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# VISION 2047

T A R G E T 2 0 2 6



**SANTOSH TROPHY IN  
ITANAGAR A GROUND  
BREAKING ACHIEVEMENT**

- Kalyan Chaubey  
President, AIFF

**YOUNG  
CHAMPIONS  
IN DHAKA**



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# President's Note

## Santosh Trophy in Itanagar: A path-breaking, yet pragmatic initiative

**Kalyan Chaubey**

Ever since we formed a new committee in the All India Football Federation in September 2022, we, among many other issues, have remained engaged in coming up with fresh ideas and finding advanced mechanisms about how to make the National Football Championship for the Santosh Trophy a more appealing, productive and interesting affair.

There is a definite reason behind it.

Senior Men's football in the country on a pan-India basis, at the moment, is essentially in a three-tier system – the Indian Super League, the I-League (having three divisions now), and then the Santosh Trophy. While we know the top players mainly play in the ISL, followed by the I-League, the footballers in the next level, who are always hard at work while trying to push themselves up, look forward to excelling in the Santosh Trophy.

The Santosh Trophy is the best platform for such upcoming footballers to showcase their talent and try to get a footing at the next level. What makes this tournament so special? The Santosh Trophy is unique; it has tradition, and individuality.

The beautiful game all over the world manifests itself in the form of rivalries between cities or zones. The Santosh Trophy throws up a completely different kind of rivalry – of that between states. Having started in the pre-Independence era in 1941, the Santosh Trophy has developed its own history, following and support base. We, at the AIFF, have the duty to carry the flag forward and see to it that it further flourishes in the near future.



Over its 83-year history, we have seen states like Punjab, Bengal, Kerala, Goa, or the Northeast states excel and enjoy the rivalries of the Santosh Trophy. However, the seven states of the Northeast, despite providing so many of their sons and daughters to Indian club football, have not been able to enjoy the perks of hosting it on as many occasions. Out of the 77 editions that have been held in the history of the Santosh Trophy, only seven have been held in the Northeast, out of which six were in Assam and one in Manipur.

Please, make no mistake. Football in the Northeast is not restricted to Manipur and Mizoram only. Arunachal Pradesh, the land that lies in the furthest eastern reaches of the country, has its own history, its own culture, and its own heritage of football, which will be amply on display at the Golden Jubilee Stadium in Itanagar once the action kicks off on February 21.



I would like to convey my massive thanks and gratitude to honourable Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister and APFA President Shri Pema Khandu ji for stepping forth to support the cause of the Santosh Trophy and spreading its gospel in the valleys of Arunachal Pradesh. Without his support and active involvement, it would have been impossible to host the National Football Championships in Arunachal Pradesh for the first time. I am confident that hosting the Santosh Trophy in Arunachal Pradesh would work as an impelling force not only for Arunachal, but for the entire Northeast.

Last year, we saw how successful Imphal was in hosting the Tri-Nation Tournament, where our National Team defeated Myanmar and the Kyrgyz Republic. We hope for the same level of roaring success in Itanagar as well. Last year, the AIFF took the historic decision to host the Tri-Nation tournament in Imphal. The state of Manipur had never hosted a senior men's international tournament and there were sceptics, who questioned our decision. We all know that the tournament turned out to be a thumping success.

Time has not been fair to Manipur, a region of the country that has sent so many of its sons and daughters into the cradle of Indian Football. We were there to amend that in whatever small way we could, and we definitely played a role in bringing people together through the great game of football. After the Santosh Trophy in Arunachal Pradesh, our next stop is Guwahati, for the World Cup qualifier against Afghanistan and we have every reason to believe it will be a resounding success.

Who is the next big star of Indian Football? More importantly, who is the next big striker for the national teams? These are simplistic questions that have been asked on numerous occasions, but their answers are neither simple nor readily available. Unlike our top leagues, the Santosh Trophy is an all-Indian tournament, giving opportunities to players across all positions to show their potential for further growth as they go to the higher rungs of Indian Football.

Taking the Santosh Trophy to Saudi Arabia has already given a huge impetus to upcoming players in the country. It has given them food for thought; an opportunity to think this tournament can take them to the next level. We are hopeful that over time, we will be able to see more top players come through the ranks of the Santosh Trophy, like we have done in the past. The revival procedure is not merely for the tournament itself but for the ecosystem around it.

# AIFF COMPETITIONS CALENDAR 2024-25

**DURAND CUP:** JULY 26 - AUGUST 31, 2024.

**I-LEAGUE 3:** AUGUST 1 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2024.

**AIFF YOUTH LEAGUES (U13/U15/U17):** SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 - MAY 31, 2025.

**INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE:** SEPTEMBER 14, 2024 - APRIL 30, 2025.

**I-LEAGUE:** OCTOBER 19, 2024 - APRIL 30, 2025.

**INDIAN WOMEN'S LEAGUE:** OCTOBER 25, 2024 - APRIL 30, 2025.

**IWL 2:** JANUARY 25 - APRIL 30, 2025.

**I-LEAGUE 2:** JANUARY 15 - APRIL 30, 2025.

**SUPER CUP:** OCTOBER 1, 2024 - MAY 15, 2025.

**JUNIOR BOYS NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP TIER 1 AND TIER 2:** JULY 15 - JULY 31, 2024.

**JUNIOR GIRLS NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP TIER 1 AND TIER 2:**

JULY 15 - JULY 31, 2024.

**SUB-JUNIOR BOYS NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP TIER 1 AND TIER 2:**

AUGUST 5 - AUGUST 31, 2024.

**SUB-JUNIOR GIRLS NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP TIER 1 AND TIER 2:**

AUGUST 5 - AUGUST 31, 2024.

**29TH SENIOR WOMEN'S NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP STAGE:**

SEPTEMBER 1 - SEPTEMBER 15, 2024.

**29TH SENIOR WOMEN'S NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL ROUND:**

OCTOBER 1 - OCTOBER 15, 2024.

**78TH NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP FOR THE SANTOSH TROPHY GROUP STAGE:**

NOVEMBER 5 - NOVEMBER 15, 2024.

**78TH NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP FOR THE SANTOSH TROPHY FINAL ROUND:**

DECEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 15, 2024.

