



Women's T20 World Cup: India beat Bangladesh by 5 wickets to stay in hunt

MANCHESTER, JUNE 25: India rode on Shafali Verma's 34-ball 53 to defeat Bangladesh by five wickets and remain in contention for a semifinal berth in the Women's T20 World Cup here on Thursday.

Asked to bowl first, India limited Bangladesh to 136 for 8 despite dropping four catches to continue their woeful fielding in the tournament.

Opener Juairiya Ferdous (33) and skipper Nigar Sultana (32) were the significant contributors for Bangladesh.

Coming back into the side, left-arm spinner Radha Yadav (3/28 in 4 overs) picked up three wickets for India during an impressive outing, even as her other colleagues chipped in with economical bowling.

India completed their chase in 16.5 overs. Ritu Moni (2/29 in 4 overs) was the best Bangladesh bowler.

Bangladesh: 136/8 in 20 overs (Juairiya Ferdous 33, Nigar Sultana 32; Radha Yadav 3/28).

India: 139/5 in 16.5 overs (Shafali Bhatia 53; Ritu Moni 2/29).



Women's Basketball team Emerge Champions at Women Ballers League in Srinagar

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
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Demonstrating determination and teamwork, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sports Complex, Women's Basketball Team emerged champions at the Women Ballers League, held in collaboration with the Men's Basketball League under the aegis of the J&K Sports Council at Gindun Stadium, Srinagar, from June 19 to 21, 2026.

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sports Complex, under the patronage of SMVDSB comprising two men's teams and one women's team, total of 11 players participated in the prestigious tournament. While both men's teams displayed commendable performances and advanced to the quarterfinal stage. However, it was the women's team that stole the spotlight by securing the championship title with an outstanding display of grit and consistency throughout the competition.

For their title-winning performance, the women's team was awarded a cash prize of ₹8,000, along with the championship trophy and medals by the organis-



ers. Adding another feather to the Sports Complex Cap, Anu Priya was adjudged the Player of the Tournament for her exceptional all-round performance for which she received a cash award of ₹2,500 along with an individual trophy.

Shri Alok Kumar Maurya, Additional Chief Executive Officer, while honouring the

players today congratulated them for emerging as winner in the tournament.

He highlighted the Shrine Board's sustained commitment towards the promotion of sports in the region under the Chairmanship of Shri Manoj Sinha, Hon'ble Lt. Governor JK-UT. He also appreciated the dedication, discipline and hard

work exhibited by the players and coaching staff, and expressed confidence that such achievements would inspire more youth to pursue sports with passion and commitment. Among those present on the occasion were Shri Dhruv Gupta, Director Sports, SMVD Sports Complex, Basketball Coach and other officials.

I would get angry and cry, wondering why I was out of the team: Deepika

NEW DELHI, JUNE 25:

Star drag-flicker Deepika Sehrawat says the toughest challenge of her career was not scoring goals but coping with months away from hockey after a serious hamstring injury, a period that left her frustrated, emotional and questioning when she would return to the field.

Now, after playing a pivotal role in India's title-winning FIH Nations Cup campaign in New Zealand, the 22-year-old feels she has rediscovered both her confidence and rhythm at a crucial time, with the World Cup and Asian Games on the horizon.

Deepika, who missed last year's Asia Cup after suffering a Grade III hamstring tear, made an impressive return by finishing as the joint highest scorer at the Nations Cup with six goals, alongside American Ashley Sessa.

"Nations Cup was my first tournament after rehab and regaining full fitness. It had been a long time since I had played at this level, so I was a little nervous in the beginning.

But it turned out to be a good tournament and this performance has given me a lot of confidence after returning from injury," Deepika told PTI Bhasha in an interview.

The prolific forward admitted that the months spent on the sidelines tested her mentally as much as



physically.

"The time away from hockey was very difficult. I would get angry and cry, wondering why I was out of the team. While the team was touring Argentina and Australia, I was still in rehab. It was only at the Nations Cup that I truly felt I had returned," said Deepika, Hockey India's best emerging player for 2025.

At a time when doubts crept in about her comeback, Deepika said the support and faith shown by head coach Sjoerd Marijne, strength and conditioning coach Wayne Lombard and the support staff played a crucial role in restoring her confidence.

"Last year, the injury was so serious that I wasn't sure when I would return. The credit for my comeback goes to coach Sjoerd, Wayne, trainer Ciara and Rodet, who worked tire-

lessly on my rehabilitation," she said.

"Their support gave me confidence throughout the recovery process. Coach Sjoerd has built this team in a short period. It wasn't easy, but he has worked very hard and the players have fully backed him. The coaching staff deserves a lot of credit," Deepika also highlighted the impact of a specialised drag-flick camp conducted by Dutch great Taek Taekema, one of the finest exponents of the skill.

"The drag-flick camp with him was a great experience. We not only worked on drag flicks but also analysed videos of opposition teams, studying the movements of first rushers and goalkeepers. That helped me understand where to place my shots."

She said the biggest lesson was to trust her instincts and play without fear.

"I was told not to put too much pressure on myself and to trust my skills. Even if we were trailing, I was encouraged to take drag flicks with confidence. That approach helped me a lot." Despite finishing among the tournament's leading scorers, Deepika insisted the achievement was the result of a collective effort.

"As a striker and drag-flicker, it is my responsibility to score goals. But without the team's support it wouldn't have been possible because I can only showcase my skills when the team earns penalty corners. The team backed me completely."

India's Nations Cup triumph also secured promotion back to the FIH Pro League after relegation last season, something Deepika believes will be invaluable for the team's development.

