



# VISION 2047

T A R G E T 2 0 2 6



**MONTH OF DECEMBER:  
FULL OF FOOTBALL**

- Kalyan Chaubey  
President, AIFF

**MANIPUR WOMEN  
CHAMPIONS  
YET AGAIN**



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# President's Note

*Month of December: full of football!*

## **Kalyan Chaubey**

December is a month of joy and celebration; a home to many holidays, including Christmas and New Year's Eve.

But in AIFF, who are working closely with Indian football, the Beautiful Game remains the only festival. So, currently, the entire Football House is deeply involved in conducting and arranging nationwide broadcast of 86 matches in three tournaments - I-League, Santosh Trophy and Senior National Women's Championship for the Rajmata Jijabai Trophy.

Let us now have a look at the Santosh Trophy, the country's premier and oldest football championship for the states. We have witnessed a huge upswing in the competitive nature and organisation of the tournament in the last two editions; first in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and then in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh. Currently, the 78th edition of the Santosh Trophy is being played in Hyderabad, Telangana, in similar spirit; the final will be played on the New Year's Eve.

In the past, I had expressed my thanks to Government of Telangana for their continuous support to Indian football. The city of Nizams, in 2024, hosted the Intercontinental Cup and then the FIFA friendly against Malaysia and now it is successfully hosting the 78th Santosh Trophy after a gap of 57 years. I am confident that this effort will go a long way in attracting the youth of Telangana and the country in general more towards the great sport.

We have succeeded in showcasing Santosh Trophy as a bigger platform, where players from nook and corner of the country can present themselves and hope to be spotted for bigger assignments.

On the other hand, the success of Women's Nationals for the Rajmata Jijabai Trophy is two-fold. While the activities in women's football in the last two seasons had seen improvement in quality matches,



Narainpur as the venue has gained significance by holding the third national level tournament after the inaugural Men's U20 (Swami Vivekananda Cup) and the BC Roy Trophy.

An initiative by the Government of India through Ministry of Sports has helped AIFF in organisation of Khelo India and its 90-odd leagues came as a boon and it greatly increased the number of women's players' registration in India. The women's competitions have become far more broad-based since then, and the Rajmata Jijabai Trophy has turned out to be a huge hit. I am sure the success of the Jijabai Trophy will encourage more girls in India to take up football.

Recently, the AIFF has engaged a Swedish coach, Joakim Alexandersson, for the Indian women's team. The Maldives national team will be in Bengaluru in the month end and will play two matches against India. I hope under the guidance of Coach Alexandersson our Women will be able to adopt modern European style of football.

A busy month this; pleasant weather across the country and lots of football all over. I thank everyone in the AIFF, teams, players, coaches, officials and Member Associations for the untiring efforts they put in in this 31-day period for organising this staggering number of 86 matches. They all have done brilliant job in their own roles. My season's greetings to all of you and wish you a great year ahead.



## Roja Devi goal gives Manipur 23rd Sr Women's NFC for Rajmata Jijabai Trophy

Manipur's near-monotonous monopoly over the Senior Women's National Football Championship remained uninterrupted when they defeated Odisha 1-0 in the final of the Rajmata Jijabai Trophy at the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama Ground on Monday, December 23, 2024.

After a barren first half, defending champions Manipur made sure of taking home the trophy for the 23rd time out of the 29 editions played so far when striker Asem Roja Devi booted in the winner through a jungle of legs off a corner kick in the 55th minute. Odisha once more had to stay content with the runners-up trophy as it was their sixth defeat in seven finals, all against the ultimate champions Manipur.

On Monday, Odisha could take pride in restricting the victory margin of the mighty Manipur side to the bare minimum, but some amount of luck too played a role in the scoreline that projected a seesaw battle. While there is no denying the fact the Odisha defence put up a gallant fight against the rampaging Manipur attack, Odisha were distinctly lucky not to concede at least two more goals.

Manipur, who camped themselves in the Odisha half right from the kick off, missed the opportunity to take the lead in the fifth minute when they wasted a spot kick.

A handball by Odisha defender Shibani Munda prompted the referee Ruva Devi G to call for a penalty award. Seasoned Ratanbala Devi displayed enough confidence in taking the kick, but it hit the post before coming back to play. With the Manipur midfielders and forwards swarming all over the Odisha goal area like a unit of trained commandos, the supremacy of the north-eastern state was never in question. Odisha were reduced to playing second fiddle from the beginning, and except for occasional forays, they had not much to say in the Manipur area.