**NATIONAL BEACH SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP:** FEBRUARY 1 - FEBRUARY 20, 2025.

**AIFF MEN'S FUTSAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP:** MAY 1 - MAY 20, 2025.

# Voices from #IndianFootball



**"We didn't do justice to the opportunity we had. I know in my heart we can do well against these sides. We're extremely thankful for the love we received and really sorry for letting you down. We are India and we'll be back."**

- GURPREET SINGH SANDHU, INDIA GOALKEEPER, REFLECTING ON THE ASIAN CUP CAMPAIGN

**"After 12 years, everybody had a necessity to live that kind of moment. I have to say it was more emotional than any other celebrations I have lived in my life."**

- CARLES CUADRAT, EAST BENGAL HEAD COACH, ON WINNING THE KALINGA SUPER CUP

**"Yes, we are dejected. I want to thank everyone who came to encourage us in all three games. The results haven't been great but we have to keep qualifying and coming back to the Asian Cup to fight with the best teams in the continent. That's the only way forward."**

- SUNIL CHHETRI, INDIA CAPTAIN, AFTER THE LAST GAME AGAINST SYRIA



**"India decided to accept the officials' request for sharing the trophy as the situation was simmering and a section of the home fans were creating disturbances. The security of our players and officials was our utmost priority."**

- SATYANARAYAN M, AIFF ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY, AFTER THE SAFF U19 WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL



**"When I went to Bangladesh, I promised my family that I would come back with the trophy, and now I'm happy to have fulfilled that promise. This gives us a boost to do well in the future. Our aim now is to make India champions at the senior level too."**

- NITU LINDA, INDIA U19 WOMEN'S CAPTAIN



# RESULTS AT A GLANCE

## Blue Tigers at the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023

13 JAN 2024: **AUSTRALIA 2-0 INDIA**

18 JAN 2024: **INDIA 0-3 UZBEKISTAN**

23 JAN 2024: **SYRIA 1-0 INDIA**

## Young Tigresses at the SAFF U19 Women's Championship Bangladesh 2024

2 FEB 2024: **INDIA 10-0 BHUTAN**

(POOJA, SIBANI, SULANJANA, MENAKA, ARINA)

4 FEB 2024: **BANGLADESH 1-0 INDIA**

6 FEB 2024: **INDIA 4-0 NEPAL**

(NEHA, SULANJANA, CINDY)

8 FEB 2024, FINAL: **BANGLADESH 1-1 INDIA**

(SIBANI)

(11-11 ON PENALTIES, TROPHY SHARED)

# SAFF U19 Women's Champion



## When fortunes spun like a coin in the air

*An eyewitness account of the parlous drama enacted in U19 SAFF Women's championships*

**SRUTI CHAKRABORTY**

The SAFF U19 Women's Championships final between hosts Bangladesh and India in Dhaka on February 8, 2024, turned out to be a night to remember for Indian football fans for many years to come.

It was an eventful affair that overflowed and overshadowed everything that happened on the pitch. If the 90 minutes of deadlock, followed by the long penalty shoot-out, were a breathtaking affair, then what happened thereafter had melodrama written all over it.

As we stepped into the BSSSMK Stadium in Dhaka, the deafening roar of the home crowd filled the air, their chants echoed through the stands like thunder. Before the match, our captain, Nitu Linda, gathered her teammates together, as her words rang with determination and said, "We know we don't have our supporters here, but it is us who will support each other. Let's make this happen and take the trophy back to India."

With those words in mind, the Young Tigresses warmed up with all the focus, ready to face whatever challenges lay ahead. There was an unwavering belief among us, players, coaches and support staff alike, that we would emerge champions by the end of the night. Little did we know such a long night lay ahead of us.

With the stands already packed, the anthems of both teams were played, the players lined up for the customary team photo and the match kicked off in time in an electric atmosphere. The support for the home team was relentless, with drums pounding in rhythm with our racing hearts. In the 8th minute, when Sibani Devi found the back of the net, scoring an early goal to give us the lead, a hush fell over the stadium, as if the entire world held its breath. We had struck first, igniting a spark of hope that burned brightly within us.

Throughout the match, we fought fearlessly, refusing to concede even an inch of ground. Though we created numerous opportunities, luck seemed to elude us when it came to converting them into goals. As the clock ticked away, tension hung thick in the air, each minute felt like an eternity. Then, in the dying moments of the game, Bangladesh delivered a gut-wrenching blow, equalising with a strike from Sagorika in the 90+3 minute, shattering our hopes of victory.

With the score deadlocked at one goal apiece, the tension soared as the match headed into a nerve-wracking penalty shootout. Each kick was a test of nerves, as both teams matched each other shot for shot, goal for goal. Yet, despite our best efforts, neither side could gain the upper hand. All 11 players on both sides took a penalty each and all of them were bang on target!

But then, to our disbelief, the referee halted the shootout and apparently on the advice of the Match Commissioner, announced that the match would be decided by a spin of the coin. Nitu Linda and Afeida Khandaker, the respective captains, agreed and stepped forward for the decisive toss. The coin spun through the air and when it finally landed, the verdict was delivered: India were declared champions.

The stadium was filled with noise and confusion, with everyone feeling different emotions all at once. Even though we were happy and cheering, there was also a feeling that something wasn't quite right, like a sense of unfairness that made it hard to fully enjoy the celebration. When we looked at the opponent bench, we saw voices screaming at the match commissioner and the referees about the decision.

As we celebrated, the match commissioner intervened, acknowledging the controversy surrounding the decision. After much deliberation, it was decided that both teams would be crowned joint winners.



We made our way back to the dressing room, emotions ran high. Anger, sadness, and disappointment mingled with pride. We had fought with every ounce of our being, and though the outcome may not have been what we initially hoped for, we knew that our journey was far from over.

In the end, as we stood shoulder to shoulder with our rivals, lifting the trophy together, we knew that this moment would forever be etched in the annals of Indian football history. It wasn't just a victory; it was a testament to the resilience, spirit, and fellowship that defined us as a team and a bittersweet conclusion to an unforgettable night. And as we looked towards the future, we knew that no matter what challenges lay ahead, we would face them together, as champions.

"My girls played their best in the final game. They took the lead early, but unfortunately, it did not end as we hoped for. It was the decision of the organising committee and our federation to declare them joint winners. I hope the girls will learn from the mistakes from all the three matches played and become champions wherever they go," said head coach Sukla Dutta after the match.

The AIFF Acting Secretary General, Mr. M Satyanarayan said: "India, despite being declared winners after the spin of the coin, decided to accept the officials' request for sharing the trophy as the situation was simmering and a section of the home fans was found indulging in creating disturbances. Since the security of the players and other team officials is our utmost priority, the AIFF decided to agree to the request of the organisers."

