

## Short Takes

### Mumbai Indians sign Goibibo as principal sponsors for IPL 2018

New Delhi, Mar 12 : Indian Premier League (IPL) defending champions Mumbai Indians on Monday signed up with online travel company Goibibo as their principal sponsors for one year, according to a statement from the franchise.

As part of the partnership, brand Goibibo will be sported on the back of the Mumbai Indians team jersey this IPL season, starting April 7.

Commenting on the partnership, Saujanya Shrivastava, Group CMO, MakeMyTrip said: "We are delighted to partner with Mumbai Indians and reach out to millions of IPL and Mumbai Indian fans through this association."

IPL is one of the most loved and watched sporting events in the country and the association with Mumbai Indians presents a consumer-focused brand like ours a unique opportunity to deepen our engagement with customers in a truly innovative manner."

A Mumbai Indians spokesperson said: "We are thrilled to have a new category in Goibibo as part of brand association with Mumbai Indians. As a brand that has strong resonance with new-age Indians on the move, Goibibo will be a perfect partner to the Mumbai Indians."

The three time IPL champions led by Rohit Sharma will open their campaign in the 2018 edition against Mahendra Singh Dhoni's Chennai Super Kings (CSK) at home on April 7.

### Juventus temporarily takes Serie A lead with win over Udinese

Rome, Mar 12 : Italian football club Juventus managed to temporarily take the top spot in the Serie A standings from Napoli with a 2-0 victory against Udinese in the 28th week of the league.

Argentine forward Paulo Dybala scored both goals for Juve at minutes 20 and 49, while teammate and compatriot Gonzalo Higuain missed a penalty kick in the 38th minute during Sunday's tie, reports Efe.

Juventus is now atop the standings, with 71 points, ahead of Napoli who drew Inter Milan 0-0, while Udinese is in 11th place, with 33 points.

Meanwhile, Crotone managed to jump out of the relegation zone and stun Sampdoria 4-1 at Ezio Scida Stadium.

Crotone forward Marcello Trotta scored goals in minutes 6 and 37, while Adrian Stoian scored in minute 23 and the fourth goal was a mistake by Sampdoria defender Matias Silvestre in the 58th minute.

Duvan Zapata scored Sampdoria's only goal in the match.

With the victory, Crotone climbed to 16th place, with 24 points, while Sampdoria remained in seventh place, with 44 points.

In other matches, Atalanta beat Bologna 1-0 on a goal by Marten de Roon at minute 87, reaching 41 points in eighth place.

Cagliari and Lazio tied 2-2 while Sassuolo and SPAL also settled for a 1-1 draw.

### Soler wins Paris-Nice title, de la Cruz takes final stage

Madrid, Mar 12 : Spanish cyclist Marc Soler (Movistar) won the title in the Paris-Nice road cycling race, while his compatriot David de la Cruz (Sky) clinched the eighth and final stage.

De la Cruz's winning time for the 110km final stage heading into Nice was two hours, 53 minutes and six seconds, just beating out another Spanish rider, Omar Fraile (Astana), who came second on Sunday, reports Efe.

Overall champion Soler finished the final day in third place, three seconds off the pace, but still clinched the title with a total time of 30 hours, 22 minutes and 41 seconds.

In the end, Britain's Simon Yates (Mitchelton Scott) came second in the general classification, four seconds behind Soler.

Spain's Gorka Izagirre (Bahrain Merida) completed the podium, 14 seconds off the pace.

### Rabada in more trouble with fresh conduct breach charge

Dubai, Mar 12 : For the second time in four days, South Africa pacer Kagiso Rabada found himself in a soup on disciplinary grounds with the International Cricket Council (ICC) confirming on Monday that the pacer has been reported for a new level one offence.

The fresh charge relates to the send-off he gave Australia vice captain David Warner after dismissing the opener on Sunday, the third day of the second Test at St.

George's Park -- the same day that he was contesting a more serious charge related to his on-field behaviour with Aussie skipper Steve Smith on the opening day of the match.

A Level 1 offence carries with it a maximum of 50 per cent match fee fine and two demerit points.

