

Messi sends signed World Cup jersey for PM Modi’s 75th birthday

NEW DELHI: Bracing up for his much-anticipated tour of India, Argentine superstar Lionel Messi has sent his signed 2022 World Cup victorious jersey to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his 75th birthday.

Promoter Satadru Dutta, who is bringing Messi to India, told PTI on Wednesday that the football icon’s World Cup jersey will be delivered to the PM in two to three days.

“When I met him in February to discuss the visit, I had told him that the PM’s 75th birthday is also coming and he said he would send a signed jersey for the Prime Minister,” Dutta said.

Dutta said he is also trying to arrange a meeting with the PM during Messi’s tour of India, which will comprise stopovers at Kolkata, Mumbai, and Delhi from December 13.

The football-mad city of Kolkata will be the first stop in Messi’s whirlwind trip named ‘GOAT Tour of India 2025’, followed by Mumbai



and New Delhi. The visit is scheduled to conclude after a meeting with the prime minister at his residence in the national capital on December 15. This will be the Argentine great’s first trip to India since 2011 when he visited the country with his national team to play a FIFA friendly against Venezuela, at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata. Dutta had

met Messi’s father earlier this year to present the proposal, and on February 28, Messi himself met him at his residence for a 45-minute discussion. A host of programmes are lined up during his stay in the country. Last month, Kerala Sports Minister V Abdurahiman also confirmed that the Argentina football team, along with star player

Messi, will arrive in Kerala to play a friendly match in November this year.

Abdurahiman was speaking to reporters in Kerala following the Argentina Football Association’s (AFA) announcement that their national team, led by manager Lionel Scaloni, would play friendly matches in Luanda, Angola, and Kerala.

Botafogo loses Neto to long-term injury

RIO DE JANEIRO: Botafogo goalkeeper Neto will miss the rest of the Brazilian football season after suffering a serious thigh injury, the Rio de Janeiro club said.

Neto sustained the injury in the first half of Botafogo’s 1-0 loss to Sao Paulo on Sunday and had to be replaced by Leo Linck.

Tests revealed the 36-year-old will require surgery and is expected to be sidelined for up to five months.

“Neto suffered a complete rupture of the rectus femoris muscle in his right thigh,” Botafogo said in a statement on social media on Tuesday. “We wish him strength and a speedy recovery.”

Neto, who has one Brazil cap, has made four appearances for Botafogo since joining the reigning Brazilian and Copa Libertadores champions from Bournemouth last month.

Eight Indians qualify for ISSF World Cup Final in Doha

NEW DELHI: Eight Indian shooters, including double Olympic medalist Manu Bhaker, have secured their places in the season-ending ISSF World Cup Final scheduled to be held in Doha, Qatar, from December 4 to 9.

Bhaker is the only Indian shooter to have made the cut in two events -- the women’s 10m air pistol and the women’s 25m pistol -- for the ISSF showpiece which determines the season’s best shooter in each of the 12 individual Olympic events. India will have representation in five of those 12 events.

Teenager Suruchi Singh, who dominated the women’s 10m air pistol with three back-to-back gold medals in Buenos Aires, Lima, and Munich, not only qualified for Doha but also secured the No 1 rank in the world in women’s air pistol.

Olympian Esha Singh also qualified in the women’s 10m air pistol event, with her gold medal winning performance in the

fourth and final ISSF World Cup in Ningbo, China.

Others who have qualified include former world champion Rudranksh Balasaheb Patil, who booked his spot in the men’s 10m air rifle with a gold medal in Buenos Aires, while Olympian Arjun Babuta ensured his presence in the same event with a silver in Lima.

Reigning Asian Champion and world-record holder Sift Kaur Samra has also qualified in the women’s 50m rifle three positions (3P) event aided by her gold in Buenos Aires, while fellow Olympian Vijayveer Sidhu secured his berth in the men’s 25m rapid-fire pistol with a gold winning effort at the same venue.

Rounding off India’s list of qualifiers is Simranpreet Kaur Brar, who gained entry in the women’s 25m pistol with her silver in Lima, given China’s Sun Yujie had already secured her berth through a gold in Buenos Aires.

The ISSF has also confirmed prize money for the

medalists at the World Cup Final with gold medal winners receiving 5,000 Euros, silver medalists earning 4,000 Euros and bronze medalists taking home 2,000 Euros.