### **INDIA'S JOURNEY TO THE FINAL**

In their inaugural match the India U-19 Women's Team demonstrated exceptional dominance by routing Bhutan 10-0 on February 2, 2024. Pooja and Sibani Devi emerged as standout performers, with Pooja notching four goals and Sibani Devi securing a first half hat-trick. Additionally, Sulanjana Raul and substitutes Menaka Lourembam and debutant Arina Devi added one goal each in the second half to India's impressive tally.





Two days later, however, India suffered a bitter 0-1 defeat against hosts and defending champions Bangladesh after conceding a goal in the dying moments. Thankfully, the defeat could not deter India from reaching the final as they routed Nepal 4-0 in the concluding round robin tie. Winger Neha stood out with a remarkable performance, scoring two goals in the second half. Sulanjana Raul and substitute Cindy Temruatpuii Colney also contributed late goals, sealing a comfortable victory for India.

### **YOUNG TIGRESSES RETURN TO A GRAND WELCOME IN NEW DELHI**

As the Indian girls returned to their motherland with the trophy in hand on February 9, 2024, a substantial crowd gathered at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi to welcome them back. When the Young Tigresses emerged from the arrivals gate amidst the beats of the drums of the soccer fans, the girls were garlanded and presented with sweets by senior AIFF officials, including the Acting Secretary General Mr. M Satyanarayan.

India U19 captain Nitu Linda said: "When I went to Bangladesh, I promised my family that I would come back with the trophy, and now I'm happy to have fulfilled that promise. So many people have come to the airport to greet us today, this really gives us a boost to do well in the future, even at the senior level too. Our aim now is to make India champions at the senior level too."



# A tale of two Manipur girls: From the worst of times to the best of times

*Anika Devi and Arina Devi contributed to India's SAFF U19 Women's Championship triumph with two clean sheets and a goal, respectively*

## **SRUTI CHAKRABORTY**

Ten-year-old Arina had her eyes filled with tears when her father said he was not in favour of her playing football. Arina's father, a mason labourer in Manipur, remained a boxing fan throughout and wanted his daughter to pursue a career as a pugilist.

Arina didn't cry for long. She wiped her eyes, stilled her nerves and then told her father in no uncertain terms that she would rather become a footballer than a boxer. And the story began to unfold thereafter.

Today, Arina Devi Nameirakpam, a midfielder, has travelled to an extent where she has become one of the privileged 23 for the India U19 Women's Team and a SAFF U19 Women's Championship winner. Baptised in the hardcore battle of international football, Arina scored her first India goal on her debut in the 10-0 win over Bhutan.

“At the age of 10, my brothers would play football in front of our house, and they would call me the ball girl. Watching them play ignited a love for the game in me. As I began learning the intricacies of football, I started playing regularly,” Arina said.

Arina stops for a moment and gets lost in her thoughts. She then puts away her empty plate on the breakfast table and begins to narrate her story again.

“Despite my passion, my father never supported my football aspirations; he always wanted me to be a boxer. Despite his disapproval, I continued to pursue football. Although he never expressed his thoughts, he would drop me off at coaching classes without uttering a word.

“Many people, including some close to us, would come to our house to tell my father that football is not for girls. They even have an issue with my short hair. However, my selection for the Indian team and our subsequent victory silenced many critics. My father is now satisfied, but I've assured him that I'll play and make him proud so that he doesn't have to heed others' opinions anymore,” the midfielder, who draws inspiration from Bala Devi, said.

## **CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE**

No less fascinating is the story of goalkeeper Anika Devi Sharubam, another youngster from a small village in Manipur to become a SAFF U19 Women's champion for India.

Born to a weaver mother and a father who worked as a labourer, Anika realised early on that she needed to make a significant contribution to provide a better life for her family.

She became a football player. Yet, one notable hurdle for her in the world of football was the language barrier. Not being fluent in Hindi or English, Anika felt this could be a limitation. However, her passion for football and admiration for goalkeeper Linthoingambi inspired her to keep growing in the game without letting language barriers hold her back.





"When I initially began playing football in school, it was simply a hobby for me. I never anticipated that my love for the game would lead to a call-up to represent the national team. The prospect of making my debut on the international stage makes me a bit nervous, as it's my first time showcasing my skills at this level," Anika said.

"I face some challenges with expressing myself in other languages, but I'm working on overcoming this barrier by learning other languages. On the pitch, it's all about your performance. Fortunately, my coaches and friends have been incredibly supportive, never discouraging me due to my linguistic limitations.

"I draw inspiration from Linthoi, the goalkeeper of the senior national team. Whenever I have the opportunity to meet her, I strive to learn new techniques and insights. My ultimate aspiration is to play and repeat our success at the senior level someday," Anika, a music lover, said.



# Shooting Range

SAFF U19 Women's Championship







# Hope lives on despite early continental exit

*Valorous Blue Tigers fight till the bitter end in AFC Asian Cup*

**SOUMO GHOSH**

Hindsight can be quite cruel to history. Going by what happened on the pitch, India never had a chance in Group B of the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023. However, the weeks and days leading up to the tournament were anything but so, despite being drawn in a potentially difficult group with Australia, Uzbekistan, and Syria.

The Blue Tigers ultimately lost all three matches and failed to score a goal, ending their fifth appearance at the Asian Cup on a disappointing note, but they were certainly not hopeless.

Be it the resolute performance against Australia, the second half resurgence against Uzbekistan, and the tough fight against Syria, India never looked down and out, and as the cliché goes, went down fighting.

The hopes were not over right until the bitter end, the final whistle against Syria. It was only after that last game that the bunch of a rather dejected Blue Tigers went around the field appreciating the fans, who had come all the way from India to support them.

It was not their proudest moment, not by any stretch of the imagination. It is in these moments that the truth about professional athletes becomes clear. Absolute desolation after three weeks of hard work is difficult to swallow.

"We didn't do justice to the opportunity we had. I know in my heart we can do well against these sides. We're extremely thankful for the love we received and really sorry for letting everyone down. We are India and we'll be back," said goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu.

However, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche wrote in his autobiography 'Ecce Homo': "That which does not kill him makes him stronger". It is exactly this philosophy with which the Blue Tigers take stock of the mismatches against teams like Australia and Uzbekistan, learn from the errors against Syria, and use them to their advantage in the FIFA World Cup 2026 and AFC Asian Cup 2027 Joint Qualifiers Round 2, where they are gunning to finish in the top two spots in Group A.

