

# Semifinal spot on the line as India face West Indies in do-or-die Super 8 contest

Kolkata, (UNI) India's revived batting firepower will collide with West Indies' explosive depth in a virtual quarterfinal when the two sides meet in a high-stakes Super Eights clash at the Eden Gardens here on Sunday.



With West Indies coming off a defeat to South Africa and India riding high after a thumping win over Zimbabwe, the Group 1 equation has turned this encounter into a straight shootout. The winner will seal a place in the second semifinal against England in Mumbai on March 5, raising the stakes for what promises to be a blockbuster contest in Kolkata.

India finally found their rhythm with the bat against Zimbabwe, producing a commanding 256/4, the highest total of the tournament so far. The rejigged top order, featuring Sanju Samson's return to an opening role, provided early impetus, while Abhishek Sharma rediscovered touch with a fluent half-century after a lean run. Tilak Varma's unbeaten 44 off 16 balls at No.6 added the late surge that underlined India's depth and intent.

Yet, despite the batting resurgence, India head into the knockout-decider with lingering concerns in their bowling unit. Arshdeep Singh's triple strikes against Zimbabwe reaffirmed his value, and the experienced duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya have largely delivered control and penetration. However, spin remains a grey area. Varun Chakravarthy has struggled for consistency, missing his lengths at crucial stages and proving expensive in recent outings. His spell against South Africa, where he was targeted by David Miller and Dewald Brevis, and another costly outing against Zimbabwe have left the team management with a decision to make.

Left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav, who has featured sparingly in the tournament, presents an alternative. Both spinners are well-acquainted with Eden Gardens conditions through their IPL stints, and the nature of the surface, expected to offer some grip, could influence the final combination.

# J&K end 67-year wait to be crowned Ranji champions; Jay Shah hails historic feat



Hubballi(Karnataka), (UNI)

At exactly 2.11 pm on February 28, history beckoned Jammu & Kashmir. When the captains shook hands on the final afternoon in Hubballi, it only formalised what had been inevitable for more than a day - Jammu & Kashmir, armed with a massive 291-run first-innings lead, were crowned champions of the 91st Ranji Trophy, marking a watershed moment for a region that had waited 67 years to lift Indian domestic cricket's most coveted prize.

contributions across the order including resolute knocks from skipper Paras Dogra, Kanhaiya Wadhawan and Sahil Lotra, the foundations of something special had been laid.

Even a five-wicket haul from Prasad Krishna could not stem the tide. Jammu & Kashmir had batted Karnataka out of the contest on a surface that demanded patience and discipline.

If the batters built the platform, the bowlers drove home the advantage. Auqib Nabi Dar delivered a spell that will be remembered for years, removing key batters and reducing Karnataka to 57/4. Though Mayank Agarwal mounted a valiant rearguard with a superb century, Jammu & Kashmir never loosened their grip. Karnataka were eventually bowled out for 293, handing the visitors a decisive 291-run lead, effectively the moment the title slipped from the hosts' grasp.

What followed was confirmation of supremacy. Despite an early wobble in the second innings, opener Qamran Iqbal produced a masterclass in temperament, crafting a marathon 160 off 311 deliveries.

Facing eight-time champions Karnataka in their maiden final, Jammu & Kashmir showed neither nerves nor hesitation. From the opening session of Day 1, they dictated terms with a blend of authority and composure that belied their inexperience at this stage. Shubham Pundir's historic century, the first by a batter from the state in a Ranji Trophy final, set the tone. His unbeaten 117 anchored a dominant start, while Yawer Hassan and Abdul Samad ensured the momentum never dipped.

By the time the first innings closed at a towering 584, built on

# Hemant Soren felicitates Commonwealth U-14 chess gold medalist Adhiraj Mitra

Ranchi, (UNI)

Hemant Soren on Saturday met young chess player Adhiraj Mitra at the Chief Minister's Residential Office in Ranchi and congratulated him for winning the gold medal in the Under-14 category at the Commonwealth Chess Championship 2025.

During the meeting, Adhiraj shared his experiences of participating in the championship held in Malaysia from November 7 to 16, 2025, where several top players from Commonwealth nations competed.

