts believe that doing one round of Surya

Namaskar burns over 13 calories, and the magical number to apply Surya Namaskar for weight loss is 12.

The programme was attended by the Physical Education Lecturers, PEM's, PET's, ReK's, NYC's and students via virtual mode.

Queen's Baton for 2022 CWG arrives in Odisha



■ AGENCY

BHUBANESWAR: The Queen's Baton for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games (CWG) arrived in Odisha on Friday.

It was received by Odisha Hockey Promotion Council chairman Dilip Turkey and officials of the Sports and Youth Services Department.

Eminent sportspersons of the

state Anuradha Biswal and Shradhanjali Samantray were present to welcome the Queen's Baton.

The baton will be in Bhubaneswar for the night, and on Saturday, it will tour Puri and Konark where dignitaries and senior district officials will receive it.

It will then return to Bhubaneswar for the symbolic

relay at the Kalinga Stadium where eminent sportspersons of the state will be present.

"It is a momentous and historic occasion for us. It is a great honour for Odisha to receive the Queen's Baton and be part of its journey prior to the commencement of the Commonwealth Games 2022," said Turkey. It began on October 7 last year at the Buckingham Palace, where Queen Elizabeth II placed her message onto the baton, signifying the start of the 294-day relay to the 72 nations and territories of the Commonwealth. The India leg of the baton relay started on January 12 from New Delhi. The baton will leave for Singapore on January 16. It will return to England ahead of the games, scheduled from July 28 to August 8.

Fire in Kulgam temple: KPs demand 'speedy justice', police deny foul play

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KULGAM: As the news of a minor fire at an ancient temple in Kashmir broke out, Kashmiri Pandits lodged a protest alleging foul play and demanded the arrest of those who 'engineered' the act.

The police on the other hand said its preliminary investigation suggested that it was an accidental fire that may have been caused by the burning diyas at the Mata Lalita Tripura Sundari temple in Devsar area of South Kashmir's Kulgam on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday.

"The minor fire incident in Mata Tripur Sundari (Devsar) temple is

being investigated by Police. Pre Enquiry reveals #Fire happend accidentally by the DIYAs/ARTI being kept in Temple for daily routine.... No signs of Miscreant act. Public are requested not to pay heed to rumors (sic), Kulgam district police tweeted.

Kulgam Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) G V Sundeeep Chakravathy and Deputy Commissioner Bilal Mohi-ud-din Bhat rushed to the temple to investigate.

The Kashmiri Pandits, however, alleged the police of a cover up. They questioned how the fire broke out at midnight in such extreme cold condi-

tions and how the tree, considered to be the seat of the deity, was burnt while curtains and threads offered by devotees were not.

"It's not possible that diyas could cause such fire, that too, when no one enters the temple these days....how can a diya cause fire at 1 am," Sunita Dhar, a resident of Devsar asked.

"This is unacceptable and the local authorities rushing to conclusions without investigating is even more tormenting," former BJP lawmaker Surinder Ambardar said.

Demanding an unbiased investigation, Vishwa Kashmiri Samaj convenor Kiran Watal said, "It is the duty

of the Lieutenant Governor administration and police to protect centuries-old religious heritage temples and shrines in Kashmir."

Functionaries of the Youth All India Kashmiri Samaj and global Kashmiri Pandits Diaspora, too, demanded a speedy investigation into the case.

Locals said 'arti' is not performed at the temple off late as it remains closed.

Police, for their part, said an Army team had cleaned and sanitized the temple in the midnight and the fire may have triggered during the cleanup. The Army, however, did not responded to queries.

Sindhu, Sen enter semifinals of India Open

■ AGENCY

NEW DELHI: Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and world championship bronze medallist Lakshya Sen registered contrasting wins to advance to the women's and men's singles semifinals, respectively, at the Yonex-Sunrise India Open badminton tournament here on Friday.

Top seed Sindhu, a former world champion, got the better of compatriot Ashmita Chaliha 21-7 21-18 in 36 minutes, while Sen rallied his way to a hard-fought 14-21 21-9 21-14 victory over H S Prannoy in another all-Indian quarterfinal.

The 26-year-old from Hyderabad set up a women's singles last-four clash with Thailand's sixth seed Supanida Katethong, who entered the semifinals after the third seeded Yeo Jia Min of Singapore pulled out of the tournament due to "high fever".

Sen, seeded third, will square off against Malaysia's



Ng Tze Yong in the semifinals.

In the other women's semifinal, Aakarshi Kashyap will face second seeded Thai Busanan Ongbamrungphan after the Indian notched up a 21-12 21-15 win over compatriot Malvika Bansod on Friday.

Busanan trounced USA's Lauren Lam 21-12 21-8 in another last-eight clash. Second seeded men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also entered the semifinals with a 21-18 21-18 win over Singapore's Hee Yong Kai Terry and Loh Kean Hean.

Haritha Manazhiyil Harinarayan and Ashna Roy also made it to the last four in women's doubles after beating Rudrani Jaiswal and Jamaludeen Anees Kowsar 21-16 21-16 in the quarterfinals.

The last time Sindhu was up against Chaliha, at the 83rd Yonex-Sunrise Senior National Championship in 2019, the youngster from Assam had produced a spirited performance.

On Friday, Chaliha took time to get into the groove and put up a good fight in the second game but couldn't stop Sindhu from walking away

with the match.

Sindhu came out all guns blazing in the opening game, jumping to a 11-5 lead at the interval and then reeled off the last 10 points to earn the bragging rights.

Chaliha gave a better account of herself in the second game as she tied 9-9 before Sindhu managed a slender one-point advantage at the break. Sindhu zoomed to 15-11 but Chaliha again clawed her way back to 15-15. Thereafter, Sindhu switched gears and grabbed four match points. Chaliha saved two match points before Sindhu closed out the tie.

In men's singles, it was the first international meeting but third overall between Sen and Prannoy as the duo engaged in a battle of supremacy.

On a comeback trail, Prannoy, who had reached the quarterfinals at the last world championships, dominated the proceedings initially to secure a 6-2 lead. He got his acts together in time to turn the tables at 12-10 and then

zoomed from 15-14 to pocket the opening game.

"The pace was high in the first game as both of us tried to up the pace but I made errors at 13-13 and it cost me the game," Sen said.

Sen, however, roared back into the contest in the second game as he ran up a huge 12-5 lead and didn't look back from that point, as Prannoy crumbled.

In the decider, Prannoy took the early initiative, opening up a 6-1 advantage but couldn't sustain it as Sen moved to 11-9 at the interval and then pocketed nine of the next 11 points to seal the match in his favour.

"I played a bit more patiently in second and I had lead all through, and in the third game he started well but I gave away easy points in the beginning. But then I started playing patiently and played the rally game and it was working for me, so I stuck to it. I had 3-4 points lead, so it helped me to close out the match," Sen said.