



FIFA World Cup 2026

Torres stars as Spain edge Argentina to win FIFA World Cup 2026 title

NEW YORK, JULY 20: At a sun-drenched MetLife Stadium, there was one last time to take it all in - the good, the bad and Spain's mastery in this super-sized 48-team World Cup. Spain proved that they were the best team of the tournament, grinding their way to a 1-0 extra-time win against Argentina to end Lionel Messi's fairytale run at the World Cup, a tournament that had been just about acceptable on the field, but divisive off it, making FIFA and the global finals a strange geopolitical juggernaut.

Fans and media had queued for hours outside to clear secret service check points. Minutes before kick-off, US president Donald Trump, accompanied by FIFA president Gianni Infantino, took their seats before Tom Cruise stressed the bonds of friendship made during the tournament. Never mind that the final kicked off six minutes late.

The final had star power with Lionel Messi and Lamine Yamal, but didn't replicate the high drama of the 2022 six-goal thriller between Argentina and France. Instead, it was the worst World Cup final in recent memory, eclipsing the editions of 1994, when Brazil and Italy dragged themselves to penalties in California, and 2010, when Andreas Iniesta won it for Spain



in extra time.

In New Jersey, Spain were once again progressive. They wanted to construct and play the game the way it is ought to be. Argentina didn't. They set out to destroy. The contrasting styles led to a war of attrition, replete with Argentinian gamesmanship. The anti-spectacle of provocation, play acting and dirty fouling culminated in a second yellow card and dismissal for Enzo Fernandez for clattering Pau Cubarsi, in the 93rd minute - and even a scuffle after the final whistle. It had taken referee Slavko Vincic until the 40th minute to book an Argentine player after Lisandro Martinez fouled Mikel Oyarzabal.

History

It was the signal for the first-half time show in World Cup history and FIFA's attempt to mimic the Super Bowl. Organisers wheeled out a galaxy of stars, including BTS, Madonna, Shakira and Justin Bieber, and the result was a 27-minute break in play.

In the second half, the defending champions remained on the back foot with tier negative approach. On the wing Lamine Yamal proved to be industrious, but opportunities came at premium, substitutes Ferran Torres and Nico Williams. In extra time, Spain got the sight of goal more - Nico Williams's goal disallowed and

substitute Martin Zubamendi missing a free header. History

By contrast, Argentina talisman Lionel Messi remained peripheral, but his side were still not out of it. One flash of genius was all they needed. Instead, it was Spain who won a second World Cup when Torres smashed the ball home from close range after Williams tied him up in the 106th minute. The strike had parallels with Iniesta's goal in 2010: the significance, the timing and the knockout blow for the opponent. The Spanish were not as scintillating as at Euro 2024, but with their second global crown they cement their modern hegemony over the game

DC Samba inaugurates Inter-Block District Level Volleyball Tournament 2026 at Ramgarh

SAMBA, JULY 20: Deputy Commissioner Samba Ayushi Sudan today inaugurated the Inter-Block District Level Volleyball Tournament 2026 at Government Higher Secondary School, Ramgarh under the aegis of the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.

Organised by the district administration Samba, the tournament aims to promote sports as a healthy lifestyle and encourage youth to stay away from drug abuse through the message "Say No to Drugs, Yes to Sports."

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said sports play a vital role in shaping the personality of young people by instilling discipline, teamwork and self-confidence. She urged participants to play with dedication, uphold the spirit of sportsmanship and contribute towards building a drug-free society and encouraged youth to become



ambassadors of the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.

The tournament commenced with the inaugural match between Ramgarh and Bari Brahmana at Government Higher Secondary School, Ramgarh. The Bari

Brahmana team emerged victorious, with players from both teams displaying strong competitive spirit that set an energetic tone for the tournament. The remaining league matches will be held as per schedule

at designated venues across the district.

A large number of district officers, officials, sports enthusiasts, students and locals were present and cheered the participating teams.

UT-level workshop on coaching, officiating in Hockey held

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, JULY 20

A three-day Hockey India J&K -level workshop on coaching and officiating, organized by Hockey Jammu and Kashmir, concluded today at MA Stadium, here.

The workshop, an initiative of Hockey India, provided a valuable opportunity for coaches and technical officials to enhance their knowledge and skills in modern hockey coaching and officiating. During the coaching sessions, participants received training in fundamental coaching techniques, theoretical concepts, video analysis, and other essential aspects of player development under the guidance of Piyush Kumar Dubey, High Performance Director in Hockey.

In officiating, the partici-



pants were introduced to the latest FIH rules and regulations by Manish Gaur, officiating expert deputed by Hockey India. The sessions focused on recent updates in officiating standards and their practical implementation on the field.

The workshop attracted enthusiastic participation from various districts of the Union Territory of J&K, re-

flecting the growing interest in strengthening hockey at both the grassroots and professional levels.

"Hockey India and Hockey J&K are committed to enhancing the quality of coaching and officiating, thereby contributing to the overall development of the sport in the region," informed general secretary of Hockey J&K, Dr Taran Singh.

