

India ready to try 'a few things' in clash against Iraq

PTI, CHIANG MAI (Thailand): The Indian football team will be open to experimentation when it clashes with a comparatively easy rival Iraq in a Group B clash of the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers, here, on Wednesday.

Winger Soumya Guguloth, who suffered a nasal bone fracture during the match against Timor-Leste, has been ruled out of the contest.

India currently sit atop the table with six points and a goal difference of +17 after wins against Mongolia (13-0) and Timor-Leste (4-0). Thailand are in second place, also with six points but with a goal difference of +11.

Iraq have already played three games and are on four points. They must defeat India to have any chance of staying alive on the road to Australia. While it has

turned into a race between India and Thailand to increase their goal difference before they meet on the final day (July 5), Blue Tigresses coach Crispin Chettri affirmed that earning three points are the bigger priority, and the focus is only on the game against Iraq for now.

PREVIEW: AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP 2026 QUALIFIERS

"Thailand is the last match, but for now, our full focus is on Iraq. We shouldn't worry about how many goals Thailand or we have scored, or will score. The priority is to approach the Iraq match with a positive mindset and go for the win," said Chettri.

After defeating Timor-Leste on Sunday, Chettri and his coaching

staff stayed at the stadium to watch Iraq suffer a 0-7 drubbing at the hands of the hosts.

It has been a rollercoaster ride for the 173rd-ranked West Asians, who were held goalless by Timor-Leste in the first game, before defeating Mongolia 5-2 to earn their first-ever victory on

the international stage.

Giving his opinion on the Iraq side coached by their former men's international Abdul-Wahab Abu Al-Hail and ranked 103 places below India, Chettri said, "For me, Iraq are not as weak as people might think. They're a good side, but they've been playing back-to-back matches, so we may have an advantage in terms of

recovery."

"Overall, I don't see a big difference between Iraq and Timor-Leste. I feel Timor-Leste were more organised. So, I think we'll get more opportunities to play our game against Iraq. It should be a good match for us to try a few new things as well."

With only two days to prepare after the match against Timor-Leste, the Blue Tigresses utilised their break fruitfully with recovery in the pool and a gym session on Monday morning, followed by a full training session on Tuesday morning.

"We worked on the areas where we fell short in the matches against both Timor-Leste and Mongolia. We're now giving players specific responsibilities, whether it's in attack or in 1v1 defending. That was the main focus of the preparation," said Chettri.

Bhatti SC clinch Silver Jubilee Cup

INACIO NORONHA



The winners along with chief guest Curtorim MLA Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco, Rui Menezes, Catano Hilario, Police Inspector Filomena Costa, Adv Coleman Rodrigues, Arnaldo Costa, Conceicao Dias, Remedias Mascarenhas, Inacio Noronha, Alex Dias, Terencio Fernandes, SC Virabhat patron members and other dignitaries at the St Alex Church ground, Curtorim, recently

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RAIA: Bhatti Sports Club clinch the Silver Jubilee Cup 2025 defeating Agxem Sports Club, 3-1, in the 9-a-side inter-ward football tournament organised by Sporting Club Virabhat, at the St Alex Church ground, Curtorim, recently.

In an exciting final attended by large crowd, Agxem SC moved ahead in 10th minute through Jovel Martins to make it 1-0. Bhatti SC equalised through Ralf Dias in the 18th minute

- INDIVIDUAL AWARDS**
- First scorer:** Jovel Martins (Agxem SC)
 - Best midfielder:** Micheal Paes (Agxem SC)
 - Man-of-the-match:** Ralf Dias (Bhatti SC)
 - Highest scorer of the tournament:** Tony Dias (Bhatti SC)
 - Best goalkeeper of final:** Perry Dias (Bhatti SC)
 - Best striker of final:** Ralf Dias (Bhatti SC)
 - Best defender of final:** Aaron Dias (Bhatti SC)
 - Best midfielder of tournament:** Venson Paes (SC Virabhat)
 - Promising player of tournament:** Vivon Fernandes (SC Virabhat)
 - Best disciplined team:** Batora United

to make it 1-1 in the first half.

In second half, Bhatti SC scored the second goal

through Tony Dias in the 40th minute to make it 2-1.

Bhatti SC scored the third goal through Ralf Dias in

the 45th minute to make it 3-1. Agxem SC tried their best but Bhatti SC defenders stood like solid rock thwarting all the rival defence.

Chief guest Curtorim MLA Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco gave away the prizes in the presence of Rui Menezes, Catano Hilario, Police Inspector Filomena Costa, Adv Coleman Rodrigues, Arnaldo Costa, Conceicao Dias, Remedias Mascarenhas, Inacio Noronha, Alex Dias, Terencio Fernandes, SC Virabhat patron members and other dignitaries.

