

# I'm most comfortable batting in top order: KL Rahul

**Rahul, who usually bats No. 5, was pushed down a position lower in the Champions Trophy, His success was a reflection of his preparedness for this new challenge and dedication to keep working on his game**

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** KL Rahul has been performing consistently irrespective of his position in the batting order but given a choice, the stylish keeper-batter would be "most comfortable" occupying one of the top-order slots.

Rahul, who usually bats No. 5, was pushed down a position lower in the Champions Trophy, and made 174 runs in five innings in Dubai. Rahul's success was a reflection of his preparedness for this new challenge and dedication to keep working on his game.

"I have grown up playing in the top order. From my first competitive match in Mangalore at the age of 11 to my early days playing for India, and for most of my career, I have been a top-order batter. It is the position I am most comfortable in and the one that feels most natural to me," Rahul said.

"That said, when you play a team sport, you don't always get to choose what you want. You have to be flexible and willing to adapt to the team's needs. Over the years, I've learned to embrace that and give my best in whichever role I'm assigned," he added during an interaction with JioHotstar.

Rahul, who has led Punjab Kings and Lucknow Super Giants in the past, has reportedly turned down an opportunity to captain his new franchise Delhi Capitals in the upcoming IPL.

Speaking about the IPL auction, he said it can significantly impact a player's future in the game.



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nificantly impact a player's future in the game.

"Having been a captain for the last three seasons, I have been actively involved in the process of building a team. I understand the kind of pressure franchises face when assembling a squad."

"But from a player's perspective, it's even tougher because your career is at stake. The auction can shape a player's future or present unexpected challenges."

"I was definitely nervous, even a little anxious (during the last auction). But at the same time, I knew this

was the right step for my career. There was excitement too, though it didn't last very long because reality sets in quickly."

If not Rahul then spin-bowling all-rounder Axar Patel is the favourite to lead DC this season.

After a forgettable season at LSG last year, Rahul is looking for a fresh start at the Capitals.

"I'm really happy to be joining Delhi Capitals. Parth Jindal, the team's owner, is a close friend, and we have spent a lot of time outside of cricket discussing various things."

"I know how passionate he is about the sport, and I'm thrilled to be a part of this team. We have a strong squad, and I'm looking forward to the season ahead. This will be a new experience for me - joining a new franchise, possibly my fourth or fifth team in the IPL. I feel both excited and a little nervous."

"Every time you step into a new team environment, a lot of thoughts cross your mind - how the players will be, how the owners run the team, how the fans will re-

spond - all of that. So, it's a mix of emotions," he added. DC have never won the IPL, but Rahul is optimistic of putting up a good show with a "solid team".

"Looking at the squad and how the management has built the team, it looks like a well-balanced side with most areas covered. There's a great combination of experienced players and young talent, and I'm excited to play alongside some incredibly skilled youngsters and learn from them as well."

"With players like Mitchell Starc, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, many of whom I have played with before, we have a solid squad. I can't wait for the IPL to begin."

Rahul, who has maintained an impressive average in recent times, remained not out on a fluent 34 in the final of the Champions Trophy against New Zealand on Sunday, also reflected on his journey in international cricket.

"The journey has been filled with challenges there have been highs and lows, and I have experienced everything an athlete possibly can. But looking back, it has been a beautiful ride, and I wouldn't want it any other way."

"Now, I am excited for the next 10 years of my career. I want to build on everything I have learned in my first decade, apply that experience, and continue evolving. My focus is on improving every day, growing as a player, and winning more matches for my team," he added.

## Iyer focused on delivering for Kolkata Knight Riders

**PTI, KOLKATA:** Kolkata Knight Riders star all-rounder and newly appointed vice-captain Venkatesh Iyer on Thursday said he cannot ignore the scrutiny surrounding his Rs 23.75-crore price tag but is determined to fulfil his responsibilities rather than letting the weight of expectations affect him.

The left-handed batter, who also bowls occasional medium pace, earned a staggering Rs 23.75 crore deal -- more than 11 times his base price -- as KKR went all-out and used their RTM card following a fierce bidding war with Royal Challengers Bengaluru to bring him back.

"Obviously, you can't ignore it altogether. It exists. Wherever I go, I get asked about it," Iyer said at their pre-season media interaction at Eden Gardens.

"So, it is existent, right? But for me, it's about absorbing it and still trying to fulfill the responsibility



that has been given to me."

However, Iyer believes that once the IPL begins, the numbers won't matter anymore.

