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Sensex plunges nearly 2 pc amid US reciprocal tariff concerns



Mumbai: Indian stock markets on Tuesday witnessed a sharp decline on the first trading day of the new financial year. The fall came as investors reacted to global market concerns, especially the upcoming US reciprocal tariffs on April 2. The Sensex, which represents 30 major companies, dropped by 1,390.41 points or 1.80 per cent to close at 76,024.51. During the trading session, it fluctuated between an intra-day high of 77,487.05 and a low of 75,912.18.

The Nifty index also tumbled 353.65 points or 1.50 per cent, ending at 23,165.70. It touched a high of 23,565.15 and a low of 23,136.40 during the intra-day. Almost all stocks in the Sensex index ended lower, except Zomato, IndusInd Bank, and State Bank of India (SBI). The biggest losers included HCL Technologies, Bajaj Finserv, HDFC

Bank, Bajaj Finance, and Infosys, which saw their share prices decline by up to 3.66 per cent.

Midcap and smallcap stocks also faced pressure. The Nifty Midcap100 index closed 0.86 per cent lower, while the Nifty Smallcap100 index slipped 0.70 per cent. The BSE Midcap index was down 0.9 per cent, whereas the Smallcap index managed to rise slightly by 0.2 per cent. Sector-wise, most indices ended in the red, with IT, real estate, and consumer durables stocks falling by around 2 per cent each. Only media, oil & gas, and telecom stocks managed to stay positive.

Market volatility also surged as the India VIX, commonly known as the fear index, jumped 8.37 per cent to 13.78 points. This suggests that investors are increasingly cautious about the market's direction.

Gold prices hit fresh high as retail investors push demand amid global uncertainties

Mumbai: As the US reciprocal tariff deadline looms, gold prices on Monday hit a record high of \$3,106 per ounce for the first time, with people rushing towards accumulating the safehaven asset amid global uncertainties. The yellow metal has gained more than 18 per cent this year as retail investors continue to drive demand. Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, and UBS have raised their price targets for gold this month.

According to a report by BofA Global Research, the bullion is likely to reach \$3,500 per ounce in the next 18 months if noncommercial purchases increase by 10 per cent.



"Gold could potentially reach USD3,500/oz over the coming 18 months, if non-commercial purchases increase by 10 per cent," it said in a note, adding that central banks around the world could increase their gold holdings to over 30 per cent from the current 10 per cent (on average) to make their portfolios more efficient.

India's defence exports log over 12 pc growth at record Rs 23,622 crore in FY25

New Delhi: India's defence exports surged to a record high of Rs 23,622 crore (about \$2.76 billion) in the just-concluded FY25 -- a growth of Rs 2,539 crore or 12.04 per cent compared to Rs 21,083 crore in FY24, the government said on Tuesday. The defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs) have shown a significant increase of 42.85 per cent in their exports in FY25, reflecting the growing acceptability of Indian products in the global market and the ability of the Indian defence industry to be a part of the global supply chain.

The private sector and DPSUs have contributed Rs 15,233 crore and Rs 8,389

crore, respectively, in defence exports in FY25, whereas the corresponding figures for FY24 were Rs 15,209 crore and Rs 5,874 crore, respectively. In a post on social media platform X, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is marching towards achieving the target of increasing defence exports to Rs 50,000 crore by 2029.

India has evolved from a largely import-dependent military force to one increasingly focused on self-reliance and indigenous production. In a major boost to defence exports, wide range of items from ammunition, arms, sub-



systems/systems and parts and components have been exported to around 80 countries in the justconcluded fiscal. According to the ministry, the Department of Defence Production has a dedicated portal

for application and processing of export authorisation requests, and 1,762 Export Authorisation were issued in FY 2024-25 compared to 1,507 in the preceding year, registering a growth of 16.92 per cent.

Income Tax Dept asks Bosch to pay up Rs 20 crore

New Delhi: Auto components manufacturer Bosch Limited said on Monday that it has received a tax demand notice of more than Rs 20 crore from the Income Tax Department for the assessment year (AY) 2022-2023. The company informed the stock exchanges that the assessment order, dated March 28, raised a demand of Rs 18.36 crore as tax along with an interest of Rs 1.80 crore.

