## Indian squads qualify for London 2026 World Table Tennis Championship

India's men's and women's table berths for the 2026 World Table Tennis Championships (WTTC) in London, following impressive performances at the 2025 South Asia Regional Championships held at the National Table Tennis Centre in Kathmandu.

With only 16 coveted Asian quota spots per gender available, the stakes were high. Four regional champions from Central Asia, South Asia, South-East Asia, and West Asia secure direct qualification for the WTTC — one of the most prestigious events in



the international calendar. "The Indian squads, showcasing depth and dominance, made no mistake in ensuring their passage," said Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI)

today.

Both Indian teams emerged undefeated in the five-nation round-robin format, reaffirming their supremacy in the South

The men's team — comprising Akash Pal, Ronit Bhanja, Anirban Ghosh, P.B. Abhinand, and Di-Srivastava cruised past Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Mal-dives with identical 3-0 wins, displaying sharp form and tactical maturity.

Similarly, the women's team, led by Krittwika Sinha, Selenadeepthi Selvakumar, Taneesĥa Kotecha, Sayali Wani, and Syndrela Das, produced an equally commanding show. They too registered comprehensive 3-0 victories over the same four opponents, not dropping a single match en route to qualification.

The team management

made strategic use of the squad, rotating players effectively to provide vital inemerging talent — under-scoring the bench strength and preparation ahead of the WTTC.

With London 2026 set to host the world's best in a truly global showcase of table tennis, India's early cial milestone. It not only reflects the teams' regional dominance but also sets the stage for focused preparations leading to the marquee event, where global ranking points, Olympic implications, and national pride will be on

#### Eng crash from 109/1 to 215/7 at Tea

England's blistering start gave way to an inspired Indian fightback in the second session of Day 2 of the fifth Test at Trent Bridge, as the visitors claimed six wickets between Lunch and Tea to leave the hosts reeling at 215/7 in just 42.5 overs.

Resuming at 109/1 after a Bazball-charged first session, England looked on course to bulldoze India's first-innings 224. Zak Crawley, who had reached a 42ball fifty before lunch, added just 12 more runs before his attempted heave off Prasidh Krishna resulted in a mistimed shot to mid-wicket where Ravindra Jadeja made no mistake. Crawley walked back for a stroke-filled 64 off 57 balls (14x4), and that dismissal triggered a col-

India's bowlers, led by a relent-

and a probing Prasidh Krishna, applied the brakes and turned the tide. Ollie Pope was Mo-hammed Siraj's first strike post-lunch, pinned LBW with a delivery that jagged back sharply. The decision, initially given not out, was overturned after a confident DRS call by Siraj – three reds on ball-tracking sending Pope back for 22.

Joe Root briefly countered with some elegant boundaries, but Sira returned to trap him LBW as well this time striking him in front of middle. Root reviewed in despera tion but was ruled out - three reds again. The wicket of England's most experienced batsman at 175/4 was a massive breakthrough.

Akash Deep bowled with hear out it was Sirāj who picked up his third, a toe-crushing inswinging yorker to Jacob Bethell, who had no



#### "You feel it in the streets": How Shillong lives and breathes the derby

Shillong, (UNI): In this north eastern state capital of Meghalaya, football isn't confined to stadium walls, it spills onto the streets, cafes, and conversations.

On the evening of Tuesday, as local favourites Shillong La-long FC won over Rangdajied United FC 3–1 in the Shillong

Derby, the result was only part of the story. What mattered more was what it meant, to the fans, to the city, and to the deep-rooted football culture that pulses through Meghalaya. The attendance was estimated at 8,500,

with supporters flooding into the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium

hours before kick-off. "You don't miss this match, not in Shillong. Even if you're neutral, you go, because it's not just a game, it's our game," said a Lajong supporter. The first half was tense, both the sides probing for control. Just before the break, Everbrightson Mylliempdah pounced on a loose ball in the box to give Lajong a

His celebration, the famous 'SIUUU', was met with thunderous approval from the crowd, echoing through the hills and sending waves of excitement through the stands. For an 11year-old attending his first derby, it was a moment he won't forget. "I have seen that celebration on TV, but watching it live was the best thing ever. I shouted SIUUU so loud, I want to play for

Lajong one day," he said, gripping his homemade flag.

