

sports **popup****Kothari crowned IBSF World Billiards champion after beating Pankaj Advani**

**NEW DELHI:** Ace Indian cueist Sourav Kothari clinched the 2025 IBSF World Billiards title after an emphatic victory over multiple-time winner Pankaj Advani in the final in Carlow, Ireland. The cue sports world witnessed an unforgettable clash between two of India's finest -- Kothari and Advani -- for the coveted title at the Snooker and Billiards Ireland (SBI) Academy on Wednesday. The 40-year-old Kothari emerged champion, scoring 725 points to Advani's 480. Kothari is now only the third Indian to have won both the IBSF and the WBL World Billiards titles.

**Indians add two bronze medals on third day of Asian U-18 Athletics C'ship**

**NEW DELHI:** India picked up a bronze medal each through discus thrower Lakshita Mahlawat and 100m hurdler Shourya Ambure on the third day of the Asian Under-18 Athletics Championship in Dammam, Saudi Arabia on Thursday. Lakshita produced an effort of 41.30m to win the bronze in U-18 girls' discus throw event. China's Ma Chenyi (53.81m) and Zhao Anqi (47.89m) took the gold and silver respectively. Shourya added another bronze in U18 girls' 100m hurdles, clocking 13.80 seconds. China's Bao Yinyin (13.71) and He Yihui (13.76) won the gold and silver respectively. On Wednesday, Nitin Gupta (boys 5000m race walk), Tannu (girls 400m) won a silver medal each, while Nishchay (boys discus throw) and Aarti (girls 100m) clinched bronze apiece.

**Newcastle thrash Crystal Palace to go third in Premier League**

**NEWCASTLE:** Newcastle soared up to third in the Premier League with a 5-0 thrashing of Crystal Palace on Wednesday to close in on a return to the Champions League next season. Jacob Murphy, Harvey Barnes, Fabian Schar and Alexander Isak were on target for the Magpies, with Marc Guehi also scoring an own goal, as Newcastle made light of the absence of manager Eddie Howe due to pneumonia. A sixth consecutive victory in all competitions opens up a five-point lead for Newcastle over sixth-placed Chelsea, with a place in the top five good enough for Champions League qualification. Result: Newcastle 5 (Murphy 14, Guehi 38-og, Barnes 45+2, Schar 45+8, Isak 58) Crystal Palace 0.

**DC bowling coach Munaf fined 25% of match fee for IPL Code of Conduct breach**

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi Capitals bowling coach Munaf Patel has been fined 25 percent of his match fee and accumulated one demerit point for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during the high-octane game against Rajasthan Royals here. The match went down to the wire on Wednesday night with DC winning the edge-of-the-seat thriller in a Super Over after both teams were tied at 188 runs. The former India pacer "admitted to the Level 1 offence under Article 2.20 of the IPL Code of Conduct, which pertains to the conduct that is contrary to the spirit of the game," said an IPL statement.

**BCCI removes assistant coach Nayar; support staff set for overhaul**

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian cricket team's assistant coach Abhishek Nayar has been sacked just eight months into the assignment amid speculation of a rift with a high-profile member of the support staff even though Test debacles against New Zealand and Australia are being cited as the reason for his ouster. If board sources are to be believed, Nayar has already been intimated of the BCCI's decision to part ways with him. "While India's recent Test debacles (against New Zealand and Australia) has led to the churning but there is also a feeling in the BCCI that Nayar became a scapegoat in the turf war between an important member of the support staff and a senior star player," a BCCI source told PTI.

**Neeraj begins season with 84.52m throw in South Africa**

**NEW DELHI:** Two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra started his season on a high by winning the Potch Invitational Track event in Potchefstroom, South Africa. Chopra topped the six-man field, hurling the spear to a distance of 84.52m at the World Athletics Continental Tour Challenger event on Wednesday. The Indian star finished ahead of 25-year-old South African Douw Smit, whose best throw was 82.44m. But Chopra's effort was below his personal best of 89.94m, while Douw came close to his personal best of 83.29m. Chopra and Smit were the only two athletes to cross the 80m mark in the competition. Chopra is scheduled to begin his elite-level campaign at the Doha Diamond League on May 16.