"The company is in the process of preferring an appeal. No quantification of penalty has been passed," Bosch said. According to the regulatory filing, the delay in paying the tax "is inadvertent and is swiftly reported, once it was brought to the notice". Bosch reported a 12 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to Rs 458 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2024. The company had



made a net profit of Rs 518 crore in the October-December period of the previous financial year. Its revenue from operations rose to Rs 4,466 crore for the third quarter compared to Rs 4,205 crore in the year-ago period.

The company's profit before tax worked out to Rs 618 crore during the October-December quarter, while EBIDTA increased by 0.7 per cent to Rs 582.7 crore.

The technology company

also made a provision of Rs 47 crore as an exceptional item during the quarter. Bosch Ltd MD Guruprasad Mudlapur said that the company generated growth during the quarter through the development of advanced automotive components and customer-focused solutions. He attributed the increased service income from major auto manufacturers as reflecting their continued trust in the company and its expertise.

Hyundai Motor's March sales down 2 pc, Kia reports 2.2 pc rise

Seoul: Hyundai Motor said on Tuesday its monthly sales for March dropped 2 per cent from a year earlier due to a decline in overseas markets. The automaker sold 365,812 vehicles last month, down from 373,290 units in the same month last year, the company said in a press release. Domestic sales gained 0.9 percent on-year to

63,090 units, but overseas sales shed 2.6 percent to 302,722 units, reports Yonhap news agency. At home, the bestselling model was the Avante, selling 6,829 units, followed by the Grandeur sedan, selling 6,211 units. The Sante Fe was the most popular sport utility vehicle (SUV) domestically, selling 5,591 units.

India's motorcycle industry accelerates to robust sales growth in March

New Delhi: India's motorcycle industry witnessed strong growth in the final month of the just-concluded fiscal year 2024-25, with leading manufacturers reporting impressive sales figures. Royal Enfield and Suzuki Motorcycle India Private Limited (SMIPL) showcased remarkable achievements in March, according to their sales data. Royal Enfield, the world's largest maker of middleweight motorcycles, marked a significant milestone by selling over one million units for the first time in a financial year. In FY 2024-25, the Bullet maker sold a total of 10,09,900 units, an 11 per cent increase compared to the previous year. Of this, domestic sales stood at 9,02,757 units, while exports surged by 37 per cent, reaching 1,07,143 units, according to the company. Similarly, Suzuki Motorcycle India saw record sales with 12,56,161 units sold in FY2024-25. This was an 11 per cent growth over the previous year's figures.

NSDC, IIT Mandi and NCU Gurugram to launch B.Tech in Semiconductor Design and Technology

Guwahati: In a strategic collaboration, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), IIT Mandi, and The North-Cap University (NCU), Gurugram, have signed an MoU to launch a B.Tech. ECE in Semiconductor Design and Technology. This new program aims to address the growing global demand for skilled semiconductor professionals by providing students with specialized training and hands-on experience in semiconductor engineering, covering key areas such as nanotechnology, fabrication, and semiconductor equipment design.

The four-year program integrates 25 credits of practical learning, developed jointly by the partners. IIT Mandi will

provide faculty support and immersive lab training, while NCU will award the degree. NSDC will oversee the program's implementation, driving enrolments via its digital platform, offering financial aid, and supporting internships and placements.

This collaboration holds significant potential for the Guwahati market, with increasing demand for technical education and skilled professionals in the region. Guwahati's growing tech landscape, along with its expanding educational infrastructure, positions it as a key player for such initiatives, attracting more students to specialized programs in semiconductor technology.

Prof. NupurPrakash, Vice Chancellor



of NCU, expressed that the program will equip students with both academic knowledge and practical experience, helping them meet the demands of India's expanding semiconductor sector.

