



World Cup-winning Indian women's cricket team nominated for Laureus Team of Year Award



MADRID, MAR 03: In a first, the Indian women's cricket squad has been nominated for the prestigious 2026 Laureus World Team of the Year Award following their maiden World Cup title triumph.

The nomination was confirmed by Laureus Sport on Tuesday.

They are the first women's cricket team to receive this nomination, a recognition for their exceptional performance in the mega event, including the highest successful run chase in women's ODI history in a semi-final against Australia.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-

led side is nominated alongside major teams like the England Women's football team, European Ryder Cup squad, French football league's Paris Saint-Germain, and McLaren Formula 1.

Laureus Sport said in a press release: "In their Cricket World Cup semi-fi-

nal against Australia, the India Women's Cricket Team pulled off the highest successful run chase in women's ODI history (339) before winning their first title against South Africa and are the first women's cricket team to be nominated for this Award."

The landmark triumph was celebrated nationwide, with the BCCI announcing a significant cash prize of Rs 51 crore for the squad.

The team joins a select group of Indian athletes nominated for main Laureus categories, including Vinesh Phogat (2019), Neeraj Chopra (2022), and Rishabh Pant (2025).

The award winners will be decided by the sporting jury, the members of the Laureus World Sports Academy and announced at a gala event to be held at the Cibeles Palace in Madrid on April 20.

This is the third consecutive time Madrid will be hosting the awards ceremony.

Big win for Nalwa XI, Shaheed Jasjit Tral XI in SCPL



Sports & Allied News JAMMU, March 03

Nalwa XI today registered a huge 101 runs victory against Lt. Sheetal Singh Cricket Club in the ongoing 2nd Sikh Cricket Premier League at University of Jammu grounds, here.

Batting first, Nalwa XI made 201 runs for seven wickets, which, Sheetal Club, could not chase when whole side bowled out for 100 runs in 16.4 overs.

Sahil Singh declared

player of the match for his 27-ball 57 runs and three wickets for 10 runs in two overs. Sahil Singh named best batter for contributing 27-ball 54 runs for the winning tea while best bowler title went to Rahil Singh for his three wickets.

In this match, S P Rural, Brijesh Sharma and S P North, Vijay Shekhar were special guests, who encouraged the teams.

In the second match of the day, Shaheed Jasjit Tral XI made it a 86 runs win against Damesh Cricket

Club Poonch. Batting first, Shaheed Jasjit XI scored 203 runs for nine wickets. In reply, Damesh Club bowled out for 117 for nine to lose the game by a big margin.

Gurdeep Singh was adjudged player of the match for his four wickets haul and 14 runs with the help of three boundaries. Takshdeep Singh declared best bagged for his fine knock of 67 (off 30 balls, 4x4, 6x6) while best bowler title went to Gurdeep Singh of the winning side for four wick-

ets. The second match was graced by the DIG Shiv Kumar, Mr Mukund (IPS) and RTO Jammu, Jasmeet Singh.

Among other prominent who encouraged the teams were Legislator, Yudhvir Sethi; IPL Cricketer, Yudhvir Singh Charak; Rohit Sharma, Avtar Singh Khalsa and Balvinder Singh, both chief advisor JK Sikh Coordination Committee and Balwant Singh, senior member Sikh Coordination Committee.

India to start Asian Cup journey in Perth against Vietnam

PERTH, MARCH 3: The wait has come to an end. The Indian senior women's national team, after four years of hurt, are finally ready to begin their AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026 journey against Vietnam at the Perth Rectangular Stadium on Wednesday.

The match will kick off at 16:30 IST, according to the All India Football Federation (AIFF).

The World Cup dream, for the Blue Tigresses, came to a grinding halt in their own backyard when the team pulled out of the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022. However, their magnificent performance in the qualifiers last year has now given them a second shot. This marks the first time India has qualified for the Asian Cup on merit.

Amelia Valverde, who was appointed the head coach of the Indian women's team earlier this year, brushed past heartbreaks. "That was four years ago. There are no coincidences in life, though, and we are back here again with a chance to prove ourselves. This is a new opportunity for us to represent our team in the best possible manner," the Costa Rican said.

The AFC Women's Asian Cup presents an opportunity for the 12 participating nations, as the four semi-finalists will gain direct entry to the FIFA



Women's World Cup Brazil 2027. Two out of the four losing quarter-finalists will compete to determine the two remaining direct qualifiers from Asia. The remaining two teams will proceed to the Play-off Tournament, which can also afford them an entry to the world's biggest competition.

The Blue Tigresses, 67th in the FIFA Rankings, have had a 52-day camp spanning three continents to prepare for the Asian Cup.

Valverde said, "We have worked very hard in the last few weeks, and the motivation is high within the team to get the best possible result for India.

While they began their camp in Gurugram, and then shifted base to Antalya, Turkiye, the Blue Tigresses arrived in Perth three weeks prior to the Asian Cup, as part of their acclimatisation.

"The preparations have been very

good so far. We have been here for the last three weeks, which has been very helpful for the team," said Valverde. "We know our responsibilities, and that is to put the best version of ourselves on the pitch."

The Blue Tigresses' head coach was respectful of opponents Vietnam at the pre-match press conference.

"They are a team with a lot of quality because they played the last World Cup and they've been with the same coach (Mai Duc Chung) for a long time, playing many matches under him," said Valverde.

"We are well aware of the kind of opposition we're facing. But our job is to exhibit the best version of the Indian team, and make sure there's no doubt that we will be out there to compete and give our best," she said.