Odisha skipper and livewire of attacks, Pyari Xaxa, was kept under constant check by the alert Manipur defenders thus ending any chance of Odisha even making a serious dent in the rival arena.

But, despite all their overwhelming presence, Manipur were left frustrated by an Odisha defence that firmly believed in promptly clearing the ball whenever faced with the slightest danger. And when they could not, Manipur themselves faltered and fumbled, like one missed by experienced Dangmei Grace from close range.

Finally, the goal came in the 55th minute; it was more of a result of a scramble in the goalmouth than a concrete move. That Roja Devi could put it right through the narrow gap made all the difference in the final.

**Manipur:** Elangbam Panthoi Chanu (GK, C), Ngangbam Sweety Devi, Laishram Rejiya Devi (Irom Prameshwori Devi 58'), Hemam Shilky Devi, Phanjoubam Nirmala Devi, Yumlebham Pakpi Devi, Wangkhem Linthoingambi Devi, Nongmaithem Ratanbala Devi, Dangmei Grace (Laishram Bibicha Devi 89'), Asem Roja Devi, Naorem Priyangka Devi.

**Odisha:** Sasmita Parida (GK), Ambruta Nayak, Juli Kishan, Pragyan Kishan, Sumitra Hembram, Munica Minz, Pyari Xaxa (C), Deepa Nayak, Malati Munda (Manisha Naik 46'), Shibani Mundari, Subhadra Sahoo (Sunita Swain 58', Laxmi Priya Lenka 84').





## India drawn with Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangladesh in Group C of Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers Final Round

India were drawn against Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangladesh in Group C of the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 Qualifiers Final Round. The draw, which saw 24 teams divided into six groups of four, was held at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Monday, December 9, 2024.

Only the six group winners will qualify and join the 18 teams who have already punched their tickets to the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 after the second round of qualifying. The Qualifiers Final Round will be contested over six match days in a home-and-away format between March 25, 2025 and March 31, 2026. India, aiming to qualify for three successive Asian Cups for the first time in their history, will begin their campaign at home against Bangladesh.

India have faced all three opponents in the recent past. The Blue Tigers last faced Bangladesh in the 2021 SAFF Championship, Hong Kong in the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers in Kolkata in June 2022, and Singapore in the Hung Thinh Friendly Tournament in Vietnam in September 2022.

As per the FIFA Rankings released in November, India are placed 127th, Hong Kong are 156th, Singapore are 161st and Bangladesh are 185th.

After the draw, India head coach Manolo Márquez said, "We are a Pot 1 team and we need to show why we are the favourites to qualify. There are not too many differences between groups. Every group is difficult. Hong Kong has improved a lot with naturalised players and with their coach Ashley Westwood, who India played against in the World Cup Qualifiers (while he was in charge of Afghanistan). We will play against Bangladesh first in March, who have been our regular opponents in the SAFF Championship. We know the calendar. We have six games and we need to top the group and qualify for the Asian Cup."



**India's fixtures in the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 Qualifiers Final Round:**

**March 25, 2025:** India vs Bangladesh (home)

**June 10, 2025:** Hong Kong vs India (away)

**October 9, 2025:** India vs Singapore (home)

**October 14, 2025:** Singapore vs India (away)

**November 18, 2025:** Bangladesh vs India (away)

**March 31, 2026:** India vs Hong Kong (home)

**AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers Final Round Full Draw Result:**

**Group A:** Tajikistan, Philippines, Maldives, Timor-Leste

**Group B:** Lebanon, Yemen, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam

**Group C:** India, Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangladesh

**Group D:** Thailand, Turkmenistan, Chinese Taipei, Sri Lanka

**Group E:** Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Pakistan

**Group F:** Vietnam, Malaysia, Nepal, Lao



## Manolo Márquez holds meetings with AIFFF top brass on Asian Cup 2027 preparations

The head coach of the Senior Men's National Team, Manolo Márquez, was in the capital for two days recently (December 5 and 6) and held a series of meetings at the Football House on India's preparations for the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers.