Shri Jayant Chaudhary met with Shri Kapil Dev Agrawal at Kaushal Bhawan

Guwahati: In a major push to accelerate skill development initiatives, Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (I/C) and Minister of State, Ministry of Education, has met with Shri Kapil Dev Agrawal, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Vocational Education and Skill Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh, at Kaushal Bhawan, New Delhi. The high-level meeting, attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and the Uttar Pradesh government,



focused on enhancing Centre-State collaboration for seamless execution of key skilling programs, including Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), PM Vishwakarma, and the Swavalambini Women Entrepreneurship Programme.

A key highlight of the meeting was the discussion on the National ITI Upgradation Scheme, a transformative initiative that aims to modernize 1,000 ITIs across India under a hub-and-spoke model. The scheme, with a total outlay of ₹60,000 crore over five years, will be financed through ₹30,000 crore from the Central Government, ₹20,000 crore from State Governments, and ₹10,000 crore from industry partnerships. Both ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening Centre-State synergy in skill development, with a shared vision of making Uttar Pradesh a leading hub for skilled workforce development.

New Nissan Magnite drives growth for Nissan

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMIPL) has continued consistent and sustainable growth in India, delivering the best single-year performance for FY 2024-25 in the last seven years despite multiple headwinds faced by the domestic auto industry. The year was marked by the continued success of the New Nissan Magnite, which remains a key pillar of Nissan's domestic business plan and a vital part of the company's global export operations. In FY 2024-25, Nissan Motor India recorded total domestic volume of 28,000+ units, led

by the New Nissan Magnite introduced in October 2024.

On the export front, the company expanded its operations from 20 markets to 65+ international markets and registered an unprecedented and historic export sales of 71,000+ units further reinforcing India's role as a growing manufacturing and export hub for Nissan globally. This brings the consolidated sales of the company to 99,000+ units for FY 2024-25. Commenting on the performance, Frank Torres, Divisional Vice President of AMIEO Region Business Transformation &



President of Nissan India Operations, said, "India remains a strong pillar of growth for Nissan driven by the continued success of the Nissan Magnite." Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India, said, "The continued expansion of our dealership network reflects our commitment to improving accessibility and customer service."

SBI General Insurance Settles ₹1.06 Crore Claim to Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority

Dibrugarh: SBI General Insurance has processed a claim settlement of ₹1.06 crore to the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) under its Disaster Risk Transfer Parametric Insurance Solutions (DRTPIS). This marks the first settlement under the program, which enables automated claims based on weather data without requiring individual claim intimation.

The settlement covers excess rainfall during the monsoon season and follows an MoU signed in August 2024 establishing a three-year partnership between SBI General and NSDMA, supported by reinsurers GIC Re, Munich Re, Hannover Re, and SCOR.

"Our parametric insurance model ensures financial assistance reaches affected communities without delays," said Naveen Chandra Jha, MD and CEO of SBI General Insurance. "As climate variabilities increase, this plays a vital role in achieving sustainable development."

The funds will be distributed to communities affected by rainfall, supporting Nagaland's disaster mitigation and resilience strategy. The settlement was formally presented to NSDMA officials including MLA & Advisor Z. Nyusietho Nyuthe and other dignitaries.

Jindal (India) Limited successfully hosts "Milaap" event in Assam

Shivasagar: Jindal (India) Limited, part of prestigious B.C. Jindal Group and one of the leading downstream steel products manufacturers in India, has successfully hosted "Milaap" event, the company's retailer meet, in Sivasagar, Assam. The event was organized in collaboration with company's authorized dealer, Gautam Industries, and was attended by close to 60 retailers, along with senior officials from the company. These events, organized by Jindal (India) Limited, are in line with the company's endeavour to further fortify its foothold in the region and expand its geographical presence across India.

Among these was Jindal Sabrang, an offering from Jindal (India) Limited that redefines the aesthetics of steel by introducing a vibrant array of colour-coated options with exceptional corrosion resistance in outdoor applications. In addition, the company apprised their tailors about Jindal NeuColor+, a range that represents the pinnacle of premium coated steel products, offering a combination of advanced technology, aesthetic versatility, and long-lasting durability. "Jindal (India) Limited, one of India's leading national players, remains committed to strengthening its presence in existing markets while expanding into new regions," said Jindal (India) Limited's spokesperson.

