



## England survive massive scare against Nepal, win T20 World Cup opener by 4 runs

**MUMBAI, FEB 08:** A doughty Nepal came close to scripting a remarkable upset win over two-time champions England as they fell short of five runs in the last over of their opening Group-C match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup tournament at the iconic Wankhede Stadium here on Sunday.

Chasing a target of 185 runs, Nepal were 175/6 in the 19th over, requiring 10 runs off the last over bowled by Sam Curran. Lokesh Bam (39 not out off 20 balls) and Karan KC (1) scored five runs but could not finish the game in the final over after a heroic effort.

Nepal batters were particularly harsh on Adil Rashid scoring 42 runs off his three overs.

Skipper Rohit Paudel (39), Dipendra Singh Airee (39) and Kushal Bhurtel (29) also fought valiantly but they could not take their side over the line.

Earlier, batting first, Jacob Bethell (55) and skipper Harry Brook (53) peeled off attacking fifties to power England to a formidable 184 for seven.

Thousands of Nepal fans had a roller-coaster ride, full of happiness and tears, as



their team came close to a famous victory in the World Cup opener.

The Wankhede had turned into a mini Kathmandu as thousands turned up to support their team. After the match, Nepal players did a lap of honour to thank their supporters.

"It seemed all of Nepal came to watch us. Feeling very proud of team's performance," said captain Paudel. Player of the Match Will Jacks said, "Full credit to Nepal, they were absolutely brilliant."

Netherlands, Scotland, USA, Afghanistan and now Nepal have lit up the first five matches of the tournament, coming very close to defeating big teams in their

opening matches of the tournament.

Thrilled by Nepal's performance, former South Africa pacer Dale Steyn posted on X: "Nepal, I offer my services to you if you ever need em! Up, up and UP!" Commentator Harsha Bhogle posted, "Nepal won hearts but had a heartbreak. Outstanding game of cricket."

"Huge respect to Nepal. Took on one of the best teams in the world, stayed in the fight till the very last ball and showed what belief and heart can do! This is how teams grow and this is how champions rise. The cricketing world is watching!" Yuvraj Singh said on X.

Punching above their weights

Pakistan managed to scrape past the Netherlands by 3 wickets with 3 balls to spare in their opening Group A tie of the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup on Saturday.

Indies beat Scotland by 35 runs, a fifty by Shimron Hetmeyr was the difference between the winning and the losing side.

Afghanistan lost to New Zealand by five wickets at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. Gulbadin Naib's career-best 63 off 35 balls took Afghanistan to 182/6. New Zealand had to script their highest-ever run-chase in T20 World Cup history to post a win. They reached home with 13 balls left.

USA lost to India by 29 runs but not before giving a mighty scare to the Indian top order. Half the Indian team was back in the hut by 12th over.

Nepal lost to England by four runs after 10 runs were required off the last over of Sam Curran. Thousands of Nepal fans were distraught after coming close to win. England scored 184/7, Nepal could score only 180/6 in their 20 overs.

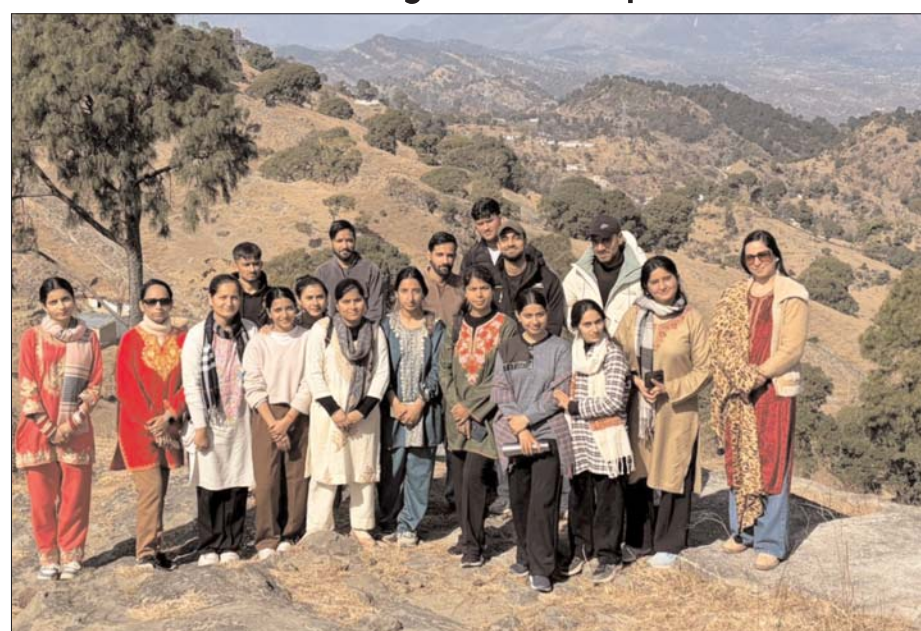
### HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, FEB 08

In a vibrant celebration of culture, tradition, and physical well-being, the Udhampur Campus of the University of Jammu (JU) organized a one-day trekking expedition to the historic Mahamaya Temple located in Garnai Lotta, here.

