



Indians shine in first round of qualifying at ITF W35 Kalaburagi

KALABURAGI, MAR 01: The Indian contingent witnessed a highly encouraging start at the ITF W35 Kalaburagi on Sunday, as Indian players delivered a wave of strong performances on the opening day of qualifying at the Chandrashekhara Patil Stadium in Kalaburagi.

With 12 Indians progressing to the second and final round, the depth and competitiveness of the domestic field were firmly on display in North Karnataka, as per a press release from ITF.

While a few seeds from overseas advanced smoothly, the spotlight remained firmly on the Indian hopefuls who rose to the occasion. In one of the early results, 11th seed Vanishita Pathania got the better of Arunkumar Lakshmi Prabha 6-3, 6-1, even as top seed Maria Mikhailova ended Chandana Potugari's campaign 6-2, 6-1.

Second seed Eva Marie Desvignes of Singapore also moved through comfortably, defeating wildcard Omna Yadav Davunaboina 6-1, 6-3.

The momentum, however, steadily shifted towards the home players as the day progressed. Saumya Ronde produced a composed performance to upset 15th seed Disha Behera 7-5, 6-4, while Kashish Bhatia delivered one of the stand-out results of the day, dismantling fourth seed Pooja Ingale 6-4, 6-0 in a commanding display.

The all-Indian contests added further intrigue. Twelfth seed Aahan Aahan



battled past Danica Fernando in a dramatic tie-breaker encounter, recovering from a set down to clinch a 5-7, 6-4, 11-9 win.

Elsewhere, Aishwarya Jadhav was clinical in her 6-3, 6-1 victory over fifth seed Prathyusha Rachapudi, and 16th seed Sreemanya Reddy Anugonda showed resilience to overturn Sanjana Sirimalla 3-6, 6-4, 10-6. Meanwhile, 13th seed Mahika Khanna ensured there were no slip-ups, easing past wildcard Hridayeshi Pai 6-1, 6-3.

Wildcard Snigdha Kanta also impressed, knocking out sixth seed Elsa Wan of Malaysia 6-1, 5-7, 10-3 in a gritty performance that underlined the fighting spirit of the Indian contingent.

Ninth seed Sandeepthi Singh Rao advanced with a 7-5, 6-2 win over Saily Prashant Kumar Thakkar, while 10th seed Yashasvini

Panwar secured a steady 6-4, 6-4 result against Aakruti Sonkusare Narayan Sonkusare.

Eighth seed Bela Tamhankar and 14th seed Laxmisiri Dandu rounded off a productive day for the hosts with straight-set wins over Jigyasa Narsinghani and Jeetesh Kumari, respectively.

With several Indians now just one win away from the main draw, the stage is set for an intense final round of qualifying as the ITF W35 Kalaburagi continues to gather momentum.

Singles Qualifying First Round

1-Maria Mikhailova bt Chandana Potugari (IND) 6-2, 6-1; 2-Eva Marie Desvignes (SGP) bt Omna Yadav Davunaboina (IND) 6-1, 6-3; 3-Valeria Savinykh (RUS) bt Harshini N Nagaraj (IND) 7-5, 6-3; Kashish Bhatia (IND) bt 4-

Pooja Ingale (IND) 6-4, 6-0; Aishwarya Jadhav (IND) bt 5-Prathyusha Rachapudi (IND) 6-3, 6-1; Snigdha Kanta (IND) bt 6-Elsa Wan (MAS) 6-1, 5-7, 10-3; 8-Bela Tamhankar (IND) bt Jigyasa Narsinghani (IND) 6-3, 6-2; 9-Sandeepthi Singh Rao (IND) bt Saily Prashant Kumar Thakkar (IND) 7-5, 6-2; 10-Yashasvini Panwar (IND) bt Aakruti Sonkusare Narayan Sonkusare (IND) 6-4, 6-4; 11-Vanishita Pathania (IND) bt Arunkumar Lakshmi Prabha (IND) 6-3, 6-1; 12-Aahan Aahan (IND) bt Danica Fernando (IND) 5-7, 6-4, 11-9; 13-Mahika Khanna (IND) bt Hridayeshi Pai (IND) 6-1, 6-3; 14-Laxmisiri Dandu (IND) bt Jeetesh Kumari (IND) 6-1, 6-1; Saumya Ronde (IND) bt 15-Disha Behera (IND) 7-5, 6-4; 16-Sreemanya Reddy Anugonda (IND) bt Sanjana Sirimalla (IND) 3-6, 6-4, 10-6. (ANI)

Jaguar Club, Preet Nagar advance in SCPL

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, MAR 01

Jaguar Cricket Club and Preet Nagar Cricket Club won their respective matches to move into the next round of the ongoing 2nd Sikh Cricket Premier League (SCPL), organised jointly by All J&K Sikh Coordination Committee and Hari Singh Nalwa Cricket Club at University of Jammu grounds, here today.

