

sportspopup

Table tennis legend great Sharath Kamal to call time on glorious career

CHENNAI: Indian table tennis legend A Sharath Kamal on Wednesday announced that the WTT Contender Chennai later this month will be his last tournament as a professional athlete, capping off an illustrious career spanning well over two decades. The WTT (World Table Tennis) event will be played here from March 25 to 30. "I played my first international tournament in Chennai. I will be playing my last international also in Chennai. This will be my last tournament as a professional athlete," said the 42-year-old here.

Prague Masters: Praggnanandhaa draws with Shankland

PRAGUE (Czech Republic): Grandmasters R Praggnanandhaa and Aravindh Chithambaram continued to remain in joint lead after drawing their sixth-round games in the Prague Masters Chess tournament here. Praggnanandhaa was held to a draw by Sam Shankland of the United States, while Aravindh split the point with Quang Leim of Vietnam to be on four points out of a possible six, on a day when all the games were drawn for the first time in the tournament. Praggnanandhaa and Aravindh continued to be followed by top seed Wei Yi of China, Anish Giri of Holland, Vincent Keymer of Germany and Quang Leim, all of whom are on three points apiece. Another half-point behind are the Czech duo of Nguyen Thai Dai Van and David Navara, Gurel Ediz of Turkey and Shankland. With three more rounds to come, Praggnanandhaa holds the edge over Aravindh as he is set to play the next two games with white pieces. Aravindh, on the other hand, has only one game with white left.

WPL: Struggling UP Warriorz face must-win clash against Mumbai Indians

LUCKNOW: Time is running out for UP Warriorz, who face a must-win situation against Mumbai Indians in their Women's Premier League match here on Thursday, at 7.30 pm. With their playoff hopes hanging by a thread, the Warriorz must bounce back from back-to-back defeats to stay in contention. It was a disappointing homecoming for the Warriorz, who were comprehensively beaten by Gujarat Giants at the Ekana Stadium in their previous fixture. The 81-run defeat not only pushed them to the bottom of the points table but also dented their net run rate.

Newcastle striker Isak lost car and cash in home raid, court hears

LONDON: Newcastle striker Alexander Isak's home was raided by a "professional group of travelling burglars" who stole his car and jewellery worth \$87,000, a court heard on Wednesday. The Sweden international was not in his house in Northumberland, in northeast England, when the gang broke in through a glass door last April, Newcastle Crown Court was told. The thieves had already stolen jewellery and clothes worth more than £1 million from a businesswoman and designer goods worth £100,000 from another woman in the previous days.

Super Cup football tournament to be held in Bhubaneswar from April 21

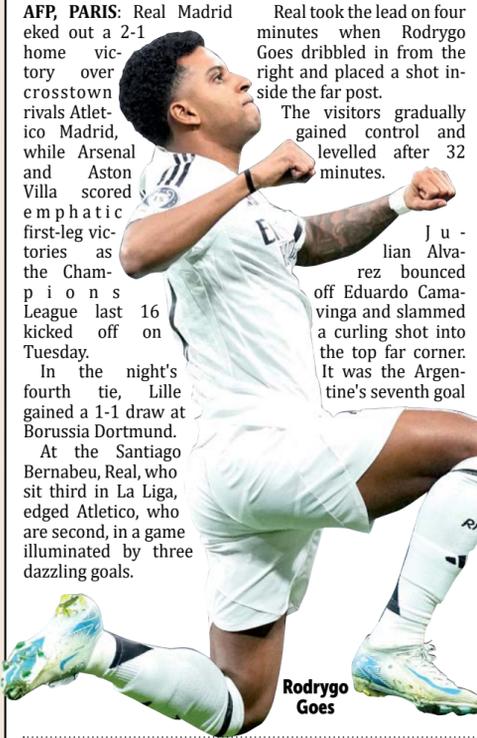
NEW DELHI: The season-ending Super Cup tournament will be held in Bhubaneswar from April 21, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) announced on Wednesday. The 16-team premier club competition will be played in a knock-out format. Thirteen Indian Super League clubs and three I-League sides will participate in the fifth edition of the tournament. The winners of the Super Cup 2025 will earn a chance to compete in the 2025-26 AFC Champions League 2 (ACL2) Playoffs, providing an opportunity for Indian clubs to make their mark on the continental stage. East Bengal won the last edition of Super Cup in 2024, also held in Bhubaneswar.

