



## Ishan Kishan overtakes Abhishek to become world number one T20I batter

**DUBAI [UAE], JULY 1:** Ishan Kishan has become world number one T20I batter, overtaking his Indian teammate and opener Abhishek Sharma for the top spot, according to the latest ICC Men's T20I batting rankings.

Kishan earns a new career-high rating and surpasses Abhishek following the completion of India's recent two-match T20I series against Ireland in Belfast, which the hosts won 2-0, despite not being able to fire in both the matches, with Abhishek getting a golden duck in the last match after a 49 in the first T20I.

The rise to the top for Kishan comes on the back of his consistent form at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the start of the year, where the hard-hitting left-hander compiled 317 runs at a strike rate of almost 200 that included a 'Player of the Match' performance against Pakistan in Colombo and a half-century against New Zealand in the final, as per ICC.

Ishan is the leading T20I run-getter this year, with 1,147 runs in 30 innings at an average of 38.23 and a strike rate of 190.21, with a century and 10 fifties.

Abhishek had held the top ranking for almost 12



months, with Kishan joining an exclusive group that includes Virat Kohli and Suryakumar Yadav as one of four male players from India to have held the premier position for batters in T20I cricket.

There are only seven rating points separating the two Indian players at the top of the rankings for T20I batters, while Ireland duo Lorcan Tucker (up four places to equal 77th) and Ross Adair (up six slots to 84th) make some ground in this category following some decent efforts with the bat in Belfast.

Seamer Matthew Humphreys (up one place to 25th) earns a new career-high rating on the list for T20I bowlers following his four wickets across the se-

ries, while India's Shivam Dube (up three rungs to seventh) and Ireland pair Gareth Delany (up four slots to 24th) and Harry Tector (up eight spots to 38th) make ground on the updated rankings for T20I all-rounders.

There's also plenty of change on the latest Test rankings this week following the completion of three Tests around the world, with big changes at the top of both the batting and bowling categories as a result.

Australia left-hander Travis Head takes the position as the No.1 Test batter as Harry Brook (second) and Joe Root (down two spots to third) fail to impress during the Nottingham Test against New

Zealand, while Jasprit Bumrah is in sole ownership of the top ranking for Test bowlers as Kiwi pacer Matt Henry drops back down to second.

It was the Black Caps that came out on top at Trent Bridge to boost their ICC World Test Championship prospects, with a quartet of their players - Rachin Ravindra (up two spots to seventh), Daryl Mitchell (up five places to 11th), Devon Conway (up 14 rungs to equal 15th) and Tom Latham (up 12 slots to equal 31st) making giant strides on the updated list for Test batters.

Kiwi pacer Nathan Smith (up eight rungs to 38th) makes gains on the latest rankings for Test bowlers, while England captain Ben Stokes improves two places to finish his international career in third place on the list for Test all-rounders following his mid-match retirement.

There are also gains for a pair of West Indies quicks following their impressive Test triumph over Sri Lanka, with Shamar Joseph (up nine slots to equal 14th) and Kemar Roach (up 4 to 17) making eye-catching progress on the list for Test bowlers following their exploits in Antigua. (ANI)

## J&K to host National Coaching Camp for Indian Soft Tennis Teams ahead of 20th Asian Games

**HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS  
JAMMU, JULY 01**

In a landmark development for sports in Jammu & Kashmir, the J&K Amateur Soft Tennis Association, under the aegis of the Amateur Soft Tennis Federation of India (ASTFI) and in active collaboration with the J&K Sports Council, will host the first-ever National Coaching Camp for the Indian Soft Tennis Teams in preparation for the 20th Asian Games, Japan 2026. The camp will be held at the Gindun Sports Stadium, Rajbagh, Srinagar, from 10th July to 13th August, 2026.

The National Coaching Camp represents an unprecedented recognition of Jammu & Kashmir's sporting infrastructure and administrative capability at the national level. For the first time in the history of the Union Territory, an In-

dian national-level training camp ahead of the Asian Games will be conducted on J&K soil, a testament to the confidence reposed by the Amateur Soft Tennis Federation of India and the Government of India in the region's growing sporting ecosystem.

The J&K Sports Council reaffirms its unwavering commitment to providing world-class facilities and logistical support to ensure the successful conduct of the camp. About Soft Tennis in India and J&K Soft Tennis is a recognized sport under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India, and is also sanctioned by the School Games Federation of India and the Association of Indian Universities.

