Laxman Sivaramakrishnan announces retirement as commentator

NEW DELHI: Former India leg-spinner and veteran cricket expert Laxman Sivaramakrishnan on Friday announced his retirement from the BCCI commentary panel, citing lack of opportunities to conduct toss and presentation ceremonies as reasons to end his broadcasting career. Sivaramakrishnan, who created ripples with his big, booming leg-spinners, googlies and and top spins as a 17-year-old in the early 1980s, expressed his frustration in a series of tweets, which suggested deep-seated dissatisfaction with his job.

"I am retiring from commentary for BCCI," Sivaramakrishnan wrote on his 'X' handle.

"If I have not been used for TOSSES and PRE-SENTATION for 23 years and new comers come in do pitch report Tosses Presentation even when Shastri was coaching, what do you think could be the reason.

"How does a company owning BCCI rights go down? Any guesses.

"My retirement is nothing great. But a story of tv production unfolds. Soon you will see the bigger picture," he tweeted.

Also when a user suggested if his skin colour was an issue, Sivaramakrishnan replied, "You are right. Colour Discrimination." Sivaramakrishnan, 60, was known for expressing his views candidly for more than two decades inside the commentary box. Fondly known as Siva, he played nine Tests and

16 ODIs for India between 1983 and 1986, years after which he began his commentary career in 2000.

He also served as a player representative on the ICC Cricket Committee.

Although he went wicketless in this first Test match, he later became famous for his match-winning 12-wicket haul against England in 1984.

Sivaramakrishnan was also a key player in India's victorious 1985 Benson & Hedges World Championship triumph in Australia under the great Sunil Gavaskar's captaincy.

Curran likely to miss IPL 2026 due to injury

JAIPUR: Rajasthan Royals (RR) have suffered a major setback ahead of the start of IPL 2026 as Sam Curran is expected to be ruled out of the entire IPL season due to a suspected groin injury.

The England all rounder Curran last played a match on March 5, 2026 against India in the semi-final of the T20 World Cup 2026, in which England lost. In November 2025, RR acquired Curran from CSK, and he was set to play for the franchise for the first time. RR acquired Ravindra Jadeja and Curran from CSK in exchange for wicketkeeper-batsman Sanju Samson. Curran began his IPL career with the Punjab Kings in 2019, and RR would have been the third team he would have played for in the IPL. After playing for CSK in 2020 and 2021, Curran was signed by the Punjab Kings for Rs 18.5 crore.

He played a crucial role, including in the final against Pakistan where he helped restrict them to 176/9, contributing to India's 8-wicket win.

India, Australia tours highlight SA women's home summer

NEW DELHI: South Africa women are set for a blockbuster home summer, which includes a historic maiden tour from Australia alongside an India visit with both series including a Test match.

India will travel to South Africa for a three-match ODI series, which will be part of the ICC Women's Championship. It will begin on December 9 in Potchefstroom. The second ODI will be played in Bloemfontein before the teams travel to Newlands for the third and final ODI.

The tour will also include a one-off Test match at St George's Park in Gqeberha from December 20 to 23. This marks just the fourth Test between India and South Africa, with India winning all the previous three meetings in 2002, 2014 and 2024. The Test will also clash with the opening men's Test between England and South Africa in Johannesburg.

Later in the new year, South Africa will host Australia for a full series, which includes ODIs, T20Is and a

Test. The tour begins with a T20I series from March 18 in Kimberley before the teams move to Benoni and KuGompo City (East London) for the second and third T20Is. The ODI series begins on March 27 in Gqeberha and the sides will next head to Paarl for the second ODI on March 31. The series will conclude in Durban on April 3, which will be a Black Day ODI, continuing to highlight the ongoing fight against gender-based violence.

The two teams will then play a Test at the JB Marks Oval in the North West province from April 8 to 11. This will just be the second women's Test match

between South Africa and Australia, following their first meeting in February 2024 in Perth. Australia dominated South Africa at that meeting, winning by an innings and 284 runs.

This is Australia's first full bilateral tour to South Africa. They were supposed to visit in March 2020 for ODIs and T20Is but the tour was cancelled due to Covid-19.

"We are delighted to host two of the world's leading teams in India and Australia for what promises to be a blockbuster home summer for the Proteas Women," CSA Chief Executive Officer Pholetsi Moseki said.

Punjab FC face winless Kerala Blasters in Kochi

KOCHI: Punjab FC will hope to maintain their unbeaten run in the Indian Super League 2025-26 season as they face winless Kerala Blasters FC at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Kochi on Saturday. The match is scheduled to kick-off at 19:30 IST.

Punjab FC have bounced back from their first-round loss against Jamshedpur FC by being unbeaten in their last three fixtures which included a win against Bengaluru FC and two draws against NorthEast United FC and FC Goa. On the other hand, Kerala Blasters have had a terrible start to the season, losing their first four matches, including three at home.

