



India retain Harmanpreet as captain for Asiad despite underwhelming WC campaign

NEW DELHI, JUNE 30: Harmanpreet Kaur was on Tuesday retained as India captain for this year's Asian Games in Japan despite the team's earlier-than-expected exit from the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in England.

The Women's Selection Committee named a 15-member squad for the Asian Games, scheduled to be held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from September 19 to October 4. The team's World Cup campaign ended on Sunday after a group stage loss to Australia.

The Indian women's team will enter the Asian Games as defending champions, having won the gold medal at the event's previous edition in Hangzhou, China, in 2023.

Smriti Mandhana will continue to be Harmanpreet's deputy.

Wicketkeeper-batter Yastika Bhatia is the only player to be dropped from the World Cup squad and in



her place G Kamalini has been drafted into the side.

Shreyanka Patil, who was ruled out with an ankle injury in the middle of the World Cup, has been included in the squad but her availability will be subject to fitness. Harmanpreet will be supported in the batting line-up by Mandhana,

Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues and Richa Ghosh, while the bowling responsibilities will largely be shouldered by Deepti Sharma, Renuka Singh, Shree Charani, Arundhati Reddy and Nandni Sharma.

India's squad for the 2026 Asian Games

Harmanpreet Kaur (cap-

tain), Smriti Mandhana (vice-captain), Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh (wk), G Kamalini (wk), Bharti Fulmali, Sree Charani, Renuka Thakur, Kranti Gaud, Arundhati Reddy, Shreyanka Patil, Radha Yadav, Nandni Sharma.

Australia cruise into Women's T20 World Cup 2026 final with dominant 8-wicket win over West Indies in semis

LONDON [UK], JUNE 30: Six-time champions Australia stormed into the final of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 with a commanding eight-wicket victory over West Indies at The Kia Oval on Tuesday, producing another clinical all-round performance to move within one win of winning their seventh title.

After Sophie Molineux-led Australia won the toss and opted to bowl first, West Indies openers Hayley Matthews and Qiana Joseph started things off with a solid 47-run opening partnership. Matthews struck 30 off 28 balls, while Joseph made 16, before Australia's Georgia Wareham struck for the first breakthrough.

Wareham broke the stand by dismissing Joseph, triggering a dramatic collapse. Ashleigh Gardner then produced the decisive spell of the innings, removing Stafanie Taylor and Jahzara Claxton in the same over as West Indies slipped from 47 without loss to 55 for 4.

Sophie Molineux then claimed the wicket of Chinelle Henry (11) in the 15th over. Wareham struck again in the 16th over, dismissing Shemaine Campbell (22), reducing West



Indies to 83/6.

Deandra Dottin came in at No. 8 and fought back with an unbeaten 26 off just 16 deliveries. She combined with Jannillea Glasgow (15) for a valuable 42-run stand that lifted West Indies to a competitive 125/7. Wareham finished with figures of 2/17 in 3 overs while Gardner finished with 2/13 in 4 overs. Captain Molineux also claimed two wickets, giving away 30 runs in 4 overs.

Chasing 126, Australia

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Chasing 126, Australia faced a couple of early setbacks as Georgia Voll (16) and Phoebe Litchfield (4) departed cheaply. Ellyse Perry also retired hurt after scoring two, briefly raising hopes of a West Indies comeback.

However, opener Beth Mooney ensured there would be no late drama. The left-hander played a fluent knock of 61* from only 36 balls, striking eight boundaries to put Australia firmly in control. Gardner complemented her perfectly with

an unbeaten 35 off 20 balls as the pair added an unbroken 63-run stand to wrap up the chase in just 13 overs with 42 balls to spare.

The comprehensive victory sends Australia into their eighth Women's T20 World Cup final in 10 editions.

They will now face the winner of the second semi-final between England and South Africa at Lord's on Thursday, aiming to successfully defend their world title. (ANI)

Indian Embassy organises 2nd Ambassador's Cricket Tournament in Kathmandu

KATHMANDU [NEPAL], JUNE 30: The Embassy of India in Kathmandu has successfully organised the second edition of the Indian Ambassador's Cricket Tournament at the Tribhuvan University Cricket Ground and Mulpani Cricket Stadium in Kathmandu.

The tournament reflects India's commitment to strengthening people-to-people ties with Nepal through sports and supporting the development of young sporting talent in the country, according to a press release by the Embassy of India.

The tournament from June 26 to 28 brought together eight teams repre-



sending the Embassy of India, Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the diplomatic community in Kathmandu, Nepali media, former Nepali cricketers, Government of Nepal officials, corporate organisations, and the Indian diaspora in Nepal (ICAN), it said.

The opening ceremony was held on June 26 in the

presence of the Ambassador of India to Nepal, Naveen Srivastava; Joint Secretary (South Asia Division), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal, Gahendra Rajbhandari; and other senior diplomatic representatives.

After three days of spirited and competitive matches, the tournament concluded with an exciting

final on June 28 between the Embassy of India and ICAN.

Following the match, the Ambassador Naveen Srivastava and representatives from organising partners presented trophies and awards to the winning team and outstanding performers, according to the press release by the Embassy of India in Kathmandu.

A reception was held on June 29 to celebrate the success of the tournament. The Ambassador of India to Nepal attended the event along with other dignitaries. The ambassador thanked the Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) and other organising partners for their support for the tournament.

