

sportspopup

Former CWG medallist B Sumeeth retires

**NEW DELHI:** India's doubles specialist B Sumeeth Reddy, a member of the 2022 Commonwealth Games mixed team silver medal-winning squad, has announced his retirement as an active badminton player to focus entirely on coaching. The 33-year-old from Hyderabad, who formed the men's doubles pair with Manu Attri and also played mixed doubles with several shuttlers, including his wife N Sikki Reddy, made the announcement through social media on Sunday. "Retired and proud. Embracing the next chapter with gratitude and excitement. I thank my family, friends and well wishers for all the support," Sumeeth wrote in an Instagram post.

Tamim Iqbal undergoes angioplasty after heart attack

**NEW DELHI:** Former Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal on Monday underwent angioplasty after suffering a heart attack during a Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League match in Dhaka. According to a report in ESPNcricinfo, the incident occurred in the first innings of the 50-over-a-side contest between Mohammedan Sporting Club and Shinepukur Cricket Club when the 36-year-old Iqbal felt pain in his chest. Tamim, who was leading Mohammedan, fielded for just one over before being rushed to a nearby hospital. "Initially, a helicopter was arranged for Tamim's movement to the hospital, but he could not be flown from the BKSP ground in Savar. He was later taken to the Fazilatunnesa Hospital," the report quoted match referee Debabrata Paul as saying. The treating doctors later issued an official medical bulletin.

Quick timing, great hands, good vision: Hayden praises Dhoni after stumping of Suryakumar

**CHENNAI:** Mahendra Singh Dhoni's lightning-quick reflexes behind the stumps to get rid of Suryakumar Yadav during an IPL match here have left former Australian opener Matthew Hayden gushing about the former Indian captain's abilities, despite not being in his prime. Dhoni, 43, is nearing the end of his career, having hung up his international boots five years ago and playing just as a player for the Chennai Super Kings after leading the team to five IPL titles. However, Dhoni showcased his brilliance once again on Sunday when he whipped off the bails in an instant off Noor Ahmad's delivery, sending Suryakumar back to the pavilion. "He (Dhoni) was on fire," Hayden, the former Australia batter and Dhoni's team-mate at CSK till 2010, said on ESPNcricinfo's T20 Time Out. "I mean Noor Ahmad was firing down the leg side and it was just a movement across the ball. They're difficult when you're sitting there sort of partially obscured by the batsman. Then the stumping was just superb, just such quick timing, great hands, good vision. He's still got it."

WFI President Sanjay elected as bureau member of UWW-Asia

**AMMAN (Jordan):** WFI President Sanjay Kumar Singh was on Monday elected as a bureau member of United World Wrestling (UWW)-Asia, the national federation has announced. The election took place during the UWW-Asia General Assembly in Amman on Monday, a day before the start of the Asian Championship. "This is not just a personal milestone but a testament to the growth and recognition of Indian wrestling at the global level. I look forward to working closely with UWW-Asia to promote and develop the sport across the continent," said Singh in a release.

Ban on Indian kabaddi federation will be lifted next month: international body chief Tiwari

**NEW DELHI:** In a respite for Indian kabaddi players, the international governing body of the sport is set to lift suspension imposed on the national federation next month after the court-appointed administrator handed over the charge to the 'elected body'. International Kabaddi Federation (IKF) President Vinod Kumar Tiwari told PTI that the ban will be lifted after an executive council meeting scheduled next month. The IKF had banned the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI) in July last year after the 'elected body' was not allowed to take charge.

Australia rewrites plan to host 2032 Brisbane Games

**SYDNEY:** Australia said on Monday it is overhauling its multi-billion-dollar plans for hosting the 2032 Summer Olympics in Brisbane after years of "chaos and crisis". The new plan, reportedly including a new 60,000-seat stadium, rewrites much of a \$7.0 billion (US\$4.4 billion) infrastructure scheme announced two years ago. "I do believe we've got a plan that can get the show back on the road," Queensland Premier David Crisafulli told reporters on the eve of the official unveiling of the new scheme. "It's a plan to make sure that we do deliver generational infrastructure, and it's a plan to make sure that we do host a great Games when the eyes of the world are on us," the Conservative State leader said.

Juventus sack coach Motta, Tudor comes in

**MILAN:** Thiago Motta was sacked as Juventus coach on Sunday after less than one season in charge with former player Igor Tudor replacing him. Juventus FC announced that Thiago Motta has been relieved of his duties as men's first team coach. The club thanked Thiago Motta and all of his staff for their professionalism and for the work they have carried out in recent months with passion and dedication.