In the first match of the day, Jaguar Club registered a 15 runs win against Ever-shine Club. Batting first, after Ever-shine won the toss and opted to field, Jaguar made 142 runs losing all their wickets in 19.5 overs.

In reply, Ever-shine could not reach the target and exhausted the 20 overs quota for 127 runs losing seven wickets. For his match win-



ning spell of three for 16 in four overs, Harjot Singh of Jaguar was named man of the match while Jeevanjot Singh (34-ball 37 runs) declared best batter. In this match, IGP Crime, Sujit Kumar (IPS) was the chief guest, who interacted with the teams and praised the organisers. In other match of the day, Noor XI lost to Preet Nagar United by 19 runs de-

spite brilliant century from Danish Fayaz. Preet Nagar, batting first, made 190 runs for seven wickets. Danish, who scored highest 44-ball 74 runs, was declared player of the match.

In reply, Noor XI could not chase despite superb in-nings of 56-ball 101 (7x4, 7x6) 171 runs and completed their 20 overs for 171 runs losing eight wickets.

Commissioner Secretary Industries, Vikramjeet Singh (IPS) was chief guest in this match, who praised the organisers for engaging the youth into sports.

FIXTURE: Chardikala Strikers to meet Nanak Nagar United Cricket Club at 9 am; Hari Singh Nalwa Cricket Club to face Baba Farid Nagar Cricket Club at 1.30 pm tomorrow.

J&K Masters Badminton Tourney begins

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, MAR 01

Organised by Badminton Association of Jammu and Kashmir (BAJK), the two-day Yonex-Sunrise J&K UT Masters (Veteran) Badminton Championship in collaboration with J&K Sports Council got underway today at Badminton Hall, Police Lines, here.

The event was declared open by chairman of the Association, Dr O D Sharma, who interacted with the participants and officials.

Among others present were DV Sharma (president BAJK), Dushyant Sharma (treasurer BAJK), Balbir Janwal, Basanti Bhat, Pawanjit Singh and Sukhdev Singh (incharge Badminton Hall).

The competition is being held in different age groups



between 35 plus and 80 plus categories of men and women in both singles, doubles and mixed events.

The technical penal is led by chief referee, Rahul Sharma.

The Results: Men Singles: 35 plus: Mudasir Ahmad bt Suhail 21-08, 21-10. 40 plus: Lokesh Sharma bt Abdul Shakoor 21-18, 21-19. Plus 45: Sanjay Kumar bt Koushal Ku-

mar 21-17, 21-11. 50 plus: Vivek Mehta bt Ajatshatru 21-17, 21-14. Plus 55: Sanjeev Arora bt R K Dubey 21-12, 21-17. 60 plus: Daljit Singh got walkover Ramesh Sharma.

Modern Pythian Games makes history at Bishkek with SCO Nations

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1: Modern Pythian Games is set to mark a historic milestone in global cultural history as India leads its maiden Indian Youth Team of artists to participate in the 1st Youth Delphic Games for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Member Nations.

This will be the first occasion when an Indian team of artists will represent the country as an officially organised national delegation, on the lines of international sporting events, according to a release.

The 65-member Indian delegation will depart on 22 March 2026 for Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, which currently holds the Chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

The 1st Youth Delphic Games are being hosted by the Mayor of Bishkek in collaboration with the International Delphic Committee, Moscow, the apex body that organises Delphic Games across the CIS region. The Delphic Games draw inspiration from the ancient Pythian Games, which celebrated excellence in arts and creativity.

The Indian delegation will comprise 41 young artists-- 21 from Delhi, 10 from Himachal Pradesh, 4 from Karnataka, and one each from Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, and Haryana--representing a wide spectrum of artistic disciplines. These include folk music, dance, singing, pop music, DJ arts, visual arts, arts and crafts, and piano.



Through this diverse cultural representation, the delegation will showcase the richness of Indian arts and heritage to the SCO Member Nations, ushering in a new era of cultural diplomacy. With this landmark participation, India not only steps onto the international competitive cultural platform, but the Modern Pythian Games--initiated from India--also attains formal cultural recognition among SCO nations, marking a significant diplomatic and cultural milestone.

