

It felt like the Mumbai Indians lacked a bit of purpose and intent with the ball, and that certainly spilled over into the batting. It was always going to be a big task to score 151 in 11 overs. Young swashbuckler Vaibhav Sooryavanshi was "brilliant" against pace ace Jasprit Bumrah

- Anil Kumble

Vaibhav taking down Bumrah eased pressure, says Jaiswal

GUWAHATI

AMAZED by Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's seemingly effortless takedown of Jasprit Bumrah, Rajasthan Royals batter Yashasvi Jaiswal said his 15-year-old opening partner eased the pressure on him in the 27-run IPL win over Mumbai Indians on a rain-soaked evening here. The talking point before the match was the first face-off between the redoubtable pacer and the teen sensation, and Sooryavanshi lived up to the hype, smashing

an incoming Bumrah 131kph delivery on middle and leg for a first-ball six over mid-on.

"First ball, he hit him for a six, and I told him to just keep playing his shots," said Jaiswal, who scored a 32-ball 77 not out to lift RR to 150/3 in the 11-overs a side match that was truncated because of inclement weather. Mumbai Indians, in reply, managed 123/9 to slump to a second loss on the trot, while Rajasthan Royals climbed to the top of the table with three wins from three matches.

Mahela concedes MI blown away by Sooryavanshi and Jaiswal magic; It felt like Mumbai Indians lacked purpose and intent with the ball: Kumble

The Bihar left-hander, who was signed by Rajasthan Royals for Rs 1.1 crore during the 2025 IPL mega auction. He had shown glimpses of his prodigious talent by becoming the youngest centurion in T20 cricket and the second-fastest in IPL history with a record-breaking

35-ball hundred against Gujarat Titans last season. On Tuesday too, he was in beast mode from the outset, even though Bumrah operating with the new ball. Sooryavanshi, who turned 15 a day before IPL 2026 began, went on to hit two of

his four sixes off the pacer in his opening over, setting the tempo early with a 14-ball 39. It made life easier for Jaiswal at the other end as their confidence soared, allowing them to target other MI bowlers like Deepak Chahar and Trent Boult who both leaked 22 runs in their respective overs. "Of course, Bumrah bhai is one of the legends, so if he's scoring against him, it's amazing. It made us feel that other bowlers we can also take down," said Jaiswal, who hit 10 fours and four sixes and anchored the

innings," Jaiswal said. are quite an opposition."

Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene admitted his side was blown off course by a blistering onslaught from Rajasthan Royals openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

It felt like the Mumbai Indians lacked a bit of purpose and intent with the ball, and that certainly spilled over into the batting. It was always going to be a big task to score 151 in 11 overs," said former India captain Anil Kumble.



Divya Deshmukh storms into joint lead

R Praggnanandhaa saw his title hopes take a major hit after a loss against Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri in the eighth round

PAPHOS

INDIAN chess sensation Divya Deshmukh pulled off a superb turnaround converting what looked like a certain draw into victory to climb into joint lead, while compatriot R Praggnanandhaa saw his title hopes take a major hit after a loss against Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri in the eighth round, leaving him almost out of contention for a top finish in the Candidates tournament here.

In the women's section, World Cup winner Deshmukh turned the tables on overnight leader Anna Muzychuk to jump into joint lead with four others including the Ukrainian on 4.5 points from what had seemed a difficult position to defend. Deshmukh did well to fight on and equalise and then capitalised on an unforced error by her opponent in the queen-and-pawns endgame to score a vital victory.

The other Indian, R.



Vaishali drew with Bibisara Assaubayeva of Kazakhstan to join Deshmukh, Kateryna Lagno of Ukraine, China's Zhu Jiner and Muzychuk in the lead on 4.5 points after eight games. The event is wide open now with Jiner giving a knockout blow to the hopes of her Chinese compatriot Tan Zhongyi to move to 4.5 points while Kateryna defeated fellow Russian Aleksandra Goryachkina.