"It was very important for us to win this tournament because playing in the Pro League gives us the opportunity to compete regularly against the top teams."

"That helps us understand where we stand and what we need to improve. We went there with the intention of winning and the feeling of lifting the trophy is very special."

With the World Cup and Asian Games fast approaching, Deepika said India is determined to carry forward the momentum generated by the Nations Cup success.

Inter-Zonal District Level Kabaddi Championship for Under-17 Boys commences in Baramulla

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JUNE 25

The Inter-Zonal District Level Kabaddi Championship for Under-17 Boys, organized by the Department of Youth Services & Sports (DYSS) Baramulla, commenced with great enthusiasm and competitive spirit at BHSS Baramulla today.

The championship was officially inaugurated by Mubeen Ahmad Khan, Physical Education Master (PEM) and Activity In-charge DYSSO Baramulla, in presence of Mohammad Arif Bhat, Physical Education Lecturer (PEL) and Convenor/Chief Selector of the competition, along with other senior officials and technical experts of the department.

A total of 13 zonal teams from across District Baramulla are participating in the prestigious championship. The tournament is being conducted in a league format, with each team scheduled to play four matches, providing ample



opportunities for players to showcase their skills, fitness, and sporting excellence.

Addressing the participants on the occasion, Mubeen Ahmad Khan highlighted the importance of sports in shaping the character and personality of young students. He urged the athletes to display discipline, teamwork, commitment, and sportsmanship throughout the competition. He also appreciated the efforts of the Department of Youth Services & Sports in providing a vi-

brant platform for nurturing talent and promoting a healthy sporting culture among youth.

Mohammad Arif Bhat, Convenor and Chief Selector of the championship, encouraged the participants to make the most of the opportunity and perform to the best of their abilities. He emphasized that such competitions not only help in identifying talented players for higher-level events but also contribute significantly towards the overall physical, mental, and social development of students.

The opening day's matches witnessed intense competition and remarkable performances from various teams. At the conclusion of the league-stage fixtures played today, eight teams successfully qualified for the quarterfinal stage of the tournament.

The quarterfinals, semifinals, and grand finale of the championship are scheduled to be played on June 27, 2026, at the same venue, where the district champion will be crowned following a series of high-voltage encounters.

FIFA World Cup 2026 emerges as highest-scoring WC in last 68 years

NEW DELHI, JUNE 25 (ANI):

The ongoing edition of the FIFA World Cup has been the highest-scoring World Cup in the last 68 years, with several superstars of the game finding the net.

As per OptaFranz, with a rate of 2.98 goals per match, this World Cup is the highest-scoring in the last 68 years, since the 1958 WC, where the average was 3.6 goals per match.

So far in the tournament, a total of 161 goals have been scored. The all-time record for most goals in a single World Cup is 172 goals in the 2022 edition, which was won by Lionel Messi-led Argentina.



The biggest win of the tournament is Canada's 6-0 win over Qatar.

The leading goal-scorer in the ongoing edition is Argentina's Messi, who has scored five so far. This in-

cludes his first-ever FIFA WC hat-trick against Algeria in the campaign opener. The brace in the next clash against Austria made him surpass Germany's Miroslav Klose (16) for most

goals in the tournament's history, with 18.

"We'll fight to go as far as possible..." SA's Mofokeng after team seals first-ever FIFA WC knockout qualification'

In second place are Brazil's Vinicius Jr, France's Kylian Mbappe and Norway's Erling Haaland with four goals each.

Germany's Denis Undav, Switzerland's Johan Manzambi, Brazil's Matheus Cunha, Morocco's Ismael Sibari and Canada's Jonathan David (three each) are at the third spot.

Vinicius Jr (one assist) and Undav (two assists) have secured a total of five goal involvements in the ongoing tournament. (ANI)

Shree Charani secures most wickets by Indian in single Women's T20WC edition

MANCHESTER [UK],

JUNE 25: Indian spinner Shree Charani made history, overcoming Poonam Yadav for most wickets by an Indian in a single ICC Women's T20 World Cup edition.

Shree Charani, the newly crowned world number one T20I bowler, achieved the milestone during her side's group stage T20 World Cup match against Bangladesh in Manchester on Thursday.

During the match, Charani took 2/21 in four overs, getting wickets of Nahida Akter and Shorna Akter.

Now, in four matches in this tournament, she has 12 wickets at an average of 7.08 and an economy rate of 5.31, with her best figures of 4/19.



She is the leading wicket-taker in the tournament so far. For India, the old record was in the hands of Poonam, with 10 wickets in five matches at an average of 11.90 and an economy rate of 5.95, with best figures of 4/19 in the 2019/20 edition.

New Zealand all-rounder Amelia Kerr has the most wickets in a single Women's T20 WC competition, with 15 scalps in six matches at an average of 7.33 and an economy rate of 4.85, with best figures of 4/26 in the 2024/25 season.

"We'll fight to go as far as possible..." SA's Mofokeng after team seals first-ever FIFA WC knockout qualification' Coming to the match, Bangladesh opted to bat first and put up 136/8 in 20 overs.

Juairiya Ferdous (33 in 31 balls, with five fours) and Sobhana Mostary (22 in 26 balls, with two fours) put up a half-century stand for the second wicket and skipper Nigar Sultana (32 in 27 balls, with four boundaries) helped Bangladesh to a modest total.

Radha Yadav (3/28) and Charani (2/21) were among the lead wicket-takers for India, with Renuka Thakur and Nandni Sharma also getting a wicket each.