A Class VIII student of Loyola School, Jamshedpur, the young player briefed the Chief Minister about his journey and achievements in the tournament.



Congratulating the budding chess talent, the Chief Minister said that sportspersons from Jharkhand have consistently demonstrated dedication and excellence at national and international levels, bringing laurels to the state.

He extended his best wishes to Adhiraj Mitra for a bright future.



# DP World PGTI's 2026: Three Championships played already, franchise league launched, prize money raised

New Delhi, (UNI)

The opening month of the 2026 season has provided clear signs that the DP World PGTI is growing in scale and strength. The tour staged three high-value events - in Naya Raipur, Delhi and Kolkata in quick succession, and then added a fresh dimension with the announcement of '72 The League'.

Together, these developments show a tour that is expanding not only in reach, but also in substance.

A key measure of that progress is prize money. In the early domestic phase of the season, DP World PGTI staged three events carrying prize purses of Rs 1.5 crore each, creating a combined purse pool of Rs 4.5 crore. That marks an important rise in the financial scale of Indian professional golf. The SECL Chhattisgarh Open, for example, saw its purse increase from Rs 1 crore to Rs 1.5 crore year-on-year.

For players, that means stronger incentives and more competitive weeks. For sponsors and partners, it reflects a tour with increasing value and credibility.

The season began in Naya Raipur with the SECL Chhattisgarh Open Golf Championship from February 3 to 6. The event stood out not only because of its Rs 1.5 crore purse, but also because it was staged in an emerging market rather than a traditional metro.

It showed that professional golf can attract attention and deliver strong competition outside its established centres. American golfer Jhared Hack underlined that with a memorable win, including a brilliant final-round 59, as he finished five shots clear in the season opener.

# Atletico closes door on possible Griezmann U.S. move

Madrid, (UNI)

Atletico Madrid's Director of Sport, Mateu Alemany, has closed the door on speculation that French international Antoine Griezmann is on the verge of leaving the club to sign for MLS side Orlando City.

The 34-year-old forward, who will be 35 in March, is reported to have a lucrative offer from the

U.S. side, with French sports newspaper L'Equipe reporting the deal has all-but been agreed, according to Xinhua.

However, with the transfer window in the MLS closing on March 26, if Griezmann, who has scored 202 goals in 445 appearances for the club, wants to leave Atletico Madrid, he would have to do so two



months before the end of the Spanish season and with his side possibly still in the Champions League and also with the chance of playing the Copa del Rey final if it defends a 4-0 semifinal advantage against FC Barcelona in the Camp Nou next Tuesday.

When asked about Griezmann's future on Friday following the draw for the last-16 of the Champions League, Alemany said the question "was just speculation."

"Antoine has two more seasons left on his contract and he is focused on what lies ahead. His form has been very good and we think he can help us a lot on what lies ahead," commented Alemany.

## BUSINESS

# Techs important frontier where 'Aspirational Nepal' & 'Rising India' can collaborate: Nepal Ambassador

New Delhi, (UNI)

Dr Shankar Prasad Sharma, Ambassador of Nepal to India, called for a 'tech upgrade' in the bilateral relationship, describing technology as an important frontier where an "Aspirational Nepal" and a "Rising India" can further collaborate.

While delivering his keynote address at 'Nepal-India Tech Forum 2026' hosted by PHDCCI here, Sharma urged Indian IT giants to explore Nepal as a promising investment destination, highlighting the country's digital evolution from its first IT policy in 2000 to the National AI Policy 2025 and the broader 'IT Decade Vision.'

The Ambassador noted that Nepal has built meaningful Digital Public Infrastructure, including data centres, digital payment systems, and citizen platforms, with support from India and multilateral agencies.



Producing over 10,000 ICT graduates annually, Nepal has built a strong talent base, though retaining skilled professionals remains a challenge.

He outlined the government's FASG Framework - Foundation, Access, Skills and Growth - as a structured roadmap for inclu-

sive digital transformation, with AI Excellence Centres planned across four provinces.