Indian athletes still have a chance to qualify for the Finals through medal winning performances at the upcoming ISSF World Championship Shotgun in Athens, Greece, and the World Championship Rifle/Pistol in Cairo, Egypt, in October and November, respectively.

India’s overall campaign at the four World Cup stages for Rifle/Pistol in 2025, held in Buenos Aires, Lima, Munich, and Ningbo, with separate shotgun world cup stages also being held in Nicosia and Lonato, was one of their strongest yet.

India enjoyed one of its best World Cup seasons in 2025, collecting a total of 22 medals, including 9 golds, 6 silver and 7 bronze across rifle, pistol, and shotgun disciplines, to finish second overall.

Neeraj Chopra qualifies for javelin throw final, set for title defense

NEW DELHI: India’s Neeraj Chopra has qualified for the final of the javelin throw in the World Athletics Championships 2025 as he moved a step closer to his title defense. Neeraj, a two-time Olympic medalist, will defend his crown at the World Athletics Championships at the same venue in Tokyo, Japan, where he won a gold medal in 2021. Neeraj qualified for the final with an initial throw of 84.85 meters.

Needing to throw 84.5m to qualify for the final of the javelin throw even at the World Athletics Championships, Neeraj booked his place on the first attempt, having thrown 84.85m, way ahead of the qualification mark. This meant he booked his place in the final 12 athletes who will compete for the title on Thurs-



day. The Indian will have a tough fight if he is to defend his title at the World Athletics Championships, having won a gold medal in 2023.

In Thursday, Neeraj will be up against Julian Weber of Germany and Jakub Vadlejch of the Czech Republic. However, Neeraj’s biggest threat will be Pakistan Arshad Nadeem, who

got the better of him at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Arshad’s 92.97m throw outclassed the Indian, but revenge could be sweet on Thursday if Neeraj could defend his title.

Despite having a mixed season, the 27-year-old will be eager to get the better of his opponents as he takes the field on Thursday. The 2025 season has seen the best out of Neeraj, having crossed the 90m mark at the Doha Diamond League in May. It was the first time he crossed the magical mark that had eluded him so far.

He finished second in the finals of the Diamond League last month in Zurich, where he finished with a mere throw of 85.01m. Although this may be below his usual standards, he will be eager to end the season on a high note on Thursday.

Lanus beats Fluminense to edge toward semifinal

BUENOS AIRES: Marcelino Moreno struck late as Argentina’s Lanus edged to a 1-0 home win over Brazilian side Fluminense in the first leg of their Copa Sudamericana quarterfinal.

Moreno put the hosts ahead in the 89th minute on Tuesday by lashing a first-time shot into the far corner after Eduardo Salvio’s cross from the left wing.

Despite controlling a greater share of possession than Lanus, Fluminense managed only one attempt on target at La Fortaleza.

The return leg will be played at Rio de Janeiro’s Maracana stadium next Tuesday, with Lanus needing only a draw to progress.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant suffer matchday 1 defeat to Ahal FK in AFC Champions League Two

NEW DELHI: Mohun Bagan Super Giant suffered a 0-1 defeat against Ahal FK in their AFC Champions League Two 2025-26 Group C opening match at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan Stadium on Tuesday. Enwer Annayev scored the winning goal in the 83rd minute, securing three points for the Turkmenistan side. The match began with early pressure from Ahal FK, as Suleyman Mirzoyev threatened the home side in the second minute but sent his effort wide of the target. Magtymberdi Berenov and Mirzoyev continued to test the Mohun Bagan defence, forcing them to defend deep in their own half during the opening minutes.

Mohun Bagan’s first significant attack came in the



13th minute when Liston Colaco and Sahal Abdul Samad had their shots blocked. Shortly after, Ahal’s Elman Tagayev struck the left post. The home side created another opportunity in the 37th minute through a combination between Samad and Jason Cummings,

but the Scottish striker fired his shot high from inside the box. The second half saw increased pressure from Ahal FK. Berenov’s attempt in the 52nd minute went astray, and five minutes later, Mohun Bagan goalkeeper Vishal Kaith made an impressive save to deny

him again.