Captain Sunil Chhetri echoes the sentiments of the squad that the Blue Tigers are at a stage where qualifying for the AFC Asian Cup on a regular basis is the most important thing, along with regularly playing against quality opposition.

"We have to keep coming back to this level. This is like the World Cup for Asian teams like us. We have to keep trying and keep rubbing shoulders with the best in Asia. You can see how much we have improved in the last decade. This competition is crucial for us to be consistent," he said.





With that target in mind, the Blue Tigers are in good stead for the upcoming FIFA International Windows in March and June, when their fate in the FIFA World Cup 2026 and AFC Asian Cup 2027 Joint Qualifiers Round 2 will be decided. A top two finish will guarantee India a spot at Saudi Arabia 2027, while it will also make sure that the Blue Tigers get into Round 3 of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers, where they will get to play against the best in Asia.

## **AN AMAZING FANBASE**

India's fanbase is one of legends. It does not matter which part of the continent or the world the Blue Tigers travel to, they always get a good number of supporters in the stands. It was no different in Qatar, where cheers went up every time those in Blue touched the ball, while stony silence followed after they conceded a goal.

Every match, the Indian fans thronged to the stands, painting them in the tri-colour and getting behind the team.

"The fans have been amazing. There are a lot of Indians living in Qatar, and a number of fans have also come over from India to support us. I want to thank them for their support and encouragement in all the three games. I know the results have not been great, but please keep supporting and encouraging us," said Chhetri.







# Back with a Bang

*A sensational Kalinga Super Cup final in Bhubaneswar saw East Bengal lift their first national title in 12 years and earn a slot in next season's ACL2*

**AKHIL RAWAT**

The party is still going on in Kolkata. Almost three weeks have passed since the frenetic Kalinga Super Cup 2024 final in Bhubaneswar, but the adrenaline rush following the 120 minutes which ended their 12-year trophy drought is not easing off anytime soon.

Madness ensued after the full-time whistle. As Carles Cuadrat was being tossed high in the Bhubaneswar sky, the torchbearers lit up the east and south stand with *moshals*. Like magnets the East Bengal squad were drawn towards the far end of the pitch near the away stand, celebrating with the thousands of red and gold shirts who had journeyed 450 kilometres from home, feeling almost reluctant to gather for the award ceremony.

But the silverware is what it was all about after all. An epic final which replicated the scoreline of East Bengal's previous trophy win, the Federation Cup in 2012. While it was Manandeep Singh and Chidi Edeh who struck in extra time in Siliguri that day, skipper Cleiton Silva wrapped it up in the Odisha capital. The job would've been finished in 90 minutes had it not been for Ahmed Jahouh's last-minute penalty, but what is East Bengal without agony? As they say, the more the suffering, the better the relief after it ends.



An epic final might perhaps be an understatement. Destiny had it that East Bengal's protagonists had to be Nandha Kumar and Saúl Crespo. Both scored and could only raise their folded hands in apology to the home crowd. They had not only donned the purple of Odisha FC last season, but also lifted the very same Super Cup trophy with them nine months before. This one may have been their second title, but must have felt like a new one in its own right.

By the time the East Bengal team bus departed the stadium, it was past midnight. Celebrations went long into the night in the vicinity of the Kalinga Stadium, and the party was only getting started. The real revelry was to come in Kolkata, where the Red and Golds received a welcome so grand that it could make any club in India envy.

"After 12 years, everybody had a necessity to live that kind of moment. I have to say it was more emotional than any other celebrations I have lived in my life," head coach Carles Cuadrat said.

The fiesta was not only about the night of January 28. It was about reliving how it feels to be at the top of the pedestal. For a club so lavish in history, it felt unfitting to go more than a decade without a national title. Football runs in Kolkata's blood, and for the younger generation who witnessed their first trophy, these were their heroes now. The Kalinga Super Cup story will be told and retold for years to come by the Red and Gold faithful. How they swatted their eternal rivals Mohun Bagan SG to reach the knockouts, how Cleiton Silva etched his name as the messiah of the club, how Cuadrat and his men trounced the home favourites in a see-saw of a final.

Important to remember that it wasn't only about the champions tag. A continental slot was on the line too. East Bengal will be back in Asia for the first time since 2015. They will take part in the qualifying round of the AFC Champions League 2 next season, representing not only red and gold, but also the tricolour. The Federation Cup triumph earned them a ticket to the 2013 AFC Cup, where they made the semi-finals, their best-ever run in an AFC competition. With the trophy already in the bag, there's nothing East Bengal will relish more than another continental dream run come next season.



## AIFF Technical Committee recommends L Chaoba Devi as Head Coach of India Senior Women's Team

*The former India international will take charge of her first senior India assignment at the Turkish Women's Cup in Antalya in February*

The All India Football Federation's Technical Committee met virtually on Thursday, January 25, 2023, to recommend the names of the coaching staff of the Indian Senior Women's Team.

The meeting was chaired by former India captain Mr. IM Vijayan and attended by AIFF Acting Secretary General Mr. M Satyanarayan, members Ms. Pinky Bompal Magar, Mr. Harjinder Singh, Mr. Arun Malhotra, Mr. Climax Lawrence, Mr. Eugeneson Lyngdoh and AIFF Technical Director Mr. Syed Sabir Pasha.

After much deliberation, the Technical Committee recommended the name of former India international Langam Chaoba Devi for appointment as the head coach of the Indian Senior Women's Team. She has represented India at two AFC Women's Championships and the 1998 Asian Games in Bangkok and was formerly the assistant coach of the Senior Women's Team. Chaoba is the current head coach of Kickstart FC, who are unbeaten and presently in second place in the ongoing IWL season.

Priya PV, named the AIFF Women's Coach of the Year in 2023, has been recommended as the assistant coach of the Blue Tigresses. Last year, she was the head coach of the Indian U17 team, who made it to Round 2 of the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers for the first time.



Lourembam Ronibala Chanu should continue in her role as the goalkeeper coach of the Indian senior women's team, the Committee recommended.

The Blue Tigresses will participate in the 2024 Turkish Women's Cup, scheduled for February 21 to 27 in Antalya during the FIFA women's international match window. This will be India's third participation in the Turkish Women's Cup, after 2019 and 2021. India will face Estonia, Hong Kong and Kosovo in the tournament. After the conclusion of round 10 of the IWL on February 11, the Indian squad has been camping in Bengaluru ahead of their departure for Turkey on February 18.

