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Ministers Begin 2-Day Strategic Leadership Retreat at IIM Kozhikode



As Preferred Source Kozhikode: Kerala Chief Minister V D Satheesan and his 20-member council of ministers on Friday began a two-day residential leadership retreat at IIM Kozhikode to chart a new vision for the state. The programme, titled 'Reimagining Kerala', brings together the state's political leadership, IIM Kozhikode faculty and international experts to discuss issues that will shape the state's future. Speaking to reporters, Industries Minister P K Kunhalikutty said this was his second such programme, recalling that a similar initiative was organised during the Oommen Chandy government in 2011.

He said the programme would help improve coordination among ministers and provide an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences. "Our agenda here today is that of sharing knowledge and sharing experience. Everyone here has a decent amount of experience themselves. It is meant for mutual sharing. That is how the agenda has been set as well," he said. Kunhalikutty said the ministers would also learn management skills and explore the use of artificial intelligence and advanced technology in governance.

"How can technology be used to bring a change in people's lives? That is the subject. They will give us more theoretical knowledge, and we will share practical insights with them. By sharing mutually, that will be used to bring forth a new vision and new beginnings," he said. He said that although a majority of the ministers in the UDF government were first-time ministers, they had experience in public service. "This will be a new experience for all of them," he said.

Labour Minister Bindhu Krishna shared a video on Facebook showing her travelling with other ministers to Kozhikode to attend the programme. IIM Kozhikode said the programme was conceptualised by its Director Prof Debashish Chatterjee and faculty members. "The retreat brings together Kerala's political leadership, IIMK faculty and distinguished international scholars for a forward-looking dialogue on the forces that will shape the state's future," the institute said.

In a statement, Chatterjee said 'Reimagining Kerala' was an invitation to step back from the urgency of day-to-day administration and reflect on the larger forces shaping the state's future. "From artificial intelligence and demographic change to climate vulnerability, migration, public health, fiscal pressures and the future of work, the challenges before us call for foresight, evidence and shared strategic thinking," he said. "This is not a classroom programme or an evaluation exercise, but a space for candid dialogue among peers-where practitioners and scholars can exchange perspectives and explore pathways towards a more resilient, inclusive and future-ready Kerala," he added. The 2026 retreat brings together faculty and experts from Keio University in Japan and King's College London. Sessions will focus on transformational leadership, behavioural science, climate resilience, healthcare and ageing, the economy, employment, entrepreneurship, higher education and Kerala's global positioning, IIM Kozhikode said.

US Open 2026: Sabalenka Storms into Third Round as Pegula, Medvedev Advance

New York: Aryna Sabalenka took the next step on the road to a rare US Open three-peat, routing qualifier Polina Iatcenko 6-1, 6-1 to join a raft of contenders cruising into the third round on Wednesday. Men's defending champion Carlos Alcaraz was seeking to join them when he took on Portugal's Jaime Faria in the nightcap on Arthur Ashe Stadium. Alcaraz won his seventh major title at the Australian Open in January but arrived in New York an unknown quantity after a wrist injury forced a four-month layoff that saw him miss Roland Garros and Wimbledon.

He dispelled doubts with a straight-sets first-round victory over Roman Safiullin and will look for further improvement against 72nd-ranked Faria. World number one Sabalenka, without a title since her impressive Indian Wells-Miami double in March was in attack mode as she overpowered 160th-ranked Russian qualifier Iatcenko in just 53 minutes. The Belarusian star belted 24 winners, showcasing not only her power from the baseline but also an effective touch at the net. She dropped just four points on serve in the opening set and was broken just once to give Iatcenko her only game of the second set. Sabalenka responded by winning the next three to secure the win. "Happy with the level I played today, happy with the focus," said Sabalenka, who will face Uzbekistan's Kamilla Rakhimova for place in the round of 16. Jessica Pegula and former champion Daniil Medvedev also raced into the third round.

