



Smriti reflects on Asia Cup win, stresses need for win consistency in T20Is

DUBAI [UAE], SEPTEMBER 14 : Indian opening pair of Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma, who played a massive role in India's Asia Cup final win over Sri Lanka on Sunday, reflected on India's recent performances in T20 tournaments, with the former terming the title win as a "good confidence booster".

Shafali, who top-scored in the tournament, also spoke on how she has changed her approach towards tournament finals over the years.

Smriti and Shafali put on a record-breaking 129 run stand for the opening wicket, the highest in women's Asia Cup history for any wicket and the best partnership in any T20I tournament final in women's cricket, as they took India to a winning total of 183/5. Sri Lanka were bowled out at 111.

Speaking in a video posted by BCCI after the match, Smriti reflected on India's performances in T20 tournaments since 2024, noting that it has not been that good.

While Team India made strides in the ODI cricket



with a historic ICC Women's World Cup win at home last year, the T20I format stays the one they are yet to crack fully, having finished in group stages of both ICC T20 World Cup 2024 and 2026 and ending as runners-up in previous T20I Women's Asia Cup to Sri Lanka, failing to defend 166 runs against SL at Dambulla.

(women's Asia Cup final) was very disappointing. We made 160, we could not defend it. But I think after two years, it felt good to be play-

ing the same opposition in the finals. Especially after three years of playing in T20 cricket, I do not think our team has done so well in tournaments. So I feel in that way, it is a good confidence booster. But we have to continue," said Smriti.

Smriti also hailed her opening partner Shafali for her free-flowing knock of 68 in 39 balls, with nine fours and two sixes, highlighting her gap picking abilities.

Shafali emerged as the leading run-getter in the tournament this year, with

236 runs in five matches and innings at an average of 47.20, with a strike rate of 171.01, with three fifties and a best score of 68. Reaching the milestone in 24 balls, she also smashed the fastest women's Asia Cup fifty.

"Today's innings was a matured innings. You started off well but picked your gaps. A lot of things are said for the openers. I think it was not an easy wicket as you showed. The way you bat and took on right fielders, over mid-on and mid-off.

District Jammu wins Divisional-Level Boys U-19 Kabaddi Championship

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, SEP 14

District Jammu emerged victorious in the Inter-District Divisional-Level Boys Under-19 Kabaddi Tournament, defeating District Ramban in a closely contested final held here at the Indoor Stadium.

The three-day tournament, held from September 12 to 14, 2026, was organised by the District Youth Services & Sports Department, with participation of teams from across districts of Jammu Division. The tournament was conducted in accordance with the Activity Calendar issued by the Directorate of Youth Services & Sports, J&K and as per the assignment entrusted by the Joint Director, Jammu.

The final witnessed an intense contest between Jammu and Ramban, with District Jammu securing victory by a narrow margin of two points. District Ramban put up a determined performance and finished as the runners-up.

The tournament provided young players an opportunity to compete at the divisional level and demon-



strate their skills, competitive spirit, discipline and sportsmanship. The encounters throughout the championship also reflected the growing interest in Kabaddi among young sportspersons of the region.

The concluding ceremony was attended by Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Manish Kumar as the Chief Guest. He congratulated the participating teams on their performances and appreciated the Department of Youth Services & Sports, Doda, for providing young players with opportunities

to compete at the divisional level and showcase their sporting talent.

The successful conduct of the championship was facilitated by a dedicated team of technical officials, referees and departmental staff. The technical panel was headed by Ashok Kumar, Convener and comprised Imran Mughal, Koshal Sharma, Muzamil Hussain, Parmod Thakur, Satya Devi, Mohd. Saleem, Bashir Ahmed, Sandeep Kumar, Shafitullah, Suraj Parkash, Vijay Kumar, Vinod Bhandral, Ajay Sharma, Archana

Devi, Bandana Devi, Shalalu Devi, Bandu Devi, Veena Devi, Ishtiaq Hussain, Khalid Hussain, Naveed-ul-Rehman, Mohd. Yousuf and Mohd. Iqbal.