Kaith continued his strong performance in the 69th minute, using his frame effectively to stop Berenov’s attempt at the near post after Cummings’ setup. The match intensity peaked in the 80th minute with Kaith making another crucial save to deny Mirzoyev’s header. At the other end, Samad narrowly missed the target following a counter-attack. The deadlock was finally broken in the 83rd minute when Basim Gurbanberdiyev assisted Annayev, who found the bottom right corner from a tight angle, beating the diving Kaith. Mohun Bagan Super Giant will now travel to Iran for their second group match against Foolad Mobarakeh Sepahan SC on September 30.

Katzberg sets championships record, Kipyegon wins fourth 1,500m world title

TOKYO: Canada’s Ethan Katzberg retained his hammer throw world title with an event record of 84.70 meters, while Kenya’s Faith Kipyegon extended her dominance in middle-distance running by winning her fourth 1,500m world title at the World Athletics Championships here. Katzberg, 23, delivered his best throw on the second round, beating the previous championships record of 83.63m set by Ivan Tikhon of Belarus back in 2007. He also achieved two over-83m marks en route to wrapping up his victory on Tuesday.

Germany’s Merlin Hummel produced a personal best of 82.77m

in the opening round to take the silver medal, while Hungary’s Bence Halasz claimed bronze with 82.69m. “I can’t ask for much more. The whole field was gunning for it and these were incredible results with four guys over 80 meters. That really pushed me to get the result that I had today,” said Katzberg, who also took gold at last year’s Olympic Games in Paris.

“I am two meters away from the world record [86.74m] but I am getting closer. I will continue to push myself and push the limits of what I can do. It took a lot of hard training for this personal best. After 84.70m, I was really trying to go for it,” he

added.

Two-time Olympic champion and world record holder Kipyegon stormed home in 3 minutes, 52.15 seconds to claim her fifth world title and her fourth in women’s 1,500m.

Her compatriot Dorcus Ewoi impressed with a personal best of 3:54.92 to secure the silver medal, giving Kenya a one-two finish. Australia’s Jessica Hull took the bronze in 3:55.16, edging out Kenya’s Nelly Chepchirchir, who also ran a personal best of 3:55.25 to finish fourth.

“Being able to defend my title and to win a fourth gold feels really special. I just wanted to be myself.

After setting the world record in Eugene, I said to myself, ‘I have to go to Tokyo and defend my title.’ I knew I could run it under control. This sport drives me. I need to push myself in order to be the best,” said Kipyegon, 31, who had lowered the world record to 3:48.68 in Eugene, the United States in July.

Hamish Kerr of New Zealand added the world high jump title to his Olympic gold and world indoor title, equalling his own Oceanian record with a world-leading of 2.36m. Two-time world indoor champion Woo Sang-hyeok of South Korea cleared 2.34m for his second world championships silver after 2022.

Finland stuns France in Volleyball Men’s World Championship

MANILA: World No. 20 Finland pulled off a huge upset at the FIVB Volleyball Men’s World Championship after holding off two-time Olympic champion France here.

Having lost to Argentina in full sets on Sunday, Finland claimed a 3-2 (25-19, 17-25, 29-27, 21-25, 15-9) victory over the world No. 4 France side to improve to a 1-1 win-loss record in Group C on Tuesday.

Opposite Joonas Mikkela Jokela had 17 kills and three aces to lead Finland with a team-high 20 points, with outside hitter Luka Marttila and middle blocker Petteri Tynnismaa adding 15 and 13 points respectively.

“Obviously, the feeling was amazing! There were a lot of Finnish fans in the arena, so it was even more amazing in front of them, especially when we were playing volleyball like that,” said Jokela afterwards.

“We started great

against Argentina as well, and I think we did the same thing today. At moments, we played great volleyball, and at moments, not so great. But we got a lot of support from the bench today and I think that turned the game our way.”

France outspiked Finland 58-49, but they were outblocked 14-10 and gave away 39 points through errors, compared to 31 for Finland.

Also in Group C, Argentina beat South Korea 3-1 (25-22, 23-25, 25-21, 25-18) for its second straight win.

Later on Tuesday, world No. 17 Belgium produced another upset win by downing world No. 2 Italy 3-2 (25-23, 25-20, 22-25, 21-25, 15-13) in Group F, where Ukraine eased past Algeria 3-0 (25-17, 25-12, 25-11).

In Group A, hosts the Philippines defeated Egypt 3-1 (29-27, 23-25, 25-21, 25-21) for their first victory

at the World Championship, while Iran rallied past Tunisia 3-1 (23-25, 25-20, 25-23, 25-16).

