Stokes hails gripping 2-2 series draw as a Test classic

England skipper Ben Stokes described the recently concluded five-Test series against India as a showcase for everything that makes Test cricket great, calling it a tough contest between two teams who left everything on the field in their ICC World Test Championship tussle.

Speaking at the postmatch press conference following India's series-levelling win at The Oval, Stokes was full of praise for the commitment and effort from both teams, despite the 2-2 series scoreline.

"I think the series as a whole, even before this game, it was just all four games going to five days, this one again, and it's been toe-to-toe for 25 days, two very good teams who have



thrown everything at each other, left nothing out there, so I guess from a cricket fan's point of view, 2-2 is probably fair, obviously we're disappointed now to have not got the result that we wanted to give us a series win, so there's obvious-

ly that disappointment, a little bit of frustration there as well from everyone," he

said.
"I think as a massive advocate of this format and Test cricket as a whole, this has certainly been one of those series that can hopefully change that narrative around Test cricket as dying," Stokes said.
"Disappointed from ob-

viously a playing point of view, but as an advocate of the game, the series has been fantastic to be part of,"

England and India ex-changed control throughout the series, with neither side managing to win backto-back Tests, and Stokes reflected on the ebb and flow

"India have been in control, we've been in control, then it's gone back to them, then it's gone back to us,' Stokes said.

'To be a part of it and be able to experience five games like this has been pretty special. We had a similar situation here in 23 with the Ashes, where we had to come here and win

the game, and that again was another special series to be a part of," he said. "That was 2-2, this was 2-

2, so it's been awesome to be a part of. Obviously there is still a lot of disappointment, but for the game, for the wider game, obviously we want to constantly be promoting the game. This series has been great for that," Stokes said. With both teams showcasing dominant performances at various stages, England struck first with a win in Leeds. India responded strongly with a victory at Edgbaston, only for England to reclaim the lead at Lord's. India fought back with a gritty draw in the fourth Test at Old Trafford, then delivered a dominant performance in the series finale at The Oval to level things once again, an ICC

Neymar brace fires Santos past Juventude Rio De Janeiro, (UNI)

Neymar twice as twice as Santos snapped a threegame winless run with a 3-1 home victory over Juventude in Brazil's Serie A.

Santos took the lead in the 37th minute when Gabriel Veron's long-range effort was kept out

by goalkeeper Eudes Carneiro and Neymar slotted home the rebound

Alvaro Barreal doubled the advantage three minutes later, showing deft control before volleying home from inside the six-yard

Venezuela international de-fender Wilker Angel pulled a goal back on the stroke of halftime with a towering header following Marcelo Hermes' corner. But Neymar put the result beyond doubt

minutes from time as he converted from the penalty after Meirelles was dragged down by

Caique Goncalves.
"It's a good feel-

ing to play well and win again," Neymar said after the match.

"We have to keep improving and to make sure we learn from our mistakes

We have a lot of work ahead of us. Neymar declared himself ready to return to Brazil's national team for World Cup qualifiers against Chile and Bolivia in September.

The 33-year-old hasn't repre sented his country since October 2023, when he suffered a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament in a World Cup qualifier against Uruguay. "Everyone knows what I'm capable of," the former Barcelona and Paris Saint-Ger-



Punjab FC leads India's youth development

Mohali, (UNI): Punjab FC's Youth Program, established just a fewyears ago has already produced multiple players who have represented India in international football across various age

Nikhil Prabhu and Abhishek Singh Tekcham are two players from the club's youth program to have been selected for the senior national team. In total, the program has produced 11 Indian internationals across senior, U23, U19 and U17 categories. Youth Program focuses on developing footballers from the grassroots level.

The academy currently has 16 grassroots centres spread across towns like Jalandhar, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Attari and Patiala. Over 100 young athletes train at these centres under the guidance of nearly 30 coaches, nutritionists, doctors, physiotherapists and support staff.

Punjab FC's youth program has been recognized with the Indian Super League's (ISL) "Best Elite Youth Program" award for the 2024-25 season,

The youth teams of the club are clearly a force to be reckoned with as during the 2024–25 season alone, the club clinched the AIFF U17 Elite League, the AIFF U15 Junior League and won the Dream Sports Championship U17 for the

Punjab FC is one of the few clubs in India to offer fully integrated, all-round development, it provides certified coaching and full-time residential programs covering strength and conditioning, academics, sports psychology, yoga, injury management and nutrition.