East Bengal lose 0-1 to FC Arkadag in first leg of AFC Challenge League quarterfinal

KOLKATA: Indian Super League (ISL) side East Bengal lost 0-1 to FC Arkadag of Turkmenistan in the first leg of their AFC Challenge League quarterfinal match here on Wednesday. Yazgylvc Gurbanow scored the all important goal for the Turkmenistan side in the 10th minute.

Real edge Atletico in CL derby

Seven-goal Arsenal crush PSV; Late goals put Villa in command



Rodrigo Goes

AFP, PARIS: Real Madrid eked out a 2-1 home victory over crosstown rivals Atletico Madrid, while Arsenal and Aston Villa scored emphatic first-leg victories as the Champions League last 16 kicked off on Tuesday.

In the night's fourth tie, Lille gained a 1-1 draw at Borussia Dortmund. At the Santiago Bernabeu, Real, who sit third in La Liga, edged Atletico, who are second, in a game illuminated by three dazzling goals.

Real took the lead on four minutes when Rodrigo Goes dribbled in from the right and placed a shot inside the far post.

The visitors gradually gained control and levelled after 32 minutes.

Ju-lian Alvarez bounced off Eduardo Camavinga and slammed a curling shot into the top far corner. It was the Argentine's seventh goal

of the Champions League campaign.

Antoine Griezmann and Rodrigo De Paul helped Atletico take control for long periods, with Madrid finding it hard to win the ball back.

Thibaut Courtois saved at full stretch from Griezmann before Brahim Diaz restored the home lead in the 55th minute, shimmying past a challenge and curling a shot inside the far post.

Arsenal all but ensured a quarter-final berth as they crushed a shambolic PSV 7-1 in Eindhoven.

Jurrien Timber headed Arsenal into the lead on 18 minutes before Ethan Nwaneri smashed a second. Mikel Merino, from a narrow angle, put the visitors three goals up in just the 31st minute.

Noa Lang hit back with a PSV penalty before half-time. But Martin Odegaard slotted home a rebound and Leandro Trossard dinked a goal as Arsenal scored

twice in the first three minutes of the second half.

Odegaard added another with 12 minutes left and then set up defender Riccardo Calafiori, a first-half replacement, to round off the scoring.

Aston Villa manager Unai Emery insisted his team still have work to do despite a commanding 3-1 victory away to Club Brugge.

Two late goals gave Villa the victory in Belgium to puncture the hopes of the hosts who performed so well for so long.

Leon Bailey's early opener for Villa at the Jan Breydelstadion was soon cancelled out by a Maxim De Cuyper leveller.

Club Brugge had been more than a match for their Premier League visitors, but Brandon Mechele's 82nd-minute own goal restored Villa's lead.

Marco Asensio, on as a substitute, then converted an 88th-minute penalty, his fifth goal in four games wrapping up the victory which puts the 1982 European Cup winners in a very strong position.

In Dortmund, Karim Adiyemi put the home team ahead on 22 minutes, meeting a clearance from a corner with a low half-volley from the edge of the penalty area and swerving his shot inside the post.

RESULTS

Last 16, first legs

Club Brugge 1 (De Cuyper 12) Aston Villa 3 (Bailey 3, Mechele 82-og, Asensio 88-pen); Borussia Dortmund 1 (Adeyemi 22) Lille 1 (Haraldsson 68); PSV Eindhoven 1 (Lang 45-pen) Arsenal 7 (Timber 18, Nwaneri 21, Merino 31, Odegaard 47, 73, Trossard 48, Calafiori 85); Real Madrid 2 (Rodrigo 4, Diaz 55) Atletico Madrid 1 (Alvarez 32)

Vagator PYSC second division champions

Team Herald sports@herald-goa.com

RAIA: Vagator PYSC were held to a 2-2 draw by South Goa United in the final playoff match, at Navelim ground, on Wednesday.