On a day when Uzbek Javokhir Sindarov just decided to consolidate his lead and drew with tail-ender Andrey Esipenko of Russia in the 'Open' section, Praggnana-

ndhaa, who had scored his sole victory over Giri in the first round, fell prey to some simple tactics from a seemingly equal position and lost his second game in the tournament.

Sindarov took his tally to 6.5 out of a possible eight and looks headed for victory as his lead now stands at a massive two points with six rounds remaining in the USD 700,000 prize money tournament that will also select the next challenger for reigning world champion D. Gukesh in the world championship match slated later this year.

KKR brace for Shami challenge in LSG clash

TAPAN MOHANTA
KOLKATA

OUT of tune and bereft of ideas, Kolkata Knight Riders may ring in sweeping changes in search of their first win of the season when they face a Mohammed Shami-inspired Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL, here on Thursday.

Shami is fresh from his outstanding 2/9 against Sunrisers Hyderabad, where he dismissed Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head in successive overs -- the same duo who had battered KKR the other day. The 'local' man Shami, a fine exponent of straight seam bowling and movement, will relish the conditions at Eden Gardens and could emerge as a key threat for a KKR who are yet to win after three matches. A glimpse of what to expect was seen on Monday when PBKS' Australian speedster Xavier Bartlett showed how effective straight seam bowling can be on a grassy Eden pitch, blowing away KKR's top order by dismissing overseas duo Finn Allen and Cameron Green in the space of three balls. From 16/2 in two overs, KKR were fortunate to escape with a point after their match against Punjab Kings was washed out.

Because of a trough stretching from Gangetic West Bengal to the Gulf of Mannar, rain has been a constant over the past three days and is forecast around late Wednesday and early Thursday. However, being a late 7.30pm start the match is unlikely to be affected much, which should lift the mood. Coming back to the contest, while Shami will be a major threat in the power play, tackling the rest of LSG's attack including Prince Yadav and mystery spinner Digvesh Rathi could also be decisive. LSG's strength lies in their power play bowling, something evident when they reduced both Delhi Capitals and Sunrisers Hyderabad to identical scores of 26/4 early on.



MATCH STARTS AT 7:30PM



Ayush stuns world No. 7 Feng in Asia Championships

NINGBO: India's Ayush Shetty stunned world No. 7 Lin Shi Feng of China in straight games to enter the second round of the men's singles competition at the Badminton Asia Championships here on Wednesday. World No 25 Ayush, who had won the US Open Super 300 title last year, registered a 21-13 21-16 victory in 51 minutes.

Lin raced to a 4-1 lead early on, but Ayush clawed back to level at 7-7 before gradually taking control to pocket the opening game. After the change of sides, the Chinese again moved ahead 4-1 and extended it to 12-9, but Ayush turned the tide with a six-point burst to surge to 18-13. Lin closed the gap to 16-18, but the Indian held his nerve to shut the door on his fancied opponent. Top stars such as PV Sindhu, Lakshya Sen, Kidambi Srikanth and HS Prannoy will begin their campaigns later in the day.

India go down 1-2 to Thailand

NEW DELHI: Rituja Bhosale and Ankita Raina salvaged some pride with a consolation win in the doubles after Sahaja Yamalappalli's narrow defeat in the second singles as India went down against Thailand 1-2 in the rain-hit opening Asia/Oceania Group I tie of the Billie Jean King Cup here on Wednesday. A lot was riding on world No. 384 Sahaja as she resumed the match after it was halted due to rain on Tuesday evening.

However, the 25-year-old could not keep India in the hunt, losing 4-6, 6-1, 4-6 to Patcharin, ranked 449, in a match that lasted two hours and 25 minutes. Doubles pair of Bhosale and Raina then beat Thasaporn Naklo and Peangtarn Plipuech 6-3 6-4 in one hour and 11 minutes.