India captain Sweetie Devi Ngambam was one of the players who had experienced the heartbreak in 2022. However, she echoed her coach's feelings about the Asian Cup. "We have prepared very well. The squad is ready, and we are fully focussed on giving our best performance at the AFC Women's Asian Cup," she said. "We came here three weeks before, and I think it was a good decision from the federation to send us here early. It was an advantage to adapt to the weather, and we are now ready for the challenges."

RCB to play five IPL 2026 home matches in Bengaluru, two in Raipur

BENGALURU, MAR 03: Defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru will play five of their home matches at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here and the remaining two fixtures at Raipur's Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in the upcoming IPL, the franchise said on Tuesday.

The announcement ended doubts about whether the IPL 2025 winners would be able to play at their home ground, the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, following the stampede that killed 11 fans after RCB's maiden title win.

That tragic incident, the venue has not hosted any major domestic matches including the Ranji Trophy, Vijay Hazare Trophy or even the Maharaja Trophy KSCA T20.

"This significant development comes after months of hard work and close coordination across all concerned authorities with a common goal of bringing the games back to home ground for the fans," RCB said in a release.

"RCB extends its sincere



gratitude to the Government of Karnataka, the Karnataka State Cricket Association and the Karnataka Police for their unwavering guidance, cooperation and support in facilitating the hosting of matches in Bengaluru."

"The collective efforts to ramp up infrastructure and safety measures in time for the IPL season have ensured that the defending champions will play the majority of their home games in their home ground," the franchise added.

The franchise said that the two "home matches" in Raipur will be as "per prior

commitment." RCB CEO Rajesh Menon said the fans deserve to watch their team compete at home.

"The M. Chinnaswamy Stadium is more than just our home ground it is where our identity as a team truly comes alive," he said.

"The energy our fans bring to Bengaluru has always been a driving force for our players, inspiring them through every phase of the game. Our fans have stood by us unconditionally, and they deserve the opportunity to watch their team compete at home."

"After detailed discussions and completing the

necessary due process around permissions, we are pleased to confirm that RCB will play five matches in Bengaluru. We sincerely thank the Government of Karnataka, the KSCA, and the Karnataka Police for their support in making this possible," Menon added.

Former India cricketer and Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) president Venkatesh Prasad termed the development "probably bigger than" his five-for (5/76 in June 1996) at Lord's.

"For me personally, it's a huge achievement. Probably this is much bigger than my five-wicket haul against England at Lords," Prasad said.

"It's a pleasure to announce that they (RCB) have agreed to play five games in Bengaluru. The opening game and the opening ceremony will be staged here, and the play-off will also be played in Bangalore.

The biggest news is that the final of IPL will also be played in Bangalore," he added.

Renuka ruled out of one-off Test against Australia, Kashvee named replacement

PERTH, MAR 03: The Indian women's team currently touring Australia suffered a blow on Tuesday playing many matches under him," said Valverde.

"We are well aware of the kind of opposition we're facing. But our job is to exhibit the best version of the Indian team, and make sure there's no doubt that we will be out there to compete and give our best," she said.

India captain Sweetie Devi Ngambam was one of the players who had experienced the heartbreak in 2022. However, she echoed her coach's feelings about the Asian Cup. "We have prepared very well. The squad is ready, and we are fully focussed on giving our best performance at the AFC Women's Asian Cup," she said. "We came here three weeks before, and I think it was a good decision from the federation to send us here early. It was an advantage to adapt to the weather, and we are now ready for the challenges."

"To better manage her workload, Renuka has been advised rest and will be unavailable for selection for the pink-ball Test. The BCCI medical team will be closely monitoring Renuka's fitness



progress. "The women's selection committee has named Kashvee Gautam as her replacement. Kashvee was also part of the ODI squad in

the ongoing multi-format series." The Test match begins on Friday.

Kashvee has played six ODIs for India, taking three wickets, and has 19 wickets

to her name in 18 Women's Premier League matches. India won the T20I series 2-1 and were whitewashed in the three-match ODI rubber.

"Will have to be economical with ball, sharp in fielding": Vengsarkar ahead of IND-ENG T20WC semifinal

PUNE (MAHARASHTRA) [INDIA], MARCH 3: Ahead of India's T20 World Cup semifinal against England, former Indian cricketer Dilip Vengsarkar cautioned that Men in Blue will have to be sharp with their fielding and economical with their bowling since the Wankhede Stadium has smaller dimensions and a batting-friendly pitch.<

It will be the third time in a row when India and England will be locking horns with each other in a T20 World Cup semifinal after the 2022 and 2024 editions, with the loss at Adelaide by 10 wickets paving the way for a change in Team India's mindset with regards to white-ball cricket, the 2024 win being a revenge for Men in Blue in their historic unbeaten campaign. Now in 2026, both teams will be fighting for a spot in the final to secure their record-breaking third title and become the most decorated side in the tournament's history.



Speaking to ANI, Vengsarkar said, "Both teams are in form, England did well in Sri Lanka (their all Super Eight matches were in Sri Lanka), and India did well against the West Indies (in a must-win, virtual quarterfinal match). There will be eyes on everyone as there is not much time for an individual. They are peaking at the right time. England are playing their

first game in India this tournament after so long, that too at Mumbai, so India has an advantage."

Vengsarkar also cautioned that in the format, there is no second chance, and a single mistake could cost the team a win. He cautioned that on a ground as small as Wankhede, with a batting-friendly surface, bowlers and fielders will have to be on point. "There is no second

chance. If you make a mistake in T20s, you lose. India is in good form. I hope that India does well. I think bowling is very crucial. India has to really bowl well...

Bowlers have to be absolutely spot on. The Wankhede ground is smaller, and the pitch is suited to batting. They will have to be economical, and the fielding has to be sharp as well," he concluded. (ANI)