

Indian markets follow global sell-off amid tariff jitters, Nifty closes above 22,100

Mumbai: The Indian stock markets went through a major selloff on Monday amid global crash, with domestic benchmark indices falling sharply - registering their biggest one-day fall since June 4 last year when the Lok Sabha election results were announced. However, a slight recovery in the final trading window helped the Nifty climb back above the 22,100 mark, easing some of the day's earlier losses. The Sensex tumbled 2,226.79 points, or 2.95 per cent, to close at 73,137.90. During the session, it swung between an intra-day high of 73,284.24 and a low of 71,425.01. Investors lost over Rs 13.5 lakh crore at the closing.

The Nifty followed a similar path, falling 742.85 points or 3.24 per cent to settle at 22,161.60. Tata Steel fell the most by dropping over 7 per cent on both the exchanges. This sharp decline followed the biggest drop in Asian markets in 14 years, triggered by a slump in Wall Street. The domestic market sentiment turned negative after US President

Donald Trump announced steep tariffs, which were met with retaliatory measures from China.

This standoff between two major global economies has raised fears of a full-blown trade war, which could push the world into recession. "The market tumbled as the carnage over high US tariffs and the retaliation by other countries may kickstart a trade war," said Vinod Nair of Geojit Investments Limited. He added that though the overall impact on India may be limited when compared with other countries, investors are advised to play cautiously during this fray. "Focus will be on pure-play domestic themes, where the rebound is likely to be fair when the dust settles," Nair stated. The broader market also faced heavy selling pressure. Both the Nifty Midcap100 and Smallcap100 indices ended over 3 per cent lower.

Sector-wise, metal and realty stocks were the worst hit. The Nifty Metal index fell 6.75 per cent, while the Nifty Realty index dropped 5.69 per cent.



Other sectors like IT, banking, auto, and financial services also posted losses of up to 4 per cent. Even a better-than-expected US job report, which typically boosts global sentiment, failed to calm the nerves of investors as trade concerns took centre stage. According to Sundar Kewat of Ashika Institutional Equity, the downturn was primarily driven by escalating global uncertainties. "Weak cues from Wall Street -- where markets closed lower last Friday -- spilled over into global markets, including India," Kewat said. "Investor sentiment took a hit amid growing recession fears, exacerbated by heightened global trade tensions," he added.

Meanwhile, the Indian rupee slightly weakened against the US dollar, closing 61 paise lower at 85.84, compared to Friday's close of 85.23. "Rupee is expected to trade in a wide range of 85.25-86.25, with elevated volatility anticipated in the near term," Jateen Trivedi of LKP Securities said. Gold traded in a volatile range between Rs 87,900 and Rs 88,500 as markets digested the broader impact of the ongoing China-US tariff war.

Sentiment remained cautious with investors looking for further clarity from the US on its next course of action, especially amid escalating trade tensions. The upcoming US CPI data is expected to play a crucial role in shaping rate cut expectations, which could influence gold's direction globally. Domestically, the RBI policy meet later this week will be closely watched, as rupee volatility is likely to add another layer of uncertainty for MCX Gold, said Trivedi.

US tariffs: Gold, crude oil prices tumble amid global uncertainty

New Delhi: The effect of the newly announced reciprocal tariffs by US President Donald Trump is now being felt in the global commodity markets, with sharp declines seen in the prices of key commodities



like gold and crude oil. According to the Indian Bullion Jewellers Association (IBJA), the price of 24-carat gold on Monday fell sharply by Rs 2,613 to Rs 88,401 per 10 grams, down from Rs 91,014 on Friday.

Similarly, the price of 22-carat gold dropped to Rs 86,280 per 10 grams, while 18-carat gold is now priced at Rs 78,680 per 10 grams. Silver prices also took a hit. A kilogram of silver declined by Rs 4,535 to Rs 88,375, compared to its previous price of Rs 92,910 per kg. The fall in gold prices is largely due to a global decline in rates. The price of gold internationally has come down from its record high of \$3,201 per ounce to \$3,060 per ounce.

A similar trend is seen in silver, which dropped from \$35 per ounce to around \$30.40 per ounce. Crude oil prices have also slumped amid concerns over a slowdown in global economic activity following the announcement of the trade tariffs. On Monday, Brent crude was trading 2.12 per cent lower at \$64.24 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude dropped 2.24 per cent to \$60.61 per barrel.