IFFCO applauds the Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill 2025 announcement

Guwahati: IFFCO has welcomed the announcement of Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill, 2025 in the Lok Sabha and its subsequent approval by the lower house on 26th of March 2025. While announcing the bill Hon'ble Minister of Cooperation and Home Affairs Shri Amit Shah said that after 75 years of independence, today the country is getting its first cooperative university. He said that this bill will strengthen the rural economy, develop the ecosystem of self-employment and small entrepreneurship, increase social inclusion and will increase opportunities to set new standards in innovation and research.

Dr. Udai Shanker Awasthi, Managing Director, IFFCO, stated that, "I appreciate the Tribhuvan Cooperative University Bill 2025, a historic step for the pioneering development of cooperatives." He said, The establishment of sector-specific schools across the country will help fertilizer cooperatives, especially IFFCO, this will empower cooperatives with a new generation of professionals in the field of fertilizer cooperative management and marketing. While expressing his appreciation for this step, Shri Dileep Sanghani, Chairman, IFFCO, said this step will ensure that seeds for the next generation of the cooperative leadership will be nurtured and cared for under a system which run by the cooperatives for the cooperatives. This will also strengthen the rural economy.

Nissan expands India portfolio with new 7-seater B-MPV and 5-seater C-SUV

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India has announced the addition of an all-new 7-seater B-MPV to its expanding product portfolio, further solidifying its presence in high-growth segments. This new model will launch in FY25, followed by a 5-seater C-SUV in early FY26. The announcement was made at Nissan's Global Product Showcase Event in Yokohama, Japan.

The 7-seater B-MPV will feature a bold C-shaped grille and muscular SUV-inspired design, aligning with Nissan's distinct design philosophy. Meanwhile, the new 5-seater C-SUV draws inspiration from the iconic Nissan Patrol, offering advanced technology and rugged reliability tailored for Indian road conditions. These additions will complement Nissan's existing line-up, including the Nissan Magnite, the Nissan X-TRAIL, and an upcoming affordable EV.

Guwahati, a growing automobile in Northeast India, is expected to see significant demand for these new models. With rising consumer interest in SUVs and MPVs, Nissan's latest offerings could attract buyers looking for spacious, feature-packed vehicles suited to diverse terrains. Dealers anticipate strong sales momentum, driven by increasing urbanization and road infrastructure improvements.

With a strategic push to enhance its domestic presence and exports, Nissan aims to have four key models in India by FY26, strengthening its foothold in the competitive B/C and D-SUV segments.

Amazon Fresh Expands to 170+ Cities in India

Bengaluru: Amazon India has expanded its grocery service, Amazon Fresh, to over 170 cities and towns, marking a significant growth of 50% in the second half of 2024 compared to the previous year. The service, one of the fastest-growing categories on Amazon.in, sources fruits and vegeta-

bles from over 11,000 farmers and offers a wide range of groceries, including dairy, frozen products, and personal care items.

Srikant Sree Ram, Director of Amazon Fresh India, emphasized the commitment to quality with a rigorous four-step check for all products. This expansion

aims to enhance access to high-quality groceries at competitive prices, providing customers in tier-2 and tier-3 cities with convenient doorstep delivery. The initiative is set to transform online grocery shopping across India, offering savings and a vast selection.

Tata Neu HDFC Bank Card hits 2 million milestone

Guwahati: Tata Neu and HDFC Bank have announced a significant milestone: the Tata Neu HDFC Bank Credit Card has surpassed 2 million cards issued, solidifying its position as one of India's preferred rewards credit cards. This achievement underscores the card's remarkable success in delivering value and a seamless rewards ecosystem to customers across the country. Since its launch in August 2022, the Tata Neu HDFC Bank Credit Card has made significant strides, loved by its users for offering the most simple and transparent rewards ecosystem in the Indian credit card market.

"At Tata Digital, we are dedicated to revolutionizing the credit card experience by making benefits more rewarding and transparent for our customers," said Gaurav Hazrati, Chief Business Officer, Financial Services, Tata Digital. Every transaction with the Tata Neu HDFC Bank Credit Card unlocks a universe of rewards, including up to 10% savings, accelerated NeuCoin earnings, and exclusive privileges across travel, fashion, electronics, groceries, and more. Mr. Parag Rao, Country Head—Payments, Liability Products, Consumer Finance, and Marketing, HDFC Bank, "As India's leading card issuer, it is our endeavour to create a customised offering for every customer segment, providing best-in-class payment solutions."