The Acting Secretary General Mr. M Satyanarayanan said: "We want to give our women's team more international exposure this year, and we have decided to send the team to this Turkish invitational tournament. So, I think it will be a good start. Hopefully, our girls will gain much-needed experience playing in a European atmosphere. With the technical committee having recommended their choice of coaches, let's hope for the best and find some new talent for the Indian team."



# India to participate in Turkish Women's Cup 2024 in Alanya

The Indian senior women's team will participate in the Turkish Women's Cup 2024 in Alanya, Turkey, from February 21 to 27, 2024. Estonia, Kosovo, and Hong Kong are the Blue Tigresses' opponents in the four-team tournament, which will be held in a round-robin format.

Led by new head coach Langam Chaoba Devi, India are currently camping in Bengaluru, Karnataka, since February 10, and will depart for Alanya on February 18. It is set to be India's third participation in the Turkish Women's Cup (after 2019 and 2021), which is being held during the FIFA women's international match window. Each team will face every other team once, and the table toppers at the end of the round-robin stage will be crowned champions.

## **India's fixtures at the Turkish Women's Cup 2024 (All matches will be played at the Gold City Sport Complex):**

**19:00 IST, February 21:** India vs Estonia

**19:00 IST, February 24:** India vs Hong Kong

**16:00 IST, February 27:** Kosovo vs India

## **India's 30-member probables for the Turkish Women's Cup:**

**Goalkeepers:** Anshika, Elangbam Panthoi Chanu, Monalisha Devi Moirangthem, Shreya Hooda

**Defenders:** Ashalata Devi Loitongbam, Astam Oraon, Dalima Chhibber, Juli Kishan, Mamta, Ranjana Chanu Sorokhaibam, Shilky Devi Hemam

**Midfielders:** Anju Tamang, Indumathi Kathiresan, Kajol Dsouza, Karthika Angamuthu, Kritina Devi Thounaojam, Manisha, Pavithra Murugesan, Priyanka Devi Naorem, Sangita Basfore

**Forwards:** Grace Dangmei, Jyoti, Karishma Purushottam Shirvoikar, Kaviya Pakkirisamy, Lynda Kom Serto, Neha, Pyari Xaxa, Sandhiya Ranganathan, Sanju, Soumya Guguloth



# Probables prepare in Goa for SAFF U16 Women's Championship

India U16 women's team's newly-appointed head coach Biby Thomas Muttath named a list of 30 probables for the upcoming SAFF U16 Women's Championship in Lalitpur, Nepal, from March 1 to 10, 2024. The Young Tigresses have been training in Goa after being chosen in a selection trial and will depart for Nepal on February 27.

The coaching staff comprises head coach Biby Thomas Muttath, who was India's assistant coach in the SAFF U19 Championship triumph in Nepal last year. Nivetha Ramadass is the assistant coach, and Jasmeet Singh is the goalkeeper coach.

## **India's fixtures SAFF U16 Women's Championship (All matches will be played at the Chyasal Stadium):**

**March 1, 14:45 IST:** India vs Bhutan

**March 5, 14:45 IST:** Bangladesh vs India

**March 7, 14:45 IST:** India vs Nepal

**March 10, 14:45 IST:** Final (top two teams from round-robin stage)

## **List of 30 probables for the SAFF U16 Women's Championship:**

**Goalkeepers:** Konjengbam Tamphasana Devi, Munni, Rubina, Surajmuni Kumari, Thameena Fatima.

**Defenders:** Amrita Ghosh, Anjali Patel, Bonifila Shullai, Divya Linda, Elizabed Lakra, Gauri, Rupashree Munda, Sarangthem Alena Devi, Tia Zamora Fernandes.

**Midfielders:** Anita Dungdung, Anushka Kumari, Anwita Raghuraman, H Yashica, Rheanna Liz Jacob, Ritu Badaik, Shveta Rani, Thandamoni Baskey, Tonambam Taniya Devi.

**Forwards:** Anchal Singh, Gurleen Kaur, Gurnaz Kaur, Longajam Nira Chanu, Neha Saji, Pearl Fernandes, Sandhya.



# AIFF Technical Committee meets Men's Head Coach Igor Stimac

The AIFF's Technical Committee met Senior Men's National Team head coach Igor Stimac virtually on February 10, 2024, to review India's performance at the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023, and chart the way forward.

Technical Committee chairperson Mr. IM Vijayan kicked off the proceedings in the presence of Acting Secretary General Mr. M Satyanarayan, and committee members Ms. Pinky Bompal Magar, Mr. Shabbir Ali, Mr. Victor Amalraj, Mr. Climax Lawrence, Mr. Santosh Singh, and Chief Technical Officer Mr. Vincent Subramaniam and Technical Director Mr. Sabir Pasha, and India head coach Mr. Igor Stimac.

Acting Secretary General Mr. Satyanarayan said, "We've seen the National Team go through highs and lows over the last year, but we can be proud of our players and the effort that they put in every time they take the pitch. However, the area we should concentrate on is the game at the grassroots level, so that our national team becomes stronger in the future."

Mr. Vijayan said, "I welcome all members to this meeting, and I would like to, first of all, say to the head coach that the results in Qatar are now a matter of the past. Our main focus should be on the matches ahead, in the March and June FIFA windows and that we should get the best possible results from them."

The India head coach highlighted the importance of the upcoming FIFA World Cup Qualifiers against Afghanistan (March 21 and 26), followed by the home game against Kuwait (June 6), which could decide whether India head into Round 3 of the Asian Qualifiers, which would also guarantee direct entry into AFC Asian Cup 2027. Mr Stimac said: "The mission to beat Kuwait in the away game and get three points has been accomplished. Now the two games against Afghanistan and the home match against Kuwait will be extremely crucial."

The Committee was informed by the Acting Secretary General that apart from Hyderabad, three state associations – Maharashtra (WIFA), Odisha (FAO), and West Bengal (IFA) – have expressed interest in hosting the World Cup Qualifier against Kuwait on June 6 and that the Federation is yet to arrive at a final decision on the same.



# AIFF's flagship grassroots programme, Blue Cubs League up and running

In a major development in grassroots football in India, the representatives from all 36 states, football academies, ISL, I-League and IWL clubs, district associations, and other stakeholders held a meeting to discuss the Blue Cubs League pathway and strategies to drive the league's expansion throughout the nation.