He said Indian companies such as Infosys already operate in Nepal's banking sector and pointed to opportunities in cloud computing, fintech, cyber security, and AI as future growth areas.

Munu Mahawar, Additional Secretary (North) at the Ministry of External Affairs, reaffirmed India's commitment to fostering deeper tech-driven ties.

He underscored the Government of India's commitment to foster deeper tech-driven ties with Nepal.

He reflected how India-Nepal border regions have seen the positive infrastructural drives like Integrated Check Posts (ICPs), petroleum pipelines, improved transits and trade facilitations and their multiplied impact on economies both sides.

# CGA launches digital tools to boost transparency in public fund management

New Delhi, (UNI)

In a major push to strengthen oversight and efficiency in government banking operations, the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) has launched two key initiatives: the 'Government Bank Dashboard' and the 'Government Bank Manual' aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability and real-time monitoring of public funds handled by banks. The initiatives were unveiled by CGA TCA Kalyani, marking a significant step toward modernising the framework through which government transactions are processed and supervised.

The newly introduced Government Bank Dashboard is designed as a real-time digital monitoring platform that tracks critical banking parameters linked



to government business. These include transaction timelines, remittance efficiency, reconciliation status and compliance with service-level agreements.

The dashboard is expected to enable proactive supervision by identifying delays or discrepancies early, thereby reducing operational risks and improving service delivery standards.

Complementing this digital tool is the Government Bank Manual, which lays down a comprehensive and standardised set of operating procedures for banks undertaking government transactions.

The manual clearly outlines roles, responsibilities, reporting timelines and reconciliation protocols, ensuring uniform practices across institutions handling public funds.

# RBI's tightened credit norms to reshape proprietary trading: CRISIL

New Delhi, (UNI)

Fresh directions issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on credit facilities to capital market intermediaries (CMIs) are set to significantly alter the operating landscape for proprietary trading firms, according to a credit alert released by Crisil Ratings Limited.

The RBI's "Commercial Banks - Credit Facilities Amendment Directions", released on February 13 and effective from April 1, 2026, introduced a dedicated chapter on credit facilities to CMIs.

While banks may adopt the framework earlier, the new norms primarily redefine permissible credit exposure and collateral requirements for intermediaries operating in the capital mar-



kets. CRISIL's initial assessment indicates that the most pronounced impact will be on CMIs engaged in proprietary trading - that is, trading securities on their own account.

Under the revised norms, bank guarantees issued in favour of exchanges or clearing houses for proprietary trading must now carry 100pc collateral coverage, compared with 50pc earlier. Importantly, at least half of this collateral must be in cash, with the remainder restricted to cash equivalents or government securities.

This change effectively halves the leverage previously available to such entities. Banks had typically offered guarantee limits of up to twice the collateral value.

# Godrej Agrovet Bolsters Bengal's Agriculture with 'Takai' Multi-Crop Insecticide

New Delhi: In a strategic move to safeguard West Bengal's position as India's "Rice Bowl," Godrej Agrovet Limited has launched Takai, a cutting-edge multi-crop insecticide designed to combat devastating pest infestations. Powered by Cyclapryl™ technology, developed by ISK Japan, Takai offers rapid knockdown effects and long-lasting protection against Lepidopteran pests like stem borers and leaf folders. In West Bengal, where annual paddy production hits 15 million tons, these pests



can slash yields by up to 40% if left unchecked.

Takai's versatility extends beyond rice to maize, soybean, and pulses, with label expansions underway for chili and cabbage. Pest threats like the Fall Armyworm in maize and Semilooper in soybean often cause losses between 25% and 65%, directly impacting food security and farmer income. NK Rajavelu, CEO of Godrej Agrovet's Crop Protection Business, emphasized that Takai ensures more stable, high-quality yields by instantly stopping

pests from feeding.

The product is particularly vital for Bengal's multi-season paddy cycles, where humid conditions foster year-round pest attacks. By recommending a precise dosage of 160 ml during critical growth stages, Godrej Agrovet aims to empower farmers with a sustainable, research-driven solution. This launch reinforces the company's commitment to building a resilient agricultural ecosystem through innovative chemistry and a robust local distribution network.