



India crush defending champions Sri Lanka by 72 runs to clinch 8th Women's Asia Cup title

DUBAI, SEP 13: Shafali Verma and vice-captain Smriti Mandhana struck forceful fifties, while the bowlers under Sree Charani produced an equally intense effort as India crushed Sri Lanka by 72 runs to clinch a record-extending eighth women's Asia Cup title here on Sunday.

Openers Shafali (68) and Mandhana (59) produced a symphony of power and grace during their stand of 129 in just 12.5 overs, guiding India to 183 for five in 20 overs.

The Lankans managed to rein in the opposition's middle-order in the business end of the innings, but they were no match for the guile of Indian bowlers—led ably by left-arm spinner Charani (4/20)—ending up at 111 all out in 20 overs.

Their main, in fact their only hope, was skipper Chamari Athapaththu (36, 32b), who raised 58 runs for the second wicket with Vishmi Gunaratne.

But seasoned off-spinner Deepti Sharma dealt a body blow to Lanka's aspirations, dismissing both batters in the 10th over.

Athapaththu tried to give Deepti the charge but she was beaten in the flight and stumper Richa Ghosh did the rest.

Three balls later, Gunaratne went for a sweep but only to be bowled around her legs.

At 63 for three after 10 overs, with the asking rate soaring over 12, the match



was as good as over for the defending champions, and all these despite India shelling five catches.

Earlier, after electing to bat, Mandhana, who hit her 36th T20I fifty, and Shafali, whose 24-ball fifty was the fastest in women's Asia Cup, shut the Lankans out of the match. In fact, Shafali eclipsed the 25-ball fifty Mandhana made in the tournament's 2022 edition. The 22-year-old made her intentions clear from the outset, pulling and driving with power.

Shafali targeted Athapaththu in her first over itself, creaming her for 6, 6 and 4 as India reached 57 in the Power Play segment and 98 in at the half-way mark without losing any wicket.

Initially, Mandhana concentrated on giving support

to Shafali, reaching 23 off 22 balls. But once her younger partner reached 50, the left-hander shifted the gears easily.

She swept Nilakshi Silva for a six, and then eked out a maximum off Chamudi Praboda, a well-timed strike sailing over long-on.

But her signature shot was an inside out cover drive off Athapaththu for a boundary as Mandhana reached her fifty in 35 balls.

However, the burgeoning stand was snapped when Shafali slapped Praboda straight to Athapaththu at the edge of the circle.

As it often happens, another wicket followed the first breakthrough. Mandhana was caught in a yes-no situation with skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and eventually sacrificed her wicket via a run out.

It was the third time Mandhana fell victim to run out in this tournament.

India were 140 for two after 15 overs and needed a few more runs to complete the dominance over Lankans, who looked a lot more chirpier after those two wickets.

But in the last five overs India only could manage 43 runs as the big-hitting Richa Ghosh (17, 13b) was dismissed just when she started to accelerate.

The Lankan bowlers, particularly slinger pacer Mithali Ayodya, too deserve some credit for discovering better lines in the business end of the Indian innings.

However, India still managed to get close to 200, courtesy that early duet from Mandhana and Shafali and a 5-ball 15 by Gunalan Kamalini.

Divisional-Level U-19 Kabaddi Tournament witnesses thrilling day-2 action at Doda

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, SEP 13

The Inter-District Divisional-Level Kabaddi Tournament for Boys Under-19 witnessed thrilling contests and spirited performances on the second day, here at the Indoor Stadium. The teams from across the Jammu Division displayed remarkable skill, determination and sportsmanship.

The three-day tournament is being organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports, in accordance with the approved Activity Calendar of the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports, J&K.

The day two featured a series of high-intensity league matches across two pools, with participating teams competing with great enthusiasm and showcasing impressive technical ability, tactical awareness and teamwork.

In Pool-A, Kathua defeated Samba by 16 points, while Jammu secured a 6-point victory over Doda. In Pool-B, Rajouri registered a 6-point win against Reasi, while Poonch recorded a



commanding 38-point victory over Kishtwar.

The matches were conducted smoothly under the supervision of technical officials and referees, who ensured fair play and adherence to the prescribed rules

and regulations. The successful conduct of the tournament is being supported by the district administration Doda, along with the coordinated efforts of departmental officers, officials and field staff.