Earlier, Rabada was hit with a level two charge for the Smith incident, which carries a sanction of three or four demerit points.

Rabada is already on five demerit points, and reaching eight demerit points automatically triggers a two-Test ban.

This is the fourth instance that the 22-year-old fast bowler have been charged, two of which have been for send-offs.

In February last year, Rabada was charged for inappropriate and deliberate physical contact with Sri Lanka's Niroshan Dickwella while in July 2017, the pacer was caught using inappropriate language after dismissing England all-rounder Ben Stokes.

In the recently concluded series against India last month, Rabada was charged for using language which could provoke an aggressive reaction from another player in the send-off of India batsman Shikhar Dhawan.

ICC match referee Jeff Crowe will deliver his verdict later on Monday after which the Proteas will get a clearer picture of whether the pacer will be available for the remaining two Tests of the four-match series against the Kangaroos.

## Goalkeeper Amrinder extends stint with Mumbai City FC

Mumbai, Mar 12 : Goalkeeper Amrinder Singh has signed a new three-year deal with Mumbai City FC, committing his future with the Indian Super League (ISL) franchise until May 2021.

Amrinder has consistently been a standout performer for Mumbai City FC and has established his spot as one of the top goalkeepers of the country.

The 24-year-old joined Mumbai City FC for the 2016 season of the ISL, initially on loan from Bengaluru FC. After joining in the second half of the season, Amrinder featured for Alexandre Guimaraes' side six times, conceding just thrice and winning the Golden Glove award in the process.

Unsurprisingly, the move was made permanent as Amrinder was the first player to be retained by the Islanders ahead of the 2017-18 season and subsequently, made a total of 16 league appearances.

Commenting on his contract extension, the Punjab-born goalkeeper said: "The



last season and a half that I've spent here in Mumbai has been extremely fruitful for me on both, a personal and a professional front. So when an opportunity presented itself to extend my stay here at this wonderful club, I didn't have to think twice."

"I believe that the set up we have here at Mumbai

City FC is top notch and that we're in the right direction. And moreover, the management, the staff and the fans have been extremely supportive and wonderful. I can't wait to get back on the pitch and win games with them and for them," he added.

Club CEO Indranil Das Blah said: "We are delight-

ed to have retained Amrinder for the next three years. We believe he is the best goalkeeper in the country and has proved his worth over the last two seasons." "He is hard-working, dependable and professional and the club is lucky to have secured his services for the next few years," Blah added.

## India finish top of shooting World Cup medals tally

Guadalajara (Mexico), Mar 12 : India topped the medals tally for the very first time in an International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) competition, after finishing the World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun stage here with four gold, one silver and four bronze for a total of nine medals.

In the concluding event of the World Cup on Sunday, the three Indians in the Men's Skeet competition, however failed to reach the podium with Smit Singh shooting 116 in qualifying to finish at the 15th spot, Angad Bajwa shot 115 to end in 18th while Sheeraz Sheikh secured the 30th spot with a score of 112.

Two time Olympic Champion Vincent Hancock of the US won the Men's Skeet competition. Hancock, who had won gold in Men's Skeet at the Beijing and London Olympics, had gone into a



bit of a slump after winning the 2015 World Championships and completed a comeback of sorts into the winner's circle with this win here.

He did it in style by first topping qualification with a sublime 123 out of 125 and then followed it up in the final, with a world record equalling 59 out of 60.

He was however matched by Paul Adams of Australia and finally got the better of him 6-5 in a shoot-off for gold and silver.

Italy's Tammara Cassandro settled for the bronze with 49 hits in the final. India's Smit was placed seventh at the start of the day and stood a chance of

qualifying but rounds of 22,23 and 23 ended all hopes. Bajwa was the best Indian shooter of the day returning rounds of 24, 25 and 24 but he had dropped too far behind on day one of qualifying and Sheikh did not look in his element in this competition.

