



FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup

India seal semi-final spot in FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup 2026 after 2-1 win over Japan

AUCKLAND [NEW ZEALAND], JUNE 16: The Indian Women's Hockey Team defeated Japan 2-1 in their second Pool A match of the FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup New Zealand 2026 on Tuesday at the North Harbour National Hockey Centre in Auckland to secure a spot in the semi-finals, having won both their pool games so far.

Captain and 'Player of the Match' Salima Tete (33) and Lalremsiami (49) netted the goals for India while Hiramitsu Ai (35) was the lone goalscorer for Japan. It was a memorable game for midfielder Jyoti, who marked her 100th senior international appearance, according to a press release.

The first half was extremely tight with both sides creating chances, but none could break the deadlock till half-time.

The game opened up in the third quarter as India scored first in the 33rd minute through a nicely executed penalty corner variation. Navneet Kaur's strike was deflected perfectly to Salima by



Nikki Pradhan, and the skipper slotted it into the goal to give India the lead.

Japan promptly replied two minutes later, as Hiramitsu Ai (35) converted from a penalty corner to score the equaliser.

With all to play for in the final quarter, India's Lalremsiami found the winning goal in the 49th minute. Sushila Chanu Pukhrabam played an incisive pass from the edge of the circle towards the goal and found Lalremsiami, who deflected the ball into the net to help India emerge victorious.

The win took unbeaten India to the top of Pool A with six points from wins against the USA and Japan. India will next face Uruguay in their last Pool A match of the tournament on June 18 at 4:15 am IST, while Japan and the USA will face off for the second semi-final spot from Pool A.

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Block Qaimoh lifts Volleyball Title under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JUNE 16

As part of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, the Volleyball Tournament in Kulgam concluded with an exciting final match between Block Qaimoh and Block Devsar, in which Block Qaimoh emerged victorious and lifted the championship title.

A total of 16 teams from across the district participated in the tournament, showcasing remarkable talent, sportsmanship, and enthusiasm while promoting the message of a drug-free society through sports.

The winners and runners-up were felicitated by Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, who congratulated the participating teams for their spirited performances and encouraged youth to actively engage in sports and constructive activities as a means to stay away from substance abuse.



The tournament concluded on a high note, reinforcing the objectives of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan by inspiring young people to adopt healthy lifestyles and contribute positively to society.

FIFA World Cup sees four draws in a day for 1st time in 68 Years

LOS ANGELES [US], JUNE 16: There were four draws on a single day at the World Cup for the first time since June 15, (US local time) 1958, exactly 68 years ago, when eight matches were played, as per the Athletic.

In the first fixture of the day, Debutants Cape Verde produced one of the biggest upsets of the ongoing FIFA World Cup, keeping a star-studded world number two-ranked Spain, who are also

the current European Champions, restricted to a goalless draw in a sensational defensive masterclass at Atlanta on Monday.

In the second fixture of the day, Egypt were denied their first-ever FIFA World Cup win despite a quick strike from Emam Ashour as Romelu Lukaku forced an own goal equaliser within the first minute of coming on the pitch, with Belgium playing a 1-1 draw at Seattle on Tuesday.

In the third fixture of the day, an 80th-minute equaliser from Maximiliano Araujo helped Uruguay play a 1-1 draw against Saudi Arabia in their FIFA World Cup opening clash at Miami on Tuesday. With this draw, Spain, Cape Verde, Uruguay and Saudi Arabia, all the teams in the group H are all level at one point each.

In the last fixture of the day, Iran secured a hard-fought 2-2 draw against New Zealand in their open-

ing World Cup match on Tuesday, in a thrilling contest played at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles.

Iran will return to Los Angeles to face Belgium, while New Zealand take on Egypt in Vancouver in the next Group G matches on Sunday. New Zealand, making their third appearance at the finals, remain without a win at a World Cup after seven matches. Iran is looking to reach the knockout round for the first time.

LOS ANGELES [US], JUNE 16: Iran secured a

hard-fought 2-2 draw against New Zealand in their opening World Cup match on Monday, in a thrilling contest played against the backdrop of protests by Iranian supporters against the government in Tehran at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles.

New Zealand took the lead in the seventh minute when Elijah Just volleyed home from close range after being picked out by captain Chris Wood.

Iran responded in the 32nd minute, with Ramin Rezaeian poking the ball in from close range to spark celebrations among the largely pro-Iran crowd at a packed stadium in Los Angeles.

Just, the 26-year-old winger, who plays for Motherwell F.C. restored New Zealand's advantage in the 54th minute. Once again set up by Wood, he calmly lifted the ball over goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand to score his second goal of the match. But Iran hit back again 10



minutes later, Mohammad Mohebbi glancing a header in off the back post to equalise again. Iran will return to Los Angeles to face Belgium, while New Zealand take on Egypt in Vancouver in the next Group G matches on Sunday.

Belgium drew 1-1 with Egypt earlier on Monday. New Zealand, making

their third appearance at the finals, remain without a win at a World Cup after seven matches. Iran is looking to reach the knockout round for the first time.

