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India hits record 1 billion tonnes of coal production, Modi calls it historic

India crossed a record milestone of 1 billion tonnes of coal production in the current fiscal, a landmark, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi described as a proud moment for the country, showing its commitment to energy security and self-reliance.

Coal, which is predominantly used to produce electricity as well as fuel in several industries, is the mainstay energy source for the world's fifth largest economy. India produced 997.83 million tonnes of coal in 2023-24 (April 2023 to March 2024).

In a social media post on X, Modi described the 1 billion tonnes of coal production in the current fiscal as "A Proud



Moment for India!" He said, "Crossing the monumental milestone of 1 Billion tonnes of coal production is a remarkable achievement, highlighting our commitment to energy security, economic growth and self-reliance." Modi said the feat also reflects the dedication

and hardwork of all those associated with the sector.

The Prime Minister was commenting on Union Minister of Coal and Mines G Kishan Reddy's social media post announcing this achievement. With cutting-edge technologies and efficient methods,

the minister said India has not only increased production but also ensured sustainable and responsible mining.

"This achievement will fuel our increasing power demands, drive economic growth, and ensure a brighter future for every Indian," Reddy said. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Modi, India is on its path to become a global energy leader, he said. Reddy lauded the efforts of the workforce of the coal sector in achieving this milestone. As per the Ministry of Coal Action Plan FY 2024-25, the coal production / offtake target for current fiscal is 1,080 million tonnes.(PTI)

Millennials drive luxury car sales: Lamborghini, Mercedes-Maybach eye expansion

Lamborghini and Mercedes-Maybach plan to expand in India as a growing tribe of young, rich Indians splurge on super luxury cars, driving their sales to record levels.

Italian supercar maker Lamborghini, fresh from a year of record sales, is exploring a fourth showroom in India, while Mercedes-Maybach sees the country as a potential top-five market by sales, company executives said. "India, for us, is an asset ... there is a huge potential for the future. There is the idea of having maybe a fourth dealership but this is still something in the early stages," Lamborghini CEO Stephan Winkelmann told reporters at a virtual roundtable.

The optimism is driven by "a change in generation" in the country with "momentum from younger customers", he said, adding that the average age of a Lamborghini buyer in India is below



40 years — making it the youngest market after China.

"You have a lot of start-ups in India which are very successful. You have very young, high net worth individuals who are stepping into this type of car. So this is positive for us," he said.

Daniel Lescow, head of Mercedes-Maybach, said India was already in its top 10 markets and had the potential to be in the top five, but the speed of growth would depend on how the luxury market develops.

"I'm convinced there's so much more potential

... so many opportunities here," Lescow told Reuters.

Rapid economic growth in India has wrought a fundamental shift in attitude towards luxury purchases among its younger generations that differs from their elders, who were more concerned with saving.

Executives at start-ups cashing out after record public listings and younger generations of a family business spending with less guilt are driving up sales of all things luxury — cars, watches, bags and even homes.

Ola Electric faces government scrutiny over vehicle registration mismatch

Mumbai: Ola Electric Mobility said on Friday that the government has sought information from the electric two-wheeler maker on the mismatch between its vehicle sale and registration numbers for February, which were caused by a "temporary" backlog in registrations.

India's heavy industries and road transport ministries have emailed Ola seeking information, the company said in a statement.

Since its high-profile stock market debut last year, Ola has faced mounting challenges, from declining sales to increased regulatory scrutiny.

The company has reportedly cut jobs at least twice since November, and is now restructuring its sales and service networks to focus on cost reductions and inventory management. While Ola said it has sold 25,000 vehicles in February, a government portal showed only about 8,600 were registered during the month.

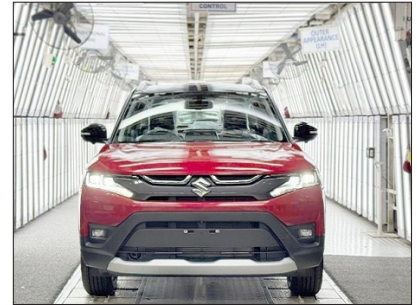
This is a straightforward case of a temporary registration backlog, the company said, adding that the backlog intensified after it ended contracts with two vendors handling its registration process as it sought to streamline operations. It is in negotiations with the vendors and assured that the backlog was being "rapidly cleared".

