

# India beat Nepal 7-0 in SAFF U17 Women’s Championship opener

Thimphu (Bhutan), (UNI) India’s U17 women’s team sent out a resounding statement of

intent in their SAFF U17 Women’s Championship 2025 opener, dismantling Nepal with a thumping 7-0 victory at the iconic Changlimithang Stadium here today.

Braces from Nira Chanu Longjam (25’ 56’), Abhista Basnett (16’ 41’), and Anushka Kumari (37’ 62’), along with a strike from captain Julian Nongmaithem (45+1’), ensured a flawless start to India’s campaign. The Young Ti-



gresses raced to a commanding 5-0 lead by half-time, leaving Nepal no room for recovery in what

was a one-sided affair from the outset.

With the tournament adopting a double round-

robin format this year, it was imperative for India to begin on the front foot, and they did so in sensational style.

Nepal didn’t allow India to assert their dominance from the first whistle. But it was only a matter of time before the Young Tigresses’ cohesive structure, the result of months of training since January, began becoming evident. The midfielders gradually began dictating tempo, finding incisive passes

and carving through Nepal’s defence with sharp distribution, while the forwards constantly found

pockets of space to create havoc.

The backline, though tested early, remained compact and resilient. Goalkeeper Munni produced a solid display, securing a clean sheet and marshalling her defence with confidence.

Set-pieces proved to be a significant weapon for India. The breakthrough came in the 16th minute after a poor backpass resulted in a corner. Shveta Rani swung in a dangerous delivery from the left, and Nepal custodian Jharna Durnakoti fumbled under pressure.

## With formidable raiders in its ranks, Puneri Paltan aim to reclaim PKL title in Season 12



Pune,(UNI)

Pro Kabaddi League Season 10 champions Puneri Paltan will be keen to get their hands on the prestigious PKL title once Season 12 commences on August 29.

Puneri Paltan have been one of the most consistent teams in the league, having reached the Play-offs in six out of the 11 editions. However, they finished a disappointing eighth last season with just nine wins in 22 games.

Ahead of Season 12, Puneri Paltan announced former Indian kabaddi captain Ajay Thakur as their head coach. The 39-year-old has been promoted to the role of head coach after he was appointed as their assistant coach in Season 11.

Widely regarded as one of the greatest kabaddi players of all time, Ajay was part of the Indian kabaddi team that won gold medals at the 2014 Asian Games and the 2016 Kabaddi World Cup. He was awarded the Padma Shri and the Arjuna Award in 2019. Having featured in the first seven editions of the Pro Kabaddi League as a player, Ajay ended his illustrious PKL career with 816 points in 121 matches, including 794 raid points and 22 tackle points.

Meanwhile, Puneri Paltan appointed Ashok Shinde as the head strategist for the upcoming season. He was earlier named their head coach in the middle of last season after BC Ramesh stepped down.

Despite missing out on a Play-offs spot last campaign, Puneri Paltan decided to retain most of their players for the forthcoming season. Additionally, the Season 10 winners added eight new players at the PKL Season 12 Player Auction to assemble a formidable squad for a total amount of INR 5 crore. One of Puneri Paltan’s undeniable strengths heading into PKL Season 12 is their strong raiding unit. Ahead of PKL Season 12 Player Auction, Puneri Paltan ensured they retained Pankaj Mohite, who was their standout raider last season with 110 raid points in 22 matches.

Furthermore, they managed to retain their experienced raider, Mohit Goyat, who contributed 83 raid points in 19 games last season. Puneri Paltan have also retained their captain, Aslam Inamdar, who will once again play a key role in their attack. Earlier, in Season 11, Puneri Paltan lost momentum after their skipper Aslam was ruled out due to a knee injury.



## Subroto Cup: Assam & Chhattisgarh play out a 2-2 thriller; Haryana Notches dominant 3-0 victory over Nagaland

New Delhi, (UNI): Day 2 of the Subroto Cup International Football Tournament saw contrasting shades of footballing drama — from the nail-biting 2-2 draw between Assam’s Betkuchi High School and Chhattisgarh’s Mata Rukhmani Kanya Ashram, to an unforgettable record where Amenity Public School, Rudrapur (Uttarakhand) scored 20 goals against Air Force School, Kanpur in one of the tournament’s most emphatic wins. The Assam–Chhattisgarh clash had spectators on edge, with early strikes from Assam’s Samaina (2’) and Sayasree (21’) before Chhattisgarh’s Sushila hit back with a brace (6’, 49’). Meanwhile, Amenity Public School’s ruthless finishing saw standout performances from Kamal (5 goals), Sonam (6 goals), Anjali (3 goals), and Sonakshi (3 goals) in a 20-0 rout.