The sport is affiliated with the Asian Soft Tennis Federation and the International Soft Tennis Federation and holds the

distinction of being featured in both the National Games of India and the Asian Games In Jammu & Kashmir, the sport has witnessed exceptional growth under the stewardship of the J&K Amateur Soft Tennis Association.

Pertinently, the Association has built an impressive medal tally at national and international competitions, having won 5 Gold, 13 Silver, and 10 Bronze medals. It has also established a robust grassroots network comprising 18 affiliated district units spread across Jammu & Kashmir and has successfully hosted five National Championships across various categories. Plans are already in place to host additional prestigious national and international Soft Tennis events in the current calendar year.

A senior official of the J&K Sports Council stated that hosting the National

Coaching Camp for the Indian Soft Tennis Teams ahead of the Asian Games is a proud moment for every resident of Jammu & Kashmir. "This is not merely an event, it is a signal to the nation that J&K is ready and capable of hosting elite-level sporting programmes. Our local players will have the invaluable opportunity to train alongside the country's finest athletes, absorb the guidance of top national coaches, and benchmark themselves against the highest standards", the official said.

The J&K Sports Council has appealed sports lovers, youth, and citizens across Jammu & Kashmir to celebrate this historic achievement and to extend their full support to the athletes and officials participating in the camp and join in celebrating this historic milestone for sports in the Union Territory.

## Pakistan and Bangladesh excluded as Asian Kabaddi League launches international women's tournament

**NEW DELHI, JULY 01:** Women kabaddi players from across Asia are set to get their biggest professional platform yet with the launch of the inaugural Asian Kabaddi League (AKL) Women's Chapter 1.

While the league is open to players from Asian countries, Pakistan and Bangladesh will not participate in the first edition. The tournament will feature eight regional teams and will be telecast in prime time on Sony from August 1 to 16.

The league aims to transform the landscape of women's kabaddi by offering international competition, professional exposure and a dedicated platform that has long been missing from the sport.

The tournament is being organised in association with the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI), the South East Asian Kabaddi Federation (SEAKF), and the state kabaddi associations of Jharkhand, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh.

Representatives from the participating federations and state associations were felicitated during the launch ceremony.

Unlike most professional kabaddi competitions that primarily focus on men's



events, AKL Women's Chapter 1 has been conceived exclusively for women athletes.

Organisers say the league is designed to provide equal opportunities, encourage international participation and inspire more young girls to take up the sport.

Introducing the league, Vikram Vijay Chandan, President - Growth & Media, AKL, said the tournament would bring together top women kabaddi talent from across the continent.

"AKL - Women's Chapter 1 is a professional platform that unites the finest women kabaddi players and team heads from across Asia.

With Sony as our broadcaster and matches in prime time, we are determined to give women's kabaddi the stage, visibility and respect it deserves," said Chandan.

League Chairman Praveen Shetty welcomed representatives from the participating states and reaffirmed that the league is founded on the belief that talented women players, irrespective of their region, deserve a professional stage to showcase their abilities.

International kabaddi player Suman Shokeen called the league a landmark opportunity for women in the sport and said it fulfils a long standing demand for a

professional competition. "Women players have waited a long time for a professional league of this scale. AKL is a fresh beginning - it gives us a stage to show what we can do and will encourage many more young girls to take up kabaddi," said Shokeen.

With eight regional teams, international participation and nationwide television coverage in prime time, AKL Women's Chapter 1 is expected to become a significant milestone in the growth of women's kabaddi and provide female athletes with a stage to showcase their talent before a wider audience.

## Serena Williams' return ends in defeat to Maya Joint at Wimbledon

**LONDON [UK], JULY 1 (ANI):** Serena Williams suffered a defeat to Maya Joint in her much-anticipated Wimbledon return after a four-year absence, following an epic Centre Court battle. International Sports Competitions.

The 23-time Grand Slam champion, who recently announced her comeback at the age of 44, showed moments of brilliance against the 20-year-old Australian and saved a match point in the second set to force a decider.

However, she eventually ran out of steam, going down 6-3, 6-7 (6-8), 6-3.