Since the tariff announcement, crude oil prices have declined by nearly 14 per cent. Experts say this sharp drop is driven by fears that the global economy, particularly trade between major economies, may slow down, which could lead to reduced demand for oil.

Tata Power to set up 100 MW battery energy storage system in Mumbai

Mumbai: Tata Power announced on Monday that it has received approval from the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (MERC) to install a 100 MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Mumbai over the next two years. The cutting-edge BESS, equipped with advanced 'black start' functionality, will enable a swift recovery of power supply to critical infrastructure, including the metro, hospitals, airport, and data centres, in case of grid disturbances. This will prevent large-scale blackouts and enhance Mumbai's power network resilience.

The entire 100 MW system will be installed in the next two years across 10 strategically located sites, especially near load centres across Mumbai Distribution, centrally monitored and controlled from Tata Power's Power System Control Center. Additionally, the system's sophisticated technology will optimise reactive power management, improving peak demand efficiency and strengthening the city's power infrastructure, the company said.



With high ramp-rate capability, the BESS will facilitate peak load management, ensuring a stable and balanced power supply even during high-demand periods. It will also help reduce power purchase costs by storing energy during low-cost periods and utilising it during high-cost peak hours, thereby ensuring reduced tariffs for consumers in the future. Furthermore, the BESS will support capital expenditure (capex) deferral by minimising the need for costly infrastructure upgrades and efficiently managing load fluctuations with stored energy, according to the Tata Power statement.

Centre pays Rs 37,450 crore to farmers for cotton procured at MSP

New Delhi: The Central government has, through its nodal agency, the Cotton Corporation of India Ltd (CCI), successfully procured 525 lakh quintals of seed cotton, equivalent to 100 lakh bales, under Minimum Support Price (MSP) operations during the current marketing season up to March 31 this year, according to a

statement issued by the Ministry of Textiles on Tuesday. In total, Rs 37,450 crore has been paid directly into the accounts of approximately 21 lakh cotton farmers across all cotton producing states, the statement said. The procurement accounts for 38 per cent of the total cotton arrivals of 263 lakh bales and 34 per cent of the estimated

total cotton production of 294.25 lakh bales in the country.

Among the states, Telangana has recorded the highest procurement at 40 lakh bales, followed by Maharashtra with 30 lakh bales, and Gujarat with 14 lakh bales. Other states with significant procurement include Karnataka (5 lakh bales), Mad-

India's car sales surge past 41.53 lakh mark during FY25

New Delhi: The number of new cars registered on the government's VAHAN portal rose to a record 41,53,432 units during the financial year ended March 31, 2025, which represents a 4.87 per cent increase in sales over the previous financial year, according to figures compiled by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA). The rural areas registered a higher growth rate of 7.93 per cent driven by higher farms incomes, following the better performance of the agricultural sector. The urban areas clocked a growth of 3.07 per cent.

Maruti Suzuki India continued to be the market leader with a dominant 40 per cent market share while arch rival Hyundai Motor India was locked in fierce competition for the second spot with home-grown Tata Motors and Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. The two Indian carmakers also made inroads in the electric car segment, according to the data. Two-wheeler sales during 2024-25 registered a higher growth rate at 7.71 per cent year-on-year to touch 1,88,77,812 units on the back of buoyant demand. Three-wheelers sales rose 4.54 per cent compared to the previous on driven by higher economic activity but commercial vehicles remained flat during the year. "FY25 truly showcased how adaptable and resilient India's auto retail sector can be," FADA President CS Vigneshwar said in a statement.

"Our initial forecast of low single-digit growth, around 5 per cent, for passenger vehicles ended up hitting the mark almost perfectly.

hya Pradesh (4 lakh bales), Andhra Pradesh (4 lakh bales), and Odisha (2 lakh bales). Procurement in Haryana, Rajasthan, and Punjab stands at 1.15 lakh bales. The MSP mechanism continues to provide remunerative prices to cotton farmers, protecting them from distress sales when market prices fall below the MSP.

MSDE showcases grassroots innovators at Startup Mahakumbh 2025

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) is set to highlight 15 homegrown startups at Startup Mahakumbh 2025, India's largest start-up and investor summit, from April 3-5 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Through the Skill India Pavilion (Hall 4), these ventures—nurtured under the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD)—

will gain national exposure and access to funding opportunities.