Other Highlights of the Day: Kerala vs Gujarat: Lal Bahadur Shastri Memorial Hr. Sec. School (Thrissur, Kerala) beat Vimla Vidyalaya (Palampur, Gujarat) 3-0. Sri Lanka vs Lakshadweep: Sri Lanka School Football Association defeated PM Shri Govt. Mahatma Gandhi Sr. Sec. School, Andrott 3-1. Jharkhand vs Delhi: PM Shri KV Sr. School, Hazaribagh scored a dominant 4-0 win. Bihar vs Haryana: Upgraded High School Bilaspur thrashed Vidya Devi Jindal School 5-0 with a hat-trick from Anshu. Haryana vs Nagaland: PM Shri GGSSS Mangali Hisar’s Ruchi scored a hat-trick in a 3-0 victory.

## Khelo India Water Sports Festival 2025: Top national, international athletes to vie for 24 gold medals

Srinagar, (UNI)

The best national athletes in the country will vie for the 24 gold medals at stake in the inaugural Khelo India Water Sports Festival to be held at the iconic Dal Lake here. The three-day event will see more than 400 compete for the medals events- rowing, canoeing and kayaking.

The Khelo India Water Sports Festival 2025 will be the first consolidated Open-age category championships where all 14 kayaking and canoeing events and the 10 rowing events are Olympic events. To add to the fun of the Water Games, there will be three demonstration events- water skiing, shikhar boat spring and dragon boat race.

The KIWSF will see 36 states and Union Territories in action. Among them, all eyes will be on athletes from Uttarak-

hand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Kerala. “Since Services will not take part in these Games as a team, it will be good to see how the states compete and perform. The course has been prepared keeping all international specifications in mind and we are all set to go,” said competition manager Bilquis Mir, a former World Cupper canoeist and an Olympic judge.

The Khelo India Water Sports Festival is a new addition to the Khelo India calendar. In 2025, two new events have been added. The Khelo India Beach Games took place in Diu in May. As per the Khelo Bharat Niti, both the Water Games and Beach Games are aimed at promoting sports and attracting tourism.

Suhani Meena, a water sports athlete from Madhya Pradesh, who will participate in rowing said she was elated at being in Kashmir.

# Raducanu & Alcaraz out as polarising US Open event starts

New York, (UNI)

Emma Raducanu and Carlos Alcaraz might have lost in the revamped US Open mixed doubles - but they certainly won the hearts of the New York crowd.

In a party-like atmosphere at Arthur Ashe Stadium, Britain’s Raducanu and Spain’s Alcaraz saw their chances of claiming a \$1m winning prize ended by fellow Briton Jack Draper and Jessica Pegula, who have reached Wednesday’s semifinals.

Despite the presence of home player Pegula, it was the losing pair who were heavily backed by a sizeable crowd at Flushing Meadows.

Pegula and Draper won 4-2 4-2 in the new shortened

format, which is part of the US Open’s “reimagination” of the mixed doubles.

As well as the huge financial incentives, the event has also been moved forward to the week before the singles main draws to attract the stars.

Raducanu and Alcaraz teaming up for the glamorous event - which has controversially deviated from its traditional format and polarised opinion - created many of the pre-tournament headlines.

There was a fear they might not turn out at all, given Alcaraz played in the final of an ATP event in Cincinnati on Monday.

But the pair walked out together on the US Open’s main show court little over 24



hours later to a euphoric reception of screams and shouts.

An excitable atmosphere continued as the fans - who paid between \$25 (£18.50) and \$145 (£107)

for what British doubles player Jamie Murray described as a “glorified exhibition” - danced to tunes played by an on-court DJ and acted up when appearing on the big screen.

## Record breaker Sachin Goyal and Captain Tridip Medhi of home team MP Hathodas Speak

Bhopal: As the action intensifies in Season 2 of the Pro Panja League, home franchise MP Hathodas has emerged as one of the challenging teams of the tournament. With the squad now on the brink of securing a semi-final spot, star player Sachin Goyal and captain Tridip Medhi spoke about their journey, the team’s spirit, and the growing impact of Parvin Dabass and Preeti Jhangiani founded, Pro Panja League in Indian arm-wrestling.

Local-favourite Sachin Goyal has been one of the biggest and most powerful players of the league so far and has dominated the 80kg category. Talking



about his experience so far in the tournament, he said, “I feel very proud to be a part of a league in Gwalior. Playing in your own city gives you the chance to show how talented, powerful, and strong you are. Our team

has a great bond, we help each other, we have fun together, and we work as one unit. Everyone is strong and hardworking.

In his match against Sonu of Jaipur Veers, Sachin broke the all-time Pro Panja League record

across two seasons with the fastest pin of 0.10 seconds. About his performance, he commented, “This season has been special for me, especially setting the all-time league record by pinning my opponent in just 0.1 seconds, but what matters most is taking MP Hathodas into the final. Right now, we are focusing on table practice and understanding tactics, which is really helping us in our performances on the stage.” Captain of the team, the experienced Tridip Medhi spoke on similar lines and said, “MP Hathodas is a very balanced team and as captain, my aim is to lead them to the finals.