**Nadal to be honoured at the French Open**

**PARIS:** Retired 14-time champion Rafael Nadal will receive a tribute at the French Open on Court Philippe-Chatrier on May 25, the tournament's opening day. "Rafa has left his mark on the history of the French Open in so many ways, that's why a tribute ceremony will be held in his honor," French Open director Amélie Mauresmo said on Thursday. "We want the tribute to be special, exceptional. We want it to be a surprise for everyone." Nadal, a 22-time Grand Slam champion who retired in November, already has a statue rising in the alleys of the clay court Grand Slam. He will also feature in an exhibition in the tournament museum and lend his voice to the official French Open trailer. "We wanted to do the tribute last year, to be transparent, but he refused at the time," Mauresmo said. "He wasn't sure that it was his last Roland Garros. Now that he is retired, he is happy to receive it."

**No problem if Real replace me: Ancelotti**

**MADRID:** Carlo Ancelotti accepted Real Madrid may look to replace him as coach after Arsenal knocked out the Champions League holders in the quarter-finals on Wednesday. "It could be that the club decide to change (coach), it could be this year -- or the next when my contract expires, there's no problem," Ancelotti told reporters. "The day that I leave here I can only thank the club." Madrid have been linked with Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso, who played for Los Blancos, and former Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp. Ancelotti said his team were still in the fight for La Liga, the Copa del Rey and the Club World Cup this summer.

**FC Goa thrash Penha de Franca**

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**MAPUSA:** FC Goa trounced Penha de Franca by 9-3 margin in the Goa Football Association U-19 league match played at Field of Dreams, Guirim.

The Young Gaurs got off to a great start with four

goals scored in the first half, coming from Ruell, Aaryav, Shubh and Likson.

The second half was a goal fest. Ruell and Shawn added two goals each, while Bryson got his name on the score sheet for the Young Gaurs. For Penha de Franca, Soham, Raunak and Shavir scored.

# GOA delegation, sports associations meet SAG Executive Director to address key challenges

The purpose of the meeting was to highlight several pressing issues affecting the functioning and development of sports bodies and athletes in the State

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HERALD PIC



Goa Olympic Association (GOA) Secretary General Gurudatta Bhakta along with representatives of various State sports associations officials present the memorandum detailing their concerns and expectations, seeking immediate redressal and proactive collaboration from the Sports Authority of Goa to the Executive Director Dr Geeta Nagvenkar, at the SAG office, Athletic Stadium, Bambolim

sociation Secretary Farrell Furtado, Goa State Tennis Association President Sachin Dukle, Goa Gymnastics Association President Sudesh Thakur, Goa Fencing Association President Yogesh Thakur and Goa Triathlon Association Secretary Nisha Madgavkar, were among those who were part of the delegation.

The purpose of the meeting was to bring to the attention of the SAG several pressing issues affecting the functioning and development of sports bodies and athletes in the State.

The delegation formally handed over a memorandum detailing their concerns and expectations, seeking immediate redressal and proactive collaboration from the Sports Authority of Goa.

The Goa Football Association (GFA) President Caitano Fernandes, GOA Treasurer Jayesh Naik, Goa Hockey As-

sociation Secretary Farrell Furtado, Goa State Tennis Association President Sachin Dukle, Goa Gymnastics Association President Sudesh Thakur, Goa Fencing Association President Yogesh Thakur and Goa Triathlon Association Secretary Nisha Madgavkar, were among those who were part of the delegation.

**A MOVE FOR A BETTER SPORTING SPIRIT**

associations are struggling financially due to non-receipt of grants for several years, severely affecting their ability to field teams at national championships,

stated a press release issued by the Goa Olympic Association.