Apart from meeting the AIFFF President Shri Kalyan Chaubey, the 56-year-old Spanish coach also held discussions with the Technical Committee members, the AIFFF Technical Director Syed Sabir Pasha and members of the AIFFF scouting team.

On Monday, December 9, the draw for the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers Final Round will be held at 12:30 pm IST. India are placed in Pot 1 for the draw, which will split 24 teams into six groups of four each. The matches will be held in a round-robin format on a home-and-away basis from March 2025 to March 2026. As per the schedule, India, as a Pot 1 team, will play their first match on March 25, 2024, at home against a Pot 4 team.

Márquez has given the proposal to hold a preparatory camp of a longer duration before India start their AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers campaign on March 25. After consulting its marketing partners, the AIFFF felt the National camp could begin on March 14, two days after the last league match in the Indian Super League 2024-25.

The AIFFF President Shri Chaubey said: "The qualification for the 2027 Asian Cup is our main target. The AIFFF will do everything as per the plan submitted by the head coach."

Márquez said: "For two days, I had fruitful meetings with the AIFFF President, senior officials and technical members of the AIFFF. I am sure with the kind of preparations we have planned, the National Team will do well in the Asian Cup qualifiers."



# India should Target FIFA Top 50 Rankings in Next 10 Years - Dr Mansukh Mandaviya

All India Football Federation President Shri Kalyan Chaubey, on Thursday, November 28, 2024, called upon the honourable Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya and briefed him on the existing AIFF-FIFA Academy in Odisha and the plan to build additional four AIFF-FIFA Academies in different zones.

Mr Ged Roddy from FIFA TDS was present along with AIFF Secretary General Mr Anilkumar and Deputy Secretary General Mr M Satyanarayan.

The AIFF-FIFA Academy was launched in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, after the visit of Mr Arsène Wenger, FIFA Chief of Global Football Development and widely regarded as the world's most successful coach in developing youth players.

The AIFF-FIFA academy in Odisha currently has 32 cadets. Mr Ged Roddy, FIFA TDS project director, is presently on a visit to India to review the project.

After the meeting, which also discussed the importance of coach development, the honourable minister assured the AIFF all possible support for the development of football in India. Dr Mandaviya said, "An elaborate plan has to be chalked out and put in place for execution so that India can reach a FIFA ranking below 50 in the next ten years. India boasts one of the largest pools of young talent globally. The focus should be on grassroots, talent identification. They should be nurtured along with coach development which will be pivotal for the sports growth.

"Rapid economic growth and an expanding middle class are reshaping attitudes towards sports. Parents are now encouraging children to balance academics with sports unlike earlier times," the honourable minister pointed out.



He said, "The Government is committed to providing comprehensive support for sports development in India. Initiatives like new training centres and partnerships with international bodies will drive progress."

AIFF President Shri Chaubey said, "Given the size and population of a vast country like India, one AIFF-FIFA academy in Odisha is not enough. So, we proposed to have four more regional academies with the same technical supports from FIFA."

He also added that the AIFF has presented a detailed plan to the honourable Sports Minister.

"Presently in India, there are 25 fully professional clubs in the ISL and the I-League. In addition to that, there are 80 AIFF-accredited academies, all these teams are having under-13 age group category teams, the details have been presented to the ministry.

"If these U13 category players of 105 teams can follow the same Football Philosophy under FIFA's technical guidance through five zonal AIFF-FIFA Academies, then it will lead us to having 110 teams of U13 category. Through this initiative we can create nearly 3300 players (if there are 30 players in each team), who will grow up through same football philosophy. The success of this project may well lead India to qualify for the U17 World cup in its own merit," said the AIFF President.



## Joakim Andersson appointed India U20, U17 women's Chief Coach

Swedish coach Joakim Andersson has been appointed as the Chief Coach of India Women's U20 and U17 national teams by the All India Football Federation.

Andersson will commence his coaching stint in India with the two-month long U20 national camp beginning in Bengaluru from December 10, 2024. The 48-year-old coach has come as part of an agreement between the All India Football Federation and the Swedish Football Association.

The Swedish coach had an extensive playing career as a defender majorly for IF Elfsborg, captaining the club and winning multiple trophies. He is also a former Sweden U21 international. Andersson began his career as a youth director and coach at IF Elfsborg in 2014 and coached the Elite U17, U16, U15 and U14 teams of boys and girls, leading to multiple youth league titles and player promotions to senior teams.