In the last round, Blast-

ers secured their first point of the season after a 1-1 draw against East Bengal courtesy of a stoppage time equaliser by Muhammad Ajsal. The Shers also drew their previous match 1-1 against FC Goa, with goalscorer Nsungusi Effiong receiving a red card at the start of the second half. The side from Mohali will be missing the services of their top scorer for the next three matches.

Speaking ahead of the match, Kerala Blasters Head Coach David Català said, "We performed better than in other games in the last match. We showed character and competed, especially in the first half against them. I'm satisfied with the point, but I'm not really satisfied with the situation overall.

Matheesha Pathirana set to miss early part of IPL 2026

NEW DELHI: Abhishek Nayar, the Kolkata Knight Riders head coach, expects Sri Lanka fast bowler Matheesha Pathirana to be available for IPL 2026 from mid-April.

Pathirana, who was ruled out of the 2026 T20 World Cup due to a calf strain, is currently undergoing rehabilitation under the supervision of Sri Lanka Cricket [SLC]. He featured in just three matches in the tournament before being helped off the field during the game against Australia, raising concerns over his availability for the early part of the IPL.

"The latest update that

we know is he's obviously with the Sri Lankan cricket board and they took out his rehab," Nayar said during KKR's pre-season conference. "And the latest communication that we've had is, hopefully, somewhere mid-April is when they feel he'll be match fit. That's what we know as of now." That timeline is likely to rule Pathirana out of at least the opening phase of IPL 2026, dealing an early blow to KKR's bowling plans. The franchise had invested INR 18 crore in the 23-year-old at the auction after he was released by Chennai Super Kings.

KKR have also been hit

by the absence of Harshit Rana, one of their pace mainstays in recent seasons, due to a knee injury. While Rana has not been officially ruled out of the tournament, Nayar indicated that the team is already exploring options to fill his role.

Rana suffered the injury during India's T20 World Cup warm-up match against South Africa and was ruled out of the T20 World Cup, which India went on to win.

"Firstly, it is a big blow," Nayar said. "Because Harshit has been an integral part of this team for the last couple of seasons, including the championship season.

Starc and Hazlewood likely to sit out initial games of IPL 2026

NEW DELHI: Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood are unlikely to be available for their teams' first few IPL 2026 games with Cricket Australia (CA) understood to be monitoring the workloads of their premier fast bowlers keeping in mind the busy cricket calendar ahead. The update means Starc (Delhi Capitals) and Hazlewood (Royal Challengers Bengaluru) have joined a rapidly growing list of Australian cricketers who will be unavailable for a part or the entirety of the upcoming IPL season. Pat Cummins had earlier been ruled out of the start of the tournament for Sunrisers Hyderabad, while Jack Edwards (Sunrisers Hyderabad) was ruled out altogether on Friday. Nathan Ellis (Chennai

Super Kings) is also expected to be ruled out with a hamstring injury. Cummins played just one Test in the Australian summer due to a stress injury in his back. That match, the third Ashes Test in December, was Cummins' only appearance in a representative game since July 2025, when Australia were in the West Indies. Hazlewood, meanwhile, sat out the entire Ashes series because of hamstring and Achilles issues. Hazlewood did play some of the games in the white-ball series at home against South Africa and India as well as away in New Zealand last year and a Sheffield Shield game in November last year, but has been out for the most part of the last several months.

Duke engineers trap light to create the fastest photodetector ever built

Engineers at Duke University have built the fastest pyroelectric photodetector ever demonstrated, a device that senses light by capturing the heat it produces when absorbed.

This ultrathin sensor can detect light across the entire electromagnetic spectrum. It runs at room temperature, requires no external power, and can be integrated directly into on-chip systems. The technology could lead to a new generation of multispectral cameras with applications in skin cancer detection, food safety inspection, and large-scale agriculture.

Most modern digital cameras rely on semiconductor photodetectors, which generate an electrical current when struck by visible light. That signal is then processed into an image.

However, semiconductors are limited to a narrow portion of the electromagnetic spectrum, similar to the human eye. To detect wavelengths beyond that

range, researchers often use pyroelectric detectors, which produce electrical signals when they heat up after absorbing light.

These thermal detectors have historically been less effective than semiconductor-based systems. Capturing certain wavelengths requires generating enough heat, which typically demands thick materials or very bright light. As a result, these devices tend to be bulky and slow.

"Commercial pyroelectric detectors aren't very responsive, so they need a very bright light or very thick absorbers to work, which naturally makes them slow because heat doesn't move that fast," said Maiken Mikkelsen, professor of electrical and computer engineering at Duke. "Our approach cleverly integrates near-perfect absorbers and super-thin pyroelectrics to achieve a response time of 125 picoseconds, which is a huge improvement for the field."

