



Sindhu battles past Hooda, Shetty upsets world No. 11 Farhan

Indian shuttlers progress to second round of China Open with contrasting wins

CHANGZHOU, JULY 22: Ayush Shetty produced a stunning upset by knocking out world No. 11 Alwi Farhan while double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu overcame a spirited challenge from teenage compatriot Unnati Hooda to progress to the second round of the China Open here on Wednesday.

India No 1 Lakshya Sen also advanced, defeating Japan's world No. 19 Yushi Tanaka 22-20, 15-21, 21-14 in a hard-fought 53-minute in the men's singles.

The World No. 14 Indian will next face eighth seed Victor Lai of Canada, who is ranked world No. 8 in the pre-quarters.

Sindhu, who ended a two-year title drought by winning the Japan Open last week, had to dig deep before overcoming 18-year-old compatriot Unnati 21-14, 9-21, 21-10 in a hard-fought 56-minute women's singles opening-round clash.

The former world champion was tested early as Unnati matched her point for point until 7-7 in the opening game.

Sindhu then found her rhythm, reeling off five consecutive points to open up a 12-8 lead before comfortably taking the game 21-14.

The second game belonged entirely to the youngster.

After the scores were level at 2-2, Unnati surged to a 6-3 lead



and then rattled off six straight points to race to 12-4.

Sindhu struggled to find her range as Unnati maintained complete control to force a decider with a dominant 21-9 win.

Sindhu, however, responded like a champion in the deciding game as she gradually pulled away after a close start, stretching her advantage from 6-3 to 10-5 and then 15-8 before sealing victory 21-10 to advance in the BWF Super 1000 tournament.

In the round of 16, the Indian will face fourth seed and local favourite Chen Yufei, whom she defeated in straight games in

the Japan Open semifinals last week. IndiaNews Updates

Chen holds a narrow 8-7 head-to-head advantage over Sindhu.

In the men's singles, Shetty pulled off one of the biggest upsets of the opening round by defeating former world junior champion Alwi Farhan 17-21, 21-5, 21-17 in a 57-minute contest. Shetty will face world No 24 Nhat Nguyen of Ireland in the next round.

After dropping the opening game, Shetty bounced back emphatically, dominating the second game before maintaining his composure in the decider to

complete a memorable victory against the Indonesian.

In the men's doubles, Hariharan Amsakarunan and M.R. Arjun were outclassed by China's Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang, losing 16-21, 7-21 in under 30 minutes.

India's mixed doubles pairs Rohan Kapoor and Gadde Ruthvika Shivani lost 9-21, 16-21 to top seeds Feng Yan Zhe and Huang Dong Ping of China in 37 minutes, while Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto went down 18-21, 18-21 to fifth-seeded Chinese pair Guo Xin Wa and Chen Fang Hui in a 41-minute match.

Hashmatullah Shahidi steps down as Afghanistan ODI captain

KABUL, JULY 22: Seasoned batter Hashmatullah Shahidi has stepped down as Afghanistan's ODI captain but will remain available for the 50-over format as a player.

Shahidi, 31, took over the ODI captaincy at the start of 2022 and led Afghanistan during the 2023 ODI World Cup and the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy. He is also the captain of Afghanistan's Test side.

The left-handed batter's standout innings as captain came against India at the 2023 World Cup, where he struck 80 off 88 balls to help Afghanistan post 272. However, Rohit Sharma's side comfortably chased down the target. IndiaNews Updates

"Today I announce with full respect and consent that I am resigning as captain of my team at my personal decision," Shahidi posted on social media.

Shahidi oversaw a memorable ODI campaign, guid-



ing Afghanistan to wins over England, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Netherlands at the 2023 World Cup in India. IndiaNews Updates

Those results left them just short of a maiden semi-final berth, before he also captained the side at the Champions Trophy.

"By the grace of Allah, with the efforts of the officials, coaches and players, we have achieved many victories, won important matches, defeated big teams and made the name of the team higher," Shahidi said he will continue to be available for ODI selection, with Afghanistan set to name a new captain before their five-match ODI series against Ireland next month. "All these achievements are not just mine, but also the result of the teamwork, sacrifices and coordination of the entire team.

