

Venus Williams becomes oldest Grand Slam Semi-finalist in Australian Open



Venus Williams continued her astonishing late-career revival by felling Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-4 7-6(3) on Tuesday to reach her first Australian Open semi-final in 14 years.

The quarter-final will hardly be remembered as a classic, with both Williams and the 24th-ranked Russian surrendering serve with alarming regularity despite perfect conditions for tennis at Rod Laver Arena.

- In the end it was 36-year-old Williams's experience that proved decisive when the pressure rose, and Pavlyuchenkova crumbled with a double-fault on match point to boost the American's hopes of a maiden title at Melbourne Park.
- A semi-finalist at Wimbledon last year, Williams last reached the last four in Melbourne in 2003 when she made a run to the final and was beaten by younger sister Serena in three sets.
- The 13th seed will next play the winner of Coco Vandeweghe and Garbine Muguruza for a place in the final, with the mouthwatering prospect of battling Serena for the title if the world number two can get there as well.

Trump withdraws USA from TPP



President Donald Trump today formally pulled the US out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership as he signed an executive action to withdraw from the negotiating process of the 12-nation trade deal, one of the major international trade initiatives of his predecessor Barack Obama.

Trump had vowed during the campaign to withdraw the US from the Pacific trade deal which he argued was harmful to American workers and manufacturing.

- Trump had said the free trade agreements were lopsided against the US and vowed to implement more protectionist trade policies as president, rallying voters to the polls with his "America First" slogan.
- The TPP was negotiated under former President Barack Obama, but never ratified by Congress, so withdrawing from it will not have an immediate, real effect on US economic policies, although it does signal a new and very different US outlook on trade under Trump.

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Cabinet approves a New Scheme for promotion of Rural Housing in the country



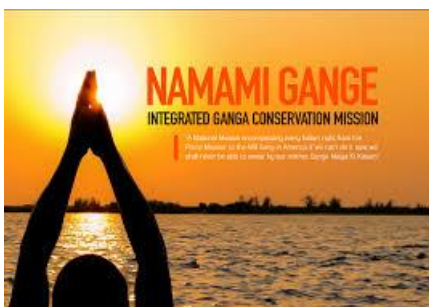
The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved a new scheme for promotion of Rural Housing in the country.

The Government would provide interest subsidy under the scheme.

Interest subsidy would be available to every rural household who is not covered under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Grameen), PMAY(G).

- The scheme would enable people in rural areas to construct new houses or add to their existing pucca houses to improve their dwelling units.
- The beneficiary who takes a loan under the scheme would be provided interest subsidy for loan amount upto Rs. 2 Lakhs.
- National Housing Bank would implement the scheme.
- The Government would provide net present value of the interest subsidy of 3 percent to the National Housing Bank upfront which will, in turn, pass it to the Primary Lending Institutions (Scheduled Commercial Banks, NBFCs etc.).
- As a result the equated monthly installment (EMI) for the beneficiary would be reduced.
- Under the scheme, the Government would also take necessary steps for proper convergence with PMAY-G including technical support to beneficiary through existing arrangements.
- The new scheme is expected to improve housing stock in the rural areas, as well as create employment opportunities in rural housing sector.

Uma Bharti calls for active involvement of NPCC in Namami Gange Programme, inaugurates new office complex of the company in Gurugram



Union Minister of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Sushri Uma Bharti has called for active involvement of NPCC into Namami Gange programme.

Inaugurating the new office complex of National Projects Construction Corporation Limited (NPCC) in Gurugram today the Minister said that our government wants to strengthen PSUs. She

said “There was a proposal for the merger of NPCC. But we were not in its favour because we believe in strengthening every PSU”.

- The Minister said her Ministry is committed to ensure purity and unrestricted flow of Ganga. She said under Namami Gange programme it will be ensured that waste from the cities does not flow into Ganga and sufficient number of sewage treatment plants are installed. At the same time, the Minister said that people should come forward for

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- the construction of Ghats and repair of stairs at Ganga. She said saints and religious leader should also come forward for this.
- Complimenting NPCC, Dr Amarjeet Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources said that company successfully carried out projects in such far flung areas where no one dares to enter. He said so far the quality of work of NPCC has been excellent and hoped that this will increase in the years to come.
 - Earlier welcoming the dignitaries CMD, NPCC Shri HL Chaudhary briefly narrated the achievements of the corporation and stated that during the year 2016, the Institute of Economic Studies felicitated the corporation with Excellence Award, keeping in view the achievements gained by the corporation during last 4-5 years. He said all this could be achieved only due to collective efforts of the employees of the Corporation, cooperation of shareholders, clients and stake holders.
 - NPCC was established on January 09, 1957 as a premier construction company to create necessary infrastructure for economic development of the country in the core sectors of irrigation and water resources, power and heavy industries under Ministry Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. NPCC comply with quality management requirements of ISO 9001-2008 for execution of civil works for Thermal & Hydro Electric Projects’, River valley projects, Industrial structures, Project Management consultancy services for buildings, Housings, Roads, Bridges and Infrastructure projects. The corporation is making profit for the last five years and now has a positive net worth. NPCC is gearing up to achieve greater heights for “Mini Ratna” status. The corporation has also been awarded credit rating as A+ company by ICRA.
 - During the year 2015-16, company has secured new works valuing Rs.1510 crore against the target of Rs.1500 crore. During the year NPCC has achieved turnover of Rs.1002 crore. Company has earned the profit before tax of Rs. 21.10 crore as against Rs.12.89 crore in previous year and Profit after tax is Rs.10.81crore. During the year, Company has paid a dividend of Rs.11/- per equity share

‘BHARAT PARV’ being Organized at Red Fort from 26th to 31st January 2017



Bharat.