"We knew going into the match, Thailand is a very good team. We really have to play some good tennis. Unfortunately, we didn't do what we needed to do and lost 2-0. But nevertheless, it's a good thing that we won the doubles because it's still a long tournament ahead. And



every win matters," captain Vishal Uppal told reporters.

Earlier, resuming at 3-4 in the decider, Sahaja sent a forehand wide as Patcharin held serve to move 5-3 ahead. The Indian then held her serve after a Patcharin backhand slice found the net, narrowing the gap to 4-5. With the match on knife's edge, Sahaja produced some exceptional groundstrokes, dominating baseline exchanges. She even earned a break point when the Thai hit long. However, she faltered at the crucial juncture, sending a forehand and a backhand long to hand the advantage back. A miscued return on the next point ended her resistance.

We will move court again to resist voter deletions: Didi

Everything in my life began from here: Mamata after filing nomination for Bhabanipur seat;

KOLKATA

WEST Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee hit out at the BJP and the Election Commission over voter deletions during the SIR exercise and said her party will move a court again to resist the removal of electors from the rolls. Her comments came after nearly 91 lakh voters' names were deleted from the electoral rolls following the completion of the Special Intensive Revision in the state.

"You will not be able to defeat the TMC by deleting names. We will move a court again to resist the exclusion of names," Banerjee said while attacking her principal challenger BJP over the roll revision exercise. Banerjee had in February argued in



the Supreme Court as she sought an intervention in the SIR process. The EC figures showed the total deletion of over 90.83 lakh names from the original voter base of 7.66 crore in October 2025. Criticising the poll panel over the SIR process, the TMC supreme said, "We will fight legally to get the names included on

the list as per the Constitution. If people cannot cast their votes, what is the need to frame the tribunal? And then you are saying that the list has been frozen. What is this? We will challenge it and try to understand it."

Turning her nomination filing for the Bhabanipur seat into a political counteroffen-

sive to the BJP's call for "paribartan", West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee marched from her Kalighat residence to submit her papers, projecting the constituency as a "mini India" under siege of polarisation. "I was born and brought up here in Bhabanipur only. I stay here 365 days a year. My life, my work, my movements -- everything revolves around Bhabanipur."

Everything in my life began from here. I thank and salute the people of Bhabanipur," Banerjee said.

"People are allowed to eat eggs, fish, or meat in the BJP-ruled states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra. The same will happen here if the BJP comes to power," Banerjee claimed. PTI

CM Stalin on delimitation

'TN will not accept any decision taken without state's consent'

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Wednesday said the South demanded a fair delimitation and that the state will not accept any decision taken by the Centre on the subject without its consent. Prime Minister Narendra Modi should not turn a "calm south into a storm", he cautioned, and posed a set of questions to the PM. "The Prime Minister must answer these fair and pressing questions raised by the people of the South," Stalin said in a post on 'X' with a headline "Delimitation Danger: Is India sliding into dictatorship?" The DMK chief sought to know why the Union BJP government was "shrouding the entire delimitation process in secrecy instead of coming clean on how it intends to carry it out."

"In 2001, former Prime Minister Vajpayee deferred delimitation for 25 years in the national interest. What is Prime Minister Modi's answer



to the just and reasonable demand of southern states to follow the same path today?" he asked in the post.

He questioned the timing of convening a special session of Parliament in the midst of five state elections and why the Union government brushed aside the fair and reasoned demand of Opposition leaders to hold the special session only after April 29. "What is it that you are trying to hide? Forcing through far reaching constitutional amendments without even convening an all party consultation is nothing short of dictatorship," Stalin claimed.

RSS files police complaints against Cong President

GUWAHATI: The RSS on Wednesday said it has filed complaints at two police stations in Assam against Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for allegedly compar-



ing the ideology of the organisation and the BJP with a 'poisonous snake' at an election rally.