The Indian contingent will however leave Guadalajara a happy lot as for the first time in the history of the sport, they have emerged triumphant in a global event and had become the talk of the competition thanks mainly to the exploits of young guns like Shahzar Rizvi, Manu Bhaker, Akhil Sheoran, Om Prakash Mitharval, Anjum Moudgil and Mehuli Ghosh apart from facile performances from senior stars like Jitu Rai, Ravi Kumar and even Sanjeev Rajput, for that matter who did not win a medal but shot very well to just miss out and finish fourth.

## Novak Djokovic beats Roger Federer to lift his fourth Indian Wells title



Indian Wells (US), March 23 : World No. 1 Novak Djokovic overtook Roger Federer 6-3, 6-7 (5), 6-2 to lift the Indian Wells ATP title on Sunday. It is Djokovic's 50th career title. He went past his coach Boris Becker who had won 49 titles during his career.

The Serb was cruising to a comfortable victory when he led by a set and a break before Federer broke Djokovic's serve for the first time in the match to force a tie-breaker. Djokovic lead 5-4 with a mini-break, but double faulted twice to hand Federer his first set point.

The 17-time Grand Slam champion converted it to force a decider in the desert. Djokovic took advantage of a string of unforced errors from the Swiss maestro's racket to win four straight games from 2-2 in the final set. This is Djokovic's fourth Indian Wells title tying him with

Federer. In the head-to-head clash, Federer leads the series 20-18 and had won three of their last four meetings in tournament finals.

The Swiss committed 43 unforced errors to Djokovic's 35 in the match. It is Djokovic's 21st Masters 1000 title. Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer are ahead of him with 27 and 24 Masters 1000 titles respectively.

Federer said: "I would like to congratulate Novak on a great final and a wonderful tournament. It's a great start to the season and I hope we can play some more this year."

Djokovic added: "Tough luck Roger, it was a great tournament and you're a great champion and great competitor. It was a pleasure playing against you and, as you said, hopefully we can play some more this year." Twitter was abuzz after Djokovic's win.

## Chandigarh to host first sports Lit-fest

Chandigarh, Mar 12 : Chandigarh is all set to host the first sports literature festival that will bring together sports personalities who have either written books or have been the subject of one or more books themselves, organisers of the festival said on Monday.

'Play Write 2018', which the organisers claim is India's first of its kind Sports Literature Festival, will be held here on March 17-18.

Among the eminent sporting personalities who will participate in the two-day festival are 106-year-old marathoner Fauja Singh, hockey legend Balbir Singh Sr, the Minerva FC team (which recently won the I-League football tournament), Indian women's Rugby team, Himanshu and Aanchal Thakur (skiers), boxer Akhil Kumar, golfers Shubhankar Sharma, Ajeetesh Sandhu and Gurbaaz Mann and actor Aparshakti Khurana.

"Hockey legend Balbir Singh Senior, and Fauja Singh, 106-year-old Marathon runner, will be the main attractions at the inaugural ceremony."

We plan to make 'Play Write' an annual event," Vivek Atray, curator of the event told media here on Monday.

Speaking on the upcoming event, Balbir Singh Sr said: "Due recognition is like an elixir to a sportsperson. Books about sports and sportspersons bring well deserved spotlight on them and their achieve-

ments, which on one side encourages them to achieve higher levels and on the other inspires the reader to go out and replicate or surpass the achievements of their heroes."

"A sports specific lit fest, especially in a city like Chandigarh can play a major role in the years to come in ensure that this genre of writing gets the support it deserves," he added.

On the second day of the festival, a special session on 'Khelo India' will be held in which young children will be given basic coaching tips and sports writers will interact with them, organiser Chitransh Aggarwal said.

"The Sports Literature festival will feature 10 interesting sessions covering games like hockey, cricket, marathon running, football, boxing, women's Rugby and kabaddi etc.

Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Kings XI Punjab players will be part of a session on cricket and I-League champions Minerva will be represented in a discussion on football," Atray said.

## Rider Sarah lone female participant in Desert Storm rally

New Delhi, Mar 12 : Seasoned rider Sarah Kashyap is all set to compete against the likes of C. S. Santosh, R.

Nataraj and Joan Pedrero Garcia, among others, as the only female participant in foreign bikes' category in the upcoming Desert Storm rally from March 17 to 25 in Rajasthan.