It is a matter of great honour that Bijender Goel, a global cultural visionary from New Delhi, India, and the Founder of the Modern Pythian Games, has been officially invited by the organisers to address a special session of SCO Member Nations during the 1st Youth Delphic Games.

In his address, Goel will articulate a bold and forward-looking vision for the revival of the ancient Pythian Games in a contemporary form through the Modern Pythian Games. He

will highlight how this integrated online and offline cultural ecosystem has the potential to transform arts and culture from a largely unorganised sector into a globally structured and sustainable industry, with an estimated economic contribution exceeding EUR1,000 billion to the global economy.

His address will further underscore the pivotal role that India and other SCO Member Nations can play in shaping this new global cultural order--fostering youth engagement, cultural exchange, economic growth, and long-term cultural diplomacy.

The Indian delegation to the 1st Youth Delphic Games will be led by a distinguished team of cultural and administrative leaders.

* Chief of Mission: B. H. Anilkumar, IAS (Retd.), Karnataka

* Deputy Chief of Mission: S. Siva Kumar, Tamil Nadu

* Chief Choreographer: Sandip Soparrakar, renowned Latin and Ball-room dancer and choreog-

rapher. It is a matter of great pride that Sneha Venkatramani, an eminent Bharatanatyam Guru from Bengaluru, and Sulbha Joshi from Uttarakhand, a renowned visual artist, have been selected to serve on the International Jury for the Games.

The list of young artists selected to represent India at the 1st Youth Delphic Games is attached herewith.

Revival of the World's Oldest Cultural Games: Pythian Games are the oldest cultural games of the world revived by Bijender Goel, the founder, from India as the Modern Pythian Games after a gap of 1,630 years.

These games were originally held in Delphi, Greece, with available historical data since 582 BC.

While the Olympic Games were the oldest sporting events of the world, originating in Olympia, Greece and with available historical date since 776 BC--were revived after nearly 1,500 years in 1894 by Pierre de Coubertin of France.

Hockey India names 20-member squad for FIH Women's Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers

HYDERABAD, MAR 01: Hockey India on Sunday announced a 20-member Indian Women's Hockey Team squad for the upcoming FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers Hyderabad, Telangana, scheduled to be held in Hyderabad from 8 to 14 March 2026, according to a release.

Hosts India, England, Scotland, Korea, Italy, Uruguay, Wales, and Austria will be competing for three qualification spots at the FIH Hockey World Cup Belgium & Netherlands 2026, set to be held in August. The teams are divided into two pools, with England, Korea, Italy, and Austria in Pool A, while hosts India, Scotland, Uruguay, and Wales are in Pool B.

Seasoned midfielder Salima Tete will continue to lead the side, providing leadership and stability at the heart of the team. The squad comprises Bansari Solanki and Bichu Devi Kharibam sharing the goal-



keeping responsibilities.

Sushila Chanu Pukhrabam, Nikki Pradhan, Manisha Chauhan, Udita, and Ishika Chaudhary form the defensive unit, while Captain Salima Tete, Neha, Sunelita Toppo, Sakshi Rana, Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Rutaja Dadaso Pisal, and Deepika Soreng will occupy the midfield.

In attack, the team boasts flair and finishing prowess with Navneet Kaur, Ishika Lalremsiami, Beauty Ddungdung, Baljeet Kaur, and Annu taking on the goalscoring responsibilities.

Recently appointed Chief Coach of the Indian Women's Hockey Team, Sjoerd Marijne, shared his thoughts ahead of the cru-

cial tournament and said, "We are really looking forward to our first tournament together. We have been working on the fitness and the tactics, so everybody understands their tasks and role in the team. We will play two practice matches in Hyderabad to be fully ready for the matches ahead."

"We kept making too many mistakes": Harmanpreet Kaur after ODI series clean sweep against Australia

HOBART, MAR 01: Indian captain Harmanpreet Kaur acknowledged her team's shortcomings in the third and final ODI match of the bilateral series held at the Bellerive Oval in Hobart, where the hosts handed them a big 185-run defeat to clean sweep the series.

The 36-year-old Indian skipper accepted that her team is 'not playing good cricket' in the ODIs. Speaking during the post-match presentation, Kaur said, "I think overall we didn't play good cricket. In T20, we were doing all the things right and in ODI, we didn't play good cricket. I think that is

something which cost us. ODI - it's a long game, and you have to keep doing the right things again and again. I think we kept making too many mistakes."

India asked Australia to bat first, hoping register a consolidatory win in the final match of the series.