

## Zimbabwe head into Super Eight as group toppers

Colombo (UNI) Zimbabwe, who failed to make the cut for the 2024 T20 World Cup, continue to spring surprises. After beating Australia earlier in the tournament, they defeated tournament co-hosts Sri Lanka by six wickets here to enter the Super Eight unbeaten and at Group B toppers. In their final group game of the 2026 edition on Thursday, Zimbabwe restricted the in-form Sri Lankans to 178/7 and then overcame a mid-innings lull to gallop to 182/4 in 19.3 overs. Brian Bennett and Tadiwanashe Marumani



gave the team the perfect launchpad, putting on an opening partnership of 69 in 8.3 overs. After losing Marumani and Ryan Burl in quick succession, they struggled to tick on for a while. But captain Sikandar Raza flipped the switch in the 15th over, slamming two sixes and four in suc-

Electing to bat first, they got off to a flying start, scoring 61/1 in powerplay. The co-hosts raced to 50 in 4.1 overs, making it their fastest team 50 in T20 World Cup history. Pathum Nissanka, who led Sri Lanka to victory against Australia in the previous match, has once again given the side the early momentum with a brisk half-century. During the innings of 62 (41b, eight fours), he also overtook Kusal Mendis as Sri Lanka's highest scorer in T20s. Leg-spinner Graeme Cremer (2/27) led the Zimbabwe fightback, dismissing Kamindu Mendis and Nissanka. The co-hosts slipped from 100/2 to 123/4.

## Ibrahim Zadran's unbeaten 95 carries Afghanistan to 200/4 against Canada

Chennai: Opener Ibrahim Zadran struck an unbeaten 95 -- his second consecutive fifty -- as Afghanistan posted 200/4 in 20 overs against Canada in their final Group D clash of the Men's T20 World Cup at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Thursday. Put in to bat first in what is also the final game of Jonathan Trott as their head coach, Afghanistan made a steady start before Canada hit back in the sixth over, as pacer Jaskaran Singh dismissed Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Gulbadin Naib in the space of four balls. Zadran then anchored the innings, finding support from Sediquallah Atal in a 95-run stand off 59 balls for the third wicket.



Zadran brought up his second successive fifty of the tournament, while Atal fell in the 16th over for 44 off 32 balls. Zadran, dropped on 54 by Canada's Navneet Dhaliwal, capitalised on the reprieve to steer Afghanistan to exactly 200 in a 56-ball vigil at the crease laced with seven fours and five sixes at a strike-rate of 169.64. It's also the first time Afghanistan have posted a total of 200 in their history of participating in the tournament. Canada's bowlers endured a mixed outing, with Jaskaran Singh returning figures of 3-52 and Dilon Heyliger claiming 1-41. Afghanistan's total looks formidable, leaving Canada with a stiff chase if they are to end their campaign on a high note.

## West Indies beat Italy to extend winning streak

Kolkata (UNI) West Indies defeated Italy by 42 runs at the Eden Gardens here on Thursday to remain unbeaten in the group stage of the T20 World Cup. Bidding to exit the World Cup on a high, a spirited performance from the Italian team saw them restrict West Indies to 165/6. But with Matthew Forde spearheading the attack, the Italian chase failed to take off, and eventually folded at 123 in 18 overs. Benjamin Manenti top-scored for the Italians with 26. For the third time in four matches, West Indies bowled out the opposition, including England, inside 20 overs. Shamar Joseph floored Italy with pace, finishing with 4/30.



Meanwhile Forde, who had provided the breakthrough with the wicket of Justin Mosca, returned with impressive figures of 3/19 in his four overs. Sent into bat, Shai Hope held

the West Indies innings together with a brisk half-century. The West Indies captain was the only one who used his feet well to counter a disciplined bowling performance and scored 75 off 46 balls, with the help of six fours and four sixes. Ali Hasan gave Italy the breakthrough, inducing a faint edge off Brandon King. The West Indies kept losing wickets at regular intervals, and were unable to pick up the pace once Hope was bowled by Crishan Kalugamage. While the leggie continued his impressive form and was the pick of the bowlers, Benjamin Manenti also contributed with 2/37 in his four overs.