World number three Pegula needed just 56 minutes to trounce Sofia Kenin, the former Australian Open champion now ranked 110th, 6-3, 6-1. Seventh-seeded Medvedev downed US wild card Sebastian Gorzny 6-1, 6-3, 7-5. Pegula, who is among a trio of players who could supplant Sabalenka atop the world rankings in New York, dropped just seven points on serve. "I was just trying to stay focused on what I needed to do," said the 2024 US Open runner-up, who next meets another former finalist in Canadian Leylah Fernandez - a 6-4, 6-1 winner over Thailand's Mananchaya Sawangkaew 6-4, 6-1 Medvedev, who has struggled in the hard court build-up to the year's final Grand Slam, dominated 731st-ranked Gorzny. He fired 14 aces and saved the lone break point he faced, although he was distracted briefly when a pair of small birds perched on the Louis Armstrong Stadium net and he was forced to replay a point he thought he'd won. "I saw them straight away and I thought the point would stop straight away and we didn't," Medvedev said. "And the moment I hit the winner we stop. I was not happy with the decision." Battle to the end Eighth-seeded Ben Shelton prevailed in a tense battle with former world number six Hubert Hurkacz 6-3, 5-7, 7-6 (7/3), 7-5. "I thought it was a battle to the end," Shelton said. "I thought Hubi played fantastic today." American 11th seed Frances Tiafoe was also in action. But another American tipped as a contender -- in-form 16th-seed Brandon Nakashima -- bowed out, upset by 46th-ranked compatriot Alex Michelsen 6-3, 6-4, 6-4. Outside the covered confines of Ashe and the Louis Armstrong Stadium, rain again disrupted play. Sixth-seeded Australian Alex de Minaur finally got his campaign underway in a match postponed from Tuesday but had to wait out another mid-match rain delay on the way to a 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 first-round victory over Italian Andrea Guerrieri. Lucky loser Bu Yunchaokete of China pulled off a first-round upset, toppling 12th-seeded Spaniard Rafael Jodar 6-2, 6-1, 6-1.

Two Trapped Tunnel Workers Rescued 10 Days After Floods

Kathmandu: Two men have been rescued alive from a tunnel at the Trishuli 3A hydropower project 10 days after the Bhotekohi flash floods disaster. They have been identified as Kabir Maharjan, 45, and Sanjay Sah, 30. Maharjan was working as a mechanical supervisor on the project, while Shah was a foreman, according to the Public Relations Directorate of the Nepal Army. The Nepal Army-led security command has been engaged in the search and rescue operation using specialised equipment.

The rescue followed an earlier breakthrough in which rescuers heard voices from inside the tunnel and established communication with people believed to be trapped there, the Kathmandu Post newspaper reported. The Nepali Army and Armed Police Force intensified efforts to reach them after the voices were heard. The death toll in Nepal due to the flash floods rose to 1,282 on Friday. The flash floods, triggered by an ice-rock avalanche near the Nepal-Tibet border on August 26, devastated towns and villages in northern and central Nepal, leaving a trail of destruction. So far, 359 bodies have been recovered in Chitwan, 218 in Nawalparasi East, 208 in Nawalparasi West, 185 in Nuwakot, 72 in Gorkha, 60 in Dhading, 140 in Rasuwa and 38 in Tanahu, according to Nepal Police. With two people dying while undergoing treatment in two hospitals in Kathmandu, the death toll has reached 1,282.



Ajith Thanks TN CM Joseph Vijay for Olympic City and Motorsports Infrastructure

Actor Ajith Kumar thanked Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay for announcing plans to develop a motorsports city. He said, "I thank the Honourable Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and the Tamil Nadu State Government for encouraging youngsters in sports, identifying their talent, and providing opportunities through these initiatives, which give much-needed attention to infrastructure development." He added, "Currently being involved in motorsports, I would like to rephrase a quote by astronaut Neil Armstrong: 'One small step by the Tamil Nadu government, one giant leap for motorsports in India!' Wishing the Honourable Chief Minister Thiru C. Joseph Vijay Avl the very best in all his endeavors. May all the new sports endeavors by the Tamil Nadu Government triumph." The Chief Minister announced in the Assembly on Thursday that his government will establish a world-class Tamil Nadu Olympic City in Chennai. The Olympic City will be developed by the Tamil Nadu Sports Development Authority and will feature world-class sports arenas, state-of-the-art sporting equipment, a High-Performance Training Centre, and dedicated Sports Science and Sports Medicine centres.