Commenting on his appointment, AIFF President Shri Kalyan Chaubey said, "I would like to convey my gratitude to the Swedish FA for the collaboration. It will help Indian women footballers to have better opportunities."

“Four of our women coaches, along with two goalkeeper coaches will be closely working with Mr. Alexandersson. The team of support staff will play a role with national scouts and Member Associations to identify talent across the country,” Shri Chaubey said.

The AIFF President also informed that the federation is considering the possibilities of increasing the quota of foreign players in the Indian Women’s League. He thanked the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, for the support to host 90 leagues in three different age categories for Women Players under the Khelo India scheme. “This scheme will help us to expand the pool of players,” he said.

The coaches who will assist Alexandersson are Nivetha Ramadoss, Amrutha Aravind, Sradhanjali Samantaray, and Nidhi. The two goalkeeper coaches are KK Hameed, and Dipankar Choudhury.

Two friendly matches between India U20 and Maldives are likely to be played on December 30, 2024, and January 2, 2025. Overall, the AIFF plans to have longer camps for seven to eight months for the women football teams and arrange 10-12 exposure matches a year against competitive opponents.

AIFF Deputy Secretary General Mr. M Satyanarayan, who is also the head of National Teams, said, “This is part of our long-term planning for women’s football. We are preparing to have a two-year long plan with Mr. Alexandersson for Asian Games 2026 and the AFC Women’s Asian Cup 2026.”

Alexandersson said, “I feel very excited about the challenge. I feel India has a big potential. Football is a big sport here and everyone wants to progress, so I think I have a good opportunity here and I’m looking forward to it.”

India currently enjoy a rank of 13 in Asia in senior women’s football. To further improve the level, AIFF has an elaborate plan to broad base at the junior level, and the Swedish coach will have regular interactions with the scouts involved in the process.





# 38 players called up for India U20 women's selection trials

The selection trials of the Indian U20 women's team began on December 10, 2024, at The Sports School in Bengaluru. A total of 38 players have been shortlisted for the trials.

**Goalkeepers:** Nandini, Ribansi Jamu, Sanju Kanwar, Sharubam Anika Devi.

**Defenders:** Chingakham Alina, Irom Sonibia Devi, Kalpna, Khumukcham Bhumika Devi, Mhalo, Nandini Yadav, Priya Darshini, Sanjana, Sarita, Tamanna, Viksit Bara.

**Midfielders:** Aleena Tony, Doshmie Rowtia, Fatima Braganza, Hildamit Lepcha, Kimte Langel, Lakshmi Priya KR, Lourebam Menaka Devi, Mandala Anusha, Palak, Remi Thokchom, Simran Gurung, Thingbaijam Sanjita Devi.

**Forwards:** Anchal Patel, Arti Munda, Deepika Pal, Gurleen Kaur, Khushbu Kashiram Saroj, Lhingdeikim, Mitali Melwal, Monisha Singha, Serbirika Terangpi, Smeeta Sundas, Tamatapu Aruna.



# Shooting Range







## Danial Shakeel Patel's dream run at FIFAE World Cup ft. eFootball - Mobile ends in semi-finals

In the first-ever FIFAE World Cup ft. eFootball - Mobile, India's Danial Patel's sensational run ended in the semi-finals after going down to Malaysia on Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at the SEF Arena, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The 17-year-old, who had taken the group stage by storm, pumping in 20 goals to finish second, registered a stunning comeback win against Türkiye's YUSA in the quarter-finals. The knockout stage was held in a best-of-three format.

Türkiye nicked the first game 2-1 in extra time despite Danial equalising with the last kick of the game in normal time. However, he bounced back in the second game, and after a cagey and goalless 90 in-game minutes, saw off a 1-0 win in extra time to force a deciding third game. The decider proved to be a one-sided affair as Danial went out all guns blazing and raced to a two-goal lead before half-time. Türkiye did not have enough left in the tank to make a comeback and Danial cruised into the last four.