"I thank all the players of my team from the bottom of my heart who always supported me and stood shoulder to shoulder with me in every victory and every challenge," he said.

"I also thank the officials and the administration of the team who believed in me and always supported me. Your trust and cooperation will always be an honour for me," he added.

Four SAI National Centre of Excellence Bhopal judokas selected for Commonwealth Games

BHOPAL, JULY 22: The Sports Authority of India (SAI), Central Regional Centre (CRC), Bhopal, celebrated a milestone as four judokas from the SAI National Centre of Excellence (NCOE), Bhopal, were selected to represent India at the Commonwealth Games 2026, to be held in Glasgow, Scotland, from July 23 to August 2.

A release said the selected athletes include Asmita Dey, who will compete in the women's -48kg category, and Shraddha Chopade in the women's -52kg category. In the men's section, Avtar Singh has been chosen for the -100kg category, while Yash Ghangas will represent India in the +100kg category at the Commonwealth Games 2026. IndiaNews Updates

Their selection is a testament to their dedication, discipline, and exceptional

performances at the national and international levels, the release said, adding that it also reflects the world-class coaching, scientific support, and high-performance training ecosystem available at SAI NCOE Bhopal, which continues to nurture athletes capable of excelling on the global stage.

Representing India at the Commonwealth Games is one of the highest honours for any athlete, and the selection of four judokas from SAI CRC Bhopal highlights the centre's growing stature as one of the country's leading hubs for judo excellence.

Abhisek Singh Chauhan, Regional Director, SAI CRC Bhopal, congratulated the athletes, saying their selection reflects years of hard work and the collective efforts of coaches, sports science experts, and support staff. He expressed confidence that they would perform strongly and make India

proud at the Commonwealth Games 2026.

"The selection of four judokas from SAI NCOE Bhopal for the Commonwealth Games 2026 is a proud moment for the entire SAI family. Their achievement reflects years of hard work, determination, and the collective efforts of our coaches, sports science experts, and support staff. We are confident they will compete with courage and make the nation proud on the international stage," he said.

The release said that the success of these athletes has been made possible through the dedicated efforts of SAI's experienced coaching team, integrated sports science support, including strength & conditioning, physiotherapy, sports psychology, nutrition, recovery management, and the state-of-the-art infrastructure available at SAI NCOE Bhopal.

ICC ODI rankings: Gill one point shy of world No. 1; Kohli, Rohit stay in top five

NEW DELHI, JULY 22: Three Indian batting stalwarts -- Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma -- feature in the top five of the latest ICC ODI batting rankings released on Wednesday after the England series, with skipper Gill within touching distance of world No. 1 Daryl Mitchell of New Zealand.

Gill scored 188 runs in three matches in the 1-2 series defeat to England and is now just one rating point behind table-topper Mitchell, who has 802 points, while Kohli (767) and Rohit (758) occupy the third and fourth spots respectively.

England's Joe Root, who was named Player of the Series after amassing an unbeaten 249 runs, jumped four places to eighth, while teammate Ben Duckett



climbed 11 spots to joint-19th and Jacob Bethell gained five places to move up to 64th.

India's newly appointed T20I captain Shreyas Iyer climbed two places to 13th

in the ODI batting rankings, while spinner Kuldeep Yadav slipped out of the top 10 to 11th among bowlers in the list headed by Afghanistan's Rashid Khan. IndiaNews Updates

England pace spearhead Jofra Archer was among the notable movers, rising one place to third behind Pakistan's Abrar Ahmed after claiming five wickets in the ODI series against India.

Aryna Sabalenka, Wimbledon winner Jannik Sinner lead US Open fields

NEW YORK, JULY 22: Two-time defending champion Aryna Sabalenka and Wimbledon winner Jannik Sinner lead the fields for the US Open that begins next month.

The US Tennis Association announced the direct entry lists on Tuesday for the final Grand Slam tournament of the season. Based on the July 20 rankings on the WTA and ATP Tours, the cutoff was Number 102 for the women and Number 101 for the men.

Sabalenka tops the women's rankings and will arrive in Flushing Meadows trying to become the first woman to win three straight US Open titles since Serena Williams from 2012-14.