Blenders Pride Fashion Tour redefines AT-LEISURE with "Play En-Vogue" Concept



Shillong: Blenders Pride Fashion Tour has wrapped up this edition with an unforgettable showcase in Guwahati, transforming the city into a playground of high fashion with its innovative "Play En-Vogue" concept. The event reimaged AT-LEISURE with a refined edge against the stunning backdrop of Guwahati's vibrant and scenic Greenwood Resort, featuring bold, experimental collections from designers Nitin Bal Chauhan, Abhishek Patni of NoughtOne, and Pawan Sachdeva, with the charismatic Ishaan Khatter as the showstopper. In collaboration with the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), Blenders Pride Fashion Tour redefined India's fashion landscape with groundbreaking showcases.

Kartik Mohindra, Chief Marketing Officer and Head of Global Business Development at Pernod Ricard India said, "With Guwahati, we concluded the most iconic edition of Blenders Pride Fashion Tour yet." Designer

Nitin Bal Chauhan, sharing his thoughts on the show, said, "Blenders Pride Fashion Tour proved to be a powerful platform for storytelling through fashion." Showstopper Ishaan Khatter said, "Fashion is about confidence, expression, and making a statement." Rapper KR\$NA expressed, "Blenders Pride Fashion Tour wasn't just a fashion event—it was a dynamic celebration of music, music, energy, and self-expression." Rapper K A R M A said, "It was an honor to have performed on such a prestigious platform that celebrates innovation in every form." "As curator for Blenders Pride Fashion Tour, it was exciting to witness how it took shape as 'The One and Only' platform of iconic and en vogue experiences." says Ashish Soni. Sunil Sethi, Chairman, FDCI expressed, "We created an impressive new edition that caught the ever-evolving pulse of global fashion and fascinated audiences nationwide

NIESBUD hosts 2nd Capacity Building Workshop

Guwahati: The National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) has inaugurated a comprehensive two-day event aimed at fostering entrepreneurship, strengthening the business ecosystem, and enabling digital market integration for small businesses and startups. The event, held at NIESBUD, brought together key dignitaries, policy leaders, and industry experts to discuss the future of entrepreneurship in India. NIESBUD recently held a two-day workshop titled "Catalyzing Entrepreneurial Growth: Enhancing Financial Inclusion, Market Access, and Digital Competence." The event at-

tracted over 100 entrepreneurs from Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh, primarily those trained under the SANKALP program.

Ms. Hena Usman, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), during her address, mentioned, "The workshop serves as a valuable platform for participants to engage with entrepreneurs within the ecosystem, providing budding business owners with essential insights into the skilling landscape." The event hosted various panel discussions which provided insight-



ful information, emphasizing the government's commitment to fostering an inclusive and resilient entrepreneurial ecosystem. With an agenda rooted in empowerment, knowledge sharing, and digital inclusion, NIESBUD reaffirmed its commitment to fostering a dynamic and robust entrepreneurial landscape in India.

Panasonic unveils 2025 AC line-up in East India, eyes strong growth in Guwahati

Guwahati: Panasonic Life Solutions India has introduced its 2025 range of residential air conditioners (RACs) in East India, designed to withstand extreme temperatures of up to 55°C. With 61 new models across 1.0, 1.5, and 2.0-ton capacities, the latest lineup aims to enhance smart living through advanced technologies like Matter, Miraie, AI-driven features, and nanoe air purification. The new range is now available across leading retail stores, e-commerce platforms, and the Panasonic Brand Store.

Abhishek Verma, Business Head, Air Conditioners Group, PMIN, PLSIND, highlighted the growing demand for air conditioners in India, where penetration remains at 7-8%. "Panasonic ACs recorded a 45% growth in April 2024-March 2025, exceeding the industry av-

erage. East India contributes 19% to the CY'24 AC market, and Guwahati is a key market for us. We anticipate a 30% growth in East India in CY'25, driven by increasing demand for energy-efficient inverter ACs," he said.