The event was designed not only to foster experiential learning and spirituality but also to highlight the immense potential of the Mahamaya Forest and temple area for sustainable tourism development.

The trek through the Mahamaya forest showcased the area's rich biodiversity.

The scenic trek through the Mahamaya Forest served as a practical classroom, demonstrating how nature and spirituality co-exist in local heritage.



Around 50 students, along with faculty members, participated in the trek, which served as a rejuvenating experience away from the traditional classroom setting.

Highlighting the vision behind this initiative, Prof.

Yash Pal Sharma, Rector, Udhampur Campus, in his message said, "The education is not merely academic, it is about nurturing the soul and connecting with our roots."

This trekking expedition to Mahamaya Temple is a

bridge between our rich Indian Knowledge System and modern experiential learning."

The trekking event was coordinated by Dr. Ritika Sambyal, Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce.

## AJKCA evolves 'Weekend Chess' concept

### HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, FEB 08

The All J&K Chess Association (AJKCA) has come out a pilot project-Weekend Chess to reach out to the maximum number of youth in Jammu and Kashmir.

To be replicated in all the 20 districts of J&K, the project shall be launched in Jammu district in near future as part of the multi-year chess promotion plan of the AJKCA.

"In the first year of the Weekend Chess, 40 such day-long competitions, across three formats of Rapid, Blitz and Classical shall be held for which a calendar with dates will be announced on February 14,"



said newly elected president of the AJKCA, Meenal Gupta.

Through the Weekend Chess programme, the AJKCA has planned to involve 1.5 lakh youth into active chess in the next four years ending 2030.

"It is a meticulously curated to boost and encourage the potential of young chess players and aspirants. It aims to develop a self-reliant chess economy fully equipped and supported by modern, digital and smart technology," said Meenal.

She added that the Weekend Chess aspires to generate plethora of opportunities and functional platform for chess players, coaches, arbiters, and all those seeking chess as a career option.

## Pakistan's boycott of India T20 WC match: PCB chief, BCB president, ICC deputy chair hold discussions in Lahore

**KARACHI, FEB 08:** Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday met his Bangladesh counterpart Aminul Islam and ICC deputy chair Imran Khwaja in Lahore, even as efforts to resolve the standoff over Pakistan's proposed boycott of the high stakes T20 World Cup match against India gather pace.

The meeting, images of which were released by the PCB, took place at the Gaddafi Stadium.

Khwaja arrived in Lahore for talks with PCB officials amid growing indications that the deadlock over the high-profile February 15 clash between arch-rivals India and Pakistan in Colombo could be resolved, paving the way for the match to go ahead.

Khwaja, who represents Singapore in the ICC, is an influential figure in the world governing body and has voting rights on the board as an associate member director.

A source close to the PCB confirmed Khwaja has been nominated by the ICC board as a mediator on the controversial subject.

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"He has been in talks with Mohsin Naqvi for a while now and he is reaching Lahore today to first talk to the



PCB chief and also the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) President, Aminul Islam," the source said.

Aminul is expected to be part of the discussions aimed at persuading Pakistan to reconsider its decision not to play India in the World Cup.

The two officials—Khwaja and Aminul—were greeted at the airport by senior PCB officials and then driven to the Gaddafi Stadium.

A PCB source said that Khwaja and Aminul, after their discussion with Naqvi, will have a meeting with some ICC governing board members virtually later Sunday.

The source said the ICC was doing its best to convince PCB to get permission from its government for the February 15 match.

Aminul reached Lahore ahead of Khwaja and his

presence is significant because the dispute between the PCB and ICC began because of the apex body's decision to replace Bangladesh with Scotland after the former refused to play their World Cup matches in India citing security reasons.

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif recently said that Pakistan's decision to not play against India was taken to show solidarity with Bangladesh, whose request to move their matches from India to Sri Lanka was rejected by the ICC.