Brief score	
West Indies:	165/6 (20.0)
Italy:	123 (18.0)

## Dube happy to change gears according to match situation

New Delhi (UNI) Moments after producing his career-best T20I knock in the 17-run win against the Netherlands helped India sail into the Super Eight unscathed, star all-rounder Shivam Dube said he thrives in pressure situations. Dube's all-round show, scoring 66 with the bat and 2/35 with the ball, along with Varun Chakravarthy's superb 3/14, extended India's winning streak to 12 matches in T20 World Cups. The 66 now stands as Dube's



highest T20I score, eclipsing his 65 against New Zealand in Visakhapatnam earlier this year and the unbeaten 63 versus Afghanistan in Indore in 2024. "It was a little tough; this is the situation I love to bat. I was enjoying it, although I was under pressure. It was skidding and keeping low. One of the balls spun as well. For me, I knew I could hit, but the situation demanded something different. I try to hit boundaries and enjoy hitting sixes.

## Revathi sets eye on upcoming French OPEN

Bengaluru, (UNI) Maaya Rameshwaran Revathi is setting her sights on success at the upcoming French Open, as the 16-year-old continues her steady rise on the international circuit following a competitive outing at the KPBT Trust ITF Women's Open W100 Bengaluru 2026. "The environment is great at the Rafa Nadal Academy because you are surrounded by athletes, and I study there as well. It has turned into a second home. I will now look to play more on clay courts, with the French Open coming up. The immediate aim is to do well in the Junior Grand Slams," she said. The Coimbatore youngster suffered a narrow three-set defeat to fifth seed Polina Iatenco in the opening round of the singles main draw. However, she bounced back strongly in the doubles competition, partnering compatriot and close friend Shrivalli Rashmikaa Bhamidipaty to defeat an all-Indian pair and advance to the quarter-finals. Coming into the Bengaluru event after appearances in Mumbai and Pune, Maaya has been gaining valuable exposure against higher-ranked opponents. Her growth has been shaped by strong grassroots training in India and advanced preparation at the Rafa Nadal Academy, where she trains and studies. Reflecting on her journey, Maaya said she began taking tennis seriously at the age of 10. A breakthrough came when she won the Under-12 Nationals in 2022, a victory she describes as an eye-opener. "When I entered the ITF juniors, I had a 25-match winning streak, won four tournaments in a row, and reached major quarterfinals



and semifinals. Winning the J300 in Delhi brought me closer to the Grand Slams, so it has been a great start for me so far," she said. In Bengaluru, a city she holds close to her heart, Maaya once again found valuable lessons. Her first-ever tennis tournament was an Under-10 event in the city, where she lost in the opening round but discovered her love for competition. "I've always liked playing in Bangalore. In the Under-14s, I had one of my better results here, and most of the times I've played on these courts, it's been very good for me," she said. With the clay-court season approaching, Maaya plans to return to the Rafa Nadal Academy to fine-tune her preparations. "The environment is great at the academy because you are surrounded by athletes, and I study there as well. It has turned into a second home. I will now look to play more on clay courts, with the French Open coming up. The immediate aim is to do well in the Junior Grand Slams," she added.

## Kapil Dev calls on Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, pushes for 'Golf tourism'

New Delhi (UNI) President of the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) Kapil Dev along with CEO, PGTI Amandeep Johl called on Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and discussed the potential of golf tourism in India. The meeting took place on Wednesday evening at the sidelines of the ongoing AI Summit. The meeting focused on positioning India as a premium global golf destination by leveraging professional tournaments, historic championship courses, and India's favourable climate windows that enable year-round play across regions. Speaking to UNI after meeting with the Tourism minister, CEO of PGTI Amandeep Johl described Golf tournaments as ambassadors for promoting tourism "The minister understands that Golf has an immense potential to attract foreign tourists." Speaking to UNI earlier, former Indian cricket captain Kapil Dev,



had pointed out the potential of Golf to attract tourists into the country "Japanese go to Thailand to play, Koreans visit other countries to play because in their coun-

try Golf is very expensive, if we can create world-class Golf infrastructure here, then we can build substantial international tourism around that."

### India women team defeat Perth RedStar in closed-door friendly in Perth

Perth: The Indian senior women's team defeated Australian side Perth RedStar FC 5-0 in a closed-door friendly match at Dalmatinac Park here in Australia on Thursday. India led 3-0 at half-time. Preparing for the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026, it was the Blue Tigrisses' first friendly game after arriving in Australia on February 11. Aveka Singh scored a brace, while Pyari Xaxa, Nirmala Devi Phanjoubam and Sanju netted one goal each for India. Amelia Valverde's side will play their next friendly against Perth Azzurri on February 23 at Macedonia Park in Perth at 16:00 IST.