Meanwhile, Iran supporters in the ongoing World Cup defied FIFA's ban by displaying the pre-revolutionary Iranian flag inside SoFi Stadium.

Ahead of Iran's tournament opener against the New Zealand national football team on Monday, hundreds of demonstrators gathered outside the stadium to protest against the Iranian government.

Iran's Ramin Rezaeian earned Player of the Match honours in the match against New Zealand.

Wimbledon: Serena Williams set for Grand Slam return, to feature alongside sister Venus in doubles

LONDON [UK], JUNE 16: Serena Williams is set to return to Wimbledon Championships 2026 after four years, teaming up with her sister Venus Williams in the women's doubles event.

The six-time Wimbledon doubles champions have been awarded a wild card entry into the 2026 edition of the tournament, marking their first appearance together since the 2022 US Open, according to WTA.

Serena and Venus have won 14 Grand Slam women's doubles titles together, the second-highest tally in the Open Era, behind the 20 major titles claimed by Martina Navratilova and Pam Shriver.

Serena Williams, who stepped away from tennis after the 2022 US Open, returned to professional action last week at Queen's Club, partnering with Victoria Mboko. The duo won their opening match, but Mboko later withdrew due to an injury that will also rule her out of Wimbledon. Williams is also competing in doubles this week in Berlin alongside Karolina Muchova.

Meanwhile, Venus Williams, who made her comeback to the tour last July after a 16-month break, is currently ranked No. 119 in doubles. Her best result since returning came at last



year's US Open, where she reached the quarterfinals partnering Leylah Fernandez.

The six remaining wild cards in the women's doubles draw have been allocated to all-British pairings: Katie Boulter/Heather Watson, Madeleine Brooks/Amelia Rajecki, Jodie Burrage/Mika Stojsavljevic, Freya Christie/Eden Silva, Harriet Dart/Maia Lumsden, and Alicia Dudeney/Mimi Xu.

Maja Chwalinska, on the other hand, has been awarded a singles wild card for Wimbledon, where she headlines the list of recipients. The 24-year-old from Poland was ranked No. 114 when the entry list was confirmed but rose to No. 21 af-

ter an impressive run from qualifying to the Roland Garros final. She will feature in the Wimbledon main draw for the second time, having previously qualified in 2022 and reached the second round.

Harriet Dart, Alicia Dudeney, Hannah Klugman, Mika Stojsavljevic, Katie Swan and Mimi Xu have been awarded six singles wild cards for Wimbledon, with the final spot to be confirmed later.

Dart, 29, will make her eighth Wimbledon main-draw appearance and has previously reached the third round twice, while Swan, 27, is set for her seventh appearance in the women's singles draw and will aim to surpass her best result of a

second-round finish in 2018.

Dudeney, 23, a former University of Florida player, recently secured her first Top 100 win against Yulia Putintseva in Nottingham qualifying and is set for her WTA main-draw debut there as a lucky loser, with Wimbledon marking her Grand Slam main-draw debut.

Teenagers Klugman, Stojsavljevic and Xu will all make their second consecutive Wimbledon main-draw appearances. Klugman, 17 and a former junior world No. 1, recently claimed her first Top 100 victory over Anastasia Zakharova in Nottingham qualifying before entering the main draw as a lucky loser.

Ashok Sharma receives India A call for tri-series in Sri Lanka

NEW DELHI [INDIA], JUNE 16: Ashok Sharma, who bowled one of the fastest deliveries of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at 154.2 kph, has been added into the India A squad for the ongoing one-day tri-series in Sri Lanka.

He replaces the injured Yuvraj Singh, who did not feature in any of India A's three matches so far. Ashok impressed in patches for the Gujarat Titans (GT) in IPL 2026, picking up six wickets in as many matches, but was expensive at 10.85.

Yuvraj felt discomfort in his right shoulder while bowling on June 13 and also experienced similar pain earlier during a fielding session on June 11. Yuvraj will undergo a graduated rehabilitation programme under the supervision of the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE) to achieve a full recovery from the right rotator cuff injury.

"The Men's Selection Committee has named Ashok Sharma as a replacement for Yuvraj Singh in the India A squad for the ongoing tri-series in Sri Lanka. Yuvraj reported discomfort in his right shoulder while bowling on 13th June and also experienced similar pain earlier during a fielding session on 11th June," BCCI wrote in a statement. "The BCCI Medical Team, after consultation with a spe-



cialist, recommended that Yuvraj undergo a graduated rehabilitation programme under the supervision of the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE) to achieve a full recovery from the right rotator cuff injury," the statement further added.

At the 'A' tri-series in Dambulla, India have lost two of their three matches - including in a dramatic Super Over against hosts Sri Lanka on Monday - and will face Afghanistan A

in their final league match on Wednesday. The final of the series will be played on Sunday.

Updated India A squad for tri-series: Tilak Varma (Captain), Ruturaj Gaikwad (vice-captain), Priyansh Arya, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Ayush Badoni, Nishant Sindhu, Suryansh Shedge, Prabhsimran Singh (WK), Kumar Kushagra (WK), Vipraj Nigam, Yash Thakur, Anshul Kamboj, Arshad Khan, Anukul Roy, Ashok Sharma.