The complaints were filed to seek legal action over alleged "derogatory, provocative, and communally sensitive statements made during a recent election rally in south Assam, a RSS spokesman said. In the complaints, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh alleged that the Congress chief had made controversial remarks during an election rally in Nilambazar under the Karimganj South assembly constituency in Sribhumi district.

"If a poisonous snake is moving in front of you while you are offering namaz, you

must stop the prayer and rush to kill the poisonous snake first - that is what the Quran prescribes you to do. I tell you that the RSS and BJP are like that same poisonous snake," Kharge was quoted as saying in the complaints. The RSS expressed serious concern, claiming that such remarks were "inflammatory in nature and capable of inciting hostility, intimidation, and violence against workers and supporters of the RSS and the BJP."

The complaints pointed out that the statement constitutes a "corrupt electoral practice under Section 83 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and the remarks criminally intimidated the public and promoted enmity between supporters of different political and social groups."

Cong levels vote-for-cash allegations against BJP

PALAKKAD

CONGRESS alleged that Sobha Surendran, the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate of the Palakkad constituency in Kerala, was "caught red-handed distributing" cash to voters ahead of April 9 elections to the state assembly.

Surendran denied the allegations, calling them "fabricated" to defeat her.

She alleged that a local Congress leader and a journalist of a TV channel were behind the allegations, and she would be filing a police



case against them. The BJP leader claimed that a video aired on TV channels, showing some women "offering something" to an elderly woman in her constituency, was wrongly projected by the Congress and the journalist to allege that she offered

money for votes.

Visuals aired on TV channels show a woman offering something to the elderly woman, and thereafter, another group goes to her and opens her hand to reveal a small roll of Rs 500 currency notes. Based on the video, it was alleged that the elderly woman was given money by someone in the BJP candidate's campaign team.

However, the elderly woman denied having received any money, but admitted to having asked for Rs 5,000 for buying medicines.

Kerala LoP urges EC to ensure smooth postal voting for govt staff

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Leader of the Opposition in the state Assembly, V D Satheesan, on Wednesday sought the EC's intervention to ensure that government employees can exercise their franchise without any hindrance through the postal voting process. In a letter to Chief Election Commissioner, CEC, Gyanesh Kumar, Satheesan said the issue has already been brought to the attention of the Kerala Chief Electoral Officer by postal voters from all 14 districts, but "no effective remedial measures have been implemented". Assembly polls for 140 constituencies in Kerala will be held on April 9. He said many such employees have also approached him, seeking assistance in resolving these difficulties.

Himanta using police to intimidate me: Khera

GUWAHATI: Congress leader Pawan Khera on Wednesday accused Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of "unleashing" the state police on him instead of addressing the opposition party's questions on multiple passports and foreign investments linked to the CM's wife. In a recorded video addressed to the CM from an undisclosed location, Khera said, "Our party had only asked you some questions. Why do you want to silence us? We have asked questions; give us the replies."

He added, "Instead of replying, you are hurling abuses at everyone, you have put police behind me. I am not afraid of them. But I am avoiding them as I have more questions to ask." Khera reiterated questions regarding a purported company registered in the US state of Wyoming in the name of Sarma's wife, Riniki



Assam Police book Pawan Khera for defamation, forgery, criminal conspiracy on complaint by CM's wife

Bhuyan Sarma, claiming that the official company website lists a London address as primary and two other addresses in

Dubai and Dhaka.

He said the London address is also linked with 'Bhuyan Properties Ltd', according to UK government records. Referring to his previous charge of Bhuyan Sarma possessing passports of Egypt and Antigua and Barbuda, and the golden visa of the UAE, Khera asked, "Did you or your agent or one of your family members use fake KYC documents to open these shell companies, buy properties?"

"It can be known only through investigation. You are in government, and you should probe these rather than trying to intimidate us," Khera added. Khera had brought the accusations against Bhuyan Sarma of possessing multiple passports and properties in foreign countries on April 5, which have been dismissed by the CM and his wife as false.