Last week, one of its vehicle registration service providers and a creditor of its unit Ola Electric Technologies filed an insolvency petition against the unit alleging default in payments. The company has also received notices in four states with regard to trade certificates for a few of its stores, it said on Friday.

Maruti Suzuki India announces up to 4 pc price hike from April

New Delhi: Leading automaker Maruti Suzuki India Ltd on Monday announced its third price hike this year - up to 4 per cent which is effective from April - to offset rising input costs

amid moderating sales. The price increase on the vehicles from next month will vary depending on the model, according to an exchange filing by the company. "In light of rising input costs and operational expenses, the company has planned to increase the prices of its cars from April, 2025. The price increase is expected to be up to 4 per cent and will vary depending on the model," said Maruti Suzuki India. "While the company continuously strives to optimise costs and minimise the impact on its customers, some portion of the increased cost may need to be passed on to the market," it added in the filing



Adani Energy Solutions bags Rs 2,800 crore power transmission project in Gujarat



Mumbai (PTI): Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) on Friday said it has bagged a Rs 2,800 crore power transmission project in Gujarat. The project will supply green electrons for manufacturing of Green Hydrogen and Green Ammonia at Mundra in Gujarat, AESL said in an exchange filing.

For the company, this is its sixth order win this fiscal year, taking its order book to Rs 57,561 crore, the company said. This project "Transmission System for Green Hydrogen/Ammonia Manufacturing Potential in Mundra, Gujarat" involves upgrading the Navinal (Mundra) electrical substation by adding two large 765/400kV (kilovolt) transformers.

Additionally, a 75 km long 765kV double-circuit line will be constructed to connect this substation to the Bhuj substation.

The project will see the ad-

dition of 150 cKM (circuit kilometer) of transmission lines and 3,000 MVA (megavolt-amperes) of transformation capacity to AESL's overall transmission infrastructure, taking them to 25,928 cKM and 87,186 MVA, respectively.

AESL won the project under the Tariff-Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) mechanism and PFC Consulting Ltd was the bid process coordinator. The project SPV was formally transferred to AESL on March 20, 2025.

AESL, part of the Adani portfolio, is a multidimensional organization with presence in various facets of the energy domain, namely power transmission, distribution, smart metering, and cooling solutions. It is the country's largest private transmission company with a cumulative transmission network of 25,928 ckm and 87,186 MVA transformation capacity.

Smart diabetes management drives demand for CGM devices during Ramadan

Guwahati: As Ramadan approaches, healthcare professionals emphasize the importance of diabetes management during fasting. With fluctuating blood sugar levels posing a challenge, experts recommend Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) devices like Freestyle Libre to help individuals make informed decisions about their diet, activity, and medication.

Balancing blood sugar levels during fasting, from pre-dawn suhoor to post-sunset iftar, can be challenging due to potential fluctuations. Therefore, suhoor and iftar become essential meals of the day, providing energy and nourishment. For people with diabetes, careful meal planning during these times is important to

manage significant changes in blood sugar levels.

Apart from an appropriate nutritional diet, monitoring blood glucose levels is also recommended. Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) is a convenient and pain-free way to monitor real-time blood glucose levels. By combining a well-planned diet with regular glucose monitoring, people with diabetes can safely observe fasting and still maintain their health throughout the holy month.

Dr. Bipul Choudhury, MD, DM, FACE (USA) Nemcare Hospital, Guwahati said, "Continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) is invaluable for people with diabetes fasting during Ramadan. The real-time blood sugar data

provided by CGM helps identify and address glucose spikes associated with meals before and after the fast. This data-driven approach helps adjust portion sizes, meal timing, and exercise for better blood glucose control and greater confidence.

Continuous monitoring of blood glucose levels is essential for proper management of diabetes, especially during Ramadan. Continuous glucose monitoring devices such as Free Style Libre provide real-time data, giving a complete view of blood sugar trends rather than single-time readings. You can make informed decisions about your meals, physical activity, and treatment with this data available on your smartphone.

