

IN BRIEF



**Djokovic heads into clay season as World No. 1**

PARIS  
Novak Djokovic moves into his 20th week as World No. 1 on Monday as the clay season gets under way. The Serb is almost 2,500 points ahead of Rafael Nadal. Japan's Naomi Osaka maintained a slender lead over Romanian Simona Halep at the top of the WTA rankings released on Monday. Osaka now sits 185 points ahead of Halep, with Czech pair Petra Kvitova and Karolina Pliskova in third and fourth. AFP



**Caparros suffering from leukemia**

SEVILLE  
Sevilla coach Joaquin Caparros announced on Sunday that he has chronic leukemia but says the condition is under control and will not prevent him continuing in his job. "I have chronic leukemia," Caparros said at a post-match press conference. "I have caught it early and can live a normal life. I want to enjoy my job and for everyone to stay calm. I've had no treatment and am grateful for the club giving me the opportunity [to continue coaching]," he said. AFP



**Ko claims first Major title at ANA Inspiration**

LOS ANGELES  
Reigning Rookie-of-the-Year Ko Jin-young captured her first Major title on Sunday, holding off fellow South Korean Lee Mi-Hyang to win the ANA Inspiration by three strokes. Ko, who is in her second year, finished with a 10-under 278 for her fourth LPGA title. Ko celebrated her win by taking the traditional dip with her caddie in Poppie's Pond — the water hazard located off the right and back of the green on the 18th. AFP

**Coach will be appointed at the earliest: Praful Patel**



Praful Patel. \*AFP

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI**

The All-India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel may consider appointing a big name as the national team coach only if the candidate fits the criteria and the appointment may be done at the earliest.

The AIFF has received more than 250 applications for the top job, which is vacant after Stephen Constantine resigned following India's failure to make the knockouts of the AFC Asian Cup.

"If the candidate fulfils the criteria, what we are looking at, and if he is well-qualified, then we can think of that (appointing a big name)," the AIFF chief said.

"The appointment will be made as soon as possible, maybe by the end of this month."

The list of applicants for the Indian coaching job also includes candidates from the ISL and I-League.

# Siddharth Desai is prize catch

Telugu Titans picks up last season's best debutant for ₹1.45 crore

**PKL AUCTION**

**NANDAKUMAR MARAR  
MUMBAI**

Raider Siddharth Desai has moved up the ranks, in terms of value at the Pro-Kabaddi League Season-7 player auction.

In only his second season as pro, the Kolhapur-born player (base price ₹30 lakh) was picked up by Telugu Titans for a staggering ₹1.45 crore on Monday. Last season's highest earner, Monu Goyat (₹1.51 crore) moved to UP Yodhas for ₹93 lakh.

Puneri Paltan and Tamil Thalaivas were involved in a frenetic three-way bid for the former U Mumba sensation, Desai. Named the 'Best debutant' last season for his power-packed raiding and speed, Desai will team up with Iranian coach Gholamreza Mazandarani again.

Titans convinced the only foreign head coach in PKL to switch from U Mumba and bid successfully for the 28-year-old player, a crowd-puller in his own right.

Thalaivas came close at ₹1.44 crore before Titans sealed the deal. U Mumba did not execute the Final Bid

Match card. Each of the 12 teams is allotted a purse of ₹4.4 crore to recruit a minimum of 18 and maximum 25 players.

Paltan used the Final Bid Match card to bring back reputed raider Nitin Tomar for ₹1.2 crore, the second highest bid. Thalaivas had beaten off challengers to get the player, only to see him taken away on a technical point.

Tomar represented Pune last season, so the team held the right to match the highest bid by any other franchise for a former player released into the pool.

Thalaivas got Rahul Chaudhari for ₹94 lakh in a straight bid.

Nineteen domestic players went under the hammer. Iranian Esmail Nababakhsh, taken by Bengal Warriors for ₹77.75 lakh, became the second-highest paid foreigner (Fazel Atrachali at ₹1 crore last season is the topper).

Several team managers used the Final Bid Match card to retain stars released earlier into the pool.