The “Bharat Parv” event is being organized by the Government of India at the Red Fort, Delhi from 26th to 31st January 2017, as part of the Republic Day 2017 Celebrations. The prime objective of organizing the event is to generate a patriotic mood, promote the rich cultural diversity of the country, to ensure wider participation of the general public and to popularise the idea of Ek Bharat Shreshtha

- The Ministry of Tourism has been designated as the nodal Ministry for the event, the highlights of which include display of the Republic Day Parade Tableaux, Performances by the Armed Forces Bands (static and moving), a Multi-Cuisine Food Court, Crafts Mela, Cultural Performances from different regions of the country and a Photo Exhibition by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.
- The Cultural Performances include choreographed Folk / Tribal Dances and Music from across the country arranged through the North Zonal Cultural Centre as well as

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performances by cultural troupes from the different States/ UTs of the country. The Food Court will have 50 stalls set up by the States / UTs, National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) showcasing food from different regions as well as by the Institutes of Hotel Management and ITDC. The Crafts Mela with 50 stalls will showcase the diverse handicrafts of the country, arranged by the State Governments and Ministry of Textiles through the Office of the Development Commissioner of Handicrafts. There will be 11 Theme State Pavilions where each State would showcase their achievements and initiatives, tourism products and destinations, etc. The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting is also setting up a Photo Exhibition on the theme “Mera Desh Badal Raha Hai, Aage Badh Raha Hai”. The big attraction of the event are the Republic Day Parade Tableaux which will be stationed at the venue for the duration of the event.

- The Bharat Parv Event will be inaugurated at 5:00 p.m. on 26th January 2017 and will be open to the public from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on 26th January 2017 and from 12 noon to 9 p.m. from 27th to 31st January 2017. The Event is open to the public and entry is free. However, identity proof is necessary for entry.

NCPCR Organises Short Film, Photograph and Poster Competition for Promotion of Child Rights in the Country

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is organising an All India Short Film, Still Photograph and Poster Competition for promoting child rights in the country.



The Commission has invited entries from film makers, producers, artists and individuals who are Indian citizens of above 18 years of age. There is no entry fee for this competition. Entries for short films can be in any language with sub-titles in Hindi or in English.

- Detailed Terms and Conditions for the competitions are available at NCPCR website www.ncpcr.gov.in and the last date for receiving entries is February 13, 2017.
- There are first, second and third prizes for each category of competitions. The first prize for short films is One Lakh Rupees and second & third prize are Rs. 75,000 & Rs. 50,000 respectively. The winners of all categories will be awarded at a function on the Foundation Day celebrations of the Commission in New Delhi, on 5th March, 2017.
- This is the first time that the Child Rights body is organizing such a competition after it came into existence in the year 2007.

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National Girl Child Day 2017 observed across India



The National Girl Child Day was observed across the country on 24 January 2017.

On the occasion, the Union Ministry of Women & Child Development threw the light on the exemplary achievements by nation's daughters during 2016.

The theme of this year National Girl Child Day was *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*.

- The Ministry also applauded the performance of females at the Olympics and Paralympics. It also highlighted the historic induction of the first female fighter pilots into the Indian Air Force.
- The event was attended by Avani Chaturvedi (Women Fighter Pilot), Arunima Sinha (First women amputee to climb Mount Everest), Deepa Malik (Silver medalist at Rio Paralympics 2016) and Shanno (Editor, *Badhte Kadam*).
- The occasion was also marked by the release of *The National Plan of Action for Children 2016*. The Ministry also felicitated 10 districts under the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme for their exemplary performance.

Israel approved building permits for 566 settler homes in East Jerusalem



Israel on 22 January 2017 approved building permits for 566 settler homes in annexed east Jerusalem. Israel conquered the region from Palestine in 1967 and was effectively annexed by Israel in 1980.

As per the plan, the new permits are for homes in the settlement neighbourhoods of Ramot, Pisgat Zeev and Ramat Shlomo.

Meir Turjeman, the deputy mayor for the city, said, the plans was postponed until the US President Donald Trump took office. Turjeman also heads the planning committee that approved them.

- Turjeman said the rules of the game have changed with Donald Trump's arrival as president because Trump has pledged strong support for Israel. During his election campaign, Trump vowed to recognise Jerusalem as the country's capital despite the city's contested status.
- As per reports, Turjenam informed that the plan was approved by the city officials but it was postponed at the request of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. PM Netanyahu requested to postpone the plan in the wake of a UN Security Council resolution in December against Israeli settlement building.
- Besides, plans for some 11000 other homes were also in process in east Jerusalem. Though, the time when the plan will be moved forward was not informed.
- The approval of the plan has drawn condemnation from Palestinian leaders.

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