



## Batters, Rashid, Prasad star as GT edge DC by one run in a humdinger

**IPL 2026**  
**'He is ready for next big step': Harbhajan praises Sooryavanshi**



**NEW DELHI:** Former India spinner Harbhajan Singh praised Rajasthan Royals' teenage opener Vaibhav Sooryavanshi after his fearless performance against Mumbai Indians' talismanic Jasprit Bumrah in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 clash at the Barsapara Stadium in Guwahati on Tuesday.

The 15-year-old stunned everyone when he smashed a six on the very first ball of Bumrah's over, a rare sight against one of the best bowlers in the world. Harbhajan, who was on commentary duty, was left amazed by the youngster's confidence and aggressive mindset, even saluting him for the effort.

Harbhajan also highlighted that such confidence at a young age is a strong sign of a bright future and shows that Vaibhav is prepared to take on bigger challenges ahead. "This battle between Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Jasprit Bumrah was one to show who is better. Vaibhav played an amazing shot on the first ball of Bumrah's over in the RR-MI match. This boy is ready to dominate. Don't go by his age. Yes, he is 15 years old, but he is ready for the next big step," Harbhajan told Jio Hotstar.

**NEW DELHI**  
Gujarat Titans edged Delhi Capitals by one run in a humdinger finish in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, which will be replayed in the minds of everyone inside the Arun Jaitley Stadium for a long time to come. David Miller very nearly pulled off the impossible, but the run out of Kuldeep Yadav on the last ball led to one of the great IPL finishes going in GT's favour, as they got their first win of IPL 2026.

Fifties from a returning Shubman Gill, Jos Buttler, and Washington Sundar had powered GT to 210 for 4, a total that looked competitive but gettable. Buttler was back to his devastating best with the bat by hitting a 27-ball 52, laced with three fours and five towering sixes. Gill, back in action after a muscle spasm in his neck ruled him out in the last game, was elegant in collecting the majority of his runs through leg-side to top-score with 70 off 45 balls, laced with four boundaries and five sixes.

He also shared a commanding 104-run partnership with Sundar, who hit his first IPL fifty via a 32-ball 55, studded with six boundaries and two sixes. For DC, Lungi Ngidi changed the complexion at the back end with his slower balls to end up with 1-24 in his four overs, even as the rest of his bowling counterparts had an economy rate above eight.

But Miller had been extraordinary -- arriving at the crease with Delhi still some distance from the target, he retired hurt on 12 due to an injured left hand. When he came back, boundaries came in clusters off his bat. Miller ended up at 41 not out off 20 balls, but it wasn't enough to give DC a win, as they ended up at 209/8.

The pivotal moment came with two runs needed off two balls: Miller turned down a single off the penultimate ball, gambling on finishing it himself rather than trusting Kuldeep with the equation. Prasad, with nerves of steel, denied him the winning finish with a short, slower ball, as Kuldeep was run out by a sharp throw from Jos Buttler, leaving Miller and DC heartbroken.



KL Rahul had given Delhi every reason to believe with a fluent 92 off 52 balls, laced with 11 fours and four sixes. But Rashid Khan had done the bulk of the damage with the ball through figures of 3-17 to keep GT alive in the game, as they eventually won the match in a dramatic fashion. Sai Sudharsan got GT's innings moving with a clip and a backfoot drive through backward point off Mukesh Kumar, but holed out cheaply to the pacer after chopping onto his stumps. That brought Buttler to the crease, and his vintage version duly arrived.

He lofted Mukesh for six, went inside-out against Axar for four and six, and then made Mukesh's third over a feast -- a scoop over fine leg, a flat six down the ground, a lofted drive over extra cover, as 23 runs came off it.

Buttler eventually reached fifty in 24 balls, before Kuldeep's short ball, skidding through low as he went for the pull, castled him. Gill, who had watched from the other end with quiet satisfaction, then found his partner in Sundar. Their 104-run partnership was full of attacking shots and elegant timing at its core -- Sundar pulling three consecutive short balls from Vipraj Nigam for boundaries,

including a no-ball that added a free hit, before Gill dispatched a full toss flat over the bowler's head. Gill brought up his fifty in 33 balls and kept accelerating, pulling and lofting Kuldeep for a brace of sixes, before Ngidi's slower ball ended his stay at 70. Washington brought up his first IPL fifty off 33 balls before miscuing to mid-off. A brace of boundaries from Glenn Phillips took GT to exactly 210. It was a good total - though the 58 runs from the last six overs, with eight wickets in hand, lingered as a question.