INACIO NORONHA



Agnelo L Fernandes, who has been unanimously re-elected as the president of Salcete Football Club for the period 2025-27 at the annual general body meeting held at the Sinquerim Sports Complex, recently, along with other committee members Vice-Presidents Savio Medeira, Fr Eremita Coutinho, Francisco Dias and Justo D'Costa, Honorary General Secretary Jacinto Fernandes, Assistant General Secretary Vaibhav Raut, Treasurer Sunil Naik, Assistant Treasurer Darcie D'Sousa, Members Dr Suvidya Naik, Clarence Furtado and Nathan Dias

Assonora Utd march into semi-finals

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RAIA: Assonora United Football Club scored a hard-fought 4-3 tie-breaker win over Saligao United in an exciting match to move into the semi-finals of 1st Vedanta Trophy organised by Sinquerim Sports Club at Sinquerim Sports Club ground, on Tuesday.

VEDANTA TROPHY

Both the teams dished out a good brand of football throughout the match but either of them failed to score during the regulation time.

In the resulant tie-breaker, Assonora United Football Club scored through Kunal Salgaonkar, Satyam Gawas, Prajyot Arabekar and Gauresh Bugde while Saligao United netted through Kendrick Menezes, Leon Kerketta and Latesh Mandrekar.

Harsh Bhagat of Assonora United Football Club was awarded the man-of-the-match by Sandeep Vaigankar.

Francis is president of FC Siolim



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MAPUSA: Francis Fernandes, former Goa Football Association's vice-president was elected unopposed as the president of revamped Football Club of Siolim in the election held at its club house, Siolim, recently.

Speaking to O Herald, Francis said he has come forward to shoulder the responsibility of revamping one of the oldest clubs in the State, which was started in November 1952 by Lube Tavara, for the betterment of upcoming footballers and youngsters in the Siolim village.

"Along with the elected committee members we are giving opportunity to the youngsters by fielding the U-14 and U-16 teams in the upcoming Goa Football Association's age grouped tournaments and also participation in the inter-village football tournaments," concluded Francis.

IM Nitish lays hands on Monsoon Cup

HERALD PIC



IM Nitish Belurkar, Mandar Lad and Rishikesh Parab, the top three winners, along with dignitaries and members of Queens Club at the Dr K B Hedgewar School, Cujira, recently

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PANJIM: International Master Nitish Belurkar displayed a flawless performance scoring a perfect 9 points in 9 rounds to emerge champion in the Monsoon Cup All Goa Open Rapid Chess Tournament 2025 organised by Queens Chess and Cultural Club, at the Dr K B Hedgewar School, Cujira, recently.

Mandar Lad and Rishikesh Parab, with 8 points each, secured second and third place respectively. Dmitry Bezstrakhov and Reuben Colaco finished fourth and fifth with 7.5 points each.

Players scoring seven points and placing 6th to 15th included Devesh Naik, Parth Salvi, WCM Gunjal Chopdekar;

Aryan Raikar, Shane Braganca, Datta Kambli, Chaitanya Gaonkar, Mayank Kurtikar, Shaurya Agrasani and Swera Braganca.

Shubham Sawaikar, Maayuresh Desai, Aarav Chopdekar, Anish Naik and Vihaan Tari followed in 16th to 20th place with 6.5 points each.

Nidhi Gaude clinched the best women prize with 6.5 points, while the best veteran prize went to Vasant Naik, who scored 6 points.

Age category winners: U-15 Boys: Chaitanya Patil, Aarth Karapurkar; U-15 Girls: Vaishnavi Parab, Riddhi Sanjay Gaude. U-13 Boys: Ethan Silveira, Nathan Cardozo. U-13 Girls: Liya Silveira, Alaina Gomes. U-11 Boys: Aaryavrat Naik Desai, Prachet Malvankar.

U-11 Girls: Samrithi Malkar, Muriel Fernandes. U-9 Boys: Prayank Gaonkar, Rejmon Fernandes. U-19 Girls: Shreeshha Ghadi, Sidonia Dacunha. U-7 Boys: Nilay Gaude, Z. Schaffer Viegas and U-7 girls: Sreeja Ghanekar, Adhvi Terse.

The youngest girl prize went to Yashasvi Walke and Vihaan Usapkar received the youngest boy prize.

The inaugural function was graced by Bindiya Dempo, while social worker Damodar Naik, who sponsored the prize money in memory of late Shri Shantaram Zantye, was chief guest at the prize distribution ceremony.

Youngest FA of India, Tanishq Kavlekar, served as Chief Arbiter and was felicitated at the event.