The featured startups, spanning sustainable agriculture, eco-conscious textiles, AI services, waste-to-wealth solutions, and food processing, hail from Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand. MSDE Secretary Atul Kumar Tiwari emphasized the importance of grassroots entrepreneurship, stating, "India's startup ecosystem is

no longer confined to metros—it is thriving in tier-two cities and villages, supporting the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat."

Among the showcased ventures are Field-X Robotics, specializing in agricultural automation; Dhanna Food Products from Tamil Nadu, with a ₹1 crore turnover; and Geeta Herbal Products, a women-led enterprise from Himachal Pradesh.

In Guwahati, the event presents a significant opportunity for startups from Assam and the Northeast, particularly in organic farming, sustainable textiles, and tourism, to engage with national and global investors. With over 3,000 startups, 1,000+ investors, and delegations from 50+ countries, Startup Mahakumbh 2025 is poised to be a catalyst for India's inclusive and innovation-driven growth.

HMD launches music-focused feature phones, extends partnership with Rajasthan Royals

Guwahati: Human Mobile Devices (HMD) has unveiled two new feature phones, HMD 130 Music and HMD 150 Music, catering to music enthusiasts with dedicated music controls and superior audio quality. Strengthening its consumer engagement, HMD has also renewed its partnership with Rajasthan Royals as the official smartphone partner for IPL 2025.

The new feature phones boast a 2500mAh removable battery, Type-C fast charging, Bluetooth 5.0, and UPI payment capabilities. They offer up to 50 hours of music playback and come in vibrant colors—Blue, Dark Grey, and Red for HMD 130 Music, and Light Blue, Purple, and Grey for HMD 150 Music. Additionally, a text-

to-speech feature in Hindi and English enhances accessibility for users.

In Guwahati, HMD's feature phones are expected to gain traction, especially among consumers seeking affordable and durable devices with modern features. With an increasing preference for long-lasting battery life and digital payment options, the new models align with the needs of Assam's mobile users, including traders and music lovers.

Priced at ₹1,899 and ₹2,399, HMD 130 Music and HMD 150 Music will be available via retail stores, HMD.com, and major e-commerce platforms, reinforcing HMD's commitment to affordable innovation.

Polycab India launches 'Super ROI' range of fans

Guwahati: Polycab India, a leader in electrical solutions, is strengthening its presence in the fan category with the launch of its Super ROI range. Designed to set new benchmarks, this strategic initiative aims to redefine Return on Investment (ROI) for the fans category. This range promises a perfect synergy of high performance, energy efficiency, and modern aesthetics. With rising energy costs and evolving consumer preferences, Polycab remains dedicated to delivering innovative solutions that ensure superior value for customers.

Polycab's range of Super ROI Fans, are powered by BLDC technology. Built with a 100% copper winding motor, these fans promise durability and reliability, backed by a four-year warranty. Polycab fans are available in modern aesthetic designs, in over 30 colours to complement your home décor. These Polycab Super ROI fans, ensure Return on Performance, Return on



Technology, and Return on Product, making it the right investment that pays off. Speaking on the launch, Mr. Ishwinder Khurana, Executive President & Chief Business Officer (B2C), Polycab India, said, "The Super ROI Fans are designed to exceed traditional expectations, embodying Polycab's dedication to innovation and offering solutions that genuinely 'pay back' over time." They are now available at leading retail outlets and on e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Flipkart.

Godrej Consumer Products Ltd. brings HIT Mosquito Aerosol with Thunderbolt Technology

Guwahati: Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) has launched a powerful new variant of its flagship Kala HIT mosquito spray, fortified with Thunderbolt Technology, to reinforce its leadership in India's ₹7,500+ crore household insecticide market. The new formulation uses Metofluthrin (MFT) to deliver 4X faster efficacy, offering instant mosquito elimination with reduced aerosol usage.

This marks GCPL's third major innovation in the category within just over a year. In early 2024, the company introduced 'GoodknightAgarbatti', India's first government-approved mosquito repellent incense sticks. In July 2024, GCPL rolled out 'Renofluthrin', India's first indigenously developed mosquito-control molecule. Now, the Thunderbolt-powered Kala HIT promises longer-lasting performance and greater value. The revamped product is available in



400ml and 625ml cans at special launch prices of ₹180 and ₹250, respectively, featuring a new fragrance and packaging.

In Guwahati, a key urban market prone to mosquito-borne diseases, local distributors see strong growth potential for the new Kala HIT variant. With rising demand for quick-action solutions, especially during peak mosquito season, GCPL's latest launch is expected to gain significant traction in both urban households and general trade outlets across the region.