## South Africa bowler Subrayen reported for suspect bowling action

Dubai, (UNI)

South Africa off-spinner Prenelan Subrayen has been reported for a suspect bowling action in the first ODI against Australia played on August 19 in Cairns.

The match officials’ report specified concerns about the legality of Subrayen’s action, according to an ICC media statement.

The first Cairns ODI against Australia was Subrayen’s debut in the 50-over format, where he bowled ten overs and nabbed the wicket of Travis Head, who was stumped out after attempting to charge down the crease.

The 31-year old off-spinner had also made his Test debut this year



against Zimbabwe in Bulawayo, where he was successful in picking four wickets in the first innings.

The bowler will undergo an Independent Assessment of his bowling

action at an ICC Accredited Testing facility.

South Africa are already without their ace pacer Kagiso Rabada who was ruled out of the three-match series due to injury. After losing a closely

fought T20I series 1-2, the Proteas have taken the lead against the hosts in the ODI series with a confident win, with two matches to be played at Mackay on August 22 and 24 respectively.

## Mighty Maharaj's record night after turbulent few months

Cairns, (UNI)

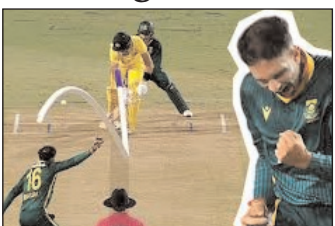
After captaining the Proteas’ champion Test team and then being dropped

from the T20 side weeks later, South Africa spinner Keshav Maharaj delivered a memorable ODI performance here. There is surely not another international cricketer who has endured quite the series of ups and downs over the past two months as Maharaj.

In June, Maharaj was moved to tears after South Africa defeated Australia in the World Test Championship final at Lord’s.

By the end of that month, he was granted the honour of captaining the world champion Test team against Zimbabwe, standing in for the injured Temba Bavuma.

Then came the crash; after a strained groin saw him miss



the second match of the Zimbabwe series, the fit-again Maharaj was blindsided when he was dropped from South Africa’s T20 squad.

Coach Shukri Conrad opted for left-arm spinners George Linde and Senuran Muthusamy, and leg-spinner Ngqaba Peter. On Sunday, Maharaj expressed his disappointment at the call and his desire to fight his way back into the T20 side, even at the age of 35. A few days later in Cairns, he put on the best white-ball performance of his

career in the first of three BKT Tires ODIs against reigning 50-over champions Australia.

The wily operator took his maiden five-wicket haul in ODIs, needing just 25 balls to reach the milestone, while also becoming the first South African spinner to take 300 international wickets across all formats.

The local batters were mystified by Maharaj’s length and control, collapsing to 6-89 (and then 198 all out) off the back of the left-arm twacker’s 5-33. Both Maharaj and Aussie captain Mitch Marsh admitted after the game that the new ball spun much more on the Cazalys Stadium surface than they were expecting.

It made Maharaj’s introduction into the attack inside the Powerplay look like a masterstroke.

## Hockey India announces 18-member India Team for Asia Cup Rajgir

New Delhi, (UNI)

Hockey India today announced the 18-member Indian Men’s Hockey squad for the upcoming Men’s Asia Cup, scheduled to be held at the recently developed Rajgir Hockey Stadium in Bihar from August 29 to September 7.

As a qualifier for the FIH Hockey World Cup Belgium-Netherlands 2026, the tournament places India in Pool A with Japan, China, and Kazakhstan. India will begin their campaign against China on August 29, before facing Japan on August 31 and Kazakhstan on September 1.

Veteran drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh will continue to serve as Captain in the continental tournament. The squad overall features a strong group of experienced campaigners, with depth and balance across



all departments.

The goalkeeping duties will be shared by the dependable Krishan B Pathak and Suraj Karkera.

In defence, Captain Harmanpreet Singh and Amit Rohidas will be joined by Jarmanpreet Singh, Sumit, Sanjay, and Jugraj Singh, providing solidity at the back.

The midfield engine room comprises Manpreet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Rajinder Singh, Raj Kumar Pal, and Hardik Singh. Leading the attack, the forward line will be spearheaded by Mandeep Singh, Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Shilanand Lakra, and Dilpreet Singh, offering plenty of firepower to trouble opposition

defences. Meanwhile, Nilam Sanjeep Xess and Selvam Karthi have been named as Alternate Athletes.

Speaking on the team selection, Indian Men’s Team Coach Craig Fulton said, “We’ve gone with an experienced squad that understands what it takes to perform in high-pressure situations. The Asia Cup is crucial for us because qualification for the World Cup is at stake, so we needed players who have the composure, resilience, and know-how to deliver. The selection reflects our intent — to put forward a team that can compete strongly and achieve our main objective.”

“I’m very pleased with the balance and quality across the squad. We have leaders in every line — defence, midfield, and attack — and that collective strength is what excites me the most.”