Those returning to last season's squads were Ravinder Pahal (Dabang Delhi), Girish Ernak (Paltan), Jai-

**Top picks**

**(CATEGORY A DOMESTIC)**

Siddharth Desai (₹1.45 crore, Titans)  
Nitin Tomar (₹1.20 crore, Paltan using Final Bid Match)

Rahul Chaudhari (94*, Thalaivas)	Chandran Ranjeet (70, Delhi using FBM)
Monu Goyat (93, UP Yodha)	Shrikant Jadhav (68, Yodha using FBM)
Sandeep Narwal (89, U Mumba)	Ravinder Pahal (61, Dabang Delhi using FBM)
Mahender Singh (80, Bengaluru Bulls using FBM)	Rishank Devadiga (61, Yodha using FBM)
Surender Nada (77, Patna Pirates)	Vishal Bharadwaj (60, Titans using FBM)
Prashanth Kumar Rai (77, Haryana Steelers)	Surjeet Singh (56, Paltan)
Parvesh Bhainswal (75, Gujarat Fortunegiants)	Ran Singh (55, moves to Tamil Thalaivas)
	Amit Hooda (53, Jaipur Pink Panthers)
	Jaideep (35, Pirates)
	Girish Ernak (33, Puneri Paltan using FBM)

**FOREIGN PLAYERS (TOP FIVE)**

Eshmaiel Nababakhsh (Iran) 77.75, Bengal Warriors  
Abozar Meghani (Iran) 75, Titans  
Jang Kun Lee (South Korea) 40, Pirates  
Eshmaiel Maghsoudhu (Iran) 35, Pirates  
Dong Geon Lee (South Korea) 25, U Mumba

\* all rupees in lakh

deep (Patna Pirates), Mahender Singh (Bengaluru Bulls), Parvesh Bainswal (Gujarat Fortunegiants), Vishal Bharadwaj (Titans), Chandran Ranjith (Dabang), Nitin Tomar (Paltan), Rishank Deva-

diga (UP Yodhas) and Shrikant Jadhav (Yodhas).

Last season, five domestic players earned upwards of ₹1 crore, a season later only two have made the crorepati club.



**Value for money:** Siddharth Desai's power-packed raiding in the first season has reaped rich dividends. \*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

# Krishna Nagar wins two golds

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DUBAI**

Asian Para Games bronze medallist Krishna Nagar of India won two gold medals at the second Fazza-Dubai para badminton international championships here on Sunday.

A day after upsetting World No. 1 Jack Shepherd in the men's singles S56 semifinals, Nagar pulled off the second upset in as many days when he defeated England's World No. 2 Krysten Coombs 20-22, 25-23, 21-12 in the most exciting final of the day, that went over an hour.

"This is the biggest win of my career," an elated Nagar said before he went on to make it two-for-two, winning the mixed doubles title along with Raja Magotra.

Team India had a good run, at the event finishing with nine medals including four golds on Sunday.

Among others, World No. 1 Pramod Bhagat and Parul Parmer took the gold in SL3 men's and women's singles. However, Asian Para Games winner Tarun went down to French World No. 1 Lucas Mazur in straight games 13-21, 17-21 in men's singles SL4 final.

# Chris Cowdrey — a less demonstrative auctioneer

Player auction is a fantastic new concept, says former England cricketer



Chris Cowdrey. \*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

G. VISWANATH  
MUMBAI  
Chris Cowdrey had his own way of being less demonstrative while conducting the VI-VO ProKabaddi League Auction 2019 at a South Mumbai five star hotel on Monday.

Picking a card from a bag held by his wife, the former cricketer-turned-auctioneer, Chris was business-like, saying: "Anybody wants to kick me of... I am asking for ten (₹10 lakh), he is going back in

once, twice and done".

The gavel is hit hard on the sound block and this time the little-known player goes unsold.

But Chris had a busy morning session as franchisees bid hard for Iran's Mohammad Esmail Nababakhsh and Abozar Mighani.

Having done the PKL auction for the first time last year, most in the 12 franchisees knew who Chris was — son of the celebrated England

cricketer and captain, the late Colin Cowdrey. Chris, now 61, played for Kent and made his Test debut against India at the Wankhede Stadium in 1984.

Talking to The Hindu he said: "I do a lot of charity auctions in the UK, mainly children's."

"This thing is quite new, I did this last year.

**'New concept'**

"It's a fantastic new concept

to us English people because you are not bidding money for a cause, but actually to buy a player for a franchise. It's very different and exciting. I watch the game, but it doesn't make any difference to the auction.

"My job is only to put it out there and see who wants to bid. It's not for me to say "I think he is a good player. I have done mainly cricket auctions, cricket memorabilia, but nothing like this."