The YSS Doda congratulated Team Jammu on winning the championship and appreciated Team Ramban for its spirited performance. The efforts of all participating teams, coaches, physical education staff, technical officials, referees and organising personnel were also acknowledged for ensuring the smooth and fair conduct of the tournament.

Kabaddi Champions League announces season 2 with two new franchises

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 14 : The Kabaddi Champions League (KCL) has officially announced its second season, promising a bigger, better and more competitive edition of the franchise-based kabaddi league.

Building on the success of its inaugural season, KCL has added two new franchises — Jind Jaguars and Kurukshetra Knights. Their inclusion further strengthens the league's franchise ecosystem while creating an expanded platform for players and emerging kabaddi talent, according to a KCL press release.

The addition of the two franchises marks another significant milestone in KCL's journey as the league continues to develop a strong and sustainable franchise-based structure around kabaddi.

Speaking about the addition of the two new franchises, KCL Chairman Balwan Singh said the expansion will further



strengthen the league's ecosystem and create greater opportunities for players.

"The addition of Jind Jaguars and Kurukshetra Knights strengthens the KCL ecosystem. It is a positive step for the league and for the development of kabaddi talent. With more franchises coming into the league, we are creating more opportunities for players to compete at a high

level and showcase their ability," Balwan Singh said. He also highlighted the impact of KCL's franchise ecosystem on player development, pointing out that 9 out of 12 players were from the KCL league.

"The biggest validation of our ecosystem is the players who have progressed through it. Nine out of the 12 players were from this league, which shows the quality of talent being de-

veloped through the KCL franchise system," he added. With the addition of Jind Jaguars and Kurukshetra Knights, the Kabaddi Champions League has now grown into a 10-team franchise family. The expansion brings fresh energy, new rivalries and new fan bases to the competition while giving more players an opportunity to compete on a bigger platform, the release said.

DEHRADUN (UTTARAKHAND), SEPTEMBER 14: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Monday congratulated Indian recurve archer Dhiraj Bommadevara for his historic gold medal at the Archery World Cup Final 2026 in Mexico, calling it a landmark achievement for Indian sports.

CM Dhami hailed Dhiraj's triumph as India's first-ever Recurve Men's individual gold medal at the Archery World Cup Final and said the victory reflected the country's growing sporting strength.

"A historic achievement for Indian sports. Heartiest congratulations to Dhiraj Bommadevara on winning India's first-ever Recurve Men's Gold at the Archery World Cup Final in Mexico. This landmark victory reflects the talent, determination and growing strength of India's sports infrastructure and development. A proud moment for the en-



tire nation!" Dhami congratulated on X.

Earlier, Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan praised Dhiraj for his historic performance in Mexico. The Deputy CM's official handle on X hailed Dhiraj's achievement after he became the first Indian male recurve archer to win an individual gold medal at the Archery World Cup Final.

"Heartiest congratula-

tions to Dhiraj Bommadevara on his historic triumph at the Archery World Cup Final 2026 in Saltillo, Mexico. With remarkable composure, precision and determination, Dhiraj defeated Japan's Junya Nakanishi in a thrilling shoot-off to claim Recurve Men's individual gold, becoming the first Indian male recurve archer to win gold at the World Cup Final," the post read.

The Andhra Deputy CM

also highlighted Dhiraj's journey from Vijayawada to the global stage, describing his success as an inspiration for young athletes.

"His journey and dedication are especially inspiring. Hailing from Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, Dhiraj began his archery journey at a young age and has now risen to the pinnacle of the sport, carrying the Tricolour with distinction on the world stage. This is a landmark moment for Indian archery and a testament to the talent, discipline and determination of our athletes," it added.