Britannia NutriChoice enhances everyday wellness with the launch of NutriPlus

Guwahati: NutriChoice—one of India's leading biscuit brands—has extended its commitment to simplifying everyday wellness with the launch of NutriPlus, a mobile app that is on a mission to democratize wellness tracking in India by making it simpler, more accessible, and entirely smartphone-driven. Designed in partnership with Aktiv Labs, this evidence-based app is available by simply scanning a pack of Britannia NutriChoice, making what is typically complex technology available in an intuitive, easy-to-access form. In just one year, NutriPlus has seen good organic adoption, with over 1.5 lakh user sign-ins—demonstrating the growing demand for effortless everyday wellness solutions.

Archana Balaraman, General Manager, Marketing, Britannia, said, "As we continue evolving NutriPlus, Britannia NutriChoice remains committed to helping individuals embrace better wellness habits with ease." NutriPlus provides a single, evidence-based NutriScore, helping users monitor key lifestyle indicators such as steps, sleep quality, fiber intake, and water intake. Users have shown a steady improvement in their routines, with daily steps increasing by 10%, exercise time rising by 16%, and sleep duration improving from 6 hours 46 minutes to 7 hours 08 minutes. As engagement continues to grow, NutriPlus remains focused on making wellness insights more accessible and actionable for all.

Aditya Birla Health Insurance's HealthReturns™ model earns over 1 lakh policyholders rewards

Guwahati: On the occasion of World Health Day, Aditya Birla Health Insurance Co. Ltd. ("ABHICL"), the health insurance arm of Aditya Birla Capital, India's leading diversified financial services company, has announced that over 1 lakh policyholders have benefited from their first-of-its-kind HealthReturns™ model for making healthier life-

style choices and maintaining good heart health, monitored by its Healthy Heart Score™ in FY'25 (April 2024-March 2025). The HealthReturns™ model essentially focuses on regular physical activity, with access to expert health guidance, which helps deliver improved health outcomes for customers. This commitment to health is evident in their

daily habits, with customers having walked over 350 billion steps so far.

The company is redefining the industry with its 'Health-First' approach, shifting from reactive coverage to proactive wellness and by integrating wellness and health management into its offerings. A core element of this initiative is Active Dayz™, which allows customers

to earn HealthReturns™ by engaging in fitness activities such as walking 10,000 steps, burning 300 calories in a workout session. Mr. Mayank Bathwal, CEO, Aditya Birla Health Insurance, said, "At Aditya Birla Health Insurance, we have been at the forefront of integrating wellness and preventive care into health insurance."

NSDC, QCI, and Nashik Zilla Parishad launch rural housing initiative

Guwahati: The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), in collaboration with the Nashik Zilla Parishad and Quality Council of India (QCI), has launched the "Sampanna Ghar Abhiyan"—a unique rural housing initiative designed to help over 1.5 lakh families build their own homes under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana—Gramin. This community-driven effort brings together 18 professional associations and grassroots institutions with a shared vision: to blend housing access with skill empowerment. Families won't just receive support in building homes—they'll also be trained to construct them with their own hands, creating a powerful link between livelihood and self-reliance.

On-ground skill delivery will be led by Shri Ramkrishna Arogya Sansthan, ensuring beneficiaries are equipped with practical construction skills that are safe, efficient, and cost-effective. The project is led by Mrs. Ashima Mittal, CEO of Nashik Zilla Parishad. Mr. Kunal Patil (President, CREDAI Nashik Metro) and Mr. Sachin Gulve (Vice President, Nashik Citizen Forum) are coordinating across technical and community bodies, while local architects are contributing to functional and user-friendly home design layouts suited for rural needs. With its integrated, community-led, and skill-based model, the Sampanna Ghar Abhiyan has the potential to become a national blueprint for rural housing interventions.

World Health Day spurs demand for California Almonds in India's wellness market

Guwahati: As India gears up for World Health Day on April 7, the spotlight is on nutrition and healthier lifestyle choices. Experts and celebrities emphasize the benefits of incorporating California almonds into daily diets, citing their role in heart health, weight management, and diabetes prevention. With over 200 research studies backing their benefits, almonds have emerged as a preferred health snack.