The team's solution relies on a structure known as a metasurface. It consists of carefully arranged silver nanocubes placed on a transparent layer positioned just 10 nanometers above a thin sheet of gold.

When light hits one of these nanocubes, it excites electrons in the silver. This interaction traps the light's energy through a process called plasmonics. The specific wavelengths captured depend on the size of the nanocubes and how they are spaced.

Because this light trapping is extremely efficient, only a very thin layer of pyroelectric material is needed beneath the surface to generate an electrical signal. The group first demonstrated this concept in 2019, although they did not measure its speed at the time.

"Thermal photodetectors are supposed to be slow, so this was mind-boggling to the entire community," Mikkelsen said.

NVIDIA wants enterprise AI agents safer to deploy

The NVIDIA Agent Toolkit is Jensen Huang's answer to the question enterprises keep asking: how do we put AI agents to work without losing control of our data and our liability?

Announced at GTC 2026 in San Jose on March 16, the NVIDIA Agent Toolkit is an open-source software stack designed to help enterprises and developers build autonomous AI agents.

What's stalling broader deployment is trust. Agents that can take action inside enterprise systems need guardrails, and until now, those have been hard to standardise at scale.

The centrepiece of the toolkit is NVIDIA OpenShell, an open-source runtime that enforces policy-based security and privacy guardrails for autonomous agents. In NVIDIA's terminology, individual agents are called "claws," and OpenShell is what keeps them in check.

Huang framed the stakes at GTC: "Claude Code and OpenClaw have sparked the agent inflexion point – extending AI beyond generation and reasoning into action. Employees will be supercharged by teams of frontier and custom-built

agents they deploy and manage."

NVIDIA is working with Cisco, CrowdStrike, Google, Microsoft Security, and TrendAI to build OpenShell compatibility into their respective security tools.

Also inside the toolkit is NVIDIA AI-Q, an agentic search blueprint built with LangChain. It uses a hybrid architecture – frontier models handle orchestration while NVIDIA's open Nemotron models do the research-heavy lifting. According to NVIDIA, this approach can cut query costs by more than 50% while still producing accuracy that tops the DeepResearch Bench

and DeepResearch Bench II leaderboards.

That figure will matter to enterprise buyers who've been burned by consumption-based AI pricing that looked manageable in pilots and became a budget problem at scale. The partner list includes Adobe, Atlassian, SAP, Salesforce, ServiceNow, Siemens, Cisco, CrowdStrike, Red Hat, Box, Cadence, Cohesity, Dassault Systèmes, IQVIA, and Synopsys.

Salesforce is building a reference architecture where employees use Slack as the orchestration layer for Agentforce agents – pulling from

data in both on-premises and cloud environments – powered by NVIDIA infrastructure. Atlassian is integrating Agent Toolkit into its Rovo AI strategy in Jira and Confluence. ServiceNow's "Autonomous Workforce of AI Specialists" is built on the toolkit with NVIDIA AI-Q. And Siemens launched the Fuse EDA AI Agent, which uses NVIDIA Nemotron to autonomously orchestrate workflows in its electronic design automation portfolio, from design conception through manufacturing sign-off. IQVIA's deployment numbers offer a real-world data point: the company has already deployed more than 150 agents in internal teams and client environments, including 19 of the top 20 pharma companies.

What NVIDIA is positioning itself as the software infrastructure layer for enterprise agentic deployment. The Agent Toolkit, OpenShell, Nemotron models, AI-Q are components of a stack that NVIDIA wants sitting underneath enterprise software.

The toolkit is available now on build.nvidia.com, with support in AWS, Google Cloud, Microsoft Azure, and Oracle Cloud Infrastructure.

Pant counts on Bharat Arun to fix LSG's bowling ahead of IPL 2026

NEW DELHI: Captain Rishabh Pant has stressed the need for Lucknow Super Giants(LSG) to strengthen their bowling unit ahead of the upcoming season of the Indian Premier League 2026, adding that the arrival of experienced bowling coach Bharat Arun has already started to make a positive difference as the team aims to end its wait for an IPL title.

Pant said the team management had identified bowling as a major area requiring improvement following last season's struggles, and believes Arun's experience and communication have helped build confidence among the bowlers during the pre-season camp. "The camp with the fast bowlers has been fantastic. Bharat Arun, sir, has come on board, and since he arrived, he has been adding a lot of value. We've had

a lot of conversations about what I want from the bowlers and what he thinks he can add. The energy is pure. He is one of the best bowling coaches, and I have that trust, having worked with him when he was with the Indian cricket team. He brings that experience," Pant said on JioHotstar.

"The bowlers trust him and open up to him, which is exactly what you want from a bowling coach, adding value to the system. When we look back at last season, we felt we needed to add more to our bowling. He is definitely someone who can contribute a lot in that area, and I am really happy to have him," he added. Pant also emphasised the importance of maintaining a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere within the dressing room, noting that players perform better when they are able to enjoy the game.