Experts advise a balanced diet, proper hydration, and light exercise to maintain blood sugar levels during Ramadan. By leveraging technology and adopting healthy practices, individuals with diabetes can fast safely while maintaining optimal health.

In Guwahati, the demand for Freestyle Libre and other CGM devices has surged as awareness about diabetes management grows. Pharmacies and medical suppliers report increased inquiries, reflecting a shift toward smart glucose monitoring solutions. With consumers prioritizing health, the market for diabetes-friendly products, including nutrient-rich foods and hydration solutions, is witnessing steady growth.

You include these foods in your diet to strengthen your immune system

Guwahati: "As the seasons change, maintaining a healthy, balanced diet is essential to strengthen your immune system and stay in top shape. Incorporating natural foods like almonds, seasonal fruits, and vegetables into your daily meals provides immunity. Citrus Fruits: Citrus fruits like orange, lemon, musambi and grapefruit are rich in vitamin C, a nutrient that is necessary for white blood cell production—the body's defense against infections. Garlic: Garlic has a long history of medicinal use, known for its anti-bacterial properties, thanks to a natural

source of 15 essential nutrients, including vitamin E, zinc, folate, and iron, which are vital for immune function. In fact, even the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) states that regular almond consumption supports immunity. Citrus Fruits: Citrus fruits like orange, lemon, musambi and grapefruit are rich in vitamin C, a nutrient that is necessary for white blood cell production—the body's defense against infections. Garlic: Garlic has a long history of medicinal use, known for its anti-bacterial properties, thanks to a natural



compound, allicin. Incorporating garlic into your meals not only adds flavor but also helps to fight off the microorganisms. Leafy Greens: Leafy greens like spinach, drumstick leaves, amaranth leaves, mint, and others contain vitamins and antioxidants that play a role in immune function.

Luminous Power Technologies & Rajasthan Royals further strengthen their power partnership

Guwahati: Luminous Power Technologies, India's leading energy solutions company, has continued its power partnership with Rajasthan Royals to be their Title Partner for the 18th season of the upcoming India's T-20 premier league creating a greater momentum for their sustainability efforts and launching nationwide solar adoption initiatives. As part of the event, Rajasthan Royals players Sanju Samson, Nitish Rana, Tushar Deshpande along with Jake Lush McCrum, Chief Executive Officer of Rajasthan Royals and Preeti Bajaj, Neelima Burra, Amit Shukla, and Shikha Gupta from the Luminous leadership team, unveiled Luminous' latest line of solar and advanced energy solutions, aligned with the company's long-term mission to empower consumers with clean energy alternatives. Speaking on the occasion, Preeti Bajaj, CEO

& MD, Luminous Power Technologies, said, "India's solar energy sector is undergoing a significant transformation, and at Luminous, we are dedicated to playing a crucial role in accelerating this change." Neelima Burra, Chief Strategy Transformation & Marketing Officer, Luminous Power Technologies, said, "Luminous is at the forefront of solar energy adoption through educational brand initiatives and skilling programs." "We believe in empowering consumers with choice, enabling them to actively participate in India's sustainable energy future", said Amit Shukla, Senior Vice President, Energy Solutions Business, Luminous Power Technologies. Commenting on the association, Jake Lush McCrum, Chief Executive Officer, Rajasthan Royals, said, "Cricket has the power to drive meaningful change far beyond the boundaries of the game."

Godrej eyes summer demand surge, bets on personal care growth

Guwahati: With the summer season driving increased consumption in personal care categories, Godrej Consumer Products Limited (GCPL) is gearing up to capitalize on the trend. The company plans to focus on key brands like Cinthol, Godrej No.1, and Park Avenue to tap into the seasonal demand for soaps, deodorants, and body wash.

A company spokesperson highlighted the impact of the recent budget, stating, "With the ease of taxation and more money in the hands of the working population, there will be a boost to overall consumption." To leverage this opportunity, GCPL aims to introduce access packs and expand its product range at competitive pricing.