Guwahati has emerged as a crucial market for Panasonic, reflecting strong demand for smart and energy-efficient cooling solutions. The city's rising consumer base and soaring summer temperatures make advanced ACs essential. Retailers in Guwahati expect robust sales, particularly for inverter models with AI-driven features, as customers seek cost-effective and sustainable cooling solutions.

With an expanded product range and technological innovations, Panasonic aims to redefine the smart home experience in East India.

Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance publishes a comprehensive study in collaboration with NielsenIQ

Guwahati: Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance, one of India's leading private life insurers, has released a comprehensive study titled 'Underinsurance Survey 2025', conducted in collaboration with NielsenIQ. The survey covered 2,000 individuals across metro, tier 1, and tier 2 cities, assessing life insurance coverage levels and identifying gaps in financial protection. The findings highlight the current state of life insurance in India and the key factors influencing purchasing decisions.

The survey reveals a significant shift in life insurance trends, with the average age of first-time buyers dropping from 33 to 28 years. Notably, 81% of respondents believed that life insurance coverage of less than 10 times their annual income was sufficient for financial security. However, the actual coverage figures tell a different story—in urban areas, the average life cover stood at 3.1X times annual income, dropping to 2.9 times for Mass Affluent and Affluent families respectively. Speaking on the survey findings, Tarun Chugh, MD & CEO, Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance, said, "India, despite being one of the world's fastest-growing economies, has a total sum assured at just 70% of GDP—significantly lower than countries like the US (251%), Thailand (143%), and Malaysia (153%), highlighting a critical protection gap."

HVL poises for takeoff with strategic acquisition of KS Oil's Haldia unit

Guwahati: Halder Venture Limited (HVL), a leading player in the Indian parboiled rice and edible oil manufacturing sector, has announced the successful acquisition of the manufacturing unit of KS Oil Ltd in Haldia, significantly expanding its operational footprint. This acquisition brings under Halder Venture Limited's control a cutting-edge refining facility at Haldia Port, boasting 500 TPD physical and chemical refining capacity—a five-fold increase over its existing plant. This strategic expansion is poised to drive annual revenue growth of over ₹1,500 crore, enabling HVL to capitalize on burgeoning

demand across Eastern India.

The acquisition was approved by the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on 20th March 2025, and subsequently, successful physical possession was given by the liquidator of KS Oil Limited on 28th March 2025. Commenting on the acquisition, Mr. Keshab Kumar Halder, Managing Director of Halder Venture Limited, said, "This acquisition is a landmark milestone in our growth journey, enabling us to scale operations, enhance efficiency, and strengthen our presence in the edible oil sector." This project is poised to generate a significant positive



economic impact, creating employment opportunities for over 500 individuals in the region, driving industrial growth, and empowering the local workforce. For more information, please visit <https://halderventure.in/> or contact Subhajit Banerjee at subhajit@halderventure.in.

Vi Launches Cricket Packs Starting at Rs. 101

Guwahati: Vi is set to enhance cricket fans' viewing experience with new prepaid packs designed for uninterrupted streaming during the T20 league. Starting at Rs. 101, customers can enjoy a 3-month JioHotstar subscription and 5GB of data.

Vi offers three main recharge options - (1) Rs. 101: 5GB data, 3-month JioHotstar subscription, valid for 30 days. (2) Rs. 239: Unlimited calls, 2GB data, 1-month JioHotstar subscription, valid for 28 days. (3) Rs. 399: Unlimited calls, unlimited data from 12 AM to 12 PM, additional 2GB daily, 1-month JioHotstar subscription, valid for 28 days. All packs provide mobile-only access to JioHotstar. Customers can recharge via the Vi App or website.



Lucknow Super Giants eye first home win of IPL 2025 against Punjab Kings

Lucknow: A buoyant Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) will look to kick off its IPL 2025 home campaign with a win as it hosts Punjab Kings (PBKS) at the Ekana Cricket Stadium here on Tuesday. LSG comes into the fixture on the back of a stunning away win against Sunrisers Hyderabad, in a game where the pre-match odds were stacked heavily against it. Punjab Kings too has wind on its sails, having

clinched a win in its season opener against Gujarat Titans in a high-scoring thriller in Ahmedabad a week ago.