# India face tricky Bangladesh

**PTI, SHILLONG:** A 3-0 thrashing of Maldives in their first international match of the year will certainly boost their confidence, but India will be wary of a tricky Bangladesh in their 2027 AFC Asian Cup qualifying round match, here, on Tuesday.

**“We always expect the best version of our opponents. Our approach to every game is similar, whoever the opponents are -- Maldives, Bangladesh, Hong Kong or Singapore. You need to know the good and bad about them. But we can't change our style of play. We know if we play a good game, we will win today”**

—Manolo Márquez, India head coach



India notched a commanding win over lower-ranked Maldives here on March 19, which marked the first win under the charge of Manolo Márquez. The win was also significant as the talismanic Sunil Chhetri led the team with a superb goal in his international return, his 95th in India Jersey.

Bangladesh have been familiar but tricky rivals for India and historically it has not been easy outings whenever the two sides faced each other. India though are currently ranked much higher in the FIFA chart -- 126th as against 185th on Bangladesh.

The last match between the two sides had ended in a 1-1 draw in the 2021 SAFF Championships in Maldives with Chhetri scoring India's goal. Chhetri had also scored India's both goals in the 2-0 win over their eastern neighbours in a 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifying round match.

Bangladesh will fancy

their chances as they have come with English Premier League (EPL) player Hamza Choudhury, who is currently playing for Sheffield United on loan from Leicester City.

But India head coach Márquez is not unduly worried about Hamza and said

2027 AFC ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

his side will win on Tuesday if they play according to his plan.

"Hamza, obviously, is a good player who was playing in Premier League. It's good for not just Bangladesh but Asian football that such players are playing for national team. His teammates will be very motivated to play with him," Márquez said at the pre-match press conference.

"We always expect the best version of our oppo-

onents. Our approach to every game is similar, whoever the opponents are -- Maldives, Bangladesh, Hong Kong or Singapore. You need to know the good and bad about them. But we can't change our style of play. We know if we play a

good game, we will win tomorrow," said Márquez.

Tuesday's match holds importance for India as any slip-up could be disastrous in their bid to make it to the 2027 AFC Asian Cup. The team could have made it to the main tournament in the second round qualifying campaign last year but failed to do so after losing two crucial matches that led to the sacking of then head coach Igor Stimac. India are placed in Group

# Marcus' hat-trick guides Dempo SC sail past Aizawl FC



Dempo SC celebrates victory after the match against Aizawl FC at Nehru Stadium, Fatorda, on Monday

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**FATORDA:** Marcus Joseph's hat-trick secured Dempo SC's I-League survival as they pulled further away from the relegation zone with a commanding 5-2 victory over Aizawl FC in the 2024-25 season.

The result at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Monday dealt a major blow to Aizawl's survival hopes.

The Trinidad and Tobago striker found the net in the 26th, 75th, and 90+6th minutes, while Pruthvish Pednekar (5') and Vinay Vijay Harji (78') also got their names on the scoresheet. Aizawl FC, desperate for points, managed goals through Zothanpuia (34') and Lalbiakdika (90+1') but fell short against a clinical Dempo attack.

With this crucial win, Dempo SC climbed to a more secure position, sitting on 25 points from 20 matches. Meanwhile, Aizawl FC remain in a precarious spot with just 19 points from as many games, hovering above already-relegated Delhi FC. Sporting Club Bengaluru, with 20 points, also find themselves entangled in the relegation scrap.

Dempo SC wasted no time asserting their domi-

nance as Pednekar opened the scoring within five minutes.

Despite Aizawl FC briefly drawing level through Zothanpuia's effort, Joseph's sharp finishing ensured the hosts went into the break with a 2-1 lead. The second half saw Dempo SC ramp up the pressure, exploiting Aizawl FC's defensive lapses.

Vinay's goal in the 78th minute summed up the visitors' nightmarish outing. Goalkeeper Rafique Ali Sardar's poor clearance fell straight to the Dempo SC forward, who gleefully slotted it home. Joseph completed his hat-trick in stoppage time, sealing the resounding win.

Aizawl FC did show glimpses of promise, with Lalbiakdika pulling one back late on. They were also denied by the woodwork and squandered a couple of golden chances. But their frailties at the back proved costly as Dempo SC took full advantage.

For Dempo SC fans, this performance was a timely reminder of their attacking prowess. With safety in sight, the focus now shifts to finishing the season on a high. As for Aizawl, the battle for survival intensifies with just two games remaining — and no room for error.