Delhi's pursuit began brightly - Pathum Nissanka smashed three fours off Siraj in the first over, timing each drive with an unhurried elegance. Rahul found his rhythm quickly - a pick-up flick off Rabada, a six over long leg, and then Nissanka demolished Ashok Sharma's final power-play over for 23 runs, including a flat six over mid-off and an inside-out drive over cover off the slower ball.

Prasidh had Nissanka holing out for 41, but Rahul shifted gears entirely -- a nonchalant loft over Prasidh's head, and then a six over long-off. A pull past square leg and a cut behind point helped Rahul register a magnificent 29-ball fifty and break free from his lean run.



## Zheng Qinwen withdraws from WTA Stuttgart Open due to injury; Top four in fray

**STUTTGART**

China's Zheng Qinwen has withdrawn from next week's WTA 500 event in Stuttgart due to injury, the tournament organisers announced on Wednesday. The main draw of the Stuttgart Open will be held from April 13 to 19 and will involve some of the world's top players.

Zheng's withdrawal from the Stuttgart Open means her clay-court debut of the 2026 season will be delayed. Alexandra Eala of the Philippines, currently ranked world No. 46, will replace Zheng Qinwen in the main draw, reports Xinhua.

In a statement, the Stuttgart Open said: "We wish Qinwen a speedy recovery and hope to see her back on the court in Stuttgart very soon."

Zheng's most recent tournament appearance came at the WTA 1000 Miami Open in March, where she lost 6-3, 6-4 to world No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus in the fourth round and missed out on a place in the quarterfinals.

Known as the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix, the Stuttgart Open was held on indoor hard courts from 1978 to 2008. Held a few weeks before the French Open at Roland Garros, the Stuttgart Open has

been contested on indoor clay courts since 2009. The state-of-the-art Porsche Arena in Stuttgart, Germany, has hosted this tournament since 2006. The event has a total commitment of \$1,206,446, and the singles main draw will include 28 direct entries, while the doubles draw will have 16 teams competing. This year's event will have the world's top four-ranked players -- Aryna Sabalenka, Elena Rybakina, Iga Swiatek, and Coco Gauff.

Other Top 10 players set to return to Stuttgart are the two-time Grand Slam runner-up Jasmine Paolini (No. 7), the 19-time WTA winner Elina Svitolina (No. 8) plus Mirra Andrejeva (No. 10), one of the 2025 season's biggest risers. Jelena Ostapenko, the 2017 French Open champion, will be back competing in the Porsche Arena as the title holder.

Barbora Krejickova, the winner of the Grand Slams in Paris (2021) and at Wimbledon (2024), and Qinwen Zheng will be continuing their comebacks in Stuttgart after injury. The circle of favourites also includes the world No. 11 Ekaterina Alexandrova, together with Linda Noskova. One week ago, the world No. 13 reached the semifinals of the renowned WTA 1000 event in Indian Wells.

## Nirbhay Soin wins men's singles title in ITF



**LACKNOW**

IC-82680P Major Nirbhay Singh Soin has made the entire organisation proud with his outstanding achievement at the ITF Masters "Friends Cup" Tennis Tournament, where he clinched the Men's Singles 30+ title after a series of high-intensity matches.

In the semifinal, he was part of a thrilling and highly competitive encounter that kept spectators on the edge of their seats. Facing a strong opponent, he displayed remarkable grit, stamina, and experience to secure victory in a marathon match lasting over three and a half hours, winning 6-4, 5-7, and 10-6 in the decider tie-break. His aggressive play in the final moments and ability to hold composure under pressure were truly exemplary.

What makes this achievement even more inspiring is that Major Soin is a Type 1 diabetic and competes while being

on a full-time insulin pump. Despite this demanding medical condition, he continues to perform at an elite level, setting a powerful example of resilience, discipline, and mental strength. His journey is a testament to the fact that physical challenges can be overcome with determination and the right mindset.