"I really don't know what to say! I don't know what just happened, to be honest," Joint said in her on-court interview as per Sky Sports. I didn't get much sleep last night. I was up until like 2am just thinking about it. My legs weren't moving in the warm-up. I really don't know how I got a good start in the match.

"She has such an aura, she's such a legend. I've



been dreaming about this moment since I was a little kid, so this is pretty crazy. The start was so nerve-racking, and trying to finish out the match was hard as well," she added.

Meanwhile, after surviving a first-round rollercoaster on Centre Court to begin her Wimbledon title

defence, third seed Iga Swiatek buried her head in her towel courtside for several minutes.

Her 6-1, 2-6, 6-3 victory over Taylor Townsend in a two-hour, two-minute battle proved both physically and emotionally demanding.

"It was a tough couple of

weeks, not a season where everything went how I wanted. I don't think I won any three-set match this year, so I'm happy that I could do it here, because obviously it means a lot opening the court as defending champion," Swiatek explained in her on-court interview. (ANI)

## 135th Edition of Durand Cup announces participating teams across five host cities

**NEW DELHI, JULY 1:** The countdown to the 135th edition of the Durand Cup gathered further momentum as the Durand Cup Organising Committee announced the 24 participating teams across the tournament's five host cities and confirmed the host city match windows, according to a release.

The tournament will commence in Kolkata on July 25 before travelling across the five host cities over the following four weeks, culminating with the final at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan on August 23.

Hosted across Kolkata, Ranchi, Imphal, Guwahati and Shillong, this year's edition will once again bring together a blend of India's leading clubs, Services teams, emerging sides and international participation, continuing the tournament's tradition of combining rich heritage with contemporary

Indian football, according to a release.

As the home of the Durand Cup since 2019, Kolkata once again forms the centrepiece of the tournament. The city will host two groups along with the inaugural match, two quarter-finals, a semi-final and the final. All matches will be played across both the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan and the Kishore Bharati Krirangan, with matches scheduled between July 25 and August 23.

The Kolkata roster is headlined by record 17-time champions Mohun Bagan Super Giant and 16-time champions East Bengal FC, two of the tournament's most successful and historic clubs.

They are joined by Mohammedan SC; Bengaluru Super Division club South United FC; CISF Football Team, the reigning champions of the BN Mul-

lick Memorial All India Police Games Football Championship; Indian Army Football Team; and Durand Cup debutants Baghat FC, the reigning I-League 3 champions promoted to Indian Football League 2 this season; and fellow I-League 3 side Samalwari Sporting from Sambalpur, Odisha.

Making its debut as a Durand Cup host, Ranchi marks another milestone in the tournament's continued expansion.

The Birsa Munda Stadium will stage league matches from July 26 to August 16 before hosting one of the tournament's four quarter-finals. The Jharkhand capital will welcome ISL sides Jamshedpur FC and Sporting Club Delhi, the Indian Air Force Football Team and debutants Defenders FC of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces.

## Wimbledon: Sinner reaches third round, beats Borges

**LONDON [UK], JULY 1 (ANI):** Italian superstar and world number one Jannik Sinner made it to the third round with a close win over Nuno Borges in the second round of the ongoing Wimbledon at Wednesday.

As per ATP's official website, Sinner beat Borges 7-6(4), 7-6(2), 6-4, booking a third-round match against Jenson Brooksby.

Having secured a five-set win in his side's opening match against Miomir Kecmanovic, Sinner brought his absolute A game in key moments, with Borges serving at 5-4



in the second set, completing a straight sets win and moving to the next round.

"The first set was very tough, but in the first set we were [both] serving very well so there weren't a lot of long exchanges," Sinner said as per the ATP official website.

"Overall, in these kinds of matches where you do not have a lot of control, I am very happy to win. Especially on this surface, I now have two wins [this week]."

"Of course, we will see what is coming, but I am very happy about the re-

sult. A couple of things we need to improve, but I am very happy," he added.

With a two-hour, 32-minute win over Borges, the 24-year-old has ticked his main draw match wins at Grand Slam level to 95 and moved past Nicola Pietrangeli for most by an Italian player. He is aiming to become the 10th man in the Open Era to secure the Wimbledon title, just two years after his rival Carlos Alcaraz joined the list.

"Especially in the first round, I felt the lack of matches," Sinner, who had not played any grass event leading up to the tournament.