

ISSF World Cup: Manu Bhaker, Chain Singh reach finals but miss out on medals in Munich

NEW DELHI, JUN 12:

Double Paris Olympics bronze medalist Manu Bhaker, finished sixth in the women's 25m pistol final, while Chain Singh finished seventh in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P), as India continued to maintain a 100% finals appearance record, in the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup (Rifle/Pistol) in Munich. Manu rallied brilliantly in the second rapid-fire stage of qualification earlier in the day, to make a fourth individual world cup final this year, shooting a sublime 298/300 to finish fifth in the 94-strong field. She shot a total of 588. Chain too maintained his excellent form this year, returning a 592 in qualification to qualify sixth in a top field. It was his second individual world cup final this year, after having won bronze in Buenos Aires. The men's 3P was the first final of competition day two and



the Indian could not recover from a score of 49.5 for his first five shots in

the first Kneeling position, bowing out at the 40-shot mark with a tally of

407.0.

The women's final which followed, had both the reigning Paris pistol champions from Korea, besides two top Chinese shooters, including Sun Yujie, who had won both the golds in the event in Buenos Aires and Lima.

Manu started well and was in medal contention till the third series of five-shots, however a score of two-hits in the fourth, pegged her back. She fought hard, but could not finish beyond sixth, exiting after the sixth series with 20-hits to her name.

Sun completed her hatrick with a score of 38, ahead of the two Korean champions Oh Yejin and Yang Jiin.

India's search for a second medal, after Elavenil Valarivan had won bronze in the women's 10m air rifle on day one, continues on day three with the men's 10m air rifle and the women's 3P finals lined up.

Delhi Open Chess: Abhijeet Gupta outplays Gharibyan in time crunch to claim sole lead

MUMBAI, JUN 12:

India's Abhijeet Gupta surged to the sole lead at the 21st Delhi International Chess Open after defeating Armenia's Mamikon Gharibyan in the seventh round. The sixth seed Gupta employed a free-flowing Ragozin Defense in their Queen's Gambit Declined game, gaining a significant time advantage early on with white pieces. By the 21st move, Gupta had 35 minutes remaining compared to Gharibyan's 23 minutes. The Indian grandmaster utilised both his time advantage and space on the board to pressure his opponent. By the 36th move, Gharibyan was down to just 21 seconds on his clock. Despite a stubborn defence,



Gharibyan resigned on the 71st move after Gupta cornered his king. With this win, Gupta moved to 6.5 points after seven rounds. He is now followed by eight players tied for second place at 6.0 points, including top seed SL Narayanan and Georgia's

Levan Pantsulaia, the highest-rated overseas player. Narayanan, after starting his campaign with a spotless five out of five wins, drew his sixth round against Gupta on Tuesday and had a similar result on Wednesday against Russian GM Boris Savchenko.

Marnus Labuschagne takes stunning catch to dismiss Temba Bavuma on Day 2 of WTC Final

MUMBAI, JUN 12:

It was all going South Africa's way in the first session of the second day at the ICC World Test Championships final at Lord's, until Marnus Labuschagne dived to his right to pull off a superb catch to dismiss a well-set Temba Bavuma. The South African skipper was batting with a much improved tempo, finding the boundaries regularly, moving to 36 with four fours and a six. And then his Australian counterpart Pat Cummins provided the breakthrough for the defending champions. The relentless accuracy of the Aussie pace attack meant that, despite better intent on Thursday, South Africa hadn't really gotten away too far ahead. Bavuma had formed a solid partnership with David Bedingham and in the 40th over, he went for a flamboyant cover drive to a full-ish



length delivery. The timing was alright but the placement wasn't as Labuschagne, a livewire on the field, started moving early to his right from short cover, dived full length and completed a fine catch. "Key to fielding is anticipation, expecting the ball. Look at the position he is in, not standing up tall, he was crouching down low,

expecting the ball at that height, exceptional catch and brilliant technique," former England captain Nasser Hussain – who often finds himself on air for these blinders at ICC events – said during commentary. "He is so balanced as he dived across, eyes on the ball and got two hands to it," former India head coach Ravi Shastri added.

After an excruciating wait for getting off the mark in innings on the opening day, Bavuma came out with much better intent on Day 2, driving the Aussie pacers on the up and even pulling Cummins for a smashing six.