His success has also brought significant media attention and recognition, with coverage and photographs featured in leading newspapers such as Hindustan Times, Times of India, Navbharat Times, and Dainik Jagran. This not only highlights his personal achievement but also brings great visibility and pride to the organisation.

Major Nirbhay Singh Soin's accomplishment is not just a sporting victory, but a source of deep motivation for all -- reinforcing the spirit of perseverance, courage, and excellence. Truly inspirational!

## World No. 1s Wang, Sun lead China in World Team Championships in London

**BEIJING**

China announced on Wednesday its roster for the upcoming ITTF World Team Table Tennis Championships Finals in London, with top-ranked Wang Chuqin and Sun Yingsha among those selected in the squad for the mega event.

The 10 players to represent China are Wang Chuqin, Lin Shidong, Zhou Qihao, Xiang Peng, and Liang Jingkun in the men's team, and Sun Yingsha, Wang Manyu, Chen Xingtong, Kuai Man, and Wang Yidi in the women's team. On the men's

side, Wang and Lin qualified directly through past results or world ranking, while Zhou and Xiang secured their places through the team trial. The coaching group decided to give the final spot to 29-year-old Liang, reports Xinhua.

Wang Hao, head coach of the men's team, said the decision was made after discussion within the coaching group and consultation with qualified players and experts.

"Liang's experience, stability, and performance in crucial matches at the World Championships and Asian Championships are obvious. Though



he didn't achieve good results after the Asian Championships due to injury, his form began improving after rehabilitation," Wang said.

Speaking of the team world championships campaign, Wang said, "The competition is always intense on the men's side, and we have seen the rapid progress of players from other teams. We cannot take the title for granted and need to go all out for it."

For the women's team, Sun and Wang Manyu qualified directly, while Chen, Kuai, and Wang Yidi secured their places through the team trial.

"They are the five highest-ranked players within the team and represent the highest level of the team," said women's team head coach Ma Lin.

"This is the first team competition after the new coaching group was established. Hopefully, everyone can do well in preparation and competition and deliver a satisfying result," chief coach Qin Zhijian noted.

China has won 11 consecutive men's team titles and six straight women's team titles in the tournament. The World Team Table Tennis Championships Finals in London will be held from April 28 to May 10.

## Injury-free Katik Tyagi ready to take 'responsibility' for KKR

**KOLKATA**

Kartik Tyagi is ready to take on the responsibility for Kolkata Knight Riders ahead of their important match against Lucknow Super Giants at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

Injuries to key bowlers have placed the 25-year-old in a situation in which the team is hoping for him to shoulder the burden of carrying the bowling unit. Even after a rain-abandoned game, Tyagi stated that the team's determination is strong. "We have it in our minds that we have to win the match. We are quite hungry," he said before the contest at Eden Gardens. "Our planning is complete." Tyagi's return to form has



not been easy. He shared his ongoing struggles with injuries and the major changes he made to his bowling technique. "I faced a lot of problems related to injuries, mainly a shin splint issue that wasn't getting better," he explained.

Fortunately for KKR, Tyagi feels his biggest strength is still there. "Pace is a very natural thing; it's inside your body, you don't have to bring

it from outside," he said. "If I run with good rhythm and bowl continuously, it just comes to me." With injuries affecting players, Tyagi mentioned that the team had prepared for such situations. "We knew well in advance that there were two or three injuries in the team. We were in camps. It became easier because everyone knew their role ahead of time.

Yes, injuries are a setback, but you have to learn to manage them." Struggling three-time winners Kolkata Knight Riders have confirmed that Sunil Narine has recovered from his illness and has returned to training ahead of their match against Lucknow Super Giants.

## Bayern Munich coach Kompany forgets about his 100th game anniversary

**BERLIN**

Vincent Kompany appeared to pay little attention to the milestone of his 100th game as Bayern Munich coach as the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium provided the stage for one of the most significant wins of his tenure.