"Congratulations, @BommadevaraD. You have made Bharat proud and created a new chapter in Indian sporting history," the post concluded.

created history by winning the men's individual title at the Archery World Cup Final, becoming the first Indian male archer to claim an individual crown at the season-ending event, according to Olympics.com.

2nd T20I: India look to seal series, address 5th-bowler conundrum against Afghanistan

NEW DELHI, SEP 14: The lack of a reliable fifth bowling option in the injury-forced absence of Hardik Pandya seems to be the only major concern for India as they look to deliver another knockout punch and seal the series against Afghanistan in the second T20I here on Tuesday.

World Cup winners India returned to the shortest format with a dominant show, beating Afghanistan by seven wickets in a one-sided contest on Sunday here.

Shreyas Iyer's men ticked all the boxes as pacer Arshdeep Singh and opening batter Abhishek Sharma produced sensational performances to set up the win.

While Arshdeep (3/19) was precise in his execution to help India restrict Afghanistan to 156 for eight, Abhishek came out all guns blazing with a 32-ball 82 to help complete the chase in 13.4 overs.

Jasprit Bumrah and Varun Chakravarthy also made suc-

cessful returns from injury, but it is the fifth-bowler conundrum that Iyer needs to address before India turn their attention to the Asian Games gold later this week.

Iyer struggled to fill the slot and his batting all-rounders -- Shivam Dube and Nitish Kumar Reddy -- could not deliver.

Dube conceded 21 runs after coming on to bowl for the first time in the last over after Reddy had gone for 30 in his two overs. Abhishek also rolled his arm over for an over. And trio conceded 59 runs in their collective four overs.

With the specialist trio of Arshdeep, Bumrah, Axar Patel and Chakaravathy doing the bulk of the damage, India were never really tested. But Iyer would want a more settled option with the Asian Games on the horizon.

In the batting department, Abhishek quashed doubts around his form with his entertaining innings, while in-form Ishan Kishan shrugged off a minor back injury scare sustained dur-



ing training to produce a 33-ball 42, that was studded with five fours and a maximum.

However, opener Sanju Samson (10) continued to live on the edge and will hope to come up

with a substantial innings after falling early on Sunday.

The Kerala batter was a star of India's T20 World Cup triumph but his form has been topsyturvy ever since, having scored

33 runs in four innings before the Afghanistan series.

With in-form youngster Vaibhav Sooryavanshi breathing down his neck, Samson would hope to turn the tide quickly and

retain his opening slot as Iyer finalises the XI for India's Asian Games campaign in Japan.

However, these are minor issues for a team that is operating like a well-oiled machine, and Afghanistan will have to come up with much better plans to contain the side.

The Afghans were no match for India in the opening game, lacking the batting firepower and the bowling attack to put their opponents under any kind of pressure.

It is a short series and Afghanistan will need a far stronger batting effort after their top order struggled to build momentum in the opening game.

The early wickets of key batters Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Azmatullah Omarzai on Sunday put Afghanistan under pressure as they lost half their side for 43 in the seventh over.

The partnership between Mohammad Nabi and Omarzai offered hope but the visitors need bigger contributions to level the series.

"We had three overs good start, then we didn't contribute well. We gave them back-to-back wickets and they put pressure on us, and we batted well in the middle overs, but we didn't put lots of runs on the board what we wanted," Afghan skipper Ibrahim Zadran said on Sunday.

Teams: India: Shreyas Iyer (captain), Sanju Samson (wk), Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan (wk), Tilak Varma, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Shivam Dube, Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Yash Thakur, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi.

Afghanistan: Ibrahim Zadran (captain), Darwish Rasooli, Noor ul Rahman, Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Sediqullah Atal, Azmatullah Omarzai, Rashid Khan, Mohammed Nabi, Gulbadin Naib, Nangeliya Kharote, Abdollah Ahmedzai, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Naveen-ul-Haq, Mujeeb ur Rahman, Noor Ahmed.