Dignitaries present included GCA Secretary Ashesh Keni, MTCA president and organising secretary of the 24th IPCA World Chess Championship Kishor Bhandekar, TTCA Secretary Dattaram Pinge, IA Sanjay Kavlekar (SAG chess coach), QTCA Secretary Sameer Naik, former State chess champion Vasant Naik, Queens Club President Dr Roopa Belurkar and others including Balakrishnan V. Sanjay Belurkar, Dr Snehil Shetty, Dr Pradnya Kakodkar, Sarika Chopdekar, Vishala Shetty, Sunetra Dagare, Teja Hadkonkar, Dr Rekha Poduwal, and Renuka Hawal.

Queens Club Vice President Dr Pradnya Kakodkar compered the event.

Davorlim KICA Warriors emerge champions

INACIO NORONHA



Chief guest Curtorim MLA Aleixo Reginald Lawrence in the presence of Joaquim Fernandes presents trophy to the winners at Raia ground, recently

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RAIA: KICA Warriors of Davorlim defeated Sai Bodeshwar of Mapusa 6-1 to emerge champions in the 3-a-side football tournament organised by Dashing Boys of Arlem at Raia

ground, recently. Prince and Roysen scored a hat-trick each for KICA Warriors while Pratik Naik reduced the margin for Sai Bodeshwar.

Stephen Satarkar of Keith Boys was declared as the best player of the tournament, while Prince

and Roysen of KICA Warriors were awarded for first scorer of the final and player of the final respectively.

Curtorim MLA Aleixo Reginald Lawrence was the chief guest and handed over the prizes in the presence of Joaquim Fernandes.

H&HC Benaulim clinch Sir Mecca memorial trophy

HERALD PIC



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MAPUSA: H&HC Benaulim managed to edge past Backstreet by 2-1 margin to clinch the 9th Sir Mecca Rodrigues memorial 7-a-side football tournament organised by Mecca Boys in Swindon, United Kingdom, recently.

H&HC received the winners' cash prize of 2000

- INDIVIDUAL PRIZES**
- Highest goal scorer:** Alvito
 - Best player of tournament:** Alvito
 - Best goalkeeper:** Preston Best
 - Center back:** Elvis
 - Best right back:** Nelly
 - Best left back:** Clinton
 - Best midfielders:** Bolton, Nestor
 - Best striker:** Alvito

pounds plus trophy. In all 12 teams participated.

Estevan Mendes received a special award for most finals played in the United Kingdom, which was presented by Royston Rodrigues.

Former mayor of Swindon Imtiyaz Sheikh was the chief guest, guests of honour former footballer of Dempo Sports Club Camilo Gonsalves and Patrick Singham and special invitee Royston Rodrigues.

GTTC Paddle Knights are champions

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PANJIM: GTTC Paddle Knights led by Wesley Do Rosario clinched the Angley's Cup 2025 outsmarting GTTTC Flame Spinners captained by Aaron Farias in a pulsating table tennis final 8-5 played at Panjim Gymkhana, Campal, here, recently.

The premier team table tennis event organised by Panjim Gymkhana lived up to its historic reputation as the oldest team championship in the State, now in its sixth decade.

ANGLEY'S CUP TABLE TENNIS

The Angley's Cup followed an exciting format inspired by the Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) league of the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI). Each team match (rubber) featured five ties, with a total of 15 games, and the first team to win 8 games clinching the rubber.

In the final, it was a see-saw battle from the start. The Paddle Knights drew first blood in the Veterans Doubles, where Noel Noronha and Shawn Soares showcased their synergy to outplay Yousuf

HERALD PIC



The winning team GTTC Paddle Knights along with the dignitaries at Panjim Gymkhana, Campal-Panjim, recently

Shaikh and Joseph Sequeira 3-0. The Flame Spinners hit back in the Women's Singles, with Sreedatri Roy dismantling Trisha Paul 3-0 to level the tie.

The momentum shifted again in the Men's Singles, as Wesley Do Rosario, playing like a true captain, delivered a clinical straight-games win over rival skip-

per Aaron Farias. However, Flame Spinners weren't done yet - their junior star Dhruva Kamat fought back to beat Rishan Shaikh 2-1 in a tight three-game encounter, keeping the contest alive.

It all came down to the Mixed Doubles, where the experienced pair of Wesley Do Rosario and Trisha

Paul sealed the deal for GTTC Paddle Knights with a commanding 11-5 win over the Farias-Roy duo, taking the team past the 8-game mark and securing the Angley's Cup title. Team Parijat, owned by Dinesh Sinari, claimed the third place edging out TT Champions, featuring veteran stalwart Diljeet Velingker.