With regards to the provision of rent-free facilities for selection trials, the associations emphasised the

need for free access to SAG infrastructure when conducting selection trials for teams representing Goa, considering it a matter of State representation.

**A MOVE FOR A BETTER SPORTING SPIRIT**

Appointment of coaches, the absence of qualified disciplines continues to hamper the growth of sports in the State. The delegation urged the SAG to expedite the

recruitment of coaches to support SSAs.

Support for ranking tournaments, with national federations organising ranking events, the delegation requested that the SAG consider covering such participation costs under the grant-in-aid schemes.

Given the steep rise in travel, accommodation and food expenses, the SSAs called for an immediate revision of grant amounts to reflect current costs.

The delegation strongly recommended that equipment procured for the National Games be handed over to the respective State associations for optimal use, preventing wastage and deterioration.

The GOA also acknowledged and appreciated recent positive steps initiated by the SAG under Dr Nagvenkar's leadership, including surprise inspections, improved monitoring mechanisms and the enforcement of codes of conduct, all of which signal a renewed commitment to transparency and professionalism in Goan sport.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with Dr Nagvenkar assuring the delegation of SAG's continued support in strengthening the sports ecosystem in the State. Both parties expressed confidence in working collaboratively towards enhancing infrastructure, governance and opportunities for Goan athletes across disciplines.

## Goa face Odisha in opener

HERALD PIC



The Goa U-20 football squad along with the team officials before leaving to Chhattisgarh

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**MAPUSA:** Goa U-20 will take on Odisha in their opening match of the Swami Vivekananda National U-20 Football Championship on April 18, at Narainpur, Chhattisgarh.

Assam and SAI are the other two teams in the group where only one team will qualify for the next round.

Goa squad: Goalkeeper: Reihan Gomes, Azeez Abdul. Defenders: Frazer Fernandes, Arfan Sayed, Gale D'Costa, Anil Zore, Vignesh Naik, Alexander Alemao.

Midfielders: Roswell Pereira, Kifren Dias, Mohammad Sahil, Ashnoy Gomes, Renil D'Mello, Serino Noronha. Forwards: Garrison Fernandes, Nakul Gawas, Preston Castanha, Kavya, Kot-

**SWAMI VIVEKANANDA NATIONAL U-20 FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP**

kar. Team officials: Head coach - Umer Mutavalli, Assistant coach - Godwin Rodrigues, Manager Francisco Nunes and Physio Dr Damodar Sutar.

Speaking to O Herald Head Coach Umer said, "This is the second edition of the championship. We

have prepared well with whatever resources we had inspite of the ongoing Reliance U-21 League, Goa Football Association's Goa Professional League and Division I League."

"My Boys have given their best in training and we have been seeded in group of death where all four teams are very tough Goa, Assam, Odisha and SAI. We shall take each match at a time and try to qualify for the quarter-finals" the coach concluded.

## Bhutia, Paul stress on the need for grassroots football in India

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**RAIA:** Former India footballers Bhaichung Bhutia, Subrata Paul emphasised on the need for grassroots football in the country and hailed the efforts of Dream Sports Foundation in this direction in promoting the sport.

"India is such a big country. We need more such grassroots tournaments. The Dream Sports Foundation has done a fantastic job introducing this U-17 national tournament. In the next few years, this tournament can become one of the biggest grassroots football tournaments in the country," stated Bhutia while addressing the mediapersons at the Dream Sports Championship Football 2025 National Finals held at the Raia panchayat football ground, recently.

"My own football academy (Bhaichung Bhutia Football Schools) has been collaborating with the Dream Sports Foundation. Thanks to their sponsor-



Former India football players, Subrata Paul (left) and Bhaichung Bhutia speaking to mediapersons

ship programmes, three of our players have donned India colours in the last three years," he stated.

The former India football captain was keen to see national-level tournaments in the U-13 and U-15 age groups as well. "Fortunately, the Dream Sports Foundation is keen to examine this possibility," he added.