# FC Goa GFA U-17 Div I League champions



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**RAIA:** FC Goa downed South Goa United Club of Sports and Culture 2-0 to

emerge champions in the Goa Football Association U-17 Division I League match played at the Don Bosco Oratory ground, Fatorda, on Monday. Lesvin

Rebello and Josley Gomes scored a goal each for FC Goa in each half.

In another match played at Betalbatim panchayat ground, Dempo Sports Club

thrashed Guardian Angel SC 4-0. Pradeep Kullu scored a brace, while Jodric Abranches and Shreyash Shetye scored a goal each for Dempo SC.

# Albert Developers SC take it easy against Goa Velha SC

St Anthony's SC win, Salvin guides SCC Cavelossim to collect full points, St Savio's SC and Youth Club of Manora share spoils

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**MAPUSA:** Albert Developers SC got the better of Goa Velha SC 5-1 in the Goa Football Association's Division I League match played at Santa Cruz ground, on Monday.

Goa Velha SC stunned their opponents with an early goal as Lokendra Thapa scored from the penalty spot, 1-0.

However, Albert Developers SC got their acts together as Tete and Saiesh

netted a brace each. Paulo Joao netted the fifth goal for his team.

At Guirim ground, St Anthony's SC, Marna-Siolim, managed to register a solitary goal win over Young Boys of Tonca.

GFA DIVISION I LEAGUE

Santa Cruz Club of Cavelossim scored a hard-fought solitary goal win over Clube Sao Minguel De Taleigao at SAG ground, Benaulim. The all-important

goal for Santa Cruz Club of Cavelossim was scored by Salvin Fernandes in the 73rd minute.

The match played between St Savio's SC and Youth Club of Manora ended in a goalless draw at Raia panchayat ground, on Monday.

St Savio SC through Cipriano Fernandes missed the chances to score in the 7th and 9th minute. Youth Club of Manora missed a chance to score through Julius Carvalho in the 11th minute.

# NZ qualifies for 2026 World Cup

**AP, AUCKLAND:** New Zealand will play at the 2026 World Cup after beating New Caledonia 3-0 on Monday in the final of the Oceania confederation qualifying series.

The New Zealand "All Whites" reached the World Cup for the third time after qualifying in Spain in 1982 and South Africa in 2010. They join hosts Canada, the USA and Mexico and Japan, which last week became the first team to qualify for the 48-team tournament.

New Caledonia still has a chance to qualify through a six-team inter-continental playoff involving teams from the Asian, African, North and Central American and South American confederations.

TODAY'S SPORTS

**GFA Division I League (Group B):** Sao Jose de Areal vs Pilerne SC, at Benaulim ground, 4 pm

**Panjim Veterans football tournament:** Verem Veterans vs Siolim Veterans, at Taleigao ground, at 4.30 pm

**17th London Trophy inter-village football:** Chandor Club vs United Club of Verna, at Goa Velha Sports Club ground, 4.30 pm

**All Goa inter-village United Trophy football (inaugural):** Cuncolim Union vs St Sebastian Youth Club, Murida-Fatorda, at Rosary Church ground, Navelim, 4.30 pm

**21st Flame of Unity Veterans football (inaugural):** Colva Veterans vs Betalbatim Veterans, at Mabai ground, Per Salim, 4.30 pm

**KALA ACADEMY GOA**  
50th TIATR 'A' GROUP COMPETITION - (2024-25)  
TODAY'S TIATR 25/03/2025  
**DUSREM JIVIT**  
J.L. Diogo Fernandes  
Institution: Dramatic Troupe of Ribandar  
Venue: Dinanath Mangeshkar Kala Mandir, Panaji  
Time: 7.00 p.m.  
Tickets of Rs. 100/- available at the Venue

**2nd Repeat Show**  
30th March 7:30 pm Pai Hall Margao  
Tickets available at the counter

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**Bara Brestar Tera Sukrar**  
John Alexander Fernandes alias Alexin de Morjim, Morjim  
At Ravindra Bhavan, Vasco at 4.00pm

# Spain set up France semis

Portugal beat Denmark in thrilling quarter-final, Germany survive Italy scare to make it to semi-finals

**AFP, PARIS:** Holders Spain beat the Netherlands on penalties after a dramatic quarter-final second leg in Valencia finished 3-3 on Sunday to set up a Nations League last-four clash with France, who edged Croatia in a shoot-out after a 2-2 aggregate draw.