Ritika Samaddar, Regional Head – Dietetics, Max Healthcare, stressed the need for mindful eating amid rising obesity and cardiovascular diseases. “Replacing deep-fried snacks with nutrient-dense

options like almonds can significantly improve health outcomes,” she said. Wellness expert Sheela Krishnaswamy highlighted almonds’ role in satiety and weight control, while nutritionist Dr. Rohini Patil emphasized their benefits in blood sugar management.

Celebrity endorsements have further fueled the almond market. Bollywood actress Soha Ali Khan and South Indian star Shriya Saran swear by almonds as a daily energy booster. “A handful of almonds keeps me energized through long shoots,” said Khan.

In Guwahati, health-conscious consumers are driv-



ing a surge in demand for California almonds. Retailers report an increasing shift from traditional snacks to dry fruits, reflecting growing awareness of wellness trends. With rising disposable incomes and lifestyle

shifts, the city's dry fruit market is experiencing steady growth.

As the health movement gains momentum, California almonds are poised to capture a larger share of India's evolving wellness market.

Hattrick Carnival[®] launched by Nissan Motor India



Guwahati: Nissan Motor India has announced the launch of the Hattrick Carnival, a nationwide limited-time offer running from 1st to 30th April 2025, bringing the electrifying energy of the ongoing cricket season and the festive spirit of Navratri to customers across India. This unique campaign offers a hattrick of benefits, making it the best time to bring home a Nissan. To amplify the announcement, Nissan Motor India is rolling out a 360-degree media campaign across digital, print, influencer outreach, and OOH, ensuring maximum visibility and engagement.

Nissan's Hattrick Carnival brings the excitement of the cricket season to its customer touchpoints, offering a more rewarding and memorable ownership experience as they celebrate the sport that unites the nation. With the festive fervour of Navratri and the ongoing cricket fever, Nissan is offering the best festive benefits of the season, making this the perfect opportunity for customers to visit a Nissan dealership and drive home their dream car. Nissan Motor India continued consistent and sustainable growth in India with a consolidated sale of 99,000+ units for FY2024-25, delivering best single-year performance for in the last seven years.

TerreArmée announces its new name Geoquest to mark a new era of innovation and growth

Guwahati: TerreArmée, a global leader in soil-structure interaction, geotechnical engineering, has announced its rebranding to Geoquest. This strategic name change reflects the company's evolution, diversification, and commitment to providing cutting-edge solutions across its global operations. Over the past decades, the company has expanded its expertise beyond its traditional Reinforced Earth® solutions, integrating geosynthetics, advanced construction materials and geohazards solutions into its portfolio. The transition to Geoquest signifies a unified global identity across continents, reinforcing the company's mission to expand, diversify, and innovate in the field of geotechnical, geohazards

and hydraulic engineering.

The new name, Geoquest, embodies the company's core strengths. The prefix 'Geo' highlights its expertise in geotechnical engineering, geosynthetics, and geohazards, while the suffix 'quest' represents its relentless pursuit of excellence by providing innovative solutions to build and maintain long-term infrastructure assets. Despite the name change, the company remains deeply committed to its legacy of expertise, innovation, and excellence. Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Somnath Biswas, Managing Director of Geoquest India, said, “The decision to adopt the name of Geoquest is a significant milestone in our company's journey.”

India launches ‘Skills Accelerator’ with WEF to future-proof workforce

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), in partnership with the World Economic Forum (WEF), has launched the India Skills Accelerator, a national platform aimed at bridging skill gaps and fostering a future-ready workforce. The announcement came during a high-level roundtable held at Kaushal Bhawan, New Delhi.

The Accelerator seeks to drive systemic change through cross-sectoral collaboration, enhancing awareness around emerging skill needs, fostering stakeholder cooperation, and reforming policy frameworks. The initiative will prioritize inclusive upskilling and reskilling, agile career transitions, and scalable training aligned with high-growth sectors like AI, robotics, and energy.

Co-chaired by Union Ministers Shri Jayant Chaudhary and Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, along with private leaders Ms. Shobana Kamineni and Mr. Sanjiv Bajaj, the Accelerator's governance structure includes major public and private stakeholders. “India is poised to become the Skill Capital of the World,” said Shri Chaudhary, stressing the need for agile and inclusive skilling systems.