Since the launch of the Blue Cubs League, the AIFF's flagship grassroots programme, in October last year, a total of 201 leagues have been registered under the programme, reflecting widespread interest and participation from diverse regions.

Currently, 95 leagues are actively operational in 24 states, providing a robust platform for young talent to showcase their skills and passion for the sport. Anticipating further growth, the inauguration of an additional 50 leagues within the next 30 days is projected, indicating a promising trajectory for the Blue Cubs League.



In the state of Gujarat alone, 23 districts have conducted/are conducting the Blue Cubs League, starting from December 16, 2023, and lasting until February 29, 2024. Sponsored by Adani, the league has been held for the U-5 to U-12 age category, with a minimum of eight teams in each category. About 4,200 players have participated in the Blue Cubs Leagues in Gujarat.

Developing grassroots football across the nation and creating a pathway for young enthusiasts to engage with the sport at a foundational level is one of the federation's priorities. The Grassroots Department extended its gratitude to all participating entities for their commendable efforts in contributing to the growth of football at the grassroots level. The collaborative spirit reflects a shared commitment to realising the vision of a thriving football culture in India.



## STATE OF AFFAIRS

# FIFA Football For Schools programme spreads across Odisha, Goa, Maharashtra and DNH & DD

*The multi-dimensional programme aspires to introduce the joy of playing football to young school students*

The Football for Schools (F4S) programme which kicked off at the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Cuttack, Odisha, on December 3, 2023, has now reached various districts, including Angul, Dhenkanal, and Deogarh in Odisha, North Goa and South Goa in Goa, and also the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and the union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.

The F4S initiative, launched under the larger project FIFA Football for Schools, is designed to significantly enhance the accessibility of football for students within the school setting, fostering a love for the game and promoting a healthier lifestyle. It is a transformative journey embarked upon by the Department of School Education & Literacy, in collaboration with the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and the Fédération International de Football Association (FIFA).

Under the able leadership of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, serving as the Nodal organisation for the F4S programme, this initiative aims to contribute to the education, development, and empowerment of approximately 700 million children globally. The programme seeks to make football more accessible to both boys and girls by integrating football activities into the education system in collaboration with relevant authorities and stakeholders. More than 1.5 lakh schools in India will benefit from this programme.

Collaboration, integration, nodal organisation and gender inclusivity are some key highlights of the FIFA F4S programme. The programme, with its multi-dimensional approach, aspires to not only introduce the joy of playing football to students but also instil values of teamwork, discipline, and fitness, contributing to their holistic development.

As a part of the programme, capacity-building/Train-the-Trainer programmes were earlier held in Bengaluru, Pune and Sambalpur in October 2023, where around 300 physical education teachers/trainees from States/UTs, KVS, NVS and AIFF across India participated with an aim to learn from the best and further use their training and skills as Master Trainers at State level.





## Minister for Education Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan assures all help for FIFA-AIFF Talent Academy

The All India Football Federation plans to create a robust three-stage pan-India structure for talent scouting and recruitment for its ambitious FIFA-AIFF Talent Academy.

In a joint effort with the Indian Ministry of Education and FIFA, the AIFF desires to integrate the ground-breaking 'Football 4 Schools' programme as a pathway to create a channel in identifying talent, scouting, and recruitment for its FIFA-AIFF Talent Academy.

In this regard, AIFF President Mr. Kalyan Chaubey, along with FIFA High Performance Expert Ged Roddy and Philippe Senderos called upon Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Education & Skill Development in Delhi on Thursday, February 1, 2024 to present the blueprint and to seek Ministry's support in reaching the last-mile connectivity to the remotest schools in rural India.

Philippe Senderos is a retired Swiss footballer renowned for his defensive prowess. Throughout his career, Senderos played for esteemed clubs such as Arsenal, A.C. Milan, and Valencia. He made significant contributions to the Swiss national team, representing them in three FIFA World Cups, including the 2006 and 2010 and 2014 editions. Senderos showcased his defensive skills on the international stage, leaving an indelible mark on Swiss football history.



With an aim to prepare India's inland squad for the future FIFA U17 World Cup events, AIFF's blueprint attempts to create a funnel for the best talents available for its FIFA-AIFF Talent Academy on a year-by-year basis. To tap the geographical vastness of India – the national federation has proposed integration of Football 4 School to its Talent Development Scheme to tap every possible school through the nodal agency Navodayalya.

Mr. Chaubey said, "I'm thankful for the support we have been assured by the honourable Minister for Education Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan, the ministry and its nodal agencies without which it will be very difficult to attempt a pan-India scouting programme. We want to go as far as possible, reach every possible 12-13 year talent in our quest to find and horn skills of a home-grown talent. Minister Mr. Pradhan has shown keen interest in our proposal and has assured full support.

Mr. Pradhan said, "The FIFA-AIFF plan is exciting and something never attempted before at this scale. The Football 4 School programme has already been introduced in 5 states and we wish to take it to every school, every student and every PE teacher. I'm confident that the integration of Football 4 School as talent scouting platform for the Academy will be successful with the commitment of FIFA, AIFF and the Ministry of Education."

Football 4 School programme currently been introduced in 4 states and 1 union territory, covering 8985 schools, off its targeted 155192 schools identified by the Ministry of Education. Odisha and Maharashtra saw the first phase roll out with 4561 and 2153 schools, respectively along with Gujarat (2016 schools), Goa (103 schools) and DNH&DD (107 schools).

Mr. Chaubey added, "To have a competitive module in our scouting process, the State U13 tournaments and AIFF U13 National Championships will create a benchmark for talent identification.

The Bhubaneswar-based first FIFA-AIFF Talent Academy plans to have an intake of 40-50 best scouted talents per year, over the next three-years to enable a continuous scouting inflow in U13, U14 and U15 age categories. AIFF is also on a lookout to establish 5 additional Talent Academies in India, for which a combined FIFA-AIFF delegation will visit existing academies in India, by mid-March.



# India's AFC eAsian Cup 2023 campaign ends in round of 16

*The eTigers put on a decent showing in the inaugural edition of the AFC eAsian Cup in Doha*

The Indian eFootball National Team's AFC eAsian Cup 2023 campaign came to an end in the Round of 16 after going down to Saudi Arabia on Sunday, February 4, 2023, at the Virtuocity in Doha, Qatar.

The knockout stage was played in a best-of-three format, where Saudi Arabia won the first two games 1-0 and 4-0 to put the tie to bed. Each match lasted 12 minutes and was played in a 2v2 format on Konami's eFootball 2024 on PS5 consoles. On Friday, India had progressed from Group B as runners-up with five points from four matches after two 1-1 draws with Uzbekistan and a win (2-1) and a loss (1-5) against Syria.

