

# Pakistan to visit India for Junior World Cup: Hockey India

**RAJGIR:** Pakistan will travel to India later this year to compete in the FIH Junior World Cup, Hockey India secretary general Bholanath Singh confirmed on Saturday.

Pakistan opted out of the ongoing Asia Cup in Bihar following the military conflict between the two countries, citing security concerns.

It had raised doubts if the team from the neighbouring country will compete in the Junior World Cup to be held in Southern Indian cities of Chennai and Madurai in November-December.

“The Pakistan team is coming to India for the Junior World Cup. They confirmed to us last night. I asked them about their availability after they opted out of the ongoing Asia Cup,” Bholanath said.

He said the preparations for the tournament are at the “final stage”.

“Out of 24 countries, we have received the long list from 23 nations. Only Pakistan is left which are hoping to receive in a day or two.”

The Indian government recently formulated a policy that it would not have any bilateral sporting ties



with Pakistan but won't stop the Indian teams from competing against Pakistan in multinational events.

The policy was adopted in the wake of Pahalgam terrorist attack that killed 26 civilians and the subsequent Operation Sindoor carried out by India.

“I am very clear that whatever Olympic Charter tells us, the government and Hockey India will abide by that and fulfil that

The Government of India is also clear that Pakistan can come and play against India in any international tournament,” Bholanath said.

“The government has even cleared their visas, but now why Pakistan didn't come only they know.”

The top HI official also made it clear that FIH Pro League is an international tournament and India will play Pakistan if they are re-

quired to.

Pakistan have replaced New Zealand in the 2025-26 FIH Pro League.

“If they are in our pool in FIH Pro League, and if we have match against Pakistan, why won't we play them? It is an international tournament,” Bholanath said.

“If Pakistan comes for Pro League, why won't we play them. It is an international tournament.”

## Duleep Trophy quarterfinals draw Indian stars

**BENGALURU:** The Duleep Trophy quarterfinal matches at the BCCI Centre of Excellence have drawn considerable attention, not only for the intense competition on the field but also for the presence of several high-profile Indian cricket personalities in the stands.

National stars including Mohammed Siraj, Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Shardul Thakur, B Sai Sudharsan, Karun Nair, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Akash Deep, and Jitesh Sharma were spotted observing the proceedings closely, offering a unique opportunity for domestic players to showcase their talent in front of some of the country's finest cricketers.

The sight of these established players has added an electric atmosphere to the venue, inspiring young and emerging talent to raise their game.

Experts and enthusiasts noted that their presence also highlights the growing importance of the Duleep Trophy as a platform for players to stake a claim for higher honours in Indian cricket.

# No match time in England, but plenty of gains for Arshdeep Singh

**BENGALURU:** Before Thursday, Arshdeep Singh's last competitive match was the final of the Indian Premier League, for Punjab Kings against Royal Challengers Bengaluru on June 3. During the recent England series, the left-arm pacer must have fancied his chances of a Test debut, but a left thumb injury sustained during a practice session in Beckenham ahead of the fourth Test in Manchester ruled him out of the series.

Turning up for North Zone against East Zone in the Duleep Trophy quarterfinal, the 26-year-old didn't take time to get into match mode. He mixed his lengths well, varied pace, and his deliveries in the corridor outside kept probing the batters.

He looked match-ready from the opening delivery; why wouldn't he? Although he warmed the bench in England, where he had a county stint with Kent in 2023, the left-arm pacer used that time judiciously as he topped up his skills. Outlining his routine in England, he explained, “During the last couple of months with



the [Test] team, I trained and bowled a lot and also worked on strength and conditioning.”

Arshdeep, who has been waiting for an elusive Test cap, remains focused on achieving it. About staying in the zone and keeping frustration at bay while waiting for his opportunity, he said, “The training is almost the same. You just put in more work when you are not playing.

More overs, strength

work and training, so that whenever you get the chance, you are ready and fully fit to go. So, when you are not playing, you try to push the limit.” It's that mindset which will keep Arshdeep going as he switches formats and turns up for the country in next month's T20 Asia Cup.

During the last Test [Oval], I started training with a white ball. The workload was properly managed. I don't know how many thousands of balls I set down in practice. There was no lack of bowling. At the end of the day, white or red ball, you just play and enjoy it.

I got a chance to play here [Duleep] and will next play with a white ball. The aim is to have a lot of overs under the belt,” remarked Arshdeep, India's leading wicket-taker in T20Is with 99 scalps. The tour of England has been a huge learning curve for Arshdeep, and he revealed senior pacer Mohammad Siraj's mantra to beat boredom that he learnt during the series.

Mentally, in the last two months, I have learnt how to enjoy the boring time.

# Govt keen to make India sports goods manufacturing hub: Mandaviya

**NEW DELHI:** India will roll out a dedicated sports goods manufacturing policy by the end of the year, which will not only help nurture sporting talent but also make the country a prominent exporter of sports goods globally, Union sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Saturday.

Athletes in several sports disciplines have to rely on costly imported equipment to compete at the highest level to give them the cutting edge.

Mandaviya announced the formation of a task force in partnership with National Sports Federations (NSFs) and industry stakeholders to craft a forward-looking policy.