The centrepiece of the Kings' pre-match planning for Tuesday will likely be LSG's batting talisman Nicholas Pooran, who leads the season's Orange Cap race. The West Indian batter has been in rampaging touch in IPL 2025, scoring 145 runs in two games at a staggering strike rate of 258.92, whip-



ping 13 sixes and 12 fours. Pooran's incandescence at No.3 has been backed by opener Mitchell Marsh's

steady hand. The pair has accumulated twin fifties each to cover up for the rest of the LSG batting unit, including skipper Rishabh Pant, who has aggregated just 15 in his two innings with his new team.

"His batting is world-class. With what he's done at the Champions Trophy, he can now be considered one of the best short-format players in the world," said PBKS fast bowling coach James Hopes.

Indian Women Set for Rigorous AllFormat Tour Down Under Next February



Sydney: The Indian women's cricket team is gearing up for a challenging all-format tour of Australia early next year. The tour, scheduled from February 15 to March 9, will feature three Twenty20 Internationals and an equal number of One-Day Internationals, culminating in a one-off Test at the redeveloped WACA Ground in Perth. The action kicks off with the first T20I at the SCG in Sydney on February 15, followed by fixtures at Manuka Oval in Canberra and

Adelaide Oval in Adelaide. The ODI series begins on February 24 at Allan Border Field in Brisbane, with subsequent matches at Bellerive Oval in Hobart on February 27 and at CitiPacer Centre in Melbourne on March 1.

The tour's climax is the one-off Test match set for March 6-9 at the WACA Ground. The venue, currently undergoing redevelopment to transform into a 10,000-capacity boutique stadium, replaces the Melbourne Cricket Ground—which was unavailable due to upcoming renovations—after hosting the recent day-night Ashes Test. This tour marks the first summer under the new ICC Women's Future Tours Program, set to run until 2029. A d j u s t m e n t s to the schedule were necessary following the BCCI's decision to move its Women's Premier League to January from 2026 onward.

The series promises to test the mettle of both teams across all formats, providing a comprehensive con-test in the lead-up to future international challenges.

CSK's Poor Start and Fielding Blunders Lead to Another Loss

Guwahati: Chennai Super Kings skipper Rituraj Gaikwad attributed the team's consecutive defeats to a sluggish start and fielding errors during their six-run loss to Rajasthan Royals in the IPL on Sunday. This loss marked their second straight setback, following an unprecedented home defeat to Royal Challengers Bengaluru after 17 years. Rajasthan Royals surged ahead thanks to Nitish Rana's explosive 81 off 36 balls and Wanindu Hasaranga's impressive four-wicket haul. Despite Gaikwad's determined 63-run knock that anchored the chase, CSK's batting faltered when Rachin Ravindra was dismissed for a duck and Rahul Tripathi fell shortly after the power play. The team eventually ended their innings at 176/6

while chasing a target of 183.

At the post-match presentation, Gaikwad admitted, "We haven't been getting good starts, but once we do, things will be different." He also highlighted the extra 8-10 runs conceded due to misfields, emphasizing the need for improvement in that area. Explaining his batting position at No. 3, he recalled a strat-egy from previous seasons involving Ajinkya Rahane and Suresh Raina, noting that his later entry was part of a pre-planned tactic decided at the auction—even though he usually bats earlier in other games. In contrast, Rajasthan Royals' stand-in skipper Riyan Parag, playing in his hometown, expressed relief in ending the Guwahati leg with a win. "We felt we were 20 runs short. De-

spite losing a couple of quick wickets in the middle overs, our bowlers executed the plan flawlessly," he said. Parag also reflected on the team's earlier struggles in recent matches—one game where they conceded 280 runs and another where they couldn't defend 180—underscoring the significance of this win.