India to face Indonesia in AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup qualifiers

India will begin their AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Thailand 2026 Qualifiers campaign in Group D against Indonesia on August 6, at the Thuwunna Stadium here at 18:00 IST.

India will aim to qualify for the U20 Women's Asian Cup, a tournament that's also a qualifier for the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup, for the fourth time. Led by Swedish head coach Joakim Alexandersson, the Young Tigresses can end a 20-year absence from the competition, having last qualified in 2006. In the 2024 qualifiers, India were eliminated in the first round by the narrowest of margins, on goal difference, by Vietnam. Coincidentally, India met Indonesia in those qualifiers as well, and registered a thumping 6-0 win. Speaking at the pre-match press conference today, Alexandersson expressed his positivity about India's qualifying chances in a competitive



'We prepared for these Qualifiers with a camp of more than two months in good facilities and a good training ground in Bengaluru. Our expectations here are to qualify, of course. We know it's going to be three tough games and

the mindset is to win all three and make it to the Asian Cup," said the

After Indonesia, India will play Turk-menistan (August 8) and hosts Myan-mar (August 10). The group winners

across all eight groups will qualify for the final tournament.

We've looked into our opponents We know Myanmar are a good team in Asian football and are supposed to be our strongest opponents. Indonesia have a strong squad as well. Every game will be a different challenge for us to face. We have to take care of them," Alexandersson added.

The Young Tigresses arrived in Yangon on August 1, five days before their

first game, to acclimatise to the conditions in Myanmar. The mood in the camp is positive, more so after the solid 4-1 win over Uzbekistan in a preparatory friendly in Tashkent last month. Defender Shubhangi Singh, who captained India in the friendlies and will also wear the armband in Myanmar, said, "Thanks to our federation, we came to Yangon five days be fore the game, which was good for us to adapt to the weather. We're going to

Nigerian president lauds D'Tigress on 5th consecutive African basketball title



Nigerian President Bola Tinubu has showered praises on the country's national women's basketball team for lifting the African championship title at the 2025 FIBA Women's AfroBasket for the fifth time in a row, becoming the oncountry on the continent to achieve that

The Nigerian team, also known as D'Tigress defeated Mali 78-64 to win the AfroBasket tour

ney.

Tinubu said later in a statement that the win had brought pride and global recognition to Nigeria, lauding "the skill, resilience, and teamwork" that powered the D'Tigress to a fifth consecutive AfroBasket title -- an African record and its seventh championship overall.

He also commended the team's determina tion and fighting spirit throughout the compe-

Your superb performance throughout the competition has made Nigeria proud. You embodied the indomitable Nigerian spirit, the power of unity, and the rewards of hard work, ĥe said, while also praising head coach Rena Wakama and her technical crew for "their outstanding leadership and strategic execution.'

India's rising boxing stars to compete at 4th Sub-Junior Nationals

The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) will host the 4th Sub-Junior (U-15) Boys and Girls National Boxing Championships from August 7 to 13, 2025 at Galgotias University in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

According to the press release issued by BFI, "the event will see the participa-tion of over 700 young boxers, including 400 boys and 300 girls aged between 13 and 14, who will compete across 15 weight cate-

Highlighting the significance of the championship, BFI stated, "As part of BFI's broader vision to build a rograssroots-to-elite pathway, the Sub-Junior Nationals serve as a crucial platform to identify young the Haryana (girls) and nior Nationals are where Ining bloc talent and prepare them for Chandigarh (boys) enter this dia's boxing journey truly success.



The event follows the successful conduct of the men's, women's, and junior nationals earlier this year competitions which have already produced international medalists and future stars."

The release added that

higher levels of competition. edition as the defending champions from the 3rd

Sub-Junior Nationals. Col. Arun Malik (Retd.), Executive Director, BFI and

He further added that this platform helps identify talented individuals and allows them to experience real Member of the Interim competition early in their Committee, emphasised the careers. The skills, disciimportance of the Champipline, and confidence develonship, saying, "the Sub-lu-nior Nationals are where In-ing blocks of international

2026 table tennis team worlds expand to 64 teams per gender

Beijing, (UNI)

The 2026 World Team Table Tennis Champi-onships Finals in London will feature 64 teams each in the men's and women's events, the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) announced today.

