

Iyer silences critics with 60, KKR crush SRH by 80 runs

PTI, KOLKATA: Venkatesh Iyer answered his critics with a match-winning 60 off 29 balls, propelling Kolkata Knight Riders to a convincing 80-run win in the Indian Premier League, here, on Thursday.

Angkrish Raghuvanshi's classy 50 (32b, 5x4, 2x6) in an 81-run stand with skipper Ajinkya Rahane (38 off 27) laid the foundation, while Iyer and Rinku Singh (32 not out off 17b) provided the late fireworks with a blistering 91-run partnership (41b) to lift KKR to 200/6 -- their highest total of the season. Seamer Vaibhav Arora set the tone by removing the dangerous Travis Head (4) and Ishan Kishan (2) in successive overs to return with impressive figures of 4-1-29-3.

Harshit Rana dismissed Abhishek Sharma (2), leaving SRH reeling at 9/3 in 2.1 overs, while Andre Russell and Sunil Narine also chipped in with a wicket each to make it 66/5 inside 10 overs. Varun Chakravarty then cleaned up the lower order taking two wickets in two balls en route to his



Kolkata Knight Riders' Venkatesh Iyer plays a shot during an Indian Premier League match against Sunrisers Hyderabad, at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata, on Thursday

three matches and will next face Lucknow Super Giants on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, SRH, enduring their third straight defeat, head home to take on Gujarat Titans on Sunday.

After being reduced to 9/3 in 2.1 overs, Nitish Reddy (19) counterattacked Arora with two fours and a six, while Kamindu Mendis (27 off 20 balls) lifted hopes by taking on Andre Russell with a pick-up shot over deep square leg.

But Russell struck back to remove Reddy before Sunil Narine (1/30) accounted for Mendis in the 10th over, reducing SRH to 66/5 at the halfway mark and effectively ending their chase.

Earlier, KKR's new-look opening pair continued to struggle, with Quinton de Kock (1) and Narine (7) once again falling cheaply after Pat Cummins opted to bowl first.

SCOREBOARD

Kolkata Knight Riders: Quinton de Kock c Zeeshan Ansari b Cummins 1, Sunil Narine c Klaasen b Shami 7, Ajinkya Rahane c Klaasen b Zeeshan Ansari 38, Angkrish Raghuvanshi c Harshal Patel b Kamindu Mendis 50, Venkatesh Iyer c Aniket Verma b Harshal Patel 60, Rinku Singh not out 32, Andre Russell run out (Klaasen) 1.

Extras: 11. **Total:** 200 for 6. **Fall of Wickets:** 14-1, 16-2, 97-3, 106-4, 197-5, 200-6. **Bowler:** Mohammed Shami 4-0-29-1, Pat Cummins 4-0-44-1, Simarjeet Singh 4-0-47-0, Zeeshan Ansari 3-0-25-1, Harshal Patel 4-0-43-1, Kamindu Mendis 1-0-4-1.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: Travis Head c Harshit Rana b Vaibhav Arora 4, Abhishek Sharma c Venkatesh Iyer b Harshit Rana 2, Ishan Kishan c Ajinkya Rahane b Vaibhav Arora 2, Nitish Kumar Reddy c Narine b Russell 19, Kamindu Mendis c (sub)Anukul Roy b Narine 27, Heinrich Klaasen c Ali b Arora 33, Aniket Verma c Venkatesh Iyer b Varun Chakaravarty 6, Pat Cummins c Harshit Rana b Varun Chakaravarty 14, Harshal Patel c and b Russell 3, Simarjeet Singh b Varun Chakaravarty 0, Mohammed Shami not out 2. **Extras:** 8. **Total:** 120 for 10. **Fall of Wickets:** 4-1, 9-2, 9-3, 44-4, 66-5, 75-6, 112-7, 114-8, 114-9, 120-10. **Bowler:** Vaibhav Arora 4-1-29-3, Harshit Rana 3-0-15-1, Varun Chakaravarty 4-0-22-3, Andre Russell 1.4-0-21-2, Sunil Narine 4-0-30-1.

Man-of-the-match: Vaibhav Arora

Rabada returns home from IPL

PTI, NEW DELHI: South African pace bowler Kagiso Rabada has returned home from the IPL due to personal reasons, his franchise Gujarat Titans announced on Thursday.

The Titans, though, have not specified the duration of Rabada's absence from the IPL 2025, where he has played two matches.

"Kagiso Rabada has returned to South Africa to deal with an important personal matter," the Gujarat outfit said in a statement.

Rabada appeared against Punjab Kings and Mumbai Indians, grabbing 1 for 41

and 1 for 42 respectively in those matches.

The 29-year-old was not picked for Gujarat Titans' match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Wednesday.

Arshad Khan was drafted into the eleven in place of Rabada, and the left-arm pacer picked up the key wicket of Virat Kohli early in the innings.

In the absence of Rabada, GT could be relying on his South African teammate Gerald Coetzee or Afghanistan all-rounder Karim Janat.

Liverpool to restore 12-point lead in EPL

AP, LONDON: Diogo Jota scored the goal that settled the Merseyside derby on Wednesday and kept Liverpool's Premier League title challenge on track.