India lined up with Ibrahim Gulrez and Charanjot Singh, while Hemanth Krishna Kommu was present as a substitute. Saudi Arabia were represented by Ahmed Alamri, Amjad Alqarni and Abdulaziz Albuhayri.

The first match was largely a cagey affair as both sides tested the opposition's defence but couldn't carve out a clear goalscoring chance until Saudi Arabia broke through thanks to Radif's goal in the 78th minute.

The Indian duo defended resolutely in the first match but Saudi Arabia's dominance proved too much to handle in the second one as Al-Brikan's eighth-minute opener set the tone for the rest of the contest. Al-Muwallad's goal sandwiched between a brace from Ghareeb in quick succession early in the second half sealed the West Asians' spot in the last eight of the first-ever AFC eAsian Cup.



# AIFF League Committee recommends promotion-relegation system for IWL

*For the first time in women's league football in India, there will be two divisions, the IWL and the IWL 2 from the 2024-25 season*

The All India Football Federation's League Committee met over video conferencing on Thursday, January 18, 2024. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Lalnghinglova Hmar, and attended by Deputy Chairperson Mr. Santanu Pujari, Committee Members Mr. Arif Ali, Mr. Caitanno Jose Fernandes, Mr. Anirban Dutta and Mr. Amit Chaudhuri. The AIFF Acting Secretary General, Mr. M Satyanarayan, was present at the meeting.

At the start of the meeting, the Chairperson and other members present, expressed their deep condolences for the untimely demise of Sandeep Chattoo, the Owner of Real Kashmir Football Club, on December 31, 2023.

The Committee reviewed the nominations filed by the various State Associations for IWL 2 and recommended steps to finalise it. After long deliberations, the Committee recommended setting February 5, 2024, as the last date of nomination for the IWL 2 teams.

In a major move, the Committee recommended introducing the system of promotion-relegation of teams involving IWL and IWL 2, effective from the 2024-25 season.



# Three teams waiting in the wings for the grand curtain call

*Gokulam Kerala FC, Odisha FC, Kickstart FC are involved in a neck-and-neck battle*

**SRUTI CHAKRABORTY**

The 2023-24 season of the Indian Women's League (IWL) has gone for a three-week break to make the best use of the FIFA Window after having completed 10 rounds and 30 games in a home-and-away format for the first time.

While the Senior National Women's Team will now get busy in the Turkish Women's Cup 2024 in Alanya, Turkey, the IWL fans back in India will eagerly wait for the resumption of the league in March, especially after the dramatic turn of events in the last match-week, which concluded on February 11, 2024.

With just three rounds remaining, the stage is set for a thrilling three-way race between Gokulam Kerala, Odisha FC, and Kickstart FC and anticipation mounts for the ultimate crowning of the IWL champions.

The recent matchweek in the IWL made the title race even more intense and interesting, with three teams involved in a close battle for the championship. Gokulam Kerala, aiming for their fourth consecutive title, are certainly now enjoying a smooth passage as Odisha FC and last season's runners-up, Kickstart FC, are not ready to leave an inch without a fight.

However, Gokulam Kerala surged back to the top of the table when they pipped Odisha FC at home, thus dealing their opponents their first loss of the season. The match showcased a tale of getting even for the hosts, as in the earlier match, Odisha FC defeated Gokulam Kerala by two goals in Bhubaneswar.

In Kozhikode, Odisha's Indumathi Kathiresan stunned everyone with a goal just 23 seconds into the game, setting a new record for the fastest goal this season. However, Gokulam Kerala, swiftly turned the tide in their favour. Ugandan striker Fazila Ikwaput emerged as the star performer for her team, securing a crucial win with a double strike in the 2-1 win. She is currently the second-highest goal scorer in the tournament, with seven goals to her name. Additionally, Soumya Guguloth and Anju Tamang have each contributed five goals in the league so far.

Out of the nine matches Gokulam Kerala have played so far, they have won six, drawn two, and lost one against Odisha FC. Their dominant goal-scoring prowess is evident, having netted 21 goals while conceding only four, resulting in an impressive goal difference of +17.

Meanwhile, Bengaluru's Kickstart FC added further charm to the title race by defeating Sports Odisha by a solitary goal scored by Sonia Marak, positioning themselves joint-second with Gokulam Kerala in the points tally. Striker Karishma Shirvoikar is one of the biggest attractions in the Kickstart line-up; she is a prolific scorer and with eight goals to her credit, she heads the season's scoring chart now.





Not far behind in the seesaw title sprint are Odisha FC, with 19 points from six wins and one draw in eight outings. The Kalinga Warriors, crucially, have a game in hand over their two rivals. Despite suffering their first defeat of the season against Gokulam Kerala FC, the star-studded Odisha FC remain strong contenders, boasting a commendable goal difference of +12, indicative of their offensive prowess and defensive solidity with Myanmar's striker Win Theingi Tun's five goals in the league.

Sethu FC also made their mark in the tournament, bouncing back from a series of defeats with a resounding win over East Bengal. Indian midfielder Kajol D'Souza's brace secured a convincing victory, highlighting their renewed form.

East Bengal, on the other hand, continue to struggle with eight consecutive defeats, languishing near the bottom of the table, just above bottom-spooners Sports Odisha. Madurai-based Sethu FC occupy the fourth position with 10 points accumulated from three wins, one draw, and four losses, while their goal difference stands at +1.

HOPS FC follow closely behind Sethu FC, as they too have accumulated 10 points with three wins, one draw, and four losses. Despite a negative goal difference of -3, the Delhi side are still battling it out in the middle, often displaying moments of brilliance against superior opponents.



# Shooting Range

*Indian Women's League 2023-24*



TARGET 2026



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# Unpredictable I-League title race heats up in February restart

*Mohammedan Sporting's seven-point lead mid-way through the season is now reduced to potentially just two*

**AKHIL RAWAT**

The I-League continues its tradition of being one of the most unpredictable competitions in the country. Mohammedan Sporting, seemingly running away with the title at the halfway mark with a massive seven-point lead, have won only one of their three games since the restart, reigniting the thrill in the title race.