It was clear from the first game that Malaysia would present the toughest challenge of the World Cup for Danial. Although the Indian took an early lead, Malaysia ultimately ended up winning 3-1. The second game turned out to be as close an affair as possible, requiring penalties to separate the two sides. Danial once again went ahead in the first half, but Malaysia equalised moments later. There were no goals until the end of extra time, which led to the first-ever shootout of the World Cup. Despite Danial seeing two of his first three penalties saved, he scored the next four to win 5-4 and force another decider. The third and final game ended up being arguably the most thrilling one of the entire tournament. It did not start according to plan at all for Danial, who conceded twice early on. But he delivered another resolute comeback with a couple of quickfire goals in the second half to level it up 2-2 again and leave Malaysia rattled. However, just as the match was moments away from inching into extra time, the Malaysian pulled a rabbit out of the hat, splitting open the Indian defence and scoring the winner in the 87th minute of in-game time.



## AIFF signs commercial rights agreement with Shrachi Sports

The All India Football Federation signed a commercial rights agreement for its premier competitions (I-League, I-League 2, IWL, Senior National Football Championship for Santosh Trophy and Senior Women's National Football Championship for Rajmata Jijabai Trophy) with Shrachi Sports Endeavour Private Limited for producing and broadcasting 338 matches in the 2024-25 season.

These senior men and women club leagues and national championship matches will be streamed on the SSEN app, and 110 of the 132 I-League matches will be broadcast live on Sony Sports Network.

"This significant partnership will help Indian football to get necessary exposure," said AIFF Secretary General Mr Anilkumar.

Mr Rahul Todi, Managing Director, Shrachi Sports, said, "It is indeed a historic day for Shrachi Sports to be partnering with AIFF. This will provide a platform for men and women players to showcase their talents to national and international audiences with high quality HD content. With this partnership, Shrachi shows its commitment towards being part of India's growing sports ecosystem."



## Training camp for AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup began in Bhavnagar from December 15

The training camp to select the Indian futsal team for the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup 2025 Qualifiers in Indonesia in January, 2025, began in Bhavnagar, Gujarat, from December 15, 2024.

Nineteen players have been named for the training camp. The Indian women's futsal team will make their first appearance in the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup 2025 Qualifiers, which will be played in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from 15-19 January, 2025.

India have been drawn in Group B, where they will face Hong Kong (January 15), hosts Indonesia (January 17), and Kyrgyz Republic (January 19).

### **List of campers:**

**Goalkeepers:** Tanvi Mavani, Sandya Kumari, Pushpa Sahu.

**Defenders:** Maya Rabari, Radhika Patel, Anjitha M, Achom Degio.

**Midfielders:** Drishti Pant, Shreya Oza, Alphonsia Marydasan, Rebecca Zamthianmawi, Arya More, Pooja Gupta, Ritika Singh, Vaishhnavi Barate, Ashwini MR.

**Forwards:** Khusbhu Saroj, Madhubala Alawe, Debika Tanti.

**Head coach:** Joshua Stan Vaz

**Assistant coach:** Judon Dominic Dsouza

**Goalkeeper coach:** Veera Babu Sivaneni



# India drawn with Thailand, Kuwait and Lebanon in Group A of AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup 2025

India were drawn against hosts Thailand, Kuwait and Lebanon in Group A of the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup Thailand 2025. The draw, which saw 16 teams divided into four groups of four, was held at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Thursday, December 19, 2024.

India will participate in the tournament after 18 years, having last featured at the 2007 Asian Beach Soccer Championship in the UAE. The Indian national beach soccer team will be active for the first time since the 2008 Asian Beach Games in Indonesia. Set to be hosted by Thailand for a third time, the 11th edition of the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup will take place at the Jomtien Beach in Pattaya from March 20 to 30, 2025. The 16 teams were seeded into four pots based on their final ranking from the 2023 tournament where applicable, with Thailand seeded first as the host association.

Thailand and Kuwait were quarter-finalists in the 2023 edition, while Lebanon were eliminated in the group stage. The top two finishers from each group will move into the quarter-finals. Qualification to the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup is also on offer – the top three teams will fill the three berths allocated to the AFC for the 2025 edition in the Seychelles.

## **AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup Thailand 2025 Draw Result**

Group A: Thailand, Kuwait, Lebanon, India

Group B: Japan, China PR, Saudi Arabia, Iraq

Group C: Iran, UAE, Afghanistan, Indonesia

Group D: Oman, Bahrain, Malaysia, Vietnam



**ALL INDIA  
FOOTBALL  
FEDERATION**