In the valedictory of the workshop, Rajeev Sharma, former president Hockey J&K was the chief guest. Among others present were Bashir Ahmed, Divisional Sports Officer, J&K Sports Council; Taran Singh, general secretary, Hockey J&K; Anil Wadera, Manager, MA Stadium; Ajay Gupta, Manager, KK Hakku Stadium and Jagjeet Singh, hockey coach.

You can never write a champion off: Saina Nehwal on PV Sindhu

NEW DELHI, JULY 20: Indian badminton Saina Nehwal is impressed with PV Sindhu's improved attack and said the Japan Open triumph showed that the two-time Olympic medallist still has it in her to win more titles, as champions can never be written off.

31-year-old Sindhu clinched her maiden Super 750 title at the Japan Open after defeating the three-time world champion Akane Yamaguchi of Japan in straight games in the women's singles final in Tokyo on Sunday.

It was her biggest title since winning the 2019 World Championships. Her previous titles came at the 2022 Singapore Open Super 500 and the 2024 Syed Modi International Super 300.

"The last 2-3 years were actually very tough. She was trying to come out of the injuries but the way she has come out of it... the Super Series win that she won yesterday after defeating three or four top players here. And quite comfortably, she has attacked very hard. Her attack has improved a lot," Saina said.

"So, that shows that, obviously, there are opportunities to win. But as you age,



with injuries, you have to tackle it well. So, it is stressful when you play at that level. So, I am sure she is going through a little bit of stress and pressure.

"But I think after winning this, she has got her confidence back. And you can never write a champion off. She is always going to come back and do well. She has played at that level for so many years."

The 2012 London Olympics bronze

medallist also hoped the younger crop of players would achieve consistency.

"I think a lot of youngsters who are playing well, they have to come and win. Because consistency is very important in badminton," she said on the sidelines of a Niva Bupa event.

"That's why I think we are the second most loved sport. Because there is a lot of consistency. So, just the juniors have to look forward to the next championship. And doing well there is important." India will host the Badminton World Championships from August 17 to 23, marking the return of the event to the country after 17 years, and Saina said the hosts have players capable of winning medals at home. She also hoped the tournament would be conducted smoothly.

"I am very happy after so many years India is hosting the World Championships. As we see Sindhu is in great form. She won the Japan Open yesterday, played extremely well," said Saina, who won silver and bronze at the 2015 and 2017 World Championships respectively.

VCA holds special event on Chess Day

Amrita, Keshav, Prajanya emerge winners



HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, JULY 20

One of the fast growing chess academies of Jammu

and Kashmir, Vivek Chess Academy (VCA) celebrated the International Chess Day with a special event for the trainees, here today.

"Besides the event, the

Academy conducted an interaction session wherein youngsters were told about the historical aspects of the mind game of Chess and the important of July 20," said

VCA Director Vivek Bharti.

He told the youngsters that it was on July 20 that International Chess Federation (FIDE) came into existence in 1924.

Earlier, senior trainee, Amrita Gupta won International Chess Day special Chess event to be rewarded with a prize of Rs 500. Keshav Mahajan emerged under-13 winner while under-10 prize went to Prajanya.

The special competition was based on the Puzzles of Chess points and Games points. Pallavi Mahajan, Deputy Chief Manager, Punjab National Bank was the chief guest, who gave away cash prizes of Rs 1000, medals and title trophy.

The Results (winners): Open: Amrita. Under-13: Keshav Mahajan. Under-10: Prajanya Mahajan.

MOSA shooters dominate Jammu meet



HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, JULY 20

Shooters from Mission Olympics Shooting Academy (MOSA) dominated in the two-day 15th Jammu District Shooting Championship, which held under the banner of Jammu and Kashmir Rifle Association (JKRA) at MOSA, here today.

Out of a total of nine events of 10 meter Pistol, MOSA won six gold while AIM 10X secured three. However, in 10 meter Rifle,

MOSA made a clean sweep with all eight gold.

In the valedictory of the championship, Legislator, Arvind Gupta was the chief guest, who in the presence of special guest, chairman JKRA, Kuldeep Singh Jamwal and general secretary district jammu association, Dharmvir Singh Jamwal felicitated the winners.

He complimented the winners and appreciated the managements of the shooting academies in the private sector for grooming the talent. The MLA was all

praise for the organizing team for the successful conduct.

The chief guest congratulated top J&K shooter, Aneesha Sharma on her remarkable achievement at the international level and wished her continued success in future competitions.

Earlier, general secretary informed the gathering that 115 shooters from various clubs and schools across Jammu district participated in this event and showcased their shooting skills.

On the basis of perfor-

mance, Laksh Chetan Wazir was declared the Best Scorer in the 10 Meter Air Rifle event with an impressive score of 395/400, while Arav Khataia emerged Best in the 10 Metre Air Pistol event with a score of 378/400.

The technical penal for the event comprised Vishal Mehra, Aman Singh, Vishal Sharma, Sunny Khajuria, Shamsheer Singh, and Aneesha Sharma, under the overall supervision of Rajesh Virdhy, chairman, technical committee, JKRA.