Reviving the energy, excitement and fun in the Thar Desert, the 31-year-old Sarah will be riding an imported KTM EXC 250, according to a statement from the organisers.

One of the most prominent women in Indian motorsports, Sarah is the only woman biker to have finished all major cross country rallies in India and was the first to finish Raid-de-Himalaya in 2015 and also became the first ever to finish Desert Storm in 2017.

Commenting on her preparations for Desert Storm 2018, Sarah, whose motorsport journey has seen her riding unusual bikes in cross-country rallies, said she aims to finish in the top-10.

From a modified Royal Enfield Thunderbird to a Himalayan to a Hero

Impulse, she has tried her hands at quite a few different machines.

"I am excited to be competing against the big boys of motorsports. It has been a tough journey as an individual to reach at this level. However with the support of my family and mentors, I have been able to make it big in the male dominated sport," she said.

"My ultimate aim is to participate in Dakar Rally which is regarded as the toughest motorsport event in the world and is most watched world over after Formula1. I would urge corporates to come forward and support individuals and the sport so that more talent can be nurtured in the country," she added.

Bringing over 200 participants together, the six-day long rally will cover a distance of over 2000 km starting from NCR and crossing cities like Bikaner, Jodhpur and Jaipur.

The rally will witness extreme challenges in the desert as the competitors will not only have to battle the weather conditions, but also the tough terrains.

## Arsenal beat Watford, Ozil achieves English Premier League milestone

London, Mar 12 : After three consecutive league defeats, Arsenal bounced back and prevailed over Watford 3-0 in an English Premier League (EPL) game that saw the Gunners' German midfielder Ozil reach a career milestone.

After losing to Tottenham Hotspur, Manchester City and Brighton & Hove Albion, Arsenal got back on track with a 2-0 win over Milan in the first leg of the Europa League round of 16, and it maintained its momentum against Watford on Sunday, reports Efe.

Arsenal took an early lead in the eighth minute on Shkodran Mustafi's header off a cross by Ozil, who reached 50 assists in a record 141 EPL matches.

This was two fewer matches than it took former French player Eric Cantona to get over the 50-assist threshold.

Watford rarely threatened Arsenal's goal during the first 45 minutes with Roberto Pereyra squandering the visitors' closest scoring chance.

After the intermission, Arsenal doubled the score just when Watford was dominating, as Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang made the most of Henrikh Mkhitaryan's nice through shot in the 59th minute.

Just two minutes later, Watford had a chance to get on the board when the official awarded Pereyra a penalty after being fouled by Ainsley Maitland-Niles, although Troy Deeny missed on it.

On a counterattack, it was Mkhitaryan who secured the Arsenal win with 13 minutes to go before stoppage time.

After the victory, Arsenal is in sixth place with 48 points, while Watford sits on 10th with 36 points.

## Mohun Bagan officials resign alleging 'non cooperation' from secretary

Kolkata, Mar 12 : City football giants Mohun Bagan club officials Debashish Dutta and Srinjoy Bose on Monday stepped down from their posts alleging non-cooperation from secretary Anjan Mitra.

The club's assistant secretary Bose and director-cum-finance secretary Dutta put in their papers on Monday afternoon and later called a media conference at the Calcutta Sports Journalists' Club to announce their decision.

"This is not an overnight decision. We have been thinking about it for about four years now. We have not found a solution and the situation has worsened.

No one is indispensable," Bose told reporters. Asked whether the players would suffer due to this and with the Super

Cup coming up in a few days' time, Dutta said, "The team is in safe hands with coach Shankarlal Chakraborty."

"We have recently pruned the squad to 25 and they will leave for Bhubaneswar on March 19 for practice. They (Anjan Mitra and his office bearers) have a lot of time left to make a champion squad for next season," he added.

When contacted, Mitra said he is yet to receive anything in writing and therefore cannot react.

"I've not yet got the letter. I can comment only after that. I heard they held a press conference announcing their resignation," Mitra told IANS over phone.

Mohun Bagan finished third in the I-League this season collecting 31 points.