Sinner will be trying to regain the title that Carlos Alcaraz took from the 2024 champion when they met in last year's final. The top-ranked Italian is coming off his fifth major championship, when he beat French Open champion Alexander Zverev in the Wimbledon final.



Alcaraz, who has missed the last two majors because of a wrist injury but hopes to return during the North American hard-court swing, is ranked Number 3 and entered in the field.

The US led the way with 14 men and 14 women earning direct entry. Number 102 Anastasia Zakharova

was the last woman and Filip Misolic, who used a protected ranking at Number 101, rounded out the men's list.

Misolic was one of eight players (five women, three men) to use a special or protected ranking.

The remainder of the 128-player fields will be filled

through wild cards given by the USTA - Williams would be expected to get one if healthy and planning to play after the 44-year-old returned to tennis but injured her knee in a first-round loss at Wimbledon - and qualifying tournaments the week before the main draw begins on August 30.

India eye redemption against spirited Zimbabwe in T20I series opener

HARARE, JULY 22: Shreyas Iyer would be eager for his first win as India captain while his young team eyes course correction against a spunky Zimbabwe that is expected to fight hard during the short three-match T20I series starting here on Thursday.

Having lost six out of his first seven T20I games as skipper in series defeats to minnows Ireland and a seasoned England side, the rubber against Zimbabwe gives Iyer and company a chance to get the house in order.

A series win against Zimbabwe would be the expected outcome but a defeat could unnerv the dressing room that also features a 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

For this tour, India will have a stop-gap head coach in VVS Laxman, whose personality if diametrically opposite to the combative regular gaffer Gautam Gambhir.

It is not that Laxman wouldn't want to win the series but his propensity to ex-

periment with playing eleven is far less compared to Gambhir.

The spotlight will once again chase 'Boy Wonder' Sooryavanshi, who is set to open in all three games alongside Abhishek Sharma as Sanju Samson hasn't even been selected.

The Harare Sports Club ground brings back fond memories for both Abhishek and Sooryavanshi. The Punjab opener made his debut and then scored his first T20I ton here in his second appearance.

For Sooryavanshi, this is the ground where earlier this year, on February 6, he hammered a hapless England U-19s with a big hundred in the junior World Cup final.

But this series will have a different context. It was supposed to be an opportunity to experiment for a new-look bowling attack, but has turned into a must-win affair due to recent debacles.

The afternoon games at the Harare Sports Club's tracks, which always have a

bit of juice and carry, can pose problems for most of the Indian batters save skipper Iyer as they don't tend to use their feet. IndiaNews Updates

Blessing Muzarabani and Richard Ngarava, two tall and potent fast bowlers have the ability to cause chaos if Indians become over-confident.

Laxman's strategy, therefore, would be interesting to watch.

With vice-captain Tilak Varma not looking comfortable at No. 5, how would the stand-in head coach manoeuvre with that position? Tilak, in T20Is, is best suited at No. 3 but Ishan Kishan, a senior member in this set-up, has been given that role.

At No. 5, Rinku Singh is a better bet with his street smart style of batting but it will not be easy to drop a designated vice captain.

India's real struggle will be selecting two among Harsh Dube, Shivam Dube and Suryansh Shedge. None of the three are pure all-rounders. As a safe bet, they might be compelled to pick

all three. IndiaNews Updates

In case of Dube, he has struggled as a batter in conditions that aid seam and swing bowling. However, he has the experience having been part of two T20 World Cup triumphs (albeit in favourable conditions in the Caribbean and India).

Between Shedge and Harsh, there is not much to choose as the former's bowling isn't up to the mark and the latter's batting doesn't have that kind of flamboyance that one would expect at No. 8.

While Gambhir has had a fascination for all-rounders, Laxman's preferences are different.

He can't afford to have a long tail as neither among the rookie pace quartet of Mayank Yadav, Ashok Sharma, Prince Yadav and Yash Thakur can bat.

Prince, who has been playing a few games for India, will certainly start with injury-prone Mayank Yadav, who had turned up in a few T20Is against Bangladesh back in 2024.