But it's not been a nosedive from the Black and White Brigade. After failing to score against Real Kashmir (0-3) and Aizawl (0-0), the floodgates opened in the 5-1 thrashing of Rajasthan United, who had surprised Real Kashmir 1-0 just last week. While Eddie Hernandez's hat-trick may have earned Mohammedan their first win of the new year, Sreenidi Deccan's back-to-back wins over Churchill Brothers and TRAU mean that they are now only five points behind the leaders with a game in hand.

The Deccan Warriors, who looked down and out after their 1-4 home drubbing by Gokulam Kerala in their last game of 2023, now carry loads of momentum. Everything indicates that the February 29 fixture between Sreenidi Deccan and Mohammedan Sporting in Hyderabad could be make-or-break for either team.

But it would not be right to rule out Real Kashmir, Gokulam Kerala, and even Aizawl or Shillong Lajong from the title battle yet. Each of these sides have struggled to find consistency in the season so far, but we've seen the tables turn in a matter of a few matches. Gokulam Kerala, led by their talismanic striker Alex Sanchez, are on an upward curve, winning three games in a row after going winless in the previous six. The Malabarians are the league's top scorers with 29 goals, and Alex has netted 13 of those. On the other hand, the Snow Leopards have the best defence, conceding a mere seven goals so far. But both Real Kashmir and Gokulam now have to deal with a similar challenge – playing outside their comfort zone. Their next six and four games, respectively, are away from home, which will be crucial in determining their bid to be trophy contenders.

Glancing at the other end of the table, things look bleak for the Imphal clubs. The inability to play out of their very own Khuman Lampak Stadium hasn't helped either. NEROCA and TRAU occupy the bottom two places with only seven points each. Debutants Namdhari are 11th with 12 points but have no fears of relegation due to their immunity. With 10th-placed Churchill Brothers at 14 points, it's a long way to safety for the Imphal duo.

Some ray of hope emerged for TRAU after their stunning comeback in the 5-3 win over Delhi FC last week. Trailing 1-3 at the hour mark, the Red Pythons struck four times in the space of 11 minutes to steal their second win of the campaign. But head coach Leimapokpam Nandakumar Singh will agree that despite the thrill, they could do with less chaotic games like these and more calm and consistent performances, especially defensively.

The same holds true for NEROCA, who are the only team yet to keep a clean sheet this season. It's obvious that almost everything from now on has to go right for these two sides to complete an extraordinary comeback from the foot of the table. Should both get relegated, the next I-League season would be the first since 2016-17 to not feature a team from Manipur. But when you've shipped a combined 75 goals halfway through the season, there can't be many complaints.





# Shooting Range

I-League 2023-24





# Fixtures announced for 77th National Football Championship for Santosh Trophy final rounds

The fixtures for the 77th National Football Championship for the Santosh Trophy 2023-24 Final Rounds were announced on Sunday, January 14, 2024. The tournament will take place in Yupia, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, from February 21 to March 9, 2024. All matches will take place at the Golden Jubilee Stadium.

Twelve teams were divided into two groups of six each in the draw conducted in November. Hosts Arunachal Pradesh, last season's champions Karnataka and finalists Meghalaya qualified automatically for the Final Round. The rest nine spots were booked by the six group stage winners (Goa, Delhi, Manipur, Assam, Services and Maharashtra), and the three best second-placed teams (Kerala, Mizoram and Railways).

Meghalaya, hoping to recreate their sensational run into the final last year, will take on Services in the opening match of Group A on February 21 at 10:00 IST. Former champions Kerala will meet Assam at 14:30. Arunachal Pradesh, hosting the Santosh Trophy for the first time, will get their campaign underway against Goa at 19:00 IST on the same day.

Group B will kick off on February 22, with Karnataka taking on Delhi to get their title defence underway at 10:00. Manipur and Railways will meet at 14:30 before Maharashtra face Mizoram at 19:00 to wrap up the opening round of fixtures.

The new format for the tournament will see an expanded knockout stage, with the top four teams from each group progressing to the quarter-finals, scheduled for March 4 and 5. The semi-final will take place on March 7 before the all-important final on March 9 at 19:00 IST.

# 77TH NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP FOR SANTOSH TROPHY

## 2023-24 FINAL ROUND

**Group A:** Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Goa, Assam, Services, Kerala

**Group B:** Karnataka, Maharashtra, Delhi, Manipur, Mizoram, Railways

### FIXTURES (ALL MATCHES AT GOLDEN JUBILEE STADIUM, YUPIA)

**February 21:** Meghalaya vs Services (10 am), Assam vs Kerala (2.30 pm), Goa vs Arunachal Pradesh (7 pm).

**February 22:** Delhi vs Karnataka (10 am), Manipur vs Railways (2.30 pm), Maharashtra vs Mizoram (7 pm).

**February 23:** Arunachal Pradesh vs Services (10 am), Meghalaya vs Assam (2.30 pm), Goa vs Kerala (7 pm).

**February 24:** Karnataka vs Mizoram (10 am), Maharashtra vs Manipur (2.30 pm), Delhi vs Railways (7 pm).

**February 25:** Services vs Goa (10 am), Kerala vs Meghalaya (2.30 pm), Arunachal Pradesh vs Assam (7 pm).

**February 26:** Mizoram vs Delhi (10 am), Railways vs Maharashtra (2.30 pm), Karnataka vs Manipur (7 pm).

**February 28:** Assam vs Services (10 am), Kerala vs Arunachal Pradesh (2.30 pm), Meghalaya vs Goa (7 pm).

**February 29:** Manipur vs Mizoram (10 am), Railways vs Karnataka (2.30 pm), Maharashtra vs Delhi (7 pm).

**March 1:** Services vs Kerala (10 am), Goa vs Assam (2.30 pm), Arunachal Pradesh vs Meghalaya (7 pm).

**March 2:** Mizoram vs Railways (10 am), Delhi vs Manipur (2.30 pm), Karnataka vs Maharashtra (7 pm).

### Quarter-finals:

**March 4:** Group A Pos 1 vs Group B Pos 4 (2.30 pm), Group A Pos 2 vs Group B Pos 3 (7 pm).

**March 5:** Group B Pos 1 vs Group A Pos 4 (2.30 pm), Group B Pos 2 vs Group A Pos 3 (7 pm).

### Semi-finals:

**March 7:** Winners QF 1 vs Winners QF 4 (2.30 pm), Winners QF 3 vs Winners QF 2 (7 pm).

### Final:

**March 9:** Winners SF 1 vs Winners SF 2 (7 pm).



**ALL INDIA  
FOOTBALL  
FEDERATION**