The Portugal international's second-half strike sealed a 1-0 win at Anfield and restored Liverpool's 12-point lead over Arsenal at the top of the standings.

With just eight games remaining this season, this was one of the biggest hurdles standing in the way of a record-equalling 20th English title for Arne Slot's team. And it was Jota who came up with the decisive moment in the 57th minute when he twisted his way through the box and lashed a shot past Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford.

"We are chasing down

the best possible season we can have and Everton showed today again how difficult it is to win a football game in the Premier League," Slot said. "We know that we're going to face eight very tough challenges, but as long as the players give as much as they did today and if (when) we play home games, the fans give us as much as they did today, we are in a very good position."

The race for the Champions League remains tight after Manchester City, Newcastle and Aston Villa all won.

Liverpool's win could turn out to be a decisive moment in its charge toward the title after an outstanding campaign began to wobble in recent weeks.

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS

Bournemouth 1 (Evanilson 67) Ipswich 2 (Broadhead 34, Delap 60), Brighton 0 Aston Villa 3 (Rashford 51, Asensio 78, Malen 90+10), Liverpool 1 (Jota 57) Everton 0, Manchester City 2 (Grealish 2, Marmoush 29) Leicester 0, Newcastle 2 (Isak 45+2, Tonali 74) Brentford 1 (Mbeumo 66-pen), Southampton 1 (Onuachu 20) Crystal Palace 1 (Franca 90+2)

sportspopup

World Boxing Cup: Manish, Hitesh & Abhinash cruise into semi-finals

NEW DELHI: India's Manish Rathore, Hitesh and Abhinash Jamwal registered commanding victories to storm into the semi-finals of their respective weight categories in the World Boxing Cup Brazil 2025 on Wednesday. In the 65 kg category, Jamwal tamed Germany's Denis Bril with a unanimous decision while Hitesh defeated Italy's Gabriele Guidi Rontani in a similar manner in the 70kg category. In the 55kg category, Rathore was up against Australia's Paris Olympian Yusuf Chothia and the Indian national champion was up for the challenge. In the semi-finals, Rathore will face Nursultan Altynbek of Kazakhstan, Hitesh will take on Makan Traore while Jamwal will look to overcome Gianluigi Malanga of Italy.

Barcelona beats Atletico to reach Copa del Rey final against Real Madrid

MADRID: Barcelona has made it back to the Copa del Rey final. Atletico Madrid is left enduring yet another elimination to a rival. Barcelona defeated Atletico 1-0 on Wednesday to reach its first Copa final in four seasons, setting up a "clasico" against Real Madrid. Ferran Torres scored a first-half winner for the Catalan club, which advanced 5-4 on aggregate after a 4-4 draw in the first leg in Barcelona in February. Madrid eliminated Real Sociedad in extra time on Tuesday, also advancing 5-4 on aggregate. The rivals will meet in the Copa decider for the first time since the 2013-14 season, when Madrid won the title. Result: Semi-final, second legs - Atletico Madrid 0 Barcelona 1 (Torres 27). Barcelona progress 5-4 on aggregate.

Suryakumar is not going anywhere from Mumbai: MCA

MUMBAI: The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) on Thursday refuted reports that Suryakumar Yadav was planning a switch to Goa for the upcoming Ranji Trophy season along with some of his teammates, saying that India's T20 skipper was committed to representing the state. Young Mumbai opener Yashaswi Jaiswal has already announced his decision to switch to Goa from Mumbai due to alleged differences with senior players of the Ranji side. However the official transfer will only happen when BCCI opens its inter-state transfer window. A media report had claimed on Wednesday that Suryakumar could leave the Mumbai Ranji side, led by Ajinkya Rahane. Suryakumar had, in fact, himself rubbished the report on his 'X' handle.

PCB chief Naqvi takes charge as ACC president

DUBAI: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday assumed charge as the president of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), succeeding Sri Lanka Cricket supremo Shammi Silva. The ACC presidency is rotated among the member nations and it was turn of Pakistan to take charge. Naqvi will remain president till 2027. Naqvi's first challenge will be smooth conduct of the men's Asia Cup, which will be held in T20 format. The tournament set to be held in September but venue is yet to be announced. "I am deeply honoured to assume the presidency of the Asian Cricket Council," Naqvi was quoted as saying in a media release. Naqvi promised to work collectively to accelerate game's growth in the region.

TODAY'S IPL FIXTURE

Lucknow Super Giants vs Mumbai Indians, at the Ekana Cricket Stadium, Ardonamau, Uttar Pradesh, at 7.30 pm

Seamer Vaibhav Arora set the tone by removing the dangerous Travis Head (4) and Ishan Kishan (2) in successive overs to return with impressive figures of 4-1-29-3

Rajasthan Royals were never in hunt as they finally man-aged 242 for 6 in their 20 overs and their effort will

certainly help their net run-rate
After being reduced to 9/3 in 2.1 overs, Nitish Reddy (19) counterattacked Arora with two fours and a six, while Kamindu Mendis (27 off 20 balls) lifted hopes by taking on Andre Russell with a pick-up shot over deep square leg

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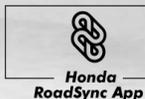
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