



## Ministry of Sports unveils official selection framework of Indian contingent for Asian Games

**NEW DELHI [INDIA], JULY 2:** The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) has released the official framework for selection of the Indian contingent for the Asian Games, outlining the step-by-step process for the selection and approval of athletes, coaches, and support staff. The framework clarifies that only those included in the sanction order issued by MYAS are considered part of the official Indian contingent.

Notably, the 2026 Asian Games will take place in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from September 19 to October 4.

The selection of athletes, coaches, and support staff for the Asian Games is conducted in accordance with the policy framework issued by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS).

The selection process is undertaken in the following manner:

1. Conduct of Selection Trials by National Sports Federations (NSFs): Each



recognized NSF conducts selection trials and/or adopts its approved selection methodology and the applicable technical regulations of the respective International Federation/Asian Federation. Selection trials are conducted in the presence of observers and are recorded on camera to ensure fairness and transparency.

2. Preparation of Probable/Selected List by NSF: Based on the outcome of the trials and the prescribed NSF's eligibility criteria, the

concerned NSF prepares its recommended list of athletes, coaches and support staff for participation in the Asian Games and forwards the same to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

3. Submission by IOA to MYAS: The IOA, being the National Olympic Committee responsible for the entry of the Indian contingent for multi-sport events, forwards the discipline-wise recommendations received from the NSFs to the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports

(MYAS) for examination and issue of sanction.

4. Examination by SAI: MYAS forwards the recommended list received from IOA to Sports Authority of India (SAI) for scrutiny of the list with reference to the applicable MYAS guidelines, Asian Games Selection Criteria, performance standards, eligibility conditions and other relevant requirements. On completion of this examination, SAI submits its recommendations to the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS).

5. Final Scrutiny and Approval by MYAS: The Ministry undertakes the final scrutiny of the list received from SAI. On completion of this examination, MYAS submits the list for the approval of the Competent Authority. Following approval, MYAS issues the official Sanction Order approving the Indian contingent for participation in the Asian Games and other multi-sports events.

## Iyer completes 5,000 international runs, Abhishek races to 100 T20I sixes

**CHESTER-LE-STREET [UK], JULY 2:** Indian middle-order batter and T20I skipper Shreyas Iyer completed 5,000 international runs on Wednesday.

Iyer achieved this milestone during his side's first T20I against England at Chester-le-Street on Tuesday, scoring a fine 47-ball 68, with six fours and a six at a strike rate of over 144.

In 147 matches for India, Iyer has made 5,031 runs at an average of 39.61, with a strike rate of 96.06, with six centuries and 37 fifties, including a best score of 128\*.

In 14 Tests for India, Iyer has 811 runs in 24 innings at an average of 36.86, with a century and five fifties, with a best score of 105.

In 79 ODIs, which is his best format, Iyer has made 3,035 runs in 73 innings at an average of 45.98, with five centuries and 23 fifties, batting at a strike rate of 98.60, with a best score of 128\*.

In 54 T20Is, he has made



1,184 runs in 50 innings at an average of 30.38, with a strike rate of over 135, with nine fifties and a best score of 74\*.

It was also a landmark match for hard-hitting Abhishek Sharma, who completed 100 sixes in T20Is, breaking past West Indies' Evin Lewis (789 balls) to

reach the milestone in just 785 balls, the fastest by a Test-playing nation player.

Abhishek, who scored an aggressive 59 in 24 balls, with six fours and four sixes at a strike rate of over 245, has 102 T20I sixes.

Coming to the match, knocks from Iyer and Abhishek and a power-packed

cameo from Shivam Dube (42\* in 21 balls, with two fours and three sixes), powered India to 189/7 in 20 overs. But the match ended in a no result as England did not get a chance to bat due to rain.

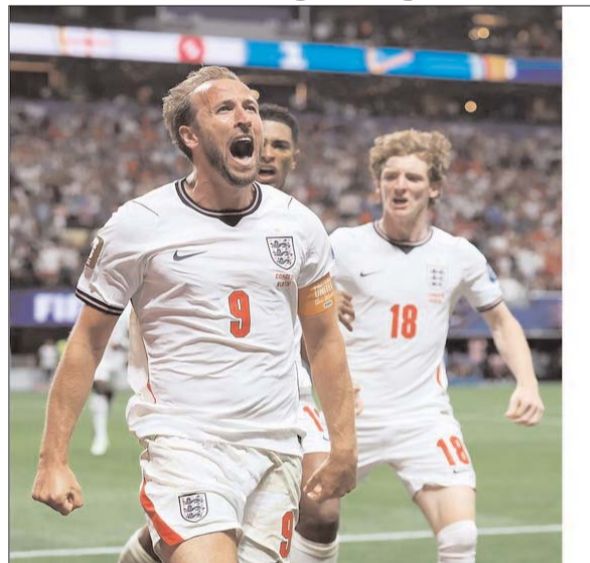
On July 4, Saturday, Manchester will host the second T20I. (ANI)