# Chennai starts well

**SHOTGUN WC**

**SPORTS BUREAU  
AL AIN (UAE)**

Olympian Kynan Chenai shot 49 following rounds of 24 and 25 in trap in the shotgun World Cup on Monday.

However, there was stiff competition, in a strong field of 142 shooters, as 11 shooters shot the perfect score of 50 in two rounds, while 22 others were on 49.

Prithviraj Tondaiman shot 48, following rounds of 24 and 24. He was on par

with 29 others on 48.

In women's trap in which Caroe Cormener of France and Kirsty Barr of Britain won the Olympic quota places with the gold and silver medals respectively. Shagun wound up well with rounds of 23 and 25, but had dropped eight birds earlier in the first three rounds.

**The results: Women's trap:**

1. Carole Cormener (Fra) 44 (121);
2. Kirsty Barr (GBR) 41 (120);
3. Silvana Stanco (Ita) 33 (121);
26. Shagun Chowdhary 115;
50. Rajeshwari Kumari 109;
69. Varsha Varman 92.

# Goa is the next hurdle for Chennai City

The latter is expected to be high on confidence

**SUPER CUP**

**AMITABHA DAS SHARMA  
BHUBANESWAR**

Chennai City FC, having sprung the biggest surprise of the tournament by knocking out holder and ISL champion Bengaluru FC in the quarterfinals, the I-League winner now has the task of challenging ISL runner-up FC Goa in the first semifinal of the Hero Super Cup at the Kalinga Stadium here on Tuesday.

Chennai City has shown great discipline and tactical efficiency in the previous two rounds. The team has come out of the underdog status, evident from the way it prevailed over FC Pune Ci-

ty (pre-quarterfinals) and then against Bengaluru FC.

With these wins, City is expected to be high on confidence while taking on the might of FC Goa, the two-time ISL runner-up.

With a trophy eluding it ever since it was founded in 2014, the Super Cup crown is high up in the priority of FC Goa, which has promised to go full steam in the match.

The side will be missing its key Spanish player in the creative front, Edu Bedia, due to suspension, but head coach Sergio Lobera said that would not affect the side. "It is true that Bedia is an important player. It will be one weakness for us, but tomorrow (Tuesday) we will put up a team that will be

competitive enough to try and reach the final," Lobera said, while suggesting idfilder Hugo Boumous is the likely replacement.

Chennai City will be banking on its tested combination of the Spanish troika — Pedro Manzi, Sandro Rodriguez and Nestor Gordillo — that has spearhead the team's fortune. With M. Regin suspended, Charles Anandraj will possibly make his way back in the side.

"On paper we are not the favourite as compared to the strengths of our opponent.

"But when we go to the pitch, we try to give our best and you have seen what has happened so far," said Chennai City head coach Akbar Nawas.

# Sindhu hopes to find form

Sixth-seeded Saina pitted against fast-rising Kjaersfeldt

**SINGAPORE OPEN**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SINGAPORE**

P.V. Sindhu will look to shrug off the disappointment of her recent early exits when she spearheads the Indian challenge at the \$355,000 Singapore Open, starting here on Tuesday.

Sindhu has looked off colour in the last few weeks.

She made a first-round exit at the All England and lost in the second round of the Malaysia Open, losing to Korea's Sung Ji Hyun both times. She entered the semifinals at the India Open but went down to He Bingjiao of China despite holding advantage in the first game.

She begins her campaign against Indonesia's Lyanny Alessandra Mainaky.

**Only title**

Saina Nehwal is the only Indian to claim a title this season with the 29-year-old securing the crown at the Indonesia Masters following



**Focused:** P.V. Sindhu will have to put behind her recent disappointments to do well at the Singapore Open. \*AFP

injury to Carolina Marin of Spain in the final.

She also entered the quarterfinals at All England after battling through a pancreas infection.

She returned at the Malaysia Open but went down in the first round.

The sixth-seeded Indian will now have to be careful when she plays a fast-rising Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt of

Denmark in the opening round here.

K. Srikanth will continue his quest to break his title jinx when he begins his campaign against a qualifier.

H.S. Prannoy will face France's Brice Leverdez, while Swiss Open finalist B. Sai Praneeth has a tough fight ahead against World No. 1 and top seed Japan's Kento Momota.