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# Current Affairs

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Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa won the Tata Steel Masters 2025



TATA STEEL CHESS TOURNAMENT

## 1. Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa won the Tata Steel Masters 2025

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa made history by winning the prestigious Tata Steel Masters 2025, securing his place among the chess elite. He showcased incredible skill and composure, defeating some of the world's best players to claim the title. The victory added another significant achievement to his already impressive career, which has seen him rise rapidly in global rankings. Praggnanandhaa's triumph was a testament to his resilience, focus, and deep understanding of the game. The win also highlighted his potential to be a major force in the world of chess for years to come.



### Foot notes:

- **Thrilling Tiebreak Victory:** Praggnanandhaa secured the title after a thrilling tiebreak against World Champion Gukesh, showcasing his composure under pressure.
- **Consistent Performance:** Throughout the tournament, Praggnanandhaa delivered a strong and consistent performance, including crucial three-game winning streaks twice during the competition.
- **Tough Competition:** He navigated a challenging field of world-class players, ultimately emerging victorious in the blitz tiebreak to claim the title.
- **Major Career Milestone:** This win marks a significant milestone in Praggnanandhaa's career, reinforcing his status as one of the brightest talents in chess.

- **Global Recognition:** Praggnanandhaa's victory serves as a statement of his growing dominance on the global chess stage, earning him recognition among chess enthusiasts worldwide.

## 2. Sri Lanka records highest deflation in 65 years

In January 2025, Sri Lanka experienced a 4.0% decline in consumer prices, marking its highest deflation rate since July 1960. This significant deflation reflects a decrease in the overall price level of goods and services in the country. While deflation can increase consumers' purchasing power, prolonged periods may lead to reduced economic activity, as consumers might delay purchases in anticipation of further price declines. Economists will be closely monitoring this trend to assess its potential impact on Sri Lanka's economic recovery and to determine if policy interventions are necessary to prevent potential negative effects associated with sustained deflation.



### Foot notes:

- **Historic Deflation Rate:** Sri Lanka has recorded its highest deflation rate in 65 years, with a significant decrease in the Colombo Consumer Price Index (CCPI).
- **Annual Deflation Rate:** The country's annual deflation rate stood at -1.6% in January, marking a substantial decline in prices.
- **Monthly Deflation Rate:** The monthly deflation rate was recorded at -0.5% in January, indicating a steady decrease in prices over the past month.
- **Economic Impact:** This record deflation is expected to have a significant impact on Sri Lanka's economy, which has been facing challenges such as high inflation and currency devaluation.
- **Positive Sign for Economy:** However, this deflationary trend can be seen as a positive sign for the economy, as it may indicate a decrease in the cost of living and an increase in purchasing power for consumers.

## 3. Andhra Pradesh Launches 'Mana Mitra', India's First WhatsApp-Based Governance Platform for Digital Public Services

In a pioneering move, the Andhra Pradesh government has launched 'Mana Mitra', India's first WhatsApp-based governance platform, aiming to make public services more accessible to its citizens. As of its initial phase, the platform offers 161 services across six key categories: electricity bill payments, revenue services, municipal services, grievance redressal, temple darshan/seva bookings, and bus ticket reservations. Citizens can access these services by sending a 'Hi' to the official WhatsApp



number: 95523 00009. The initiative, developed in collaboration with Meta, reflects the state's commitment to digital inclusivity and streamlined service delivery.

**Foot notes:**

- **Transformative Governance:** Andhra Pradesh has launched 'Mana Mitra', India's first WhatsApp-based governance platform, providing citizens with easy access to digital public services.
- **161 Digital Services:** The platform offers an impressive 161 digital services, making it convenient for citizens to access essential services without having to physically visit government offices.
- **Enhancing Citizen Convenience:** 'Mana Mitra' aims to enhance citizen convenience and experience by providing a secure, transparent, and accessible way to access government services.
- **IT Minister Nara Lokesh's Initiative:** The initiative was launched by IT Minister Nara Lokesh, marking a significant step towards digital governance in Andhra Pradesh.
- **New Standard for Public Service Delivery:** By leveraging WhatsApp, the state government is setting a new standard for convenience and security in public service delivery, making it a model for other states to follow

#### 4. Bengaluru Warriors won the first World Pickleball League title

The Bengaluru Jawans clinched the inaugural World Pickleball League title by defeating Pune United 3-1 in the final held in Mumbai. The match began with Jack Foster's commanding 26-8 victory in men's singles, setting a strong foundation for the team. Following this, the women's doubles pair, Trang Hyunh-McClain and Alejandra Borobia, secured a 13-9 win, furthering their lead. Although Pune United's William Sobek and Vanshik Kapadia managed a 15-6 win in men's doubles, Bengaluru's Katerina Stewart sealed the championship with a decisive 21-9 triumph over Brooke Revuelta in women's singles. Reflecting on the victory, Stewart expressed her gratitude and disbelief, highlighting the intense and memorable experience of the tournament.