Dr. Sukanta Majumdar articulated India's strategic opportunity to position itself as the global epicenter of next-generation talent. He underscored

the need to embed competitiveness in India's skills architecture—particularly in fields like artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and cloud computing—so that India is not only skilling for its domestic economy but for the world. The Accelerator, he added, will play a critical role in translating this global ambition into measurable outcomes. “Through the National Education Policy, we have initiated transformative changes—promoting flexibility, vocational pathways, and digital skilling. Our federal model of implementation, involving both Centre and States, can serve as a valuable learning for global platforms like the WEF as well,” he said.

Saadia Zahidi, Managing Director, World Economic Forum (WEF), said, “In the face of rapid technological and labour market changes, India's launch of the Skills Accelerator reflects a strong commitment to equipping its workforce with the skills needed for the future. By strengthening alignment across the skills ecosystem, this initiative will help close critical skills gaps, support the growth of India's digital and innovation-driven economy, and enable more people to thrive in a rapidly evolving world of work. We are pleased to support this important step and look forward to the impact it will deliver at scale.”

NIESBUD training fuels rise of Vijaya Sai Services as rural startup shines on national stage

Guwahati: A transformative 15-day Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) by the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) has propelled Vijaya Sai Services, a rural startup from Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh, into the national spotlight. Founded by Gummadi Siva Narayana, the business offers organic jaggery, turmeric, and other homegrown products. Initially struggling with limited direction and poor market visibility, Narayana's journey took a decisive turn after undergoing NIESBUD's structured training.

The program equipped him with critical insights into market trends, consumer behavior, digital marketing, and branding. Post-training, Vijaya Sai Services witnessed a swift transformation—streamlined operations, strategic outreach, and positive customer feedback led to rapid business growth and a five-member strong team.

The startup's recognition at Startup Mahakumbh 2025 in New Delhi highlights how capacity-building interventions can turn grassroots ideas into scalable enterprises.

In Guwahati, where consumer interest in organic and ethically sourced products is rising, the story of Vijaya Sai Services is being closely watched by local retailers and distributors. The city's expanding organic market is keen to explore collaborations with emerging rural brands, reflecting a shift in consumer priorities towards quality and trust-driven offerings.

NSDC and WRI India work together to improve the green skilling ecosystem in India

Guwahati: National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and WRI India have inked partnership to map green skill gap, implement reskilling and upskilling programmes and strengthen the green skilling ecosystem in India. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in New Delhi in this regard with a vision to transform India into a green-skilled nation. The agreement focuses on boosting green skills in manufacturing, service, and agriculture sectors. It also aims to promote sustainable development by equipping individuals and businesses, including Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSME), with market-relevant skills for green jobs.

The initiative combines skill training with research to help more people build careers in green industries. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO, NSDC and MD, NSDC International, said, “India's transition to a green economy presents a remarkable opportunity to empower its workforce with future-ready skills.” Madhav Pai, CEO of WRI India, emphasized, “Our collaboration with NSDC marks a significant step in bridging the green skill gap by integrating research-driven insights with practical strategies and innovative skilling models.” NSDC and WRI India will design industry-aligned curriculums to arm individuals with skills for green jobs and self-employment.

NSDC and PDEU collaborate to equip youth with industry-ready skills

Guwahati: National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has partnered with Pandit Deendayal Energy University (PDEU), a leading autonomous state technical university, to launch a state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence for Skill Development. The two organisations formalised their alliance through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed at the Startup Mahakumbh in New Delhi. The initiative aims to equip learners with hands-on experience in manufacturing skill sets across critical sectors such as Energy, Health, Water, and Food. The Centre of Excellence will focus on delivering specialized training in emerging technologies, including VLSI Design, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, Internet of Things (IoT), Data Science, Cloud Computing, Cybersecurity, Smart Manufacturing, Blockchain, and more.

Shri Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO, NSDC & MD, NSDC International, said, “Today, we partnered with Pandit Deendayal Energy University (PDEU) at the Startup Mahakumbh to strengthen the skilling ecosystem in the energy sector.” Dr. S. Sundar Manoharan, Director General, Pandit Deendayal Energy University, said, “We are proud to collaborate with NSDC under the visionary leadership of Mr. Ved Mani Tiwari.” Through this collaboration with NSDC, PDEU will further enhance its infrastructure by incorporating advanced manufacturing capabilities into the Centre of Excellence.