Guwahati, a key hub for FMCG sales in the Northeast, is expected to witness increased demand for personal care products as summer peaks. Retailers anticipate strong sales of Godrej's offerings, particularly in the budget-friendly segment, catering to a diverse consumer base.

With a strategic focus on affordability and wider accessibility, GCPL is set to strengthen its foothold in the personal care segment, aligning its product portfolio with evolving consumer preferences this summer.

HP launches next-gen AI commercial PCs in India, eyes business growth



Guwahati: HP has unveiled its latest lineup of AI-powered commercial PCs in India, designed to enhance business productivity, security, and collaboration. The new range includes the HP EliteBook Ultra G1i, EliteBook X G1i, EliteBook X G1i Flip, and EliteBook X G1a, powered by Intel® Core™ Ultra and AMD Ryzen® processors.

The EliteBook X G1a is India's first AI business laptop offering up to 55 TOPS of NPU performance, while Intel-powered models deliver up to 48 TOPS, optimizing workloads like content creation and data analysis. Features such as HP AI Companion, Poly Camera Pro, Microsoft Copilot integration, and HP Wolf Security provide personalized AI experiences and robust cybersecurity.

With Guwahati emerging as a business hub, demand for AI-powered laptops is rising among corporate professionals, IT firms, and entrepreneurs. Retailers expect strong interest in the EliteBook series, particularly for hybrid work and productivity-focused solutions. HP's premium security and AI features make these models attractive to enterprises in the region.

The EliteBook Ultra G1i is priced at ₹2,67,223, with other models ranging from ₹2,21,723 to ₹2,58,989. The new lineup is available on HP's online store across India.

Tata AIA launches Shubh Flexi Income Plan for smart savings & protection



Guwahati: Tata AIA launches Shubh Flexi Income Plan for smart savings & protection

Tata AIA Life Insurance Co. Ltd. has introduced the Shubh Flexi Income Plan, a non-linked, participating life insurance savings solution designed to offer financial security with adaptability. The plan caters to diverse financial needs, combining wealth creation with built-in protection benefits.

The plan offers three options: Endowment Option for long-term savings with a lump sum payout, Early Income Option for regular cash flow from the first year, and Deferred Income Option for accumulating wealth with flexible payout deferral. Policyholders benefit from waived future premiums in case of unforeseen events,

along with the Cover Continuance Benefit, ensuring financial stability for beneficiaries. Additional features include the 'Sub Wallet' for accumulating bonuses, Smart Lady Benefit for women, and family discounts for policyholders' nominees. For FY 2024, Tata AIA declared a ₹1,465 crore bonus, marking a 24% growth over the previous year, reinforcing its strong financial performance.

Guwahati's rising economic profile has led to growing interest in flexible insurance solutions. Financial advisors in the city highlight the Shubh Flexi Income Plan as a strategic choice for individuals planning long-term wealth growth and protection, aligning with evolving financial goals.

MSDE organizes a workshop to discuss performance, challenges, and future action plan

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) organized a high-level workshop under its KaushalManthan initiative to review the implementation of the PradhanMantriKaushalVikasYojana (PMKVY 4.0). Held at KaushalBhavan, New Delhi, the workshop brought together officials from NCVET, NSDC, NIELIT, CIPET, IITs, and IIMs to discuss performance, challenges, and future strategies.

Chaired by MSDE Secretary ShriAtul Kumar Tiwari, the discussions focused on enhancing the quality of skill certification, improving industry alignment, and strengthening the Skill India Digital



Hub (SIDH). “India’s skilling ecosystem has evolved significantly. To drive economic growth, we must integrate skill development with mainstream education and industry demands,” Tiwari said. Key takeaways included expanding the assessor pool, incorporating gamification in training, and linking Awarding Bodies to the

Academic Bank of Credit.

In Guwahati, industry representatives emphasized the need for targeted skill programs in IT, tourism, and agro-processing to meet local employment demands. With PMKVY 4.0’s focus on industry-led training, businesses in Assam anticipate a skilled workforce aligning with emerging job trends.