On a dramatic night, Portugal battled past Denmark in extra time and will next face Finals hosts Germany after their tense 5-4 aggregate victory over Italy.

"We're Spain and we don't have to fear anyone," Pedri told TVE of facing 2021 Nations League winners France in the semi-finals in Stuttgart on June 5. France wiped out a two-goal deficit against Croatia at the Stade de France.

Portugal, inspired by substitute Francisco Trincao, battled back after losing the first game 1-0 to win a thrilling last-eight encounter with Denmark 5-3 on aggregate.

**RESULTS**  
Quarter-finals second legs  
**France 2** (Olise 52, Dembele 80) **Croatia 0** aet. 2-2 on aggregate; France win 5-4 on penalties. **Germany 3** (Kimmich 30-pen, Musiala 36, Kleindienst 45) **Italy 3** (Kean 49, 69, Raspadori 90+5-pen). Germany win 5-4 on aggregate. **Portugal 5** (Andersen 38-og, Ronaldo 72, Trincao 86, 91, Ramos 115) **Denmark 2** (Kristensen 56, Eriksen 76) aet. Portugal win 5-3 on aggregate. **Spain 3** (Oyarzabal 8-pen, 67, Yamal 103) **Netherlands 3** (Depay 54-pen, Maatsen 79, Simons 109-pen) aet. 5-5 on aggregate; Spain win 5-4 on penalties. **Belgium 3** (De Cuyper 70, Lukaku 75, 86) **Ukraine 0**. Belgium win 4-3 on aggregate. **Hungary 0** **Turkey 3** (Cathangolu 37-pen, Guler 39, Bardakci 90). Turkey win 6-1 on aggregate. **Scotland 0** **Greece 3** (Konstantelias 20, Karetas 42, Tzolis 46). Greece win 3-1 on aggregate. **Serbia 2** (Maksimovic 56, Vlahovic 90) **Austria 0**. Serbia win 3-1 on aggregate. **Georgia 6** (Haroyan 4-og, Mikautadze 14, 35, Chakvetadze 23, Kiteishvili 27, Kvaratskhelia 62) **Armenia 1** (Sevkiyan 48). Georgia win 9-1 on aggregate. **Iceland 1** (Oskarsson 2) **Kosovo 3** (Muriqi 35, 45+3, 79). Kosovo win 5-2 on aggregate. **Slovenia 1** (Cerin 95) **Slovakia 0** aet. Slovenia win 1-0 on aggregate. **Republic of Ireland 2** (Ferguson 63, Idah 84) **Bulgaria 1** (Antov 30). Ireland win 4-2 on aggregate.

# Varca SC march into next round

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**RAIA:** Varca Sports Club scored a 5-2 win over CAC Cansaulim to move into the next round of 17th London Trophy inter-village football tournament 2025 organised by Goa Velha Sports Club at the club's ground, Goa Velha, on Monday.

Agnelo D'Souza put CAC Cansaulim ahead when he headed into the Varca SC goal beating Muhammad Shaikh in the goal of a cross from Dominic Soares in the 20th minute of play. Jobern Cardozo scored the equaliser for Varca SC when his grounder found the CAC Cansaulim net beating Anish Naik in the goal in the 23rd minute.

Varca SC missed a golden opportunity to surge ahead when Allan Fernandes saw his effort hit the post and rebound to Klinsson Pereira, who headed wide with an open goal in front of him in the 24th minute.



Agnelo D'Souza of CAC Cansaulim receives the man-of-the-match award from Michael D'Souza, vice-president of Goa Velha Sports Club

Agnelo made it 2-1 in favour of CAC Cansaulim when he shot into the Varca SC goal with the goalkeeper Muhammad beaten at the stroke of half time. At the break, CAC Cansaulim led 2-1.

In the second half, Aaron Baretto of Varca SC missed a chance to narrow the lead when his effort hit the crossbar and rebounded into play in the 45th minute. Later, Aaron equalised

for Varca SC when he shot home into the CAC Cansaulim net beating Anish in the goal in the 48th minute. Aaron scored his brace and increased the lead for Varca SC when he placed the ball into the CAC Cansaulim goal in the 56th minute.

Substitute Aaron Rodrigues scored for Varca SC when he tapped home of a cross from Clavis Gonsalves in the 65th minute.

Clavis Gonsalves added his name to the scorer's list and completed the misery on CAC Cansaulim to make it 5-2 in favour of Varca SC in the dying minutes of the match. Aaron Baretto and of Varca SC were cautioned by the match referee.