Diksha, Pranavi Make Weekend Cut in Weather-Hit Joburg Ladies Open

Johannesburg: Indian golfers Diksha Dagar and Pranavi Urs navigated through a rain-disrupted second round to make the cut at the Joburg Ladies Open, a Ladies European Tour (LET) event reduced to 54 holes due to persistent rain and flooding at the Modderfontein Golf Club. Diksha (71-73) produced a steady performance with an evenpar round on Saturday, placing her in tied-22nd, while Pranavi (70-77) made the cut on the line and is placed tied-56th heading into the final round. Meanwhile, fellow Indians Avani Prashanth (77-74) and Tvesa Malik (77-79) failed to progress to the final round, missing the cut set at one-over-par. Rain-Soaked Week Disrupts Play Heavy rainfall throughout the week led to multiple suspensions of play, with round two extending into Saturday due to unplayable course conditions. The tournament was eventually shortened from 72 to 54 holes.



Mixed Fortunes for Indian Duo Pranavi Urs started her opening round in impressive fashion, reaching 5-under through 13 holes before play was suspended. She returned the next day to add a birdie and complete a strong 6-under stretch. However, her momentum was disrupted by a sequence of three consecutive bogeys to finish with a 70. Her second round was far more erratic, featuring both birdies and a costly triple bogey, resulting in a 77. Still, her earlier gains proved enough to see her through to the weekend.

Shreyas Iyer Welcomes Early Setback, Calls PBKS Defeat a 'Wake-Up Call'

Mullanpur: Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer chose to see the silver lining in his team's first loss of the season, calling the defeat to Rajasthan Royals a much-needed early "wake-up call." After two commanding wins to start their IPL 2025 campaign, PBKS crashed to a 50-run loss as RR posted a venue-record 205/4, thanks to Yashasvi Jaiswal's 67 and a late blitz from Riyan Parag (43). In re-sponse, Punjab Kings faltered under scoreboard pressure, finishing at 155/9, despite Nehal Wadhwa's fighting half-century. "I thought 180-185 would have been ideal to chase. But we leaked a few extra runs and couldn't stick to our plans," said Iyer at the post-match presentation. "Glad that this happened early in the season — it'll help us reflect and regroup."

The loss also ended Iyer's remarkable eight-match winning streak as IPL captain — a run stretching across two franchises, PBKS and Kolkata Knight Riders. Only Gautam Gambhir (10) has more successive wins as skipper in the tournament's history. "It's just the third game. A slight hiccup like this is sometimes necessary to wake you up," Iyer added. "We'll go back to the drawing board and bounce back stronger." He highlighted execution lapses in both departments and stressed on the importance of building partnerships while chasing big targets. "We lost wickets in clusters, and it's always tough for new batters to come in and go hard from ball one."

On Wadhwa's knock, he said: "Phenomenal batting under pressure. He took his time, read the conditions, and capitalized on loose deliveries." He also noted the pitch was good for batting, albeit a touch slow. "It was holding a bit, so we tried to hit the deck hard. But we probably went too aggressive in patches. A calmer approach with better partnerships would've helped." With an early jolt behind them, Iyer and his side will now look to correct course and keep their campaign on track.

Dhoni's Presence Affecting Balance as CSK Face Tricky Punjab Test

Mullanpur: Chennai Super Kings (CSK) are facing a challenging start to the IPL season, with a hat-trick of defeats, all while chasing. As they prepare for their away clash against Punjab Kings on Tuesday, one issue that needs addressing is the lack of firepower in Mahendra Singh Dhoni's death-overs batting. Once considered a strength for CSK, Dhoni's presence at the back-end is now seen as a potential weakness, leaving the team grappling with a difficult combination. Despite being a fan favorite and the face of CSK for nearly two decades, Dhoni's struggle to contribute significantly in recent games has brought into question his role in the lineup, especially as the team faces mounting pressure.

While CSK's batting lineup has been inconsistent, with key players such as Shivam Dube failing to deliver consistently,

the presence of Dhoni, playing his 18th IPL season, seems to have become a sensitive area for the team. No one seems to be willing to confront the legend about his lack of impact, and despite the aura surrounding Dhoni, the team cannot ignore the growing concern. In CSK's previous match against Delhi Capitals, it became evident that the team's reliance on Dhoni may not be enough to carry them through tough games. Opposing teams are now targeting scores above 180, knowing that CSK's chase will be difficult unless someone like Dube steps up.