MG Comet EV 2025 launched with enhanced features and smart pricing

Guwahati: JSW MG Motor India has introduced the MG Comet EV 2025, upgrading its urban electric vehicle with new convenience and comfort features.

The prices for the different vehicle variants vary based on the model. The Executive variant is priced at ₹4,99,000, with an additional ₹2.5 per kilometer, bringing the total to ₹6,99,800. The Excite variant comes at ₹6,25,000, plus ₹2.5 per kilometer, making the total ₹8,25,800. The Excite FC variant is listed at ₹6,77,000, with a per-kilometer charge of ₹2.5, totaling ₹8,77,800. The Exclusive variant is priced at ₹7,35,000, along with ₹2.5 per kilometer, bringing the final cost to ₹9,35,800. The Exclusive FC variant is available for ₹7,77,000, plus ₹2.5 per kilometer, resulting in a total of ₹9,77,800.

The Comet EV 2025 is available in five variants—Executive, Excite, Excite Fast Charge, Exclusive, and Exclusive Fast Charge. Key upgrades include a Rear Parking Camera and Power-folding ORVMs in the Excite and Excite FC variants, while the Exclusive and Exclusive FC models receive premium leatherette seats and a 4-speaker audio system. The fast-charging models feature a 17.4 kWh battery pack, offering a range of up to 230 km per charge.

Commenting on the launch,



RakeshSen, Head - Sales, JSW MG Motor India, stated, “MG Comet EV’s growing popularity reflects the increasing demand for smart urban mobility solutions. With a 29% growth in sales in CY’24, the MG Comet EV 2025 reinforces our commitment to meeting evolving consumer needs.”

The MG Comet EV 2025 is expected to gain traction in Guwahati, where the demand for affordable, eco-friendly urban mobility is rising. With increasing fuel costs and traffic congestion, the city’s growing EV adoption trend aligns well with MG’s latest offering. The competitive pricing and flexible battery service model make the Comet EV an attractive option for daily commuters and fleet operators.

MG has also expanded its lineup with the Comet BLACKSTORM Edition, priced at ₹7.80 lakh. Featuring a ‘Starry Black’ exterior and premium interiors, it caters to customers seeking a stylish yet efficient EV.

The MG Comet EV 2025 can be booked at MG dealerships across India for ₹11,000.

Godrej Jersey unveils 3x3 Strategy for FY26

Guwahati: Godrej Jersey, a leader in the dairy industry down South, has unveiled its bold 3x3 Leapfrog Strategy for FY26. This forward-thinking initiative aims to expand the company’s product range, drive higher market penetration, and enhance consumer experience through continuous innovation. By focusing on three core products—Badam Milk, Paneer, and Curd—Godrej Jersey is positioning itself to become a dominant force in the dairy value-added portfolio.

The three primary objectives of the strategy are: Increase Household Penetration, Market Expansion, Product Innovation. Bhupendra Suri, CEO of Godrej Jersey, shared, “The 3x3 Leapfrog Strategy will enable us to accelerate market expansion, enhance our consumer offerings, and drive sustainable growth through continuous innovation, strategic investments, and targeted partnerships.” Godrej Jersey is revolutionizing the packaged paneer market with its new product packaging, offering an unmatched combination of exceptional texture and rich taste. Shantanu Raj, Head of Marketing at Godrej Jersey, shared, “Our focus on value-added products is to recruit more households and drive market expansion with a commitment to delivering convenience, taste, and innovations.” Godrej Jersey aims to reach a wider consumer base through strategic expansion in both urban and rural markets.

NSDC partners with Axim collaborative to boost open edX, transform skill development

Guwahati: The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has partnered with Axim Collaborative, a non-profit organization, to enhance the Open edX open-source platform and drive innovation in digital education and vocational training. The collaboration aims to strengthen India’s skill development ecosystem by leveraging cutting-edge technology and expanding global learning opportunities.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on March 20, 2025, by ShriVed Mani Tiwari, CEO of NSDC and MD of NSDC International, and Ms. Stephanie Khurana, CEO of Axim Collaborative. Under this partnership, NSDC will contribute leadership and technical expertise to the Open edX Project, supporting advancements in AI-enhanced

teaching, credential recognition, digital wallets, mobile learning, and workforce development. NSDC will also join the Open edX Technical Oversight Committee to further refine platform capabilities.