Jammu's young aces clinch Bronze at North Zone Soft Tennis Championship

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, JUNE 30

Four young players from the Khelo India Soft Tennis Centre at MA Stadium, Jammu, have brought fresh pride to Jammu and Kashmir by clinching the bronze medal at the 3rd North Zone National Soft Tennis Championship held at Gindun Stadium, Srinagar, from June 26 to June 28, 2026.

Madhavendra Singh Sambyal, Harikesh Dutt Sharma, Aditya Dutt Sharma and Vihan Parihar competed with the discipline and tactical sharpness of seasoned professionals, earning their place on the podium against some of the strongest teams from across North India.

The quartet trains under Khelo India mentor and international soft tennis player Indu Bhushan Padha, whose coaching has been widely credited for Jammu's decade-long dominance in the sport at the Union Territory level.

On the Srinagar courts, that training was evident in every rally, as the team combined composed doubles coordination with aggressive net play and smart point construction that belied their age. Their performance was not just a win for J&K but a clear signal that the structured, grassroots system being built through Khelo India Centres is producing athletes ready for the



national stage.

At the heart of this team is 17-year-old Madhavendra Singh Sambyal, already one of the most decorated young names in Indian soft tennis. His record reads like a blueprint for the aspiring athletes

Madhavendra, at just 17, stormed to the Under-17 final at the National School Games in Dewas, MP, settling for silver after an "intense title clash". His composure against the country's best put J&K "on the national soft tennis map". That silver came "close on the heels of his silver at the Senior National Championships in Srinagar", a rare feat for a school-level player competing with the adults. He's the reigning state gold medalist and top seed for J&K and previously won gold in Senior Category men's singles at the 9th UT Level Championship.

Alongside his sister Sid-

hani Singh, Madhavendra has earned selection to represent India at the 2nd Asian Junior Soft Tennis Championship, Feb 3-8, 2026, in Punjab. His athleticism isn't limited to soft tennis. In September 2025, the DPS Jammu student won gold in the Under-16 Boys Singles Pickleball Championship and qualified for Nationals in Bengaluru.

Madhavendra credits his growth to his "Coaches, the Soft Tennis Association, the J&K Sports Council and the Department of Youth Services and Sports". Today, he's become "an inspiration for new generation of young athletes in Jammu and Kashmir to dream big and compete fearlessly".

Harikesh Dutt Sharma has been on Jammu's radar since his Sub-Junior sweep at the 9th UT Championship, where he and Svadhi Sharma "swept all three events", singles, dou-

bles and mixed doubles. He also reached the U/17 Boys final at the Inter District UT Level meet, facing teammate Madhavendra.

Aditya Dutt Sharma and Vihan Parihar round out a squad where every player is battle-tested at district, UT and now zonal levels. Their bronze is not a finish line but it's a foundation.

Jammu's clean sweep of 25 gold medals at the 9th UT Level Championship proved the region's depth. This North Zone bronze proves its breadth that J&K talent can travel, compete and medal beyond the UT.

With this bronze, the team has laid a foundation that goes beyond a single tournament.

They return now to MA Stadium to prepare for the national circuit, with Madhavendra setting his sights on the upcoming national and international championships this year.

YS&S Department Kishtwar holds U-19 inter-zonal cricket tournament

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, JUNE 30

The Department of Youth Services & Sports (YS&S) Kishtwar organised the Inter-Zonal District-Level Cricket Tournament for U-19 Boys at Chowgan Ground Kishtwar under the 100-Day Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan and Youth Engagement Programme.

District Youth Services & Sports Officer (DYSSO) Jaffer Haider Sheikh visited the tournament and interacted with participating players, team officials and technical staff.

He appreciated the discipline, dedication and sporting spirit displayed by the young cricketers, encouraged them to pursue excellence through hard work, fair play and regular participation in sports and underlined the importance of staying away from drugs and adopting a healthy lifestyle in line with the ob-



jectives of the 100-Day Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan.

The tournament provided a competitive platform for budding cricketers and

strengthened the message of youth empowerment through sports.

FIFA World Cup 2026: France, Sweden set for first-ever World Cup meeting

NEW JERSEY [US], JUNE 30: The FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 32 clash between France and Sweden on June 30 (local time) in New Jersey will mark the first-ever meeting between the two nations at a FIFA World Cup.

Despite being regulars on football's biggest stage since the inaugural tournament in 1930, with France having played 76 World Cup matches and Sweden 54, the two nations have never previously met in the competition, according to the FIFA website.

Back on June 29, 1958, a FIFA World Cup final between France, led

by Raymond Kopa and Just Fontaine, and Sweden, spearheaded by Nils Liedholm, appeared a possibility. However, a 17-year-old Pele changed the script by inspiring Brazil to a 5-2 victory over France in the semi-finals, denying that much-anticipated European showdown.

France and Sweden have each enjoyed golden generations and made lasting contributions to World Cup history, yet they have remarkably never faced each other in the tournament. Their paths have come close to crossing on several occasions.

In 1950, Sweden finished third while

France withdrew from the tournament before it began. In 1994, Sweden again claimed third place after defeating Bulgaria, the team that had denied France qualification. France reached the World Cup finals in 1998, 2006, 2018 and 2022. Sweden was present at the 2006 and 2018 editions but ended up on the opposite side of the draw.

Despite never meeting at the World Cup, the two nations have shared several memorable encounters elsewhere. They played out a 1-1 draw at UEFA Euro 1992, while Sweden beat France 2-0 at Euro 2012 thanks to Zlatan Ibrahimovic's spectacular volley.