



## Clinical India A reach tri-series final, beat Afghanistan A by 101 runs

**DAMBULLA [SRI LANKA], JUNE 17:** Half-centuries from Priyansh Arya, Tilak Varma and Kumar Kushagra and an all-round show from Nishant Sindhu helped India A beat Afghanistan A by 101 runs, sealing them a spot in the finals of the tri-nation series.

Heading into the match, India was under pressure, having won just one and losing two. However now, they have got themselves a spot in finals, with the Sri Lanka A vs Afghanistan A confirming the second finalist on Friday.

Afghanistan A won the toss and opted to bowl first. Priyansh started off strongly with Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (38 in 28 balls, with four boundaries and two sixes), but the latter could not get to a big score and 75-run stand broken.

After Arya (58 in 32 balls, with nine fours and a six) and Rituraj Gaikwad (30 in 31 balls, with four boundaries) were dismissed, Tilak (59 in 75 balls, with five fours) and Kushagra (58 in 67 balls, with five fours) stitching an 104-run stand.



Down the order, Nishant (21\* in 26) and Vipraj Nigam (30 in 20 balls, with four boundaries) scored valuable cameos, taking India to 319/8.

Faridoon Dawoodzai, Abdullah Ahmadzai and Farmanullah Safi took two wickets. During the chase,

Afghanistan was restricted to 70/3, but an 87-run stand between Faisal Shinozoda (46 in 56 balls, with two fours and a six) and Bahir Shah (57 in 52 balls, with four boundaries and a six) helped Afghanistan fight back. It was not meant to be for

Afghanistan as Sindhu (4/31) and Yash Thakur (2/48) helped India restrict them to 218 in 36.5 overs.

Anshul Kamboj, Suryansh Shedge, Vipraj and Anukul Roy also got a wicket, with Sindhu given the 'Player of the Match' award. (ANI)

## ICC Chairman hails record-breaking opening weekend of Women's T20 WC

**LONDON [UK], JUNE 17:** International Cricket Council (ICC) Chairman Jay Shah hailed the start of the ongoing ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026, highlighting record-breaking attendance and viewership figures.

In a post on X, Jay Shah noted that nearly 45,000 fans attended matches during the opening weekend, making it the biggest-ever start to an ICC women's event. Shah also pointed out that the India vs Pakistan match on Sunday attracted over 25 million unique viewers on JioHotstar in India, while Sky Sports recorded its highest-ever viewership for a Women's T20 World Cup match in the UK.

"It's a blockbuster start to the @ICC #WT20WorldCup 2026. Opening weekend (Fri-Sun) saw almost 45,000 fans in attendance across #Birmingham, #Manchester and #Southampton. This is the



biggest ever opening weekend for an ICC women's event. Live Digital viewership in India for #IndvPak @JioHotstar crossed 25 million unique users - more than the aggregate viewership for the entire last edition of WT20WC," he said.

"Peak viewership in the UK on #SkySports was the highest-ever for any WT20WC match. Across In-

dia, UK and the world over...the women's Cricket movement has started re-writing history from its opening weekend itself," he added in the X post.

The tournament has featured eight matches so far and has already produced a couple of upsets, both involving defending champions New Zealand. The White Ferns first suffered a

seven-wicket loss to West Indies before going down by five wickets against Sri Lanka.

India have played one match so far in their campaign, facing arch-rivals Pakistan, whom they defeated by 64 runs. The Indian women's team are currently second in the Group A standings, behind only Australia. (ANI)

## India Junior women's hockey team set for exposure tour of UK under new coach Tim White

**NEW DELHI [INDIA], JUNE 17:** The Indian Junior Women's Hockey Team will embark on an exposure tour of the United Kingdom from July 5 to July 14, where they will play seven matches against Scotland Senior Women, England U-21, United States U-21 and Belgium U-21.

The tour will be the team's first major international assignment under the newly appointed Coach Tim White and forms an important part of the squad's preparations for future international competitions.

The Indian team will begin the tour in Edinburgh, Scotland, with two matches against the Scotland Senior Women's team at the Peffermill Playing Fields, University of Edinburgh, on July 5 and July 6.

The team will then travel to Lilleshall, England, where it will play five matches at the Lilleshall National Sports Centre.

India will face the United States U-21 on July 8 and July 11, while taking on England U-21 on July 9 and July 12. The tour will conclude with a match against Belgium U-21 on July 14.

July 5 - India U-21 vs Scotland Senior Women (Edinburgh)

July 6 - India U-21 vs Scotland Senior Women (Edinburgh)



July 8 - India U-21 vs United States U-21 (Lilleshall)

July 9 - India U-21 vs England U-21 (Lilleshall)

July 11 - India U-21 vs United States U-21 (Lilleshall)

July 12 - India U-21 vs England U-21 (Lilleshall)

July 14 - India U-21 vs Belgium U-21 (Lilleshall)

Speaking about the tour, Coach Tim White said, "This tour presents a valuable opportunity for our players to gain exposure against quality international opposition and experience different styles of hockey. Matches against world-class junior programmes as

well as Scotland's senior side will provide an excellent platform for learning and growth."

He added, "As a group, we are focused on continuing the development of the players and strengthening the foundations required to compete consistently at the highest level.