The initiative is set to impact Guwahati significantly, providing local youth with access to advanced digital learning resources. With industries in Assam seeking skilled professionals in IT, healthcare, and manufacturing, this collaboration will bridge skill gaps and enhance job prospects in the region.

“This partnership will help us build a future-ready workforce by expanding digital education,” said Tiwari. Khurana added, “Our collaboration will create stronger education-to-work pipelines, ensuring global workforce preparedness.”

National Skill Development Corporation partners with PayPal to empower youth

Guwahati: National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has partnered with PayPal to empower youth, including women, from low-income families through skill development across India. As part of PayPal CSR programme, the two organisations formalised their collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch a comprehensive skill development initiative, specifically targeting India’s Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sector. Dr Rishikesh Patankar, Vice President, NSDC and Srinivas Venkatesan, Global Chief Technology Officer, PayPal, exchanged the MoU in presence of senior members of both the organisations on Friday.

The key objective of the

MoU is the economic empowerment for thousands of youth, with a special focus on women from low-income families through skill development. Dr. Rishikesh Patankar said, “This collaboration signifies a major step forward in empowering the youth and women of India to play a vital role in the nation’s progress and development.” As per the MoU, specialised training programmes that are National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)-aligned will be offered to candidates. V. Chandramouliswaran, Vice President PayPal India Global Technology centre said “We are delighted to partner with NSDC in this unique initiative, which directly supports the Indian Government’s Skill India vision.”

MSDE marks a significant milestone in advancing India’s apprenticeship ecosystem

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) marked a significant milestone in advancing India’s apprenticeship ecosystem with the successful conclusion of a Zonal Review Meeting of the Eastern and Southern states under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme-2 (NAPS-2). Hosted at the World Skill Centre in Bhubaneswar, the strategic workshop brought together key stakeholders from across 18 States and Union Territories to assess progress, address challenges, and chart a roadmap for achieving the target of engaging 46 lakh apprentices by March 2026.

During his address, Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship said, “The National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme is not just a program—it is a transformative journey toward building an industry-ready workforce that aligns with India’s growth aspirations.” The theme of the meeting, “Apprenticeship Training for an Industry-Ready Workforce,” underscored the critical role of apprenticeship in bridging the gap between education and employability. The MSDE reaffirmed its commitment to scaling up apprenticeship engagement nationwide by leveraging platforms such as PMNAM (Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Melas) and targeted awareness workshops. The deliberations underscored India’s vision of creating an inclusive and dynamic apprenticeship ecosystem aligned with global standards under the Skill India Mission.

Godrej Agrovet, DEI Labs, and IIMA release a report on women in agribusiness

Guwahati: Godrej Agrovet Limited (Godrej Agrovet), a diversified R&D-focused food and agri-business conglomerate, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA) and Godrej DEI Lab, has launched the report “Women in Agribusiness—Opportunities and Challenges” at its second Women in Agriculture Summit. The report reveals that women constitute 64.4 percent of India’s agricultural workforce, yet only 6 percent to 10 percent are employed in top agri and agri-related companies. Commenting on the report, Balram Singh Yadav, Managing Director, Godrej Agrovet, said, “At Godrej Agrovet, we believe the future of agribusiness lies in empowering women through education, workplace

inclusivity, and leadership development.”

Prof. Vidya Vemireddy, Faculty Member, IIMA, noted, “This study addresses critical knowledge gaps regarding women’s participation in formal employment relationships within agribusiness enterprises.” Nisaba Godrej and Balram Singh Yadav announced the launch of the Godrej Agrovet Women in Agriculture Scholarship, empowering five students and fostering future women leaders in agriculture. Mallika Mutreja, Head—Human Resources, Godrej Agrovet, added, “Females account for 30 percent to 40 percent of total enrollment in agricultural studies, yet only 6 percent to 10 percent work in top agri and agri-related companies.”