Despite the struggle, Dhoni's ability to read the game and his impeccable sense of timing have always been his strengths. As one of the most respected figures in Indian cricket, the decision of whether Dhoni will retire or continue will likely be a personal one. But as the team faces yet another season of chal-



lenges, it may be time for CSK to think beyond "Brand Dhoni." Match-Up Against Chahal Could Be Interesting One of the key battles to watch will be the contest between Yuzvendra Chahal and Dhoni, which has been a fascinating match-up over the years. Chahal, the seasoned leg-spinner, has faced Dhoni 10 times in IPL games and has dismissed him five

times. The Punjab Kings spinner will likely play a key role in halting CSK's progress during the match.

For Punjab Kings, the form of skipper Shreyas Iyer and young batter Nehal Wadhwa is giving the team confidence. With CSK struggling to find the right balance, they will need to find solutions quickly to stay competitive in the tournament.

'Chilled' Pant Will Deliver When It Matters, Says Shahbaz Ahmed Ahead of KKR Clash

Kolkata: Despite a string of underwhelming performances from skipper Rishabh Pant in the IPL 2025, Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed remains confident in the star wicket-keeper-batter's ability to come good in critical moments. Pant, the league's costliest-ever buy at ₹27 crore, has managed just 19 runs in four innings this season at a dismal average of 4.75 and a strike rate of 59.37. However, Shahbaz assured there is no panic in the LSG dressing room. "There is no change in his mood. As always, he is chilled and relaxed. He is working very hard on his batting, and we believe that when crunch time comes, Rishabh Pant will score runs and win matches for us," Shahbaz said on the eve of LSG's match against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) at Eden Gardens.

Eden Gardens Pitch Under Spotlight The pitch in Kolkata has been under scrutiny, with KKR captain Ajinkya Rahane and coach Chandrakant Pandit earlier voicing concerns about the lack of spin support in their season opener. However, Shahbaz, who represents Bengal in domestic cricket, expects more assistance this time around. "This wicket looks slower. I don't think it will turn much, but the ball may stop a bit. It will be good for bowlers, especially spinners.



Compared to Lucknow, it's a smaller ground, so there are runs on offer too," he said. He added that the Eden pitch has been spin-friendly in the IPL over the last few years, tailored to suit KKR's spin duo of Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthy.

Encouraging Injury Updates for LSG LSG have been hit hard by injuries to key pacers Mayank Yadav, Akash Deep, Mohsin Khan, and Avesh Khan. Shahbaz provided a positive update on the squad's fitness. "Akash Deep and Avesh Khan are fully fit now, and Mayank Yadav is on the road to recovery. Hopefully, he will be available soon," Shahbaz said.

Prasad, Sutherland and Voll nominated for ICC Women's Player of the Month for March

Dubai: Australian duo Annabel Sutherland and Georgia Voll, along with USA's Chetnaa Prasad, have been nominated for the ICC Women's Player of the Month for March 2025. Having recently secured the ICC Women's Player of the Month Award in December 2024, Annabel Sutherland is in line for yet another honour, having had a sensational outing in March.

The allrounder starred against TransTasman rivals, New Zealand, scoring 34 brisk runs and picking up eight wickets at an average of just eight. All of these wickets came in the final two games of the series, as Sutherland picked back-to-back four-wicket hauls. In the second T20I, she had the figures of 4-8, her career-best in the format so far.

PM Modi Meets Sri Lanka's 1996 WC Winning Cricket Legends in Colombo

Colombo: On the second day of his official visit to Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met members of the iconic 1996 ICC World Cup-winning Sri Lankan cricket team, praising their achievement as a moment that "captured the imagination of countless sports lovers." Modi, who arrived in Colombo on Friday night for high-level bilateral talks and the signing of key

agreements, took time on Saturday to interact with the legendary team that had etched its name in cricketing history by defeating Australia in the World Cup final at Lahore on March 17, 1996.

Taking to social media, PM Modi shared his delight, posting, "Cricket connect! Delighted to interact with members of the 1996 Sri Lankan cricket team, which won the World Cup that year.

This team captured the imagination of countless sports lovers!" Among the cricketing greats who met the Prime Minister were Aravinda de Silva, Sanath Jayasuriya, Chaminda Vaas, Marvan Atapattu, Upul Chandana, and Kumar Dharmasena. The team members presented Modi with a special memento to commemorate the occasion.

Photos released from the event show Modi sharing a light-hearted and warm interaction with the former cricketers. The official handle of the Prime Minister posted, "In Colombo, PM @narendramodi interacted with the members of the 1996 Sri Lankan cricket team, which won the World Cup that year. Here are a few glimpses from their interaction."