Rohit Playing Superbly, No Reason To Question His Place in Side: BCCI Secretary

Mumbai: BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia on Thursday strongly defended Rohit Sharma amid speculation over the former India skipper's future in the ODI team, saying the veteran batter has been "playing superbly" and there is no reason to question his place in the side. Rohit, who now plays only one format after retiring from Test cricket last year and T20Is in 2024, has faced constant scrutiny over his position in the Indian ODI side.

"He is playing superbly in all matches. So what more do you want? In the last match (against England), he scored 138 runs, so why is there speculation? I do not want to give some fodder for the speculators," Saikia told reporters after the BCCI's review meeting here. Saikia said there was no discussion on the extension of chief selector Ajit Agarkar's contract, with the chairman of selectors unable to attend the review meeting.

The meeting was attended by Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill, T20I skipper Shreyas Iyer, head coach Gautam Gambhir and the director of cricket at the Centre of Excellence (COE), VVS Laxman. "Today he (Agarkar) was out of station, he could not be a part of the meeting because this meeting was called at a very short notice. Our head of the selection committee, Ajit, was not in town, so he could not join it. He was in such an area that he could not join online also, in spite of our best efforts," Saikia said of Agarkar's absence.

Asked if there was any discussion on extension for Agarkar as chairman of selectors, Saikia replied, "There was no such discussion in today's meeting." Saikia also quashed rumours surrounding Laxman's appointment as the BCCI's director of cricket. "I do not comment on new rumours. We did not have any such kind of discussion, (and) neither do we have such (an) intention," he said. Saikia said the BCCI would step in to provide the "best facilities" to the Indian men's and women's teams bound for the Asian Games later this month if the situation arises.

"There is no such issue which we have discussed or which was in our agenda today or prior to today," he said when asked about the facilities at the



Asian Games, set to be held in Aichi-Nagoya in Japan from September 19 to October 4. "We are not going to have any difficulties in Japan. If any kind of situation arises, we will take an appropriate call at the right time, so that we ensure that our players and the support staff will get the best of facilities in Asian Games, whether it is from organisers, or if required, BCCI will have its own system in place to provide the best facilities to our players," Saikia added. Saikia said the BCCI offered four venues to the ICC for hosting next year's inaugural Women's Champions Trophy, of which two were finalised. "BCCI is always ready to host these kinds of international events and for that it should get some credit that we are ready to accommodate any international event at any point of time," Saikia said. "At the last moment, now at the eleventh hour, Sri Lanka could not host this tournament. BCCI offered four venues, out of which two venues were selected," he said.

Indigo Flight Hits Pole While Parking At Srinagar Airport, No Injuries

Srinagar: An Indigo flight from Navi Mumbai to Srinagar hit a pole while being parked at Srinagar airport on Friday. While the aircraft suffered damage, there were no injuries to the passengers or crew members. Flight 6E 225 (VT-NOG) was being positioned at Bay No. 6 at 9.02 am when it came into contact with the Visual Docking Guidance System (VDGS) pole during the parking process, the Airport Authority of India (AAI) said in a statement. "All passengers and crew members are safe, and no injuries have been reported," it said, adding that the passengers and crew safely deboarded using manual aircraft stairs. The AAI said the details and circumstances leading to the incident will be examined by the appropriate authorities according to the prescribed procedures. "The exact cause will be ascertained following the completion of the inquiry, and no conclusion regarding the cause is being drawn at this stage," the statement read. Airport operations remained normal, with flight arrivals and departures continuing as per schedule, it added.