## T20 WC: ten Doeschate flags need for better plans against finger spin

New Delhi (UNI) India's left-hand heavy batting line-up has increasingly come under the scanner in the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup, with opposition captains repeatedly deploying finger spin to choke the scoring through the middle overs. Assistant coach of Indian team Ryan ten Doeschate has acknowledged the concern after India's 17-run win over the Netherlands in Ahmedabad, admitting the team needs clearer plans on surfaces that aid spin heading into the Super Eight. "I think on better wickets, you won't see it [batters struggling against spin]," ten Doeschate said. "You can hit through the line with more confidence. But the point is that we need to have plans where the wickets do hold and the



[longer] boundaries are there. We need to be able to have a game plan to deal with that threat," the former Dutch international said at the post-match press conference. India's top eight features six left-hand batters, a composition that

has encouraged rival captains to lean heavily on off-spinners, more specially finger spin. Through the group stage, no team has faced more off-spin than India (102 deliveries in total). Among 13 teams that have faced at least six overs of off-spin, only Nepal (5.25) and Oman (5.42) have scored slower than India's 6.23 runs per over. "I wouldn't say (there are struggles against) offspin, I'd say finger-spin [on the whole]," ten Doeschate said of India's worry heading into the Super Eight. "If you take the combined figures, I think Pakistan bowled 14 [17] overs of fingerspin in the last game, and off the top of my head, I want to say [they got] something like 4 for 78 or something like that [5 for 125]. So it's not great numbers [for India]."

## Canada, South Korea claim short track golds at Milan-Cortina

Milan (UNI) Canada's Steven Dubois won gold in the men's 500 meters at the Milan-Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games, while South Korea rallied from an incident mid-race to capture the women's 3,000m relay title. Dubois, a four-time world champion, blasted into the lead from the start and held it throughout, clocking 40.835 seconds for his first individual Olympic gold on Wednesday. Dutch brothers Melle van 't Wout and Jens van 't Wout took silver and bronze respectively, with Jens earning his third medal of the Games, according to Xinhua. "It was the one I was missing. I can't say it's never been on my mind, but I never wanted to really give myself hope, or make it an objective, because it's so hard. It's the toughest thing you can achieve, in short track, there's so much happening. It's difficult to describe it, honestly," Dubois said. China's Liu Shaoyang crashed on the final lap of the semifinals and missed final A. He later won final B. Teammate Lin Xiaojun was eliminated in the quarterfinals. "We really hoped to deliver strong results and bring home gold medals for everyone during the



Spring Festival, but we didn't manage to win one. It feels tough and quite regretful. We hope everyone can understand us - we truly gave it everything we had," Liu said. The women's 3,000m relay produced a dramatic finish after a collision with 16 laps remaining involving Canada and the Netherlands. A Dutch

skater fell and slid into a South Korean skater, leaving South Korea well adrift of Canada and Italy. South Korea reeled the leaders back in over the closing laps. With five laps remaining, Italy surged past Canada to take the lead and lift the home crowd, but Kim Gil-li found a gap on the inside with two laps to go, slipped past Arianna Fontana and sprinted home for gold in 4 minutes 4.014 seconds. Italy took silver and Canada claimed bronze. "I saw there was a chance for an inside pass, I just tried and I went through. I'm really happy to get the gold medal together with my teammates," Kim said. The silver was Fontana's 14th Olympic medal, making her Italy's most decorated Olympian and moving her past fencing great Edoardo Mangiarotti, who won 13 medals between 1936 and 1960. China's quartet of Gong Li, Wang Xinran, Zhang Chutong and Yang Jingru beat Japan and France to win final B. "Today we fully showed what we're capable of. We felt relaxed going into the race. We had no way back, so we just pushed forward without hesitation," Wang said.

## Vaishnavi Adkar storms into maiden ITF W100 quarters

Bengaluru (UNI) On a hard court that rewarded first-strike tennis and punished hesitation, Vaishnavi Adkar showed she has both the patience to absorb and the courage to attack. In a match that swung on belief as much as ball-striking, the Indian rallied past eighth seed Mai Hontama 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 to book her maiden quarterfinal berth at a ITF W100 event here on Thursday. The opening set belonged to Hontama. On the quick surface, she took time away from Vaishnavi, redirecting pace with crisp groundstrokes and stepping inside the baseline to control exchanges. The



6-2 scoreline reflected her command, as she dictated tempo and kept the Indian scrambling. But hard courts reward clarity of intent, and Vaishnavi found hers. In the second set, she stopped reacting and started initiating. She trusted her forehand, committed to deeper returns, and held serve with greater authority. A crucial break midway through the set shifted the momentum, and at 6-4, the contest was reset. The decider was a test of stamina and nerve. Long rallies, sharp angles, and relentless pace from both players turned it into a physical and mental examination.