South Goa United needed a victory, while unbeaten Vagator PYSC entered the match with a superior goal average, giving them the advantage. South Goa United started brightly, taking the lead just before half-time through Alex Fernandes, who found the net in the 44th minute.

However, after the change of ends, Vagator PYSC responded strongly. Rutik Bhandodkar equalised in the 61st minute before Melson Fer-



INMICO NORONHA

mandes put them ahead with a superb strike in the 73rd minute.

With eight minutes of stoppage time added, South Goa United stunned their opponents when Pedro Gonsalves netted a dramatic equaliser in the 97th minute.

Following the result, both teams finished with five

points each, but Vagator PYSC secured promotion to the Goa Football Association's First Division League for the 2025-2026 season due to their superior goal average.

Reflecting on the team's achievement, Joaquim Fernandes, President of Vagator PYSC, expressed his pride:

"From humble beginnings to undeniable champions. This is the power of determination, unity, and unwavering belief. We've climbed every step, together."

Meanwhile, at Don Bosco Oratory ground, PVC Parra edged past Vasco City SCC in a high-scoring encounter, winning 6-5. Sahil Jalmi net-

SC Davorlim edge past Curtorim Gym to enter final

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RAIA: Sporting Club of Davorlim secured a place in the final of the Vaidya Family Memorial Cup 2025, organised by Cuncolim Union, after defeating Curtorim Gymkhana 5-4 in a

penalty shootout at the Cuncolim Village Playground on Thursday.

The match ended in a goalless draw at full time, forcing a decisive tie-breaker. In the shootout, William, Adarsh, Airon, Ajay, and Alent successfully converted their penal-

ties for Sporting Club of Davorlim, while Regan, Anselm, Rhay, and Aliston found the net for Curtorim Gymkhana.

Ajay Raj of Sporting Club of Davorlim was named man-of-the-match. The award was presented by Hitesh Patel and Harshit Sengar.

Handball selection trials today

MARGAO: Goa Handball Association will be holding selection trials for the 53rd Senior Women National Handball Championship to be held at Hathras, Uttar Pradesh from March 31 to April 5. The selection trials will be held on March 6, from 3 pm. Players must report to Mr. Conceicao Fernandes, Secretary (GHA) at the Manohar Parrikar Indoor Stadium, Navelim along with a colour copy of your Aadhaar card and a passport size photograph.

BCCI Jt Secy commits to strengthening cricket in Goa

PANJIM: Rohan Gauns Desai, Joint Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), has reaffirmed his commitment to advancing cricket in Goa. Speaking to office-bearers of the Sports Journalists' Association of Goa, Desai stated that his primary objective is to enhance the quality of the sport in the State while ensuring greater opportunities for Goans in BCCI-related roles, including training, support staff, and management.

Addressing the long-standing issue of the proposed international stadium, Desai assured that he would work towards its resolution, recognising its significance in fostering cricket's growth in the region. He highlighted his

role as a crucial link between the BCCI and the Goa Cricket Association (GCA), expressing confidence in uniting all affiliated clubs to propel the stadium project forward.

"The development of cricket in Goa will gain real momentum once clubs start responding positively," he said, stressing the essential role of GCA-affiliated clubs, which have served as the backbone of the organisation for decades. Desai acknowledged their unwavering support and reiterated his dedication to strengthening Goa's cricketing infrastructure.

Desai assured that his focus would be on improving the state's cricketing facilities and driving overall development.

TODAY'S SPORTS

GFA Futsal League: St Sebastiao Murida F vs Parish Youth Nuvem, at 6 pm; Margao SC vs UC Verna, at 7 pm. Futebol Club YFA vs Ambelim SC, at 8 pm. All matches at Manohar Parrikar Indoor Stadium, Navelim ground.