Indian Shuttlers Make Strides at Swiss Open Super 300 as Sindhu Stumbles

Basel: In an eventful day at the Swiss Open Super 300 badminton tournament in Basel, India's men's singles players advanced to the pre-quarterfinals, while in a shock upset, two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu exited in the opening round of the women's singles event. Men's Singles Progress World-ranked 35th Priyanshu Rajawat delivered a commanding performance as he dismantled local tal-ent Tobias Kuenzi with a straight-game victory. Rajawat won 21-10, 21-11 in just 29 minutes, setting up a pre-quarterfinal clash against France's Toma Junior Popov. His dominant display underscored his growing confidence and ability to contend with toplevel competition.

In another decisive match, S. Sankar Muthuswamy Subramanian showcased his prowess by overpowering Denmark's Magnus Johannesen, recording a 21-5, 21-16 win.



Muthuswamy's victory paves the way for a challenging encounter against Denmark's second seed Anders Antonsen, scheduled for later on Thursday. However, not all of India's entries fared well. Kiran George, who had been expected to mount a strong challenge in the men's singles, was unable to overcome Denmark's Rasmus Gemke. George lost a closely fought contest 21-18, 17-21, 10-21 in the opening round, a setback that adds to the pressure on India to deliver strong performances in the subsequent rounds.

BCCI Lifts Saliva Ban in IPL Following Captains' Approval

New Delhi: In a significant policy reversal, the BCCI has lifted the ban on using saliva on the cricket ball in the upcoming Indian Premier League, following overwhelming support from team captains during a recent meeting in Mumbai.

A top BCCI official confirmed to media, "The saliva ban has been lifted. The majority of captains were in favour of the move." This decision marks a departure from the long-standing ICC regulation, which had permanently banned the practice in 2022 as a precautionary measure introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the IPL had been following the ICC's guidelines in the aftermath of the pandemic, these guidelines fall outside the direct purview of the league's governing body. With this new development, the IPL now becomes the first major cricketing event to reintroduce the use of saliva on the ball, signaling a return to traditional playing conditions that many players believe aid in ball maintenance and swing.

The move has been welcomed by several players and coaches who argue that the ability to apply saliva helps in achieving the ideal shine on the ball, a factor that can significantly influence bowling performance in conditions where movement is crucial. As teams gear up for what promises to be an electrifying season, the decision to lift the ban is expected to spark debate among cricket purists and modernists alike. Nonetheless, with the captains' thumbs up, the BCCI is confident that this change will enhance the competitive edge of the game, returning a practice that has been part of cricket's fabric for generations.

Openly Gay Footballer Josh Cavallo Endures Online Death Threats Amid Trailblazing Journey

Adelaide: In a candid revelation that underscores the enduring challenges faced by LGBTQ+ athletes, Josh Cavallo – the first openly gay player to represent Adelaide United in Australia's A-League – disclosed that he still receives online death threats on a daily basis. Speaking on the FIFPro Footballers Unfiltered podcast, Cavallo, 21, opened up about the harsh realities of being

openly gay in professional soccer, describing the environment as "a very toxic place." A Trailblazing Journey with a Price Cavallo, who came out in 2021, recalled that his video announcement "took the world of football for a shock" but remains the best decision he's ever made. "I still think we're a very, very long way from being accepted in this space, unfortunately," he said. While his

revelation has inspired many, he admitted that the backlash has been relentless. "There are multiple death threats that come my way daily," he noted, expressing sadness at the constant negativity that he endures online.

Despite these challenges, Cavallo remains resolute. "I have a very strong support network. I have my good days, I have my bad days, but I'm free. I'm

Josh Cavallo, I'm the footballer ... the gay footballer, and I'm super proud to say that," he declared, emphasizing that his identity is something he wears with pride, irrespective of the vitriol he faces. His message is clear: while change is happening, true acceptance in football will only come when every player can be free to be themselves without fear of backlash.