The expanded format

marks the centenary of both the first table tennis world champi-onships, held in London in 1926, and the founding of the ITTF the same

According Box Arena will stage the 16 groups are two elite other groups will The women's team fi-opening rounds from ones which are com-April 28 to May 1, 2026. posed of the top seven with six of the best sec-Competition will then ranked teams and the ond-placed teams based team final on May 10.



from May 2 to 10.

to the robin, with three match- elimination stage. schedule, the Copper es per team. Among the

teams will advance to the

Top finishers from the list.

The remaining eight year. The tournament will grow from the 40team format used in recent editions.

According to the four many 2 to 10.

The 64 teams in each 32-team knock-out stage second-placed teams automatically, with results only used to deternary knockout round, group will play a round mine seedings for the with the four winners are seedings for the with the four winners. completing the 32-team

Carrascal eager for huge Flamengo opportunity

Rio De Janeiro, (UNI)

Colombia international midfielder Jorge Carrascal said he did not hesitate to accept an offer to join Brazilian giant Flamengo. The 27-year-old was

presented to the media on Monday after agreeing to a four-year deal reportedly worth 12 million euros (14 million U.S. dollars).

"It has been very exciting and also very stressful because of the difficulty of the transfer," Carrascal said of the two-month negotiation process between always remained positive." Flamengo and his former club, Dynamo Moscow.

"I didn't need time to known straight away that I move from CSKA Moscow.



wanted to come. It's something that motivates me. It American football. I betook a long time for the deal to be finalized but I

Carrascal made 64 appetitions for Dynamo dow, joining Saul, think about it and made it Moscow following his 2023

He said he is already looking forward to playing for the Rio de Janeiro club at the iconic Maracana Stadium. "This is a huge opportunity for any player," said Carrascal, who has been capped 19 times for Colombia's national team.

"It's a team that competes and wins titles. I know about Flamengo's beautiful history and its importance in South lieve I made the right deci-

sion.' Carrascal is Flamengo's fourth signing of Brazil's pearances across all com- mid-season transfer win-

> Emerson Royal and Samuel Lino.

Karnataka tops 41st Sub-Junior National Swimming

Bengaluru, (UNI)

Karnataka emerged over-all champions at the 41st Sub-Junior National Swimming Championships held at Basavangudi Aquatic Centre here, amassing 104 points. Manipur secured the second position with 81 points.

Koijam Athoiba Singh of Manipur was adjudged Best Male Swimmer with 28 points, while Purvi Ritesh Naik from Goa was named Best Female Swimmer with 19 points.

În Boys' 100m Backstroke, A P Arya Sathar (Tamil Nadu) won gold with 1:05.53, narrowly beating Krishiv Doshi (Madhya Pradesh) who clocked 1:05.74. Hemanshu Nahakpam (Manipur) took

bronze with 1:08.90. Alfiya M (Tamil Nadu)



clinched gold in Girls' 100m Backstroke with a late push, finishing in 1:10.70. Serena Saroha (Haryana) and Annika Goplani (Maharashtra) took silver and bronze re-

Koijam Athoiba Singh bagged gold in Boys' 100m Freestyle with a time of 58.59, followed by Hemanshu Nahakpam (59.75) and A P Arya Sathar (1:00.79)

Goa's Purvi Naik claimed

the Girls' 100m Freestyle gold (1:04.40), edging Karnataka's Stuti Singh (1:04.49). Amatullah Dholkawala (Maharashtra) came third with

In the 400m Freestyle events, Karnataka's N Pavan Krishnaa (Boys) clocked 4:40.83, and Nyra Bopanna Kalengada (Girls) finished in 4:53.96, securing gold for the host state. In relay events Uttar Pradesh won the Boys 200m Medley Relay with 2:09.39, while Karnataka's girls' team triumphed in their Medley Relay with a time of 2:16.71. The event witnessed participation from top swimmers across the country and concluded with Karnataka asserting dominance in both individual and