“By November-December, a scheme will be launched so that the country can become the best sports goods manufacturer, one that provides top-class facilities, empowers the entire ecosystem and (helps India) emerge as a prominent exporter of sports goods globally,” the minister said at the Sports Goods Manufacturing Conclave.

He said that India had the ability to achieve anything and that the country was looking at making sports med-



icines, sports infrastructure, sports literature, and sports education design a part of the bigger sports goods manufacturing project.

“The sports ecosystem is growing at a very fast pace. Our country has the capability to achieve everything. What we need to understand are the challenges ahead. In the coming days, how do we move forward in the sports

manufacturing sector?”

“We can also make sports medicines, sports infrastructure, sports literature, and sports education design a part of sports goods manufacturing. There are lots of challenges like GST... we must make a task force and have schemes and policies for sports manufacturing,” he said.

Mandaviya added that the ministry would reach out to stakeholders to draw out a pathway to strengthen the sector to drive greater production and export.

“Sports goods manufacturing sector is the priority for the government. The first pillar of the National Sports Governance Bill was athlete-centric governance. It also addressed the disputes of the federations. This is an important conclave, a part of the reforms in the sports sector which focuses on how we can intervene in sports goods manufacturing,” he said.

“Policies will be made through discussions with all stakeholders, including NITI Aayog and the manufacturers. The work of policy framing will be completed by September,” he added.

## Pardeep Narwal at his felicitation ceremony

**VIZAG:** On a day filled with nostalgia, the Kabaddi industry celebrated a man who changed the way the sport is played- Pardeep Narwal, the Dubki King.

For over a decade, his raids left defenders in his wake and fans at the stadiums roaring. More than 1,800 raid points, three Pro Kabaddi League titles, and a move-the dubki - that became synonymous with his name.

Yet, when Pardeep spoke at his felicitation, it wasn't the numbers that defined his voice, it was the emotion. “I came here today only for the fans,” he said. “Even now, when they call or message me, I feel like I must return for them.”

He remembered friendships, naming fellow warrior Maninder Singh, now at Patna Pirates - the team that gave him his fame - as one who stood by him beyond the mat. He recalled the joy of victories, the sting of near-misses, but above all, the unbreakable bond with the game.

“The Pro Kabaddi League gave me everything-fame, family, and the love of countless people. I want to take it as far as I can.”

The journey does not end here. With his Pardeep Narwal Kabaddi Academy, where 65 children will be chasing their dreams, Pardeep has chosen to gift the future what he once received. “I want to grow my kids like my coach once grew me,” he said. This academy will open on September 1, and will usher in the new generation of kabaddi stars.

## Ankit, Dhull hundreds grind East Zone, take North Zone closer to Duleep Trophy semifinals

**BENGALURU:** Skipper Ankit Kumar and promising batter Yash Dhull made contrasting hundreds to place North Zone on the cusp of the Duleep Trophy semifinals here Saturday.

North Zone chose to bat again despite holding a 183-run lead. While Ankit (168 batting) and Dhull (133, 157 balls) further bolstered that situation, taking their side to a mammoth 388 for two at the end of third day's play for an overall lead of 563 runs.

But the third day of the quarterfinal match was all about the ruthlessness of North Zone in extending their supremacy through Ankit and Dhull who milked 240 runs for the second wicket off just 290 balls.

They did it in their own way. Dhull was all aggression and Ankit went about his task in a more mellowed manner.

After the early dismissal of Shubham Khajuria (21), who was castled by Suraj Jaiswal, East Zone bowlers struggled to make any impact on the North pair.

Senior pacer Mohammed Shami found occasional movement and troubled the batters, but that was all the East bowlers could manage on the day.

Dhull's off-side play was exceptional as 57 runs came off in the arc between point and cover region, as he went past 50 in 49 balls.

But the 22-year-old had big slice of fortune when Sharandeep Singh dropped him on 48 at covers off left-arm spinner Manishi, and the Delhi batter did not require any second invitation to exploit the reprieve.

Ankit, meanwhile, went past fifty in 74 balls, and

soon his younger partner completed his eighth first-class century in 112 balls.

The only time Dhull looked a bit unsettled was in the 90s when Shami, who restricted himself to just 11 overs on the day, troubled him with a slew of quick snorters, but he withered the storm.

Along with Ankit, Dhull, who had a surgery to remove a hole in his heart last year, never gave any respite to the East spinners, often coming down the track to disrupt their rhythm.

Dhull reached his hundred with a single to mid-off, but Ankit fetched the milestone with much more flourish, with a six off Manishi. North went to tea at 290 for one in 64 overs, and added 125 runs in the middle session without losing a wicket.

# Scientists discover strange new parasitic wasp species in the US

Researchers, including faculty from Binghamton University, State University of New York, have discovered two parasitic wasp species in the United States that were previously unknown to science.

While oak gall wasps and the creatures that prey on them may lack the beauty of butterflies, they are increasingly drawing the attention of both scientists and nature enthusiasts.