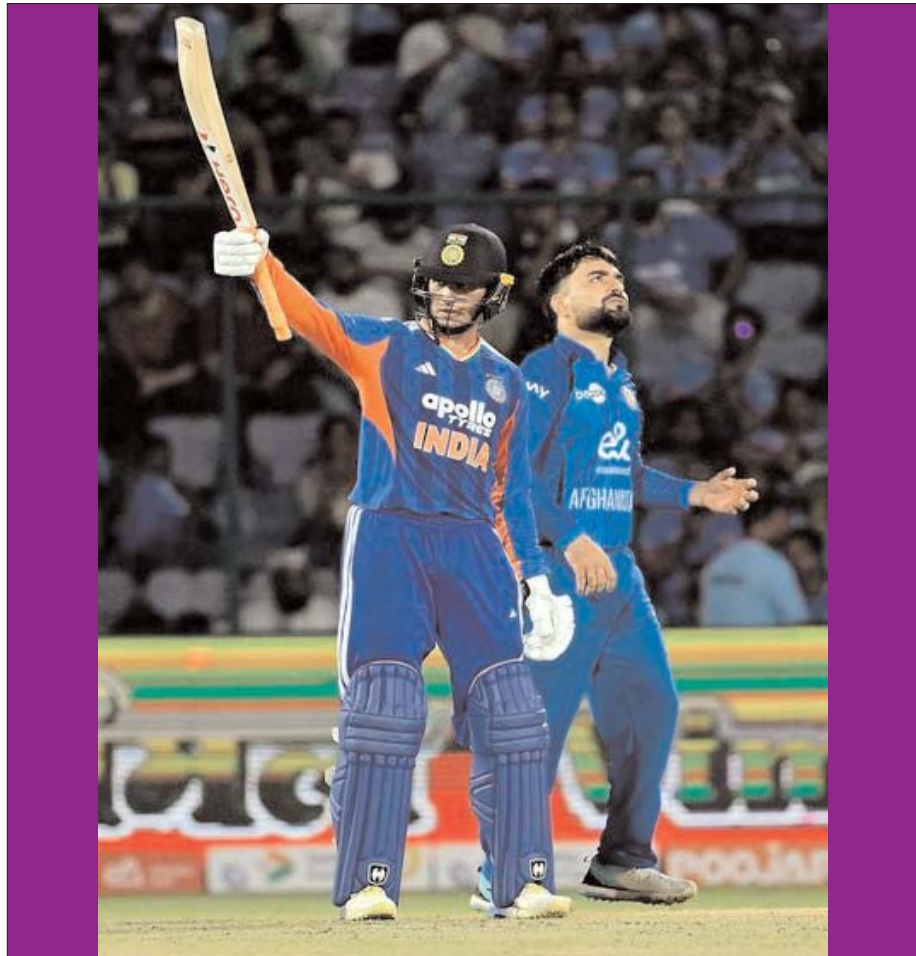
The tournament will conclude on September 14, 2026, with the remaining fixtures expected to witness keen competition as teams vie for top honours and selection for higher-level representation.

“One or two bad series won't define our batting”: Abhishek after sealing 1st T20I vs Afghanistan

NEW DELHI , SEPTEMBER 13: Following a scintillating knock that lit up Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium, Indian opener Abhishek Sharma said that a series or two would not be enough to truly define their team, especially the batting unit, given how well their aggressive brand of cricket worked in contributing to their run as back-to-back T20 World Cup champions without dropping a bilateral series.

Arshdeep's three-wicket haul and Abhishek's brutal 32-ball 82 were the highlights as the Friendship Cup between Afghanistan and India kickstarted at Delhi on Sunday with a seven-wicket win for India. Indian bowlers dismantled the Afghanistan top order, and even though Mohammed Nabi and Azmatullah Omarzai did some fine repair work, the total was a cakewalk for India's explosive batting, which came under a bit of scanner after series losses to Ireland and England during their UK tour post the IPL. A series win over Zimbabwe and this win over Afghanistan in the first T20I continue to show India's faith in their ultra-aggressive T20I approach, even though skipper have changed, with Shreyas Iyer taking over the reins from Suryakumar Yadav.

The dismissal of Rahmanullah Gurbaz by Jasprit Bumrah (1/26 in four overs) courtesy of a catch in the slips by Abhishek opened the floodgates of wickets for India, who made Afghanistan collapse to 43/5 in seven overs before Nabi and Omarzai put on a 75-run stand for the sixth



wicket. During the post-match presentation, Abhishek spoke on the challenge of facing their beloved 'Jassi Bhai' in the nets and expressed the team's faith in their aggressive approach despite some setbacks.

"I mean, getting a catch in the first over, and also in the slips, makes you a bit more confident (his catch to dismiss Gurbaz). So that is how we started the innings today. So I am very happy with that. [On the challenge of facing Jasprit Bumrah] Even in T20 cricket, that is likely to happen. I mean, of course, when we face him in the nets as well, it feels like we are playing first few

overs of Test cricket to him. So we are always on our toes for him in the slips as well. [On his consistency and returning to form in T20 cricket] I still remember two years back, we decided we wanted to play a certain way and dominate all teams. It worked for a year. But one or two (bad) series won't define our batting. As an opener, you want to give a good start," he said.