## FIFA World Cup 2026: Kane hails Messi, Ronaldo standards after firing England into last 16

**ATLANTA, JULY 02:** England captain Harry Kane credited the relentless behind-the-scenes standards set by football greats Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo after producing another decisive World Cup display, saying the countless hours spent on recovery, training and preparation helped him deliver when his country needed him most in the 2-1 comeback win over Congo DR in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 32 on Wednesday (local time).

Kane, who scored twice in the second half to rescue England from the brink of a shock exit, said maintaining elite performance over a long period requires commitment away from the spotlight.

"That's why you do all the work behind the scenes. The things that you guys don't see when we are in training, when we are at home doing recovery, doing ice baths, doing treatment all the little details that make you be consistently at the highest level for as long as possible," Kane told reporters after the match, as per DAZN Football.



"And you know, those guys, like Messi and Ronaldo, they're at the pinnacle of that. So yeah, I'm fitting as well as I've ever felt, and ultimately, when I got onto the pitch, I know all the work I've done behind the scenes will make me ready for big moments. And that's exactly what happened out there today," he added.

England looked set for a stunning exit after Brian Cipenga gave Congo DR a seventh-minute lead. The African side defended resolutely and carried their ad-

vantage into halftime, frustrating Thomas Tuchel's side despite England dominating possession.

Tuchel threw on Anthony Gordon and Bukayo Saka after the hour mark before introducing Eberechi Eze as England piled on the pressure. The changes transformed the contest, with Gordon providing assists for both of Kane's goals.

Kane levelled the scores in the 75th minute with a composed finish before striking again in the 86th minute to complete England's comeback and book

a Round of 16 meeting with co-hosts Mexico.

The brace also saw Kane climb the World Cup scoring charts. He moved past Pele and into a tie with Just Fontaine on 13 World Cup goals, occupying sixth place on the tournament's all-time scoring list.

He also became the first English player to score five or more goals at two different World Cups and is now just one goal behind Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappe in this year's Golden Boot race.

The victory marked England's first-ever World Cup win after trailing at halftime and only the second time they have recovered from conceding first to win a World Cup knockout match, the other coming in the 1966 final against West Germany.

England also extended their unbeaten run against African opposition at the World Cup to 10 matches, the longest such streak by any nation against CAF teams, while Gordon became the first player since 1966 to register two assists as a substitute in a World Cup knockout fixture.

## Wimbledon: Djokovic marches to third round with win over Tsitsipas

**LONDON [UK], JULY 2:** Serbian tennis icon Novak Djokovic secured a straight-sets win over Greek star Stefanos Tsitsipas to secure his spot in the third round of Wimbledon on Wednesday night.

Djokovic, chasing his 25th Grand Slam title and first since the US Open 2023, outclassed Tsitsipas 6-3, 6-4, 6-2, securing his third-round spot in the grass major for the 20th time with an all-round sharp outing. He also improved his head-to-head record against Tsitsipas to 13-2, as per ATP's official website.

Moving towards the win, Djokovic managed to pro-



duce a fantastic performance, breaking Tsitsipas's serve and striking three winners to end the game, including a classy lob that dropped perfectly inside the baseline, concluding the

game in one hour and 38 minutes.

"You feel very happy, satisfied and joyful on the court when you are playing this way," Djokovic said in his on-court interview.

"Once you get the momentum going. That game, when I went 5-2 up, was one of the best return games I have played in a while. I just went for my shots. I was a bit more relaxed, a little less tension in my head," he added.

Tsitsipas, battling injuries and inconsistency over the past few seasons, arrived at the tournament as the 87th-ranked player.