These insects, measuring just 1 to 8 millimeters in length, create the tumor-like plant growths known as “galls.” Small as a pinhead or large as an apple, galls can take striking shapes, with some resembling sea urchins or saucers, explained Binghamton University Associate Professor of Biological Sciences Kirsten Prior, who also co-leads Binghamton's Natural Global Environmental Change Center.

If these wasps symbolize anything, it is the richness of biodiversity. North America is home to roughly 90 species of oak trees, which in turn host about 800 species of oak gall wasps. Parasitic wasps exploit these galls by laying their eggs inside, eventually consuming the oak gall wasp within.

But how many species of parasitoid wasps are out there? That's a question that scientists — both academic researchers traveling the globe and everyday citizens in their own backyard — are working to answer.

A recent article published in the Journal of Hymenoptera Research gives insight into a previously unknown level of species diversity. In addition to Prior, co-authors include current graduate student Kathy Fridrich and former graduate student Dylan G. Jones, as well as Guerin Brown, Corey Lewis, Christian Weinrich, MaKella Steffensen, and Andrew Forbes of the University of Iowa, and Elijah Goodwin of the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Tarrytown, N.Y.

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# Tencent Hunyuan Video-Foley brings lifelike audio to AI video

A team at Tencent's Hunyuan lab has created a new AI, ‘Hunyuan Video-Foley,’ that finally brings lifelike audio to generated video. It's designed to listen to videos and generate a high-quality soundtrack that's perfectly in sync with the action on screen.

Ever watched an AI-generated video and felt like something was missing? The visuals might be stunning, but they often have an eerie silence that breaks the spell. In the film industry, the sound that fills that silence — the rustle of leaves, the clap of thunder, the clink of a glass — is called Foley art, and it's a painstaking craft performed by experts.

Matching that level of detail is a huge challenge for AI. For years, automated systems have struggled to create believable sounds for videos.

One of the biggest reasons video-to-audio (V2A) models often fell short in the sound department was what the researchers call “modality imbalance”. Essentially, the AI was listening more to the text prompts it was given than it was watching the actual video.

For instance, if you gave a model a video of a busy beach with people walking and seagulls flying, but the text prompt only said “the sound of ocean waves,”

you'd likely just get the sound of waves. The AI would completely ignore the footsteps in the sand and the calls of the birds, making the scene feel lifeless.

On top of that, the quality of the audio was often subpar, and there simply wasn't enough high-quality video with sound to train the models effectively.

Tencent's Hunyuan team tackled these problems from three different angles:

1. Tencent realised the AI needed a better education, so they built a massive, 100,000-hour library of video, audio, and text descriptions for it to learn from. They created an automated pipeline that filtered out low-quality content from the internet, getting rid of clips with long silences or compressed, fuzzy audio, ensuring the AI learned from the best possible material.
2. They designed a smarter architecture for the AI. Think of it

like teaching the model to properly multitask. The system first pays incredibly close attention to the visual-audio link to get the timing just right — like matching the thump of a footstep to the exact moment a shoe hits the pavement. Once it has that timing locked down, it then incorporates the text prompt to understand the overall mood and context of the scene. This dual approach ensures the specific details of the video are never overlooked.- 3. To guarantee the sound was high-quality, they used a training strategy called Representation Alignment (REPA). This is like having an expert audio engineer constantly looking over the AI's shoulder during its training. It compares the AI's work to features from a pre-trained, professional-grade audio model to guide it towards producing

cleaner, richer, and more stable sound.

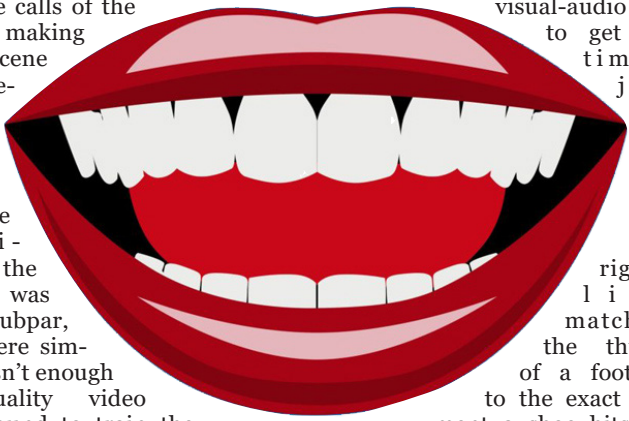
Today we're announcing the open-source release of HunyuanVideo-Foley, our new end-to-end Text-Video-to-Audio (TV2A) framework for generating high-fidelity audio.

This tool empowers creators in video production, filmmaking, and game development to generate professional-grade... pic.twitter.com/mff2m5xFvC

When Tencent tested Hunyuan Video-Foley against other leading AI models, the audio results were clear. It wasn't just that the computer-based metrics were better; human listeners consistently rated its output as higher quality, better matched to the video, and more accurately timed.

Across the board, the AI delivered improvements in making the sound match the on-screen action, both in terms of content and timing. The results across multiple evaluation datasets support this:

Tencent's work helps to close the gap between silent AI videos and an immersive viewing experience with quality audio. It's bringing the magic of Foley art to the world of automated content creation, which could be a powerful capability for filmmakers, animators, and creators everywhere.



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