Bonus point system to be pondered over for WTC 2025-27 cycle

New Delhi: The International Cricket Council (ICC) is likely to ponder over a new bonus points system during its board meeting in April which could give more weightage to victories against higher-ranked teams during the next World Test Championship cycle. The 2025-27 WTC cycle will begin with India's five-match away Test series against England in June. As per the prevailing rules, the team winning by the smallest margin or by an innings gets 12 points, six points for a tie and four points for a draw.

But this could see a change as the global governing body, as per a report in Telegraph, is considering awarding bonus points for innings victories or for a win above a certain big

margin such as 100 runs. "In fact, issues such as giving bonus points for innings wins etc has been in continuous discussion from the beginning of the WTC, as many teams felt that due weight is not getting for wins against big teams," a source close to the development told media. "So, such topics have been a part of discussions, and this could again come up for deliberations," he said. But this could now change as the ICC might bring in bonus points for landslide wins, and extra points could be given to victories over frontline teams such as India, Australia and England, as per their rankings.

"Yeah, it's a good move if it really happens. The teams will be more motivated to go for results, as we could see some ex-



citing games," a former India player told media on condition of anonymity. The ICC is also mulling giving extra points for wins away from home. "Yeah, it will be a motivating factor for, you know, those 'smaller' teams, Look, when New Zealand beat India last year, it was a historic win for them as not many teams came here and beat us. But they did not

got any extra points for it." "While winning away from home in itself can act as a motivating factor, now the teams will have that carrot in front of them — extra points, if it really happens," he added. Other than this, the ICC board meeting might also consider the two-tier Test system, which is vocally supported by Cricket Australia.

After Champions Trophy triumph, Rohit Sharma may continue as Test captain against England

The Champions Trophy triumph has added to the aura of Rohit Sharma and it won't be a surprise if he continues as Test captain and travels to England as leader of the pack even as the selectors are yet to make a decision on the tour, starting June 20.

Rohit was under pressure to perform in Dubai, especially after a 1-3 series defeat in Australia accentuated his own poor form. The triumphant run in Dubai has certainly given the skipper breathing space and elbow room. But the question remains if the national selection committee will consider success in ODI format while deciding on more challenging Test format, where the returns have been modest, of late.

The team suffered six hard-to-digest defeats, in the last WTC cycle. The new cycle for India will begin with the England series, where the first Test will be played at the Leeds. "Technically, Rohit remains the Test



captain. He voluntarily benched himself from the last Test in Sydney where he explained that a team can't carry on with multiple out of form batters.

"After Australia Tests, India haven't played any Tests and hence there has been no change in Test captaincy. Also Rohit never said he doesn't want to play Tests," a BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity. However he added that the national selection committee hasn't yet decided on the En-

gland series.

"The selection committee gets a break during IPL. Obviously with all matches televised, they always don't need to travel unless they have some specific strategy or they want to watch a particular player from up close," the source added. "So once IPL starts, the blueprint for England series will be drawn at some point. But (coach) Gautam Gambhir's view point will have a lot of weightage," he added.(PTI)

Pandya Suspension Paves Way for Suryakumar Yadav as MI's Interim Captain in IPL Opener

Mumbai: In a surprising twist for the Mumbai Indians, regular skipper Hardik Pandya will miss the IPL opener against Chennai Super Kings due to a one-match suspension for over-rate offences incurred last season, paving the way for T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav to lead the side on Sunday. A Change in Leadership The suspension, imposed as a result of three slow over-rate violations by MI last season, has left the franchise with little choice but to appoint an interim captain for the season's opener. Suryakumar Yadav, who is also the national T20 captain and recently steered India to a 4-1 series triumph over England, will don the captain's armband. "Surya leads India as well.

An Opportunity Amid Challenges Despite his recent success on the international stage, Yadav's batting form in the series against England was modest, scoring only 38 runs in five outings. However, his leadership credentials, honed through years of experience and his role as national T20 captain, have earned him the trust of the team and management alike. MI head coach Mahela Jayawardene confirmed that the BCCI has communicated the onematch ban on Pandya to the team, citing the importance of maintaining discipline after last season's over-rate issues.