**Foot notes:**

- **Championship Win:** Bengaluru Jawans made history by defeating Pune United 3-1 to become the champions of the inaugural World Pickleball League.
- **Dominant Performance:** The team's dominant performance was led by Jack Foster's 26-8 win in men's singles, followed by Trang Hyunh-McClain and Alejandra Borobia's 13-9 victory in women's doubles.



- **Katerina Stewart's Winning Moment:** Katerina Stewart sealed Bengaluru's championship with a decisive 21-9 win over Brooke Revuelta in the women's singles.
- **Player of the League:** Katerina Stewart was also named the Player of the League, recognizing her outstanding performance throughout the tournament.
- **India's First Franchise-Based Pickleball League:** The World Pickleball League is India's first franchise-based pickleball league, marking a significant milestone in the sport's growth in the country.

### 5. Tejas Shirse Won Silver, Sets National Record in 60m Hurdles at European Outdoor Championships

Indian hurdler Tejas Shirse delivered an outstanding performance at the Meeting Miramas Métropole in France, securing a silver medal in the men's 60-meter hurdles. He clocked a time of 7.64 seconds, setting a new national record and surpassing his previous best of 7.65 seconds. The gold medal was claimed by Spain's Enrique Llopis, who finished in 7.54 seconds, while France's Wilhem Belocian took bronze with a time of 7.67 seconds. This achievement marks the second time this year that Shirse has broken the national record in this event, underscoring his rapid progression and prominence in Indian athletics.



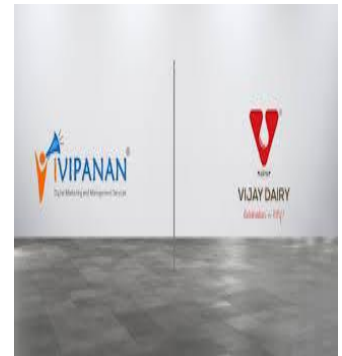
#### Foot notes:

- **Silver Medal and National Record:** Tejas Shirse won a silver medal in the 60m hurdles event at the European Outdoor Championships, setting a new national record with a time of 7.64 seconds.
- **Improving Performance:** This is Tejas' third indoor meet of the season, and he's consistently improving his performance. He earlier clocked 7.70 seconds in the heats, securing a spot in the final.
- **International Competition:** Tejas competed against top athletes from around the world, including Enrique Llopis of Spain, who won the gold medal with a time of 7.54 seconds.
- **National Pride:** Tejas' achievement is a proud moment for India, as he breaks his own national record and brings home a silver medal from a prestigious international competition.
- **Future Prospects:** With this impressive performance, Tejas will be aiming to qualify for the Indoor World Championships and continue making India proud in the world of athletics.

### 6. Vijay Dairy awards Digital Mandate to iVIPANAN

Vijay Dairy, a renowned dairy and sweets brand in Gujarat with over 50 years of legacy, has appointed iVIPANAN Digital Marketing Services to enhance its digital footprint. This partnership encompasses comprehensive digital brand building, including search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, and full-stack marketing strategies aimed at boosting customer engagement and attracting new clientele.

**Foot notes:**



- **Digital Transformation:** Vijay Dairy, a leading dairy brand, has awarded its digital mandate to iVIPANAN, a digital marketing agency, to enhance its online presence and engagement.
- **Comprehensive Digital Strategy:** iVIPANAN will develop a comprehensive digital strategy for Vijay Dairy, encompassing social media, content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and paid advertising.
- **Brand Revitalization:** The partnership aims to revitalize the Vijay Dairy brand, increasing its online visibility, and connecting with customers more effectively through digital channels.
- **Data-Driven Approach:** iVIPANAN will employ a data-driven approach to understand consumer behavior, preferences, and needs, enabling Vijay Dairy to make informed decisions and optimize its digital marketing efforts.
- **Enhancing Customer Engagement:** The ultimate goal of this partnership is to enhance customer engagement, drive brand loyalty, and contribute to Vijay Dairy's business growth through effective digital marketing strategies.

**7. H Shankar appointed as MD of Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited**

The Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) has recommended H. Shankar for the position of Managing Director (MD) at Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL). Currently serving as Director (Technical) and holding additional charge as MD since July 16, 2024, Shankar's appointment is pending requisite clearances and approval from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). Upon approval, he will officially assume the role of MD until his retirement on March 31, 2029. Shankar brings over three decades of experience in refinery operations, project management, and strategic planning.