Fielding also played a pivotal role for the Royals. A remarkable catch by Shimron Hetmyer ended MS Dhoni's late blitz for 16, while Parag himself took a stunning catch to dismiss Shivam Dube for 18. "Fielding makes up for the 20-run deficit, and our continuous efforts with fielding coach Dishant Yagnik are clearly paying off," Parag concluded.

MS Dhoni's body, knees aren't what they used to be, he can't bat 10 overs running full stick: CSK coach



Guwahati: Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming has explained MS Dhoni's batting arrivals saying that they should not expect the former skipper to walk in to bat around the 9th or 10th over mark in the ongoing IPL 2025 season following their six-run loss against Rajasthan Royals on Sunday. Coming to bat at No.7, Dhoni scored just 16 runs off 11 balls while chasing 183 at Barsapara Cricket Stadium in Guwahati as CSK suffered their second successive loss of the season.

In the game against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Dhoni came to bat at No. 9 after Ravichandran Ashwin even when CSK were reeling at 80/6 after 13 overs. The situation was not ideal for Dhoni to inflict a turnaround, but he played a 16-ball 30 not out cameo laced with three fours and two sixes. However, the move to send Dhoni in at the fag end of the innings was not welcomed by many including former players, commentators and fans. Defending his shift in the batting order, Fleming claimed that the 43-year-old veteran's

body is not what it used to be especially his knees after undergoing a left knee operation following the end of the IPL 2023.

"Yeah, it's a time thing. His body... his knees aren't what they used to be, and he's moving okay, but there's still an attrition aspect to it. He can't bat 10 overs running full stick. So he will gauge on the day what he can give us. If the game's in the balance like today, he will go a little bit earlier, and he backs other players when other opportunities are up. So he's balancing that," Fleming said in the post-match press conference. Further speaking about Dhoni's value in the franchise, Fleming added, "I said it last year; he's too valuable to us, leadership and wicket-keeping, to throw him in nine-ten overs. He has actually never done that. So, look, from around 13-14 overs, he's looking to go depending on who's in." CSK are currently placed seventh in the points table with two points in three games. The Chennai-based franchise will take on Delhi Capitals at MA Chidambaram Stadium on April 5.

IPL 2025: Samson flew to Bengaluru to seek CoE's approval to keep wickets

New Delhi: Sanju Samson flew to Bengaluru from Guwahati on Monday to seek clearance from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Centre of Excellence (CoE) for keeping wickets in the ongoing IPL 2025 season. Samson has so far played in the tournament as a sole batter coming in as an impact substitute with RiyanParag leading the franchise. The wicketkeeper-batter was only granted a temporary go-ahead to play in the ongoing IPL following surgery on his right index finger.

"Now, he will undergo testing by the Sport Science wing at the CoE and request approval to resume his full duties. If granted permission to keep wickets, Sanju will also return as skipper," Cricbuzz reported. Samson handed over the captaincy to Parag for the first three matches of the season after confirming his participation as a pure batter for the said duration. With his thumb injury healed fully, Samson is expected to don the wicketkeeping gloves and return as captain in Rajasthan's next game.

WTT: Jun-Sung and Harimoto Crowned Champions

Chennai: At the WTT Star Contender Chennai 2025, Korea's 18-year-old Oh Jun-Sung and Ja-pan's 16-year-old Miwa Harimoto emerged as the men's and women's singles champions on Sunday. In a historic run, local hero Manav Thakkar also became the first Indian paddler to reach a WTT men's singles semi-final. In the men's final, Jun-Sung battled French youngster Thibault Poret in a riveting seven-game thriller, with the match swinging in both directions before JunSung rallied from a 2-3 deficit to claim victory with a scoreline of 9-11, 11-7, 11-3, 9-11, 6-11, 11-4, 11-7. On the women's side, Olympic medallist Harimoto secured her first title at this level by defeating her compatriot Honoka Hashimoto 4-2, with set scores reading 9-11, 11-3, 11-8, 11-9, 10-12, 11-7. Earlier in the day, Thakkar's inspiring journey ended in the penultimate round with a 1-3 loss to Poret, earning him 210 WTT ranking points and a prize of USD 4,000 (INR 3.42 lakh)—a significant milestone for Indian table tennis.