The goal sparked scenes all across the stadium. "When that ball went in, the whole stand just exploded," said a Lajong supporter. "We have waited for this kind of moment.

### Archers should prepare in championship event like environment for Olympics success: Bombayla Devi Three-time Olympian Bombayla

Devi Laishram today stressed the need to create an environment during final preparations like a true championship event for making podium finish Indian archers for the Los Angeles summer Olympic in

Winner of a silver medal at the World Archery Championships, and four gold, five silver, and four bronze medals at various editions of the Archery World Cup.

Forty-year-old Laishram, who peaked at No 14 in the world rankings in March 2009, admitted the Indian archers lacked mental strength to win

archers lacked mental strength to win a medal in the Olympics.

Bombayla Devi, however, was optimistic for a medal in archery in Los Angeles as India is participating in both men and womens events with increasing facilities for the budding archers around the country.



She said lots of opportunities were now available for the archers to hone their skill with the help of qualified coaches as well as scientists introduced for the players to make fit for

strength during crucial very moments to withstand pressure of howling and cries of the galleries and nervousness begins workout as the archers take on the field for final showdown," the Manipur for athlete and now a coach told during a felicitation of two young archers Sahil Rajesh Yadav and Shrey Bhardwaj at the SAI Centre in Sali Lake Laishram, who represented In dia at the Olympics on three occasions, RIO, Beijing and London reaching the pre-quarterfinals twice but never made to the podium, said "We need strong psychological as well as mental strength to match the men-tality with other opponents to make the podium finish in the Olympics,
"I would like to have an environ-

ment similar to those final events during crucial preparations to

ensure a medal in the Los Angeles," Bombayla, who also known as

### Indian Navy secures viral victory in Durand Cup clash

The Indian Navy Football Team (INFT) secured a vital 2–1 victory over I-League side Real Kashmir FC (RKFC) in a fiercely con-

tested Group F clash of the 134th Durand Cup at the Khuman Lampak Main Stadium today.

This marks the Navy's first win in the competition since 2021, powered by goals from Vijay Marandi (6') and Sreyas V G (70'). Franck William Sessegnon's 64th-minute strike offered a brief re-

for the Snow Leopards but ultimately wasn't

INFT head coach Raman Rai deployed a conventional 4-3-3 formation, with captain Bhaskar Roy guarding the net and an attacking trident comprising Sreyas V G, Roshan Panna, and Vijay Marandi. Real Kashmir's Ishfaq Ahmed opted for a tactically fluid 4-3-2-1 setup, featuring Russian forward Marat Tareck and midfielders Modou Mbengue and Franck Sessegnon.



The Navy struck early, opening their account in the 6th minute. A surging run by Roshan Panna down the right flank resulted in a precise low cross, which Marandi met at the near post, nudging the ball in with his knee to ignite the crowd.

Real Kashmir responded with intensity, with Sessegnon and Tareck orchestrating multiple at tacking moves. However, Bhaskar Roy remained unshaken in goal, making key saves, including a crucial stop from a Tareck breakaway and a thwarted through-ball to Ahteeb in the 22nd minute.

Despite both teams exchanging chances, the Navy went into the break with a slender 1-0 lead Ahteeb came close twice, once denied by Roy at a tight angle, and again when he misfired just before

The Snow Leopards returned for the second half with renewed purpose, pressing higher and moving the ball with urgency. Their efforts were rewarded in the 64th minute when Sessegnon made a welltimed run behind the Navy backline to collect a lofted pass from Seila Toure, calmly slotting home

### U19 Asian Boxing Champ's: Indian pugilists see mixed fortunes on opening day Bangkok, (UNI)

Indian boxing contingent had a mixed day at the U19 Asian Boxing Championships 2025 which kicked-off here to-

day.
Suman Kumari gave
India a winning star but
three other boxers could not get the desired results despite putting up a strong fight against much stronger opponents.
The U19 Asian Boxing

Championships provides India's rising stars a plat-



form to showcase their India has fielded a strong skills and determination contingent of 40 boxers-20 in each age group with Suman Kumari under-a perfect mix of proven lined Indian Boxing's be for Aakash Badhwar in against some of Asia's 20 in each age group with The event will be fol- champions and potential lowed by the U22 conti- talents who have im-

In the morning session, dict. nents championships and pressed in the domestic Taipei's Meng-Sin Cheng forts fell short.

to earn a unanimous ver-

growing stature as she men's 50 kg and Sarthi Sai-dominated Chinese ni (men's 70 kg) as their ef-

#### Telangana all set to launch Sports Policy 2025 at Hyderabad conclave

All arrangements are in place for the grand Sports Conclave scheduled tomorrow at HICC Novotel, where the Telangana Government will officially unveil its

Sports Policy 2025. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will attend the event, which will also see the participation of several renowned sports personaliseveral

ties.