Djokovic's 33 winners and just seven unforced errors gave him a massive position of dominance as he did not surrender his serve throughout the match, booking a clash with Frenchman Arthur Rinderknech. (ANI)

## BAI to implement BWF's 3x15 scoring system across domestic circuit from July

**CHANDIGARH, JULY 02:** The Badminton Association of India (BAI) will introduce the Badminton World Federation's (BWF) new 3x15 scoring system across the domestic circuit from July, beginning with the Yonex-Sunrise All India Senior Ranking Badminton Tournament at the Regional Sports Centre in Ernakulam from July 7 to 14.

The move is aimed at helping Indian shuttlers adapt to the new format ahead of its proposed international rollout in January 2027.

Under the revised format, matches will continue to be played as best-of-three games under the rally-point system, but each game will now be played to 15 points instead of 21. A two-point lead will still be required from 14-all, with games capped at 21 points, where the next point after 20-all will decide the winner. The shorter format is expected to increase the pace of



matches, accelerate momentum shifts and place greater emphasis on tactical precision and quick decision-making.

The 3x15 scoring system will be implemented across major domestic events, including Zonal Championships, Domestic Ranking Tournaments and National Championships across all age groups, to ensure players, coaches and technical officials gain competitive exposure to the format before it is introduced internationally.

BAI General Secretary Sanjay Mishra said, "In order to ensure uniformity in competition, facilitate better preparation, and enable players, coaches, technical officials and all stakeholders to become fully accustomed to the new scoring format well before its proposed implementation by the Badminton World Federation (BWF) from January 2027 onwards, it has been decided to further extend the implementation of the 3x15 scoring system. This decision has been taken to en-

sure that players across all age groups develop familiarity and competitive adaptability to the revised scoring format, thereby ensuring a smooth transition when the system is adopted internationally."

Under the revised match procedures, the mid-game interval will now be taken when the leading player or pair reaches eight points. Players will also change ends in the third game, followed by a 60-second break. The 120-second interval between games remains unchanged, while the winner of the previous game will continue to serve first.

The new scoring system will be used across all Zonal Championships, Domestic Ranking Tournaments in the Under-13, Under-15, Under-17, Under-19, Senior and Masters (Veterans) categories, as well as National Championships from the Under-11 level through to Senior and Masters competitions.

## Praggnanandhaa joint second after opening day of Grand Chess Tour Croatia

**ZAGREB (CROATIA), JULY 02:** Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa began his campaign in the Zagreb leg of the Grand Chess Tour with a victory over top seed Vincent Keymer of Germany before drawing his next two games to finish the opening day of the rapid section in joint second place. Praggnanandhaa held France's Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and compatriot and world champion D Gukesh in hard-fought draws to end the day on four points, here on Wednesday.

Alireza Firouzja of France emerged sole leader on five points after winning his first two games and drawing with Anish Giri of the Netherlands in the third round.

With each rapid win worth two points, Firouzja moved ahead of Praggnanandhaa, Giri, Vachier-Lagrave and Keymer, who recovered from his opening-round defeat with two victories.

After winning the Norway chess classic ahead of Magnus Carlsen, Praggnanandhaa went on an attacking spree against Keymer in what will be hailed as a masterclass in the future.

The fury of white pieces



was there for everyone to see as Praggnanandhaa launched his forces right at the opponent king and cashed in on the full two points in a mere 26 moves.

In the second round of the day, the Indian ace drew with Vachier-Lagrave who had started off with a finely crafted victory over World champion Gukesh.

For Gukesh the rhythm came back immediately after losing to his French counterpart as he made light work of Ivan Saric of Croatia in the second round.

The youngest ever world champion is set to defend his title in the forthcoming

match against Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan.

While he was outplayed in the opener, Gukesh showcased his skills as the master craftsman while defending an attack against his king in the second round.

Gukesh is next in line along with Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania on three points and these two are a full point ahead of Nodirbek Abduttorov of Uzbekistan.

Jorden Van Foreest of the Netherlands is on one point, while Saric is yet to open his account.

The nine rounds of rapid will be followed by an 18-

round blitz marathon and the winner will be decided with cumulative points in both sections.

After this there are two more events left to be held at Saint Louis, USA in the Grand Chess Tour.

Standings (After Rd-3, Rapid)

Firouzja Alireza (Fra, 5) 2-5; Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra); R Praggnanandhaa (Ind); Anish Giri (Ned); Vincent Keymer (Ger) 4 each; 6-7: D Gukesh (Ind) Deac Bogdan-Daniel (Rou) 3 each; 8. Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 2); 9. Jorden Van Foreest (Ned, 1); 10. Ivan Saric (Cro, 0). PTI