Sharing a 1-1 record, Tunisia, Iran, Egypt and the Philippines all kept alive their hopes of qualifying for the knockout stage.

“I am super happy that we got the win, and I am happy that I played well,” said Leo Ordiales, who had 19 kills and two aces to score 21 points for the Philippines.

“After the loss to Tunisia, we talked about our errors and practiced a lot, so now we played well.”

In Group H, Brazil overpowered the Czech Republic 3-0 (25-11, 25-22, 25-18) for its second win in a row while Serbia beat China 3-0 (25-18, 25-19, 29-27).

Thirty-two teams are taking part in the round-robin preliminaries in eight groups, with the top two finishers from each group advancing to the knockout stage.

Mysterious “Universe Breaker” red dots could be black holes in disguise

Small, faint red sources detected by NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) are giving astronomers fresh clues about how galaxies formed in the early universe — and may point to a completely new category of cosmic object: a black hole consuming huge amounts of matter while emitting light.

When the telescope’s first data became available in 2022, an international collaboration that included researchers from Penn State identified puzzling “little red dots.” At first, the team proposed that these objects could be galaxies as developed as today’s Milky Way, which is about 13.6 billion years old, existing only 500 to 700 million years after the Big Bang. The researchers informally named the objects “universe breakers,” since they initially appeared to be galaxies far older and more evolved than expected in the early universe — a finding that would challenge long-held ideas of galaxy formation. In a paper published on September 12, 2025,

in Astronomy & Astrophysics, the team, which included astronomers and physicists from Penn State, proposed a different explanation. They argue the red dots are not galaxies at all but a previously unknown type of object known as a black hole star.

According to their analysis, the faint points of light may actually be enormous spheres of hot gas so compact that they resemble the atmospheres of ordinary stars fueled by nuclear fusion. In this case, however, the energy source is not fusion but supermassive black holes at their centers, which draw in matter at high speed, transform it into energy, and emit light.

“Basically, we looked at enough red dots until we saw one that had so much atmosphere that it couldn’t be explained as typical stars we’d expect from a galaxy,” said Joel Leja, the Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Mid-Career Associate Professor of Astrophysics at Penn State and co-author on the paper. “It’s an elegant answer really.

AI-enabled threats and stricter regulation in France



A new research report from technology advisory firm Information Services Group (ISG) has revealed AI threats and more stringent regulations are shifting the French cybersecurity landscape, resulting in businesses reassessing their security strategies.

Increasing security budgets mean many French enterprises require fresh guidance and expertise to establish effective priorities and combat their security challenges.

According to the 2025 ISG Provider Lens Cybersecurity – Services and Solutions report, businesses in France are adapting to a more complex, layered security landscape, with many adopting AI-powered defence. This is to meet the demands introduced by new regulations, cloud adoption, financial constraints, and a shortage of skilled workers, the AI security specialist claims.

“The way companies in France choose security services is changing,” said Julien Escrive, partner and managing director, ISG. “With increasing security budgets, enterprises need guidance and insight to set the right priorities and tackle security problems.”

Companies are starting to rely on all-in-one solutions

for security, rather than depending on a range of separate tools, according to the report. Organisations seek service providers that can supplement their security teams. Companies migrating to multicloud and cloud topologies face integration, visibility, and management challenges, the company says. Businesses find it hard to maintain oversight of applications, so use solutions like secure access service edge (SASE), which merges network security and connectivity in a unified service.

The report found that French organisations are seeking integrated security platforms for a single view of possible threats and central oversight of their defences. Because of financial stress

and a continuing deficit of cybersecurity talent, many businesses still use technical security service (TSS) providers for support, centralised platforms, and automation.

ISG says that French enterprises are have to integrate governance, risk and commence (GRC) policies into their security strategies, because EU regulations like the NIS2 directive and AI Act are becoming French law. More than 15,000 French businesses are now subject to extra compliance, the report states.

The paper shows malicious actors use AI in cyberattacks, which is posing fresh challenges for detection and response. In reaction, companies turn to security service providers that themselves use genAI and ML. Their clients are investing more in AI-driven detection, employee training, and automated responses.

Benoit Scheuber, a principal consultant and security analyst at ISG, said that AI is transforming the cybersecurity landscape, prompting companies to seek providers that can integrate tooling that increases efficiency, saying, “[Clients] seek providers that can integrate the best products into a unified platform for operational efficiency.”

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