The conclave, organised under the leadership of the Department of Sports, aims to introduce the new policy to the sports fraternity and encourage widespread participation in its implementaan sports icons and former Olympians Pullela Gopichand, Gagan Narang and Chief Minister Revanth Red-Anju Bobby George, along- dy and developed over the



side leading sports journalists such as Vishwanathan and Sabha Nayak. Officials confirmed that sports federations and association repretion. Prominent attendees sentatives will also play an include celebrated sports analyst Charu Sharma, Indiactive role in panel discussions and sessions.

The Telangana Sports Policy 2025, envisioned by

past year by the Telangana for sports excellence in the Sports Authority, focuses on country. strengthening sports goverhensive sports ecosystem. building strategic partner-The policy seeks to position ships for the state's sporting Telangana as a leading hub future.

The event will also witnance, long-term athlete ness the signing of MoUs and sports development, ca- with global sports organisareer and employment path- tions like FIFA, leading cor ways in sports, infrastructure porates and international development across the sports experts, marking a state and building a compre-significant step towards

#### Rahil Pillarisetty grabs pole position with a stunning lap



Coimbatore, (UNI)

Hyderabad's Rahil Pillarisetty (RACR Castrol Power1) délivered a stunning lap late in the qualifying session to take pole position in the premier Pro-Stock 301-400cc Open category to kick start his

campaign in the Rolon Round of the MRF MMSC-FMSCI Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship 2025 at the Kari Motor Speedway, here to-

pole positions in their respecsions on KTM.

tive National championship categories were

Raj Kumar (Coimbatore, Motuĺ Sparks Racing) in Super Stock 165cc Intermediate; Mohamed Mikail (Thiruvallur, Mad Rabbit Racing) in Stock 301-400cc (Novice) and Charu Sreekara Kedarnadh (Tirupati, Motul KTM Gusto Racing In-

dia) in Stock 165cc (Novice). The 27-year-old Pillariset-ty's best lap of one minute, 10.972 sees which he clocked at the fag end

of the session saw him pip tronas TVS Racing's Racing's teenaged riders, Vishwanath from Bengaluru and defending champion Sarthak Chavan (Pune) with less than a second separating the front-row trio.

y. "I am happy to be back on Others who qualified for the Yamaha R3 after a few sea-

# Divya and Humpy felicitated by Sports minister

New Delhi, (UNI)

Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, felicitated the FIDE Women's World Cup 2025 medallists Divya Deshmukh and Koneru Humpy in New Delhi today.

Indian chess prodigy Divya and veteran Grandmaster (GM) Koneru made the nation proud with a dominant performance at the recently concluded tournament in Batumi, Georgia.

Dr. Mandaviya personally felicitated Divya Deshmukh, who also became the 88th Grandmaster of the country and 4th Indian woman to become a Grand Master, on becoming the first Indian woman to win the FIDE Women's World Cup, as well



as the youngest ever to do so. Koneru Humpy joined the

will serve as inspiration for ceremony virtually. the new generation. More Addressing the duo at the event, the Union Minister youngsters will take interest in sports, especially a mind

sport like chess. Chess may be considered one of India's gifts to the world, and has been played since ancient times. I firmly believe that many daughters of India will rise in the world by drawing inspiration from both of "I've read about Humpy

said, "Grandmasters like you

and I know that she has inspired many in her journey. She has played a long and distinguished innings. I remember going home and watching her games with my children," Dr. Mandaviya

The FIDE Women's World Cup 2025, held from July

5–28 in Batumi, saw a his toric all-Indian final between 19 year old Divya Deshmukh and seasoned GM Koneru