Abhishek also completed his 6,000 T20 runs during course of the match, becoming the second-fastest batter to reach the milestone. Now in 207 T20s and 203 innings, Abhishek has made 6,077 runs at an average of 32.67 and a strike rate of 176.19, including

nine centuries and 38 fifties, with a best score of 148. Abhishek reached the mark in 3,420 balls, next to New Zealand's Finn Allen, who took 3,386 balls.

Abhishek was productive against spinner Rashid Khan, scoring 19 runs off seven balls, with two fours and a six. 113 batters have faced the Afghanistan star for at least 30 balls in T20s. Among all these batters, Abhishek's strike rate of 234.88 is the highest.

With this win, India is 1-0 up in the series. India opted to field first, with Afghanistan managing 156/8 courtesy a fighting 64* from Azmatullah Omarzai.

“Didn't put up a good score”: Zadran reflects on Afghanistan's loss to India in 1st T20

NEW DELHI [INDIA], SEPTEMBER 13 : Afghanistan captain Ibrahim Zadran admitted his side failed to post a competitive total despite "batting well" in the middle overs, as India secured a comfortable seven-wicket victory in the first T20I played at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Sunday.

The victory gives India a 1-0 lead in the three-match T20I series.

India chased down the target of 157 in just 13.4 overs, with Abhishek Sharma smashing 82 off 32 balls (seven fours and seven sixes) and Ishan Kishan contributing 42. The pair stitched a 121-run partnership for the second wicket.

Azmatullah Omarzai led the fightback after his side were reduced to 43/5 and put on a partnership of 83 runs with Mohammad Nabi.

Omarzai remained unbeaten on 64 off 44 balls to help Afghanistan finish with 156/8.

Speaking at the post-match presentation, Zadran felt Afghanistan's total was not enough despite their recovery in the middle overs and credited India for their disciplined bowling and sharp fielding.

The Afghanistan skipper also singled out Kishan's



run-out of Ibrahim Zadran as a key moment in the contest. The Afghanistan batter was run out for 11 in the fourth over following a sharp piece of fielding from Kishan.

“We batted well in the middle overs but didn't put up a good score. Their bowlers and fielders did well, that run out by Kishan was the turning point I think. They're the best field-

ing side. Gurbaz didn't have his day, but he will come back stronger,” he said.

Arshdeep Singh finished with figures of 3/19. The second match of the series will be played on Tuesday.

AFG vs IND, 1st T20: Abhishek, Arshdeep shine as India beat Afghanistan by 7 wickets

NEW DELHI [INDIA], SEPTEMBER 13 (ANI): An explosive knock by Abhishek Sharma and a three-wicket haul by Arshdeep Singh were the highlights as India secured an easy seven-wicket win over Afghanistan in the first T20I of the three-match series at Arun

Jaitley Stadium on Sunday.

With this win, India is 1-0 up in the series. India opted to field first, with Afghanistan managing 156/8 courtesy a fighting 64* from Azmatullah Omarzai. Arshdeep Singh (3/19) was sensational with the ball. During the chase, Abhishek (82 in 32 balls,

with seven fours and seven sixes) and Ishan Kishan (42 in 33 balls, with five fours and a six) killed the chase with an entertaining 121-run stand for the second wicket. The chase was done in 13.4 overs.

In the chase, Team India started well with Sanju Samson

producing a flick through mid-wicket against Fazalhaq Farooqi on the second ball of the innings and later hitting Mujeeb ur Rahman for a four in the second over too. But in the next over, Sanju perished to in-form Azmatullah Omarzai, as the all-rounder induced a false shot from the bat-

ter, which was caught by Darwish Rasooli at deep square leg. Sanju was gone for 10 in eight balls, with India at 18/1 in 2.1 overs.

However, Abhishek Sharma continued his onslaught nonetheless, smacking Omarzai for a six and four in the same

over. He completed 6,000 T20 runs, becoming the second-fastest to the milestone (in 3,420 balls, next to New Zealand's Finn Allen, who reached the mark in 3,386 balls).

Ishan Kishan and Abhishek Sharma opened the floodgates in Farooqi's fifth over, looting 26

runs with two fours and sixes each, with both being equal aggressors.

India marched to the 50-run mark in 4.2 overs. In the next over, Mohammed Nabi was torched for three fours by the duo as they reached the 50-run stand in just 17 balls.