

ASIAN CUP

Qualifying minimum target: Gurpreet

HYDERABAD: Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, the most experienced player in the Indian squad after Sunil Chhetri's retirement, completed a diamond jubilee of international caps (75) against Vietnam last month, wearing the captain's armband and crucially saving a penalty.

Currently training in Hyderabad with the Blue Tigers ahead of the friendly against Malaysia on November 18, Sandhu shared his thoughts on the preparations during a virtual media interaction on Wednesday.

"Everyone knows this is our last FIFA friendly window before the all-important Asian Cup Qualifiers in March. So, it's very important for us to make the most of this opportunity. We are happy to have a familiar face in Sandesh Jhingan coming back. It's great to see that he's recovered well and has already played a couple of games (for FC Goa)," Sandhu said.

"We have five more days of training before the Malaysia game, which is good because it allows us time to work together as a

team and get used to the new system that is in place with our coach," said Sandhu.

India faced Malaysia in the Merdeka



Tournament last October in Kuala Lumpur, going down 2-4 in a fiercely-contested game, which was the first time Sandhu played against the Southeast Asian side. Sandhu believed that was an unlucky result for the

Indians and the scoreline didn't justify the efforts. However, the Blue Tigers are highly motivated to change that and add a green mark to the scoreline in Hyderabad this time. "It was a different experience playing in Malaysia. They're a good side with a lot of new faces, a lot of quality players coming from elsewhere and helping them out. We could have got something more out of that game. It was an unlucky result for us, knowing that we scored a goal which was not allowed. Things like that happen in football. We need to brush aside what happened last time. We have a clean board in front of us and we need to make sure that we get the best result at home," Sandhu said.

Sandhu opened up about the intense competition he faces in the goalkeeping position in the national team. With top custodians like Amrinder Singh and Vishal Kaithi, who are key players of their ISL clubs, every national team training session is an opportunity to push the other to their limits and bag a spot in the starting eleven.

Oman to host inaugural FIH Hockey Nations Cup 2

LAUSANNE (SWITZERLAND): The International Hockey Federation (FIH) announce that the inaugural edition of the FIH Hockey Nations Cup 2 (men) will be staged in

Muscat, Oman next year (February 17-23, 2025).

This new event will give the opportunity for 8 more nations - ie, the national teams ranked after those involved in the FIH Hockey Pro League and the FIH Hockey Nations Cup - to play an intercontinental FIH tournament, and compete for the chance to be promoted into the 2026 FIH Nations Cup.

The creation of this new event follows one of the key focus areas of the FIH Em-

powerment and Engagement strategy - namely "More opportunities to compete" - that aims at facilitating the accessibility of National Associations to FIH tournaments.

Full list of participating teams for this event: Austria, Chile, China, Egypt, Oman, Poland, Scotland and USA

"Hosting the inaugural FIH Nations Cup 2 in Oman is both an honor and a testament to our commitment to advancing hockey in the region. We are thrilled to welcome teams and fans from around the world to experience Oman's passion for this sport. This tournament marks a significant milestone for Hockey Oman, and we look forward to an exciting display of talent and sportsman-

ship on our home ground," said Hockey Oman Chairman Dr. Marwan Juma Al Juma.

Commenting on the announcement, FIH President Tayyab Ikram said, "Oman is the nation of the 'firsts'!"

Hosting very successfully the inaugural FIH Hockey5s World Cup and now the very first FIH Hockey Nations Cup 2! The global hockey community could witness the wonderful hospitality of our Omani hosts during our FIH Congress, and all the participating teams can expect the same. It will

be an amazing event in a magnificent hockey venue. Thank you, Oman."

The hosts of the women's event will be announced soon.

PRO KABADDI LEAGUE

Dabang Delhi thrilling tie with Puneri Paltan

NOIDA: Ashu Malik single-handedly wrote a beautiful script for Dabang Delhi K.C. in match 50 of PKL 11 as he completed a Super 10 and also helped secure an impressive 38-38 tie with Puneri Paltan at the Noida Indoor Stadium.

He finished with 17 points to ensure that his team went home with half the points on the night.

Puneri Paltan started in a dominating fashion on

Tuesday night as Akash Shinde took the mantle of the raiding without their skipper Aslam Inamdar. The bright start was carried on by defenders Aman and Abinash Nadarajan, who won crucial tackle points.