Identifying mobile phones as a major distraction, Bhutia said, "To become a strong footballing nation, we need more children to leave their mobile phones and play

football. I am a parent and understand the challenges involved. Unless hundreds of children play football, we will never get a large enough pool of talent to choose from."

When asked about the goalkeeping talent he had seen in this tournament, former India goalkeeper Subrata Paul said, "There are many young and talented goalkeepers. Anisha Oraon from the Jharkhand FA girls team is particularly very competent."

He also reiterated the need for more grassroots tournaments like the Dream Sports Championship. "We need football coaching and tournaments even in the U-10 and U-8 age groups," Subrata added.

## Tamang stars as Mohun Bagan SG clinch RFDL title

HERALD PIC



Mohun Bagan Super Giant celebrate after winning the Reliance Foundation Development League 2024-25 season at the Reliance Corporate Park in Mumbai, recently

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**PANJIM:** Mohun Bagan Super Giant clinched the Reliance Foundation Development League (RFDL) 2024-25 title after sailing past Classic Football Academy 3-0 in the final, held at the Reliance Corporate Park in Mumbai, recently.

Pasang Dorjee Tamang scored a magnificent hat-trick to hand the Mariners the triumph in the ultimate fixture. The Mariners asserted dominance right from the get-go as they overpowered Classic FA to keep hold of the ball possession in the opening minutes of the game.

In the 8th minute, Tamang drew first blood when he smashed in one from the edge of the box to find the top right corner with a spectacular fashion. The opening goal gave Mohun Bagan Super Giant more confidence to take the driver's seat in the game and in no time, Tamang scored his second, capitalising on a mistake from the Classic FA defence to make it 2-0. Classic FA did have a chance to pull one back but were left heads-in-hands with lack of finishing touch in the final third.

The second half started in a similar fashion with Mohun Bagan Super Giant dominating the proceedings and Tamang went on to find the back of the net once again, thereby completing his hat-trick. The Mariners' midfielder picked up on a loose ball and slotted it home to make it

3-0 and seal the deal for his side with a remarkable victory.

The four semi-finalists of the 2024-25 season of RFDL all came from four different States - West Bengal, Manipur, Goa and Jharkhand, showing remarkable depth and quality of the teams in action.

Three of the four semi-finalists were the same as the last four in the Indian Super League 2024-25 season - Mohun Bagan Super Giant, FC Goa and Jamshedpur FC. The fourth semi-finalist Classic FA, is the only academy side to progress to the National Championship stage ultimately also sealing their berth in the upcoming Premier League Next Generation Cup presented by Reliance Foundation along with the other three.

The 2024-25 Indian football season, however, has been all about Mohun Bagan Super Giant's success across different levels. The Mariners' RFDL victory comes on the back of their senior team famously clinching the Indian Super League Double -- League Shield and Cup. Additionally, their U-15 side also claimed the trophy in the Reliance Foundation Youth Sports (RFYS) Kolkata region.

In the third place play-off match earlier on the day, FC Goa edged Jam-

shedpur FC 1-0 to end their RFDL 2024-25 campaign on a positive note. Saish Gaunkar broke the deadlock for the Gaurs early in the 15th minute, following a low cross from the right flank by Gogcha Chungkham. Jamshedpur showed some resilience in the second half of the game but FC Goa's defence was mean enough to hold on to their slender lead till the end. Individual awards: Golden Boot: Lawmsangzuala (Jamshedpur FC) - 16 Goals, Golden Glove - Priyansh Dubey (Mohun Bagan Super Giant) - 10 Clean Sheets, Golden Ball - Md Arbash (Classic FA).

**RESULT**

**Mohun Bagan Super Giant 3 (8', 22', 52' Pasang Dorjee Tamang) Classic FA 0, Jamshedpur FC 0 FC Goa 1 (15' Saish Gaunkar)**

**VILLAGE SHOWS**

with Dolby 5.1 Surround Sound and 30ft screen



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