"But when the IPL will start, it really doesn't matter. You are a part of a playing XI. You are a part of a team that is going out there to win," he said.

"It really doesn't matter for what price you were picked or what is expected out of you. If you are taking the field for a side, you will be expected to do well. And to do well, I feel, it's not just the number of runs that you score or the number of

wickets you pick.

"It's about how you carry yourself on to the field. And are you able to fulfil the responsibility that has been given to you? And see, again, pressure is always there, irrespective. If not the price tag, it will be something else," he said.

"It will be selection, it will be batting in multiple positions, bowling, fielding, everything. The pressure will still be there. But I think it's up to me how I absorb that pressure," added Iyer, who has been a mainstay in KKR's batting lineup since his debut.

KKR's newly-appointed skipper Ajinkya Rahane seemed visibly irritated by the repeated discussions around Iyer's price tag and said he "deserved that price."

"I want to tell you all that Venkatesh Iyer deserved that price. People are talking about all these things but he has done well for his franchise on a number of occasions. So I think he has deserved that price," Rahane said of his deputy.

"One single over can turn the game. So for us as a team, it is important that we should give our best. We don't want to think far too ahead."

The reigning champions, KKR, will kickstart the IPL 2025 season against Royal Challengers Bengaluru here on March 22.

HERALD PIC



Vishwas Gurav (Babu) of Unique Gym clinched the Mr Goa 3.0 title in the Masters Category at the 3rd All Goa Bodybuilding Competition held at Lohia Maidan, Margao, recently. Yogiraj Kamat, chairman, Goa Body Building and Fitness Association; Sports Authority of Goa Executive Director Dr Geeta Nagvenkar and Goa Olympic Association Secretary General Gurudatta Bhakta applauded Vishwas for his achievement

**KALA ACADEMY GOA**  
50th TIATR 'A' GROUP COMPETITION - (2024-25)  
TODAY'S TIATR 14/03/2025  
ODRUXTA FATTLEAN ODRUXTT  
Avito Fernandes  
Institution:  
Sao Bartolomeu Sports Club and Cultural Association, Choroa  
Venue:  
Dinanath Mangeshkar Kala Mandir, Panaji  
Time: 7.00 p.m.  
Tickets of Rs. 100/- available at the Venue

HERALD PIC



Vidya Prabodhini Higher Secondary School, Porvorim, won the Zonal Level Inter Higher Secondary School U-19 Boys Leatherball Cricket Tournament, defeating Government Higher Secondary School, Khandola-Marcel, by 17 runs in the final organised by the Directorate of Sports and Youth Affairs, at Campal ground, Panjim, recently. The team along with officials (left to right) Sanjay Shirodkar (ZSO), Paresh Miskin (former Ranji cricketer), Vilas Palkar (PE trainer) and Hemant Khot (technical official)

HERALD PIC



Vinit Khandeparkar, student of R&P Salkar Higher Secondary School, Choroa, won the gold medals in shot put, discus throw and hammer throw at the Zonal Level Inter-Higher Secondary School Athletic Meet organised by the Directorate of Sports and Youth Affairs, at Peddem Sports Complex, Mapusa. Vinit along with ZSO-DSYA official Sanjay Shirodkar and PE Teacher Jaganath Ghatwal

### TODAY'S SPORTS

**Goa Professional League (Relegation League):** Pax of Nagao SC vs Churchhill Brothers SC, at Nagao ground, Calangute Association vs Panjim Footballers, at Duler Stadium, Mapusa. Kick off 4 pm

**GFA U-19 Division I League:** Sporting Clube de Goa vs Penha De France SC, at Santa Cruz ground, 4.30 pm. Sesa FA vs FC Goa, at Sirsaim ground, 4 pm

**14th Wilred Leisure Soccer Cup:** Wilfred Leisure SC, Curtorim, vs Velsao Sports and Cultural Club, at the DSYA ground, Curtorim, 4.45 pm

## Varca Youth face Carmona in final

**Team Herald**  
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**RAIA:** Varca Youth defeated Orlim Youth 4-0 to move into the final of Benaulim constituency youth football tournament played at Varca ground, on Thursday.

Varca Youth netted a

brace through Jobern Cardozo and Haden Fernandes. Varca Youth will meet Carmona Youth in the final on March 15.

**Calangute Veterans in final**  
Calangute Veterans

scored a solitary goal win over Murida Veterans to enter into the final of 10th Fatorda Veterans football tournament played at Don Bosco Oratory ground, Fatorda, on Thursday

The all-important goal came from the boots of

Sailesh Miskin in the second half of play for Calagute Veterans.

