

## Serena Williams wins Australian Open Women's title



Serena Williams pushed sentiments aside in an emotion-charged 6-4 6-4 defeat of sister Venus to win the Australian Open on Saturday and a record 23rd grand slam title in the professional era.

- The American's seventh title at Melbourne Park was won with an aggressive charge to the net and a desperate defensive backhand from Venus that floated into the tramlines.
- Williams slumped to the ground, with hands in the air and eyes wide with joyous disbelief, before congratulating her sister for inspiring her run in Melbourne.
- The win moved her past Steffi Graf on the list of all-time slam winners and she now sits just one shy of Margaret Court's long-standing record of 24.
- In the ultimate throwback tournament, Serena met her sister on the same Rod Laver Arena court where 14 years before she had edged her in three sets to claim her first Melbourne Park crown.
- Eight years had passed since their last grand slam decider at Wimbledon in 2009, and their combined ages in Melbourne added up to the 'oldest' major final ever contested.

## India to soon flag off Antyodaya Express



Catering to the growing requirement of general passengers, Railways will introduce Antodaya superfast trains, a special service with many facilities for unreserved category, in the high demand routes.

- Antodaya Express will be a fully unreserved service for general class passengers and run in the high density routes, a senior Railway Ministry official said.
- Provided with bio-toilets for zero discharge of effluents, Antodaya coaches will have toilet occupation indication lights provided at each end near the doorway with better visibility from compartments.
- Besides there will be cushioned seats, LED lights in the coach with aluminium composite panels interior for aesthetic look. The official said the new Antodaya service was budget commitment.

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- Earlier Humsafar Express, a fully 3AC service, also part of the budget announcement, was launched for Gorakhpur to New Delhi. After Antodaya, Railways will launch Tejas Express, another special service in reserved class, which will be operational this year.

### **India Post Receives payment banks licence to start services**



India Post has received payments bank licence from the Reserve Bank of India to start rollout of banking operations commercially under the permit.

- India Post has received payments bank licence. The service will be launched as per schedule.
- India Post Payments Bank is the third entity to receive payments bank permit after Bharti Airtel and Paytm.
- Payments banks can accept deposits up to Rs 1 lakh per account from individuals and small businesses.
- The new model of banking allows mobile firms, supermarket chains and others to cater to banking requirements of individuals and small businesses.
- It will be set up as a differentiated bank and will confine its activities to acceptance of demand deposits, remittance services, Internet banking and other specified services.
- In 2015, RBI had granted 'in-principle' approval to 11 entities, including Department of Posts, to set up payments banks and proposed to give such licences 'on tap' basis in future.

### **UID Begins on BHIM App**



The government has enabled the Bharat Interface for Mobile (BHIM) app with Aadhaar seeking to accelerate the drive toward digital-money transactions in the country.

- Aadhaar Pay service will enable people to make and receive payments using their Aadhaar number and the biometric technology.
- 14 banks have come on board for Aadhaar Pay and the government is in talks with other banks too, Minister for Electronics and IT.

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- Aadhaar has already given unique numbers to 1.11 billion people in the country, and about 390 million bank accounts are linked to the 12-digit Aadhaar number.
- Prasad said that about 20 million people are linking their bank accounts with Aadhaar every month.

### **HDFC launches first humanoid 'Ira' in Mumbai**



HDFC Bank has deployed an interactive humanoid at its Kamala Mills branch in Mumbai.

- Intelligent Robotic Assistant is developed in partnership with Kochi-based startup Asimov Robotics.
- IRA will be used for customer service.
- HDFC has become the first bank in the country to deploy humanoid for customer service.
- Developed using robotics and artificial intelligence technology, IRA will be initially positioned near the bank's welcome desk where it will display the services, greet customers and guide them to the counters - cash deposit, foreign exchange, loans etc.
- In phase-II, IRA's capabilities will be enhanced by introducing features like voice/face recognition for customer identification, voice-guided navigation, balance enquiry and cheque deposit.

### **ONGC to invest Rs. 78,000 crore in KG Basin**



Oil and Natural Gas Corp. Ltd (ONGC) will invest Rs 78,000 crore in the Krishna Godavari basin for producing hydrocarbons and has signed an agreement with the Andhra Pradesh government.

- ONGC has been pursuing exploration in the basin and had last March announced a \$5 billion (Rs34,000 crore) investment over the next three years in two of its fields.
- The investment figure announced on Saturday is for the entire basin.
- ONGC sees Andhra Pradesh as a hydrocarbon rich state.

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- ONGC is very aggressively pursuing to put the huge gas reserves it has discovered in KG basin, to production.
- It plans to invest about Rs10,000 crore for exploration and production activities in onland blocks and about Rs 68,000 crore in offshore assets in the KG Basin.

### World T20 for the Blind to begin in India from Jan 30



The opening T20 World Cup Cricket for the blind will start from Monday with two matches slated in Delhi when India takes on Bangladesh and New Zealand with Pakistan.

- For the first time, the World Cup matches will take place in multiple cities across India.
- Ten teams, including hosts India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, South Africa, Australia and England, will fight it out for the title.
- The matches will be played in twelve venues, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Indore and Bhubaneswar.
- A seventeen member squad led by Ajay Kumar Reddy will represent India in the mega-event.
- Former Indian blind cricket team captain Shekhar Naik yesterday released the Blind Anthem for T20 World Cup in New Delhi.

### India's first dedicated space observatory ASTROSAT catches Vampire Star at work



India's first dedicated space observatory, Astrosat, has captured a small, 6-billion-year-old "vampire" star "preying" on a bigger celestial body.

- Scientists say the smaller star, also called a "blue straggler", feeds off its companion star by sucking out its mass and energy, causing its eventual death.
- This discovery also highlights the capabilities of the telescopes on Astrosat, a dedicated space observatory satellite launched in September 2015.
- The study was recently published in Astrophysical Journal Letters by a team of scientists from IIA, Inter-University Centre of Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA).

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- Scientists are now looking to understand the chemical composition of the ‘blue straggler’ using high resolution spectroscopy, which could reveal more about the evolution of these peculiar celestial objects.



### **On This Day**



On 29 January 1886, the first successful gasoline powered car was patented by Karl Benz in Karlsruhe, Germany. Karl Friedrich Benz was a German engine designer and automobile engineer. His Benz Patent Motorcar from 1885 is considered the first practical motorcar.

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