**Foot notes:**

- **Appointment and Selection:** H Shankar has been selected by the Public Enterprise Selection Board (PESB) for the post of Managing Director, Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL).
- **Background and Experience:** Shankar is a Mechanical Engineer and MBA in General Management, with over three decades of experience in refinery operations, project management, and leadership.
- **Current Role:** Prior to his appointment, Shankar was serving as Director (Technical) with additional charge of Managing Director, CPCL.
- **Future Responsibilities:** As the new MD, Shankar will be responsible for leading the organization and driving its growth, subject to requisite clearances and approval from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).
- **CPCL Overview:** Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL) is a leading oil and gas company in India, with a rich history dating back to 1965, and is a subsidiary of Indian Oil Corporation Limited.

### 8. Monks India appoints Ketan Desai as Managing Director

Monks India, the operating brand of S4 Capital in India, has appointed Ketan Desai as its new Managing Director, effective February 3, 2025. Desai brings over 20 years of agency leadership experience, most recently serving as Chief Operating Officer at WPP's Grey Group India. In his new role, he will report to Kenny Griffiths, Managing Director for the Asia-Pacific region at Monks. Kenny Griffiths expressed enthusiasm about Desai's appointment, stating, "His extensive strategic experience in connecting India's local strengths with global scale will accelerate plans to grow our India business and deliver on our model that helps clients navigate complexity and transforms the economics of marketing."



#### Foot notes:

- **Leadership Appointment:** Monks India, a leading marketing and advertising agency, has appointed Ketan Desai as its new Managing Director, effective immediately.
- **Experience and Expertise:** Desai brings over two decades of experience in marketing, advertising, and media, having worked with prominent agencies and brands in India and globally.
- **Growth and Expansion:** As Managing Director, Desai will be responsible for driving Monks India's growth and expansion, developing strategic plans, and leading the team to deliver innovative marketing solutions.

- **Industry Recognition:** Desai's appointment is seen as a significant move in the Indian advertising industry, given his reputation for delivering results-driven campaigns and his expertise in digital marketing.
- **Monks India's Vision:** Under Desai's leadership, Monks India aims to strengthen its position as a leading marketing agency, providing cutting-edge solutions to clients and driving business growth through innovative marketing strategies.

### **9. Sanjay Mehrishi appointed as Joint Secretary, National Health Authority**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has appointed Sanjay Mehrishi, a 1991-batch officer from the Indian Ordnance Factories Service (IOFS), as Joint Secretary of the National Health Authority (NHA) under the Department of Health & Family Welfare. His tenure will extend until his superannuation on June 30, 2027. This appointment is part of a broader bureaucratic reshuffle, with 17 senior officials being assigned to Joint Secretary-level positions across various departments. The National Health Authority is responsible for implementing the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY), aiming to provide health coverage to economically vulnerable populations in India. Mehrishi's extensive experience in public service is anticipated to contribute significantly to the NHA's mission of enhancing healthcare accessibility and quality across the nation.



#### **Foot notes:**

- **New Role:** Sanjay Mehrishi has been appointed as Joint Secretary, National Health Authority (NHA), under the Department of Health & Family Welfare.
- **Tenure:** Mehrishi's tenure will be until his superannuation on June 30, 2027, or until further orders.
- **Background:** He is a 1991 batch Indian Ordnance Factories Service (IOFS) officer.
- **Reshuffle:** Mehrishi's appointment is part of a major Joint Secretary-level reshuffle, where 17 officers were assigned new roles in various ministries and departments.
- **Responsibilities:** As Joint Secretary, Mehrishi will play a crucial role in shaping the country's health policies and programs, working closely with other officials and stakeholders in the National Health Authority.

### **10. Former CEC Navin Chawla passed away**

Former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Navin Chawla passed away on February 1, 2025, at the age of 79, in New Delhi. He had been undergoing treatment at Apollo



Hospital following brain surgery. During his tenure, he implemented significant electoral reforms, notably enabling third-gender voters to register under the "Other" category, thereby promoting inclusivity in the electoral process. Prior to his role as CEC, Chawla was a member of the Indian Administrative Service and held various positions in the government. He was also an author, known for his biography of Mother Teresa. His tenure was not without controversy; in early 2009, then CEC N. Gopalaswami recommended his removal from the Election Commission, citing allegations of partisanship.



**Foot notes:**

- **Passing Away:** Former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Navin Chawla passed away, leaving behind a legacy of contributions to India's electoral landscape.
- **Tenure as CEC:** Chawla served as the 16th Chief Election Commissioner of India from April 2009 to July 2010, playing a crucial role in conducting free and fair elections.
- **Election Reforms:** During his tenure, Chawla implemented several electoral reforms, including the introduction of photo electoral rolls and the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).
- **Author and Scholar:** Apart from his distinguished career as a civil servant, Chawla was also a prolific author and scholar, writing extensively on electoral reforms and democratic processes.
- **Tributes and Condolences:** Chawla's passing has been met with tributes and condolences from across the political spectrum, with many leaders and officials remembering his contributions to India's electoral system.



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