Sailesh Miskin of Calangute Veterans was declared as the man-of-the-match, which was presented by Simon Andrade, former player of Don Bosco Oratory, Fatorda.

## CD Margao Mega Strikers clinch Alcon GSB Unity Cup T20

**Team Herald**

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**MARGAO:** CD Margao Mega Strikers clinched the Alcon GSB Unity Cup T20 title defeating Madgaon Royals by 31 runs in a thrilling final played at MCC Ground, Margao, recently.

Batting first after winning the toss, CD Margao Mega Strikers put up a competitive total of 172/7 in 20 overs. Sidhith Raiturkar led the charge with 38 off 25 balls (3 fours, 2 sixes), while Vismay Falgaonkar (35), Durgesh Prabhugaonkar (26), Yash Prabhugaonkar (21) and Amod Borkar (16)\* chipped in with crucial contributions. Shaunit Sawardekar (2/20) and Arsh Sardesai (2/25) were the pick of the bowlers for Madgaon Royals.

In response, Madgaon Royals were bowled out for

HERALD PIC



CD Margao Mega Strikers receives award from Tanmay Kholkar, Akash Khaunte, Pinty Hoddarkar, Dr Ketan Bhatikar, Dinesh Pai, Prathamesh Sukthankar and other dignitaries at the MCC Ground, Margao, recently

147 in 18 overs. Despite a fighting 40-run knock off 24 balls by Sahish Mahambrey, supported by Aditya Dalal (29), Granthik Buyao (26) and Kaushal Hattangadi (23), they fell short.

CD Margao Mega Strikers' Animesh Prabhugaon-

kar (3/33) and Aditya Angle (2/14) dismantled the batting order, securing the victory. Animesh Prabhugaonkar was named the man-of-the-match for his all-round performance.

The prize distribution ceremony was attended by

Tanmay Kholkar (founder, Manas Developers), Aakash Khaunte (director, Alcon Enterprises), social worker Dr Ketan Bhatikar, Balakrishna Hodarkar (councillor, Curchoem-Cacora Municipal Council), Dinesh Pai (director, Priority Construc-

tions), Prathamesh Sukthankar (partner, Shamrao Builders), Sidhith Raiturkar (president, Goa GSB Sports and Charitable Trust) and Chief Organizer Kapil Sinai Borker.

Organised by the Goa GSB Sports and Charitable Trust in collaboration with Goa Saraswat Samaj, the tournament witnessed participation from eight competitive teams - Priority Titans, Canacona Mathagram United, Laziz CQS, SinQ Rangers UC, Ma-

pusa Dream Crushers and Rising Stars of Antruz.

Brief scores: CD Margao Mega Strikers 172/7 (20 overs) Sidhith Raiturkar 38, Vismay Falgaonkar 35, Durgesh Prabhugaonkar 26, Yash Prabhugaonkar 21, Shaunit Sawardekar 2/20, Arsh Sardesai 2/25. Madgaon Royals - 147 all out (18 overs) Sahish Mahambrey 40, Aditya Dalal 29, Granthik Buyao 26, Kaushal Hattangadi 23; Animesh Prabhugaonkar 3/33, Aditya Angle 2/14.

### INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

**Man-of-the-match:** Animesh Prabhugaonkar  
**Hero-of-the-match:** Aditya Prabhugaonkar  
**Best batter of the tournament:** Damodar Pai Patnekar  
**Best bowler of the tournament:** Smitesh Divekar  
**Best fielder:** Sanat Mhapne  
**Best wicketkeeper:** Vismay Falgaonkar  
**Player of the tournament:** Aditya Dalal

**Best Comedy Best songs and Best Story Show appreciated by Fr Kevin Baha Jenoy awarded cash Prizes for his superb performance**

**16th March 7.30pm Pai Hall Margao 23rd March 3.30pm KA Panjim**  
Tickets available at the counter

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**TODAY AT MARGAO**  
**AT 7.30 P.M. AT PAI T. HALL**  
**TOMORROW AT MARGAO**  
**AT 3.30 P.M. AT PAI T. HALL**  
**LAST SHOW**  
**GANVCHI ZATRA BHIAN GODDI SOTRA**  
**16th MAR. 2025**  
**AT 3.30 P.M. AT KALA ACAD.**  
**BOOKING STARTED**  
--Manja 88656203