Naqvi has not commented much on the instructions from the government to boycott the India match but a reliable source said the situation has changed after the Sri Lankan cricket board sent an email to the PCB, urging them to end the boycott.

ICC CEO, Sanjog Gupta

has also been to Colombo to meet with the President of the Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), Shammi Silva who sent the email to Naqvi to play the India match in the World Cup.

The ICC has already sought an explanation from Pakistan on how the 'Force Majeure' clause can be invoked to justify the team's refusal to play the T20 World Cup match against India after the PCB tried to wriggle out of the situation by putting the onus on its government.

But there is a glimmer of hope now as PCB has approached the ICC for deliberations, as per an ICC Director, who feels that the marquee clash will eventually take place.

The ICC is currently engaging with the board in a structured manner to explore possible resolutions, with a view that the interest of the game must supersede unilateral action.

Sri Lanka Cricket has warned PCB to reconsider its decision citing huge financial losses for all stakeholders.

The trigger for Bangladesh's withdrawal was the release of their pacer Mustafizur Rahman from the KKR squad on BCCI's instructions.

### HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, FEB 08

A volleyball tournament was successfully organized by the Bhaiya Volleyball Club under the aegis of the District Kathua Volleyball Association, witnessing enthusiastic participation from local teams and sports enthusiasts. The final match was played between JK Police and Bhaiya Volleyball Club, where JK Police delivered an impressive performance to clinch the title with a convincing 2-0 victory. The match showcased high levels of skill, teamwork, and competitive spirit, drawing loud applause from the spectators. Advocate Vijay Sharma, MLA Hiranagar, graced the



occasion as the Chief Guest, while Sudesh Kumar Sethu attended as the Guest of Honour. Both dignitaries appreciated the efforts of the organizers and encouraged

youth to actively participate in sports for physical fitness and discipline. Pankaj from the JK Police team was declared the Best Player of the Tournament for his out-

standing performance throughout the event. He was awarded a bicycle as the Best Player prize in recognition of his contribution to the team's success.

## Lovlina, Arundhati lead as India claim nine gold medals at BOXAM Elite 2026

**NEW DELHI, FEB 08:** In a stand-out achievement, India was represented in seven elite women's finals on Saturday, including an all-Indian title clash in the 54kg division and emerged with gold in each of them.

The BOXAM Elite 2026 featured over 200 boxers from 20 nations, providing a high-quality international test early in the season. India finished as the competition's most successful team with nine gold, three silver and seven bronze medals.

"BOXAM Elite offered exactly the kind of exposure we were seeking at this stage of the season, including strong international opposition, depth across weight categories, and high-pressure bouts. The performances in Spain, particularly the conversion rate

in finals, reflect the progress of our programme," Boxing Federation of India (BFI) president Ajay Singh said.

"With a demanding year ahead, this tournament has been a valuable step in preparing our boxers for the challenges to come. Congratulations to the entire contingent on an outstanding campaign." Indian women set the benchmark on the final day. Manju Rani (48kg) and Nitu (51kg) opened proceedings with emphatic unanimous wins over Spain's Marta Lopez and Noelia Gutierrez respectively, before Poonam (54kg) edged past compatriot Preeti in a hard-fought all-Indian final.

Priya (60kg) and Arundhati (70kg) followed with commanding 5:0 victories over Ukrainian opponents, while



Lovlina (75kg) displayed her trademark control and composure to defeat England's Mary-Kate Smith 4:1. Naina (80kg) completed the sweep with a measured win over Ukraine's Raisa Piskun.

Reflecting on the women's performances, Indian women's head coach Santiago Nieva said, "This was an exceptional showing from the women, not just in terms of medals, but in how they boxed with discipline, clarity, and confidence. Reaching seven finals and winning all seven speaks volumes about the work being done across the system."

"Credit also goes to the entire Indian team, the men and

women pushed each other throughout the tournament, and that collective environment is key to sustained success."

In the men's finals, Sachin (60kg) produced one of the day's most gripping performances, edging out Canada's Keoma-Ali Al Ahmadieh 3:2, while Akash (75kg) added another gold after a tense 3:2 win over Kazakhstan's Aman Konsbekov.

Deepak (70kg) and Ankush (80kg) settled for silver medals after facing strong opposition from Kazakhstan and Ukraine, respectively.

India's performance in Spain adds further momentum as the national programme builds towards a packed international calendar, with major championships and multi-sport events on the horizon.