Mohit Goyat inflicted the first All-Out of the match on Dabang Delhi K.C. in the 10th minute, but Ashu Malik, in the absence of Naveen Kumar, became the first raider to reach 100 raid points in

PKL 11 while also keeping his team alive in the game.

Led by Ashu, Dabang Delhi K.C. worked hard to mount a comeback, but Puneri Paltan's defensive duo of Aman and Abinash showed their class with multiple Super Tackles to their name.

Aman completed a well-earned High 5 in the first half itself as the score read 21-13 in favour of Puneri Paltan at the break.

Tim Paine tips Dhruv Jurel

MELBOURNE: Former Australia skipper Tim Paine believes inexperienced wicket-keeper-batter Dhruv Jurel can make a big impact for India during the upcoming Border-Gavaskar series.

While Jurel has only played three matches and was mainly included in India's touring party for the five-match Test series in Australia as a back-up for regular keeper Rishabh Pant, the 23-year-old impressed during a recent match for India A against Australia A in Melbourne.

Para Centre to feature 29 Para Sports

LEH (LADAKH): The world's first high-altitude para sports centre dedicated to training and nurturing para athletes in the country will be established in Leh, Ladakh and will focus to train for international competitions including the larger goal of preparing para-athletes for the 2028 Paralympics and advancing their skills, confidence, and performance to excel on global platforms.

A Memorandum and Understanding (MoU) to this effect was signed the

Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh, and the Aditya Mehta Foundation (AMF), who have been constantly working for the cause of Para Sports in the country.

The high-altitude para sports centre will offer inclusive, world-class training to para-athletes, not only from India but globally, providing them with a competitive edge unique to high-altitude training environments and also an opportunity for Indian para players to train along-

side them champions of the game, according to a media release.

"It is a very proud feeling for us that Leh will be establishing the world's first-ever high-altitude centre for para sports. Indian para-athletes have been leaving undeniable mark of performances at the world stage with 29 medals, including seven gold, that India won in the 2024 Paralympics in Paris is a testament of the talent we have in our country. I am confident that this centre will not only help

to tap the potentials of the region but also contribute hugely to India's journey to feature in the top-10 countries by the next Paralympics," said Advocate Tashi Gyalson, Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) of Ladakh (LAHDC), under whose guidance the initiative has seen the light of the day.

He further added, "This centre will allow these athletes to train with world-class facilities and represent Ladakh with pride on global platforms."

MGD launches Swarnakriti

MUMBAI: Malabar Gold Diamonds (MGD), the responsible jeweller and one of the world's largest gold and diamond retail chains, announces the launch of its exclusive new collection, 'Swarnakriti'. This classic curation, crafted by highly skilled karigars, showcases exquisite gold jewellery that beautifully combines India's rich heritage with contemporary designs.

Swarnakriti is a tribute to the journey of women who embody timeless elegance and strength, balancing tradition with modernity. Each piece in the collection is meticulously handcrafted, featuring intricate patterns, delicate filigree, and ornate details that celebrate India's storied heritage.

PECL announces results

MOHALI: Pritika Engineering Components Ltd. (PECL), one of the leading manufacturers of precision machined components for the tractor and automotive sectors in India, is pleased to announce Unaudited Q2 & H1 FY25 results.

Upon the Financial Performance, Harpreet Singh Nibber, Managing Director of Pritika Engineering Components Limited said, "We are pleased to report a robust performance in Q2 FY25, highlighted by a significant increase in revenue of 40.59% year-over-year, reaching Rs 32.03 crore.

Our EBITDA surged by an impressive 74.52%, with margins expanding by 320 basis points to 16.48%, reflecting our continued focus on operational efficiency.

MCMIL announces results

MUMBAI: Manaksia Coated Metals & Industries Limited (MCMIL), is one of the leading coated metal products manufacturer and exporter. Specializing in Pre-painted Galvanised Steel and Plain Galvanised Steel in both coil and sheet forms, has reported its Unaudited financials for H1 FY25.

Commenting on the performance Karan Agrawal Whole Time Director, Manaksia Coated Metals & Industries Limited said, "The decent performance we've delivered in H1 FY25 is a testament to our team's dedication and to the significant operational efficiencies we have implemented. Despite challenging market conditions, we have succeeded in strengthening our profitability while maintaining steady revenue streams.