The 39-year-old was focused instead on the work still to be done to secure the reigning German champions' place in the 2026 UEFA Champions League semifinals. In front of thousands of Bayern fans who stayed in the stadium after the final whistle to celebrate the team, he chose to speak about his appreciation for Real Madrid star Vinicius Junior rather than dwell on an important moment in his own career, reports Xinhua. "We all want players that are different. Vinicius should stay the way he is. He has my full support," he said after admitting that the hug at half-time was his first meeting with the outstanding winger.

Although he has been the architect of Bayern's current success, the former Manchester City defender instead pointed to the mood in his team's dressing room, saying there was silence because "as we know we could have scored more goals."

Bayern's first win there in 25 years appeared almost secondary to the wider significance of the display, which underlined Kompany's growing stature as a coach. His humble approach was again evident as players and club officials praised his consistent way of working.

## Billie Jean King Cup: Adkar, Yamalapalli lead India's recovery against NZ



**NEW DELHI**

Straight sets wins from Vaishnavi Adkar and Sahaja Yamalapalli eased Team India to victory against New Zealand in their second match of the Billie Jean King Cup Group I - Asia/Oceania fixture in New Delhi on Wednesday. The hosts bounced back hours after conceding their opener versus Thailand at the Delhi Lawn Tennis Association Complex.

Representing India in the singles' rubbers, the 21-year-old Adkar, who made her BJK Cup bow in the previous match, defeated New Zealand's Aishi Das 6-2, 6-4. Yamalapalli sealed the win with a 6-1, 6-3 victory over Valentina Ivanov before Rutuja Bhosale and Anika Raina paired up to face Monique Barry and Erin Routcliffe to close out the tie.

Showing no signs of any hangover from her open-

ing-day defeat, Adkar came out sharp, breaking Das early to move 2-0 ahead in the first singles rubber on Day 2. She tightened her grip with another break in the fifth game, shutting the door on any comeback and closing out the set 6-2 with authority.

Adkar carried that momentum into the second set, striking early once again, though Das responded well to draw level at 4-4. The Indian, however, raised her level at the right moment, breaking decisively before serving out the match 6-2, 6-4 in an hour and 30 minutes. Yamalapalli was even more dominant in her outing against Ivanov, racing through the opening set with three breaks of serve to seal it 6-1. She carried that same control into the second, dictating play from the baseline with authority and consistently pushing her opponent onto the back foot.

## Rayo Vallecano look for European history in Conference League

**MADRID**

Spanish side Rayo Vallecano has a chance to make European history on Thursday when it hosts AEK Athens in the first leg of the UEFA Conference League quarterfinal. The tie gives Rayo a chance to reach a European semifinal for the first time after playing in the quarterfinals of the UEFA Cup in the 2000-2001 season, when they lost to Deportivo Alaves.

The side from the working-class Madrid neighbourhood of Vallecas goes into the game after taking a big step toward La Liga survival with



a 1-0 home win over Elche on Friday, and coach Inigo Perez will have virtually his full squad available, with the exception of wingers Fran Perez and Ilias Akhomach, who have slight physical problems. AEK

Athens will provide a difficult test, with the Greek side immersed in the title race after an impressive away win over Olympiakos at the weekend. The visiting side has been tough to beat this season, with

just five defeats in 47 games in all competitions.

The highly-rated Inigo Perez has tended to rotate his team between La Liga matches and the Conference League and is likely to continue doing so on Thursday, with players such as Gerard Gumbau, Alfonso Espino, Ivan Balliu, Pedro Diaz, and perhaps Nobel Mendy coming into the starting lineup.

Fellow Spanish side Celta Vigo are in Europa League action on Thursday with a quarterfinal first leg away to German side FC Freiburg, which currently sits eighth in the Bundesliga. Celta's win in Va-

lencia last weekend lifted the club to sixth in La Liga, just one point behind Betis, which is in Europa League action on Wednesday, and the club from northwestern Spain has an excellent chance of finishing fifth, which could bring a place in next season's Champions League. Coach Claudio Giraldes recently extended his contract with Celta and will have talismanic striker Iago Aspas available for the game, along with Matias Vecino, but he will be without central defender Carl Starfelt and midfielder Hugo Alvarez, who suffered a twisted ankle in Valencia.