GFA U-13 Division I League: Dempo SC vs Salgaocar FC, at Dempo Sports Academy ground, Ella, at 4.30 pm; Youth Club of Manora vs Geno FC, at King's School, at 4.30 pm

Benaulim Constituency Veterans Football tournament: Colva Veterans vs Benaulim Veterans, at Varca ground, at 4.30 pm

Vaidya Family Memorial Cup (2nd semi-final): Fr Agnelo Sports Youth Club, Paroda vs United Sports Club of Seraulim, Cuncolim school play ground, Cuncolim, at 4.45 pm

Priority Titans secure place in final

To clash with Desserts n More Avengers on March 9

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MARGAO: Priority Titans booked their place in the final after overcoming stiff resistance from Commonwealth Fountainheads in a thrilling second semi-final clash at Arlem Cricket ground.

Electing to bat first on a batting-friendly pitch, Priority Titans were rocked early by a fiery opening spell from Ameya Prabhudessai, who dismissed Sudin Kamat (6) and Granthik Buyao (2). Aditya Prabhugaonkar then rattled the stumps of Sahish Mahambrey (19), leaving the Titans struggling at 35-3 in the fifth over.

A crucial 54-run partnership off just 32 balls between Deval Karmali (28 off 19 balls, 2 fours, 1 six) and Samar Dubhashi (38 off 21 balls, 5 fours) steadied the innings, taking the Titans to 89-4 at the half-way mark. At this stage, the match was evenly poised. However, what followed was sheer dominance from the Titans' middle-order batsmen, who launched a brutal assault on the Fountainheads' bowlers, amassing an additional 139 runs - 65 of them coming in the final three overs.

Explosive stroke play



Aamod Talaulikar best batter, Samar Dubhashi man-of-the-match, Rajui Kakodkar best bowler with guests Ashutosh Angle, Pradip Shetye.

from Amith Kamat (15), Animesh Prabhugaonkar (35), Akshay Dalvi (20), Rajui Kakodkar (31*), and Sunil Salgaonkar (22*) completely dismantled the opposition bowling attack. The Titans finished with a formidable 228-6 in their 20 overs - the highest total of the tournament.

Ameya Prabhudessai was the pick of the bowlers, claiming 2-27, while Aditya Prabhugaonkar, Pratap Prabhugaonkar, Saish Hegde, and Amod Borkar chipped in

with a wicket each.

In response, Commonwealth Fountainheads suffered an early blow when Gaurish Shenvi Lotlikar (9) was run out in a mix-up. However, Amod Borkar (21), Aamod Talaulikar (37), and Aditya Prabhugaonkar (26) counter-attacked, steering their side to 89-2 at the 10-over drinks break - mirroring the Titans' halfway score.

Momentum swung back and forth as Laxmikant Kurade (18), Amey Ra-

jadhayax (29), and Yash Prabhugaonkar (26) kept the chase alive with aggressive batting. At 172-6 in the 16th over, the Fountainheads required 57 runs from the final 25 balls.

Prabhakar Shetye (11) and Kedar Kamat (13*) fought hard, bringing the equation down to 27 runs needed off the last two overs. However, a brilliant penultimate over from Rajui Kakodkar turned the tide, as he claimed two crucial wickets while conceding just four runs. The Fountainheads were eventually bowled out for 206, handing the Titans a hard-fought 22-run victory and a place in the final.

The final between Desserts n More Avengers and Priority Titans is set to take place at Arlem Cricket ground on March 9, at 1 pm.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

- Man-of-the-match: Samar Dubhashi
- Best batter: Aamod Talaulikar
- Best Bowler: Rajui Kakodkar

LAST CHANCE TO SAVE GOA BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE DO COME AND WATCH THIS TIATR DON'T MISS THE OPENING SCENE ONLY 1 SHOW IN NORTH 9th MAR 7:30 PM DANDO AC HALL CANDOLIM FOR TICKETS CONTACT: 9209447699, 9145000324 (PUBLIC HOLIDAY) 14th MAR 3:30 PM PAI HALL MARGAO TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE COUNTER

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