Tours like these are vital in helping young athletes adapt to international standards, build confidence and develop their understanding of the game in challenging environments."

White further stated, "The objective is always to achieve strong performances but more impor-

tantly this tour will provide an opportunity for our group to understand where our strengths are as a team and areas of our game which require the most attention to keep improving.

It will also allow players to gain the experience necessary for future transitions to the senior national team. We are looking forward to a productive tour and making the most of every match."

The exposure tour is part of Hockey India's continued efforts to provide emerging talent with regular international competition and accelerate their development through high-quality overseas assignments. (ANI)

### HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, JUNE 17

The Department of Youth Services & Sports (YSS) Kishtwar organised the Inter-Zonal District-Level Tournament for All Age Group (AAG) Boys in Taekwondo under the 100 Days Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan Campaign and Youth Engagement Programme at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Boys Kishtwar.

Young Taekwondo players from different zones of the district competed in the bouts, demonstrating talent, discipline and agility. The tournament offered athletes a platform to showcase their skills while promoting sportsmanship and a healthy lifestyle.

The activities were conducted under the directions of Director General Youth Services & Sports J&K Anuradha Gupta, under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma and under the guidance of District Youth Services & Sports Officer (DYSSO) Kishtwar Jaffer Haider Sheikh, who



graced the occasion as Chief Guest. He was accompanied by Zonal Physical Education Officer (ZPEO) Kishtwar, activity in-charges and staff concerned.

Addressing participants, the DYSSO urged students

to remain committed to their studies and sports while staying away from drug abuse. He noted that the 100 Days Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan aims to channelise the energy of youth towards con-

structive activities through sports and physical fitness.

A pledge was administered during the event, with all officers, officials, coaches and participants taking an oath to work collectively towards a drug-free society.

## Dangal Wrestling Competition Held at Chak Chimna Under Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan



### HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, JUNE 17

A grand Dangal (wrestling competition) was organized at Chak Chimna village in Bishnah tehsil under the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan to promote sports, physical fitness and awareness against drug abuse. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from wrestlers across Jammu and nearby areas, drawing a large gathering of

sports enthusiasts and local residents. Shri Gangadhar Shastri Ji Maharaj attended the programme as Chief Guest, while MLA Bishnah Dr. Rajeev Bhagat was the Guest of Honour. Former MLA Bishnah Ashwani Sharma participated as Special Invitee, and Additional Commissioner, Divisional Commissioner Office Jammu, Sham Lal (JKAS), was also present.

Addressing the gathering,

the dignitaries highlighted the role of traditional sports in preserving cultural heritage and steering youth away from drug abuse. They emphasized that sports foster discipline, determination and healthy lifestyles while supporting the objectives of the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan.

Several exciting wrestling bouts were held during the event, with winners and outstanding performers being felicitated with prizes,

mementoes and certificates. The competition was successfully coordinated by Vinod Kumar Jangral, whose efforts were widely appreciated by the dignitaries and local residents.

The programme concluded with a renewed pledge by participants and organizers to strengthen the anti-drug campaign and continue promoting sports as a tool for youth empowerment and social development.

## FIFA World Cup: Messi, Mbappe in history books, 'debutant' Haaland strikes

**KANSAS CITY (MISSOURI) [US], JUNE 17:** Lionel Messi produced a vintage performance to write another chapter in football history, while Kylian Mbappe shattered a long-standing French record and Erling Haaland marked his long-awaited FIFA World Cup debut with a brace as the sport's biggest stars lit up their respective opening days of the FIFA World Cup 2026.

The trio combined for seven goals on a memorable day of action, with Messi stealing the spotlight through a stunning hat-trick in Argentina's 3-0 win over Algeria. Mbappe inspiring France to a 3-1 victory against Senegal, and Haaland powering Norway to a commanding 4-1 triumph over Iraq, according to FIFA.

At Kansas City Stadium, Messi once again showed why he remains one of football's defining figures. Making a

record sixth FIFA World Cup finals appearance, the 38-year-old delivered his first World Cup hat-trick and moved level with German great Miroslav Klose as the tournament's all-time leading scorer with 16 goals.

The Argentine captain had already entered the record books before kick-off as the first player to appear in six World Cups. He then enhanced that legacy with a masterclass that ensured there would be no repeat of Argentina's shock opening defeat to Saudi Arabia at Qatar 2022.

Messi opened the scoring with a trademark long-range strike before pouncing on a rebound for his second. He completed the treble with a precise left-footed finish from outside the box, leaving the Kansas City crowd on its feet and moving alongside Klose atop the World Cup scoring charts.

The hat-trick also saw Messi surpass

legends, including Gerd Muller and Brazil's Ronaldo, on the all-time World Cup scoring list. It came exactly 20 years after his first World Cup goal, scored against Serbia and Montenegro at Germany 2006.

Earlier in the day, Mbappe had made history of his own during France's 3-1 win over Senegal.

After a scoreless first half, France found their rhythm through Bradley Barcola and Mbappe

The Real Madrid forward struck twice to take his international tally to 58 goals, moving past Olivier Giroud and becoming France's outright all-time leading scorer.

Mbappe's double also carried him to 14 World Cup goals, placing him among the competition's greatest scorers and reinforcing his credentials as one of the favourites for the Golden Boot.