On Day 1, Mitchell Starc led an Australia fightback after Kagiso Rabada's superb five-wicket haul, as bowlers dominated proceedings at Lord's where 14 wickets fell. Starc took two top order wickets and combined with fellow quicks Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood to reduce South Africa to 43 for four at the close, 169 runs in arrears. Rabada and Marco Jansen (3/49) had earlier come to the fore as the holders collapsed after tea and were bowled out for 212, losing five for 20 after half-centuries from Steve Smith and Beau Webster had helped them steady the ship.

European game generated 38 bln euros in 2023-24 season, study shows

NEW DELHI, JUN 12:

Europe's soccer market grew by 8% in terms of revenue in the 2023-24 season to 38 billion euros (\$43.46 billion) with England's Premier League generating the most, Deloitte said in a study published.

In its Annual Review of Football Finance, Deloitte said the top five leagues — Premier League, Bundesliga, LaLiga, Serie A and Ligue 1 — generated 20.4 billion euros in revenue, an increase of 4%.

Premier League clubs had the highest revenue of Europe's top leagues at 6.3 billion pounds (\$8.50 billion).

However, the traditional 'big six' clubs in England's top flight reported lower average revenue growth (3%) than other clubs that were in the Premier League in both the 2023-24 and 2022-23 seasons (11%). The study said the growth was largely driven by expansion of clubs' commercial offerings, which also led to the teams cumulatively generating more than two billion pounds in commercial revenue



for the first time.

"A focus on stadia development and diversification of commercial revenues led to growth across the European football market in the 2023-24 season," Tim Bridge, lead partner in Deloitte's Sports Business Group, said.

"However, clubs and leagues cannot afford to take their eye off the ball as new challenges, including an evolving regulatory landscape and changing fan behaviours, arise.

"The pressure is mounting for more clubs to drive additional revenue at the same time as managing rising costs.

"More so than ever, leaders and owners must recognise the great responsibility they have of managing these businesses, capturing the historic essence of a football club while honouring its unrivalled role as a community asset for generations to come."

Clubs in Europe's 'big five' leagues reported an aggregate

operating profit (0.6 billion euros) for a second successive season, while the aggregate wages/revenue ratio fell from 66% to 64%.

Clubs in England's Women's Super League (WSL) jointly generated revenue of 65 million pounds in the 2023-24 season, a 34% rise.

Each WSL club had a double-digit increase in revenue, while all 12 clubs reported over one million pounds in revenue for the first time, with an average revenue of 5.4 million pounds.

"Through developing more robust fan engagement strategies, strong commercial deals and securing central distributions, WSL clubs unlocked a new phase of growth," Deloitte Sports Business group's knowledge and insights lead Jennifer Haskel said.

"Plus, as the reporting and attribution of commercial revenue remains inconsistent between clubs, we may be scratching the surface on the value now being generated by the women's game."

Jack Grealish left out of Manchester City's Club World Cup squad



MUMBAI, JUN 12:

In what could be a move that foreshadows Jack Grealish's future at Manchester City, the club left out their 100 million pounds signing from the upcoming Club World Cup squad. City manager Pep Guardiola

named a 27-member strong contingent with Grealish's name a notable omission. The England forward was a British record signing when he moved to City from Aston Villa in 2021 and went on to help the club win three Premier League titles, the

Champions League and a host of other trophies. But he has become an increasingly peripheral figure and made only seven league starts last season.

City's squad includes four new players signed in time to take part in the month-long tournament in the United States: Rayan Cherki, Tijjani Reijnders, Rayan Ait-Nouri and Marcus Bettinelli. In January, City also spent big to sign Omar Marmoush, Abdulkodir Khusanov and Vitor Reis as Guardiola began his overhaul of a squad that saw its dominance of English football broken by Liverpool last season.

Back in January, Guardiola had said that Savinho was starting in place of Grealish because the Brazilian was in better shape than the England player. He also said Grealish has to fight for his place in the starting XI.

'We know where we want to get to as a Test team': England coach Brendon McCullum ahead of India series



NEW DELHI, JUN 12:

England coach Brendon McCullum said that even though India have arrived to take on England with full preparation and belief, the Three Lions team is clear on what they have to achieve in the upcoming 5-Test showdown. The series, set to start from June 20, will kick off India's new World Test

Championship cycle.

"They're an outstanding cricketing nation, who will come here with high hopes, and we are looking forward to seeing them. It's important the guys refresh. We know where we want to get to as a Test team," McCullum told 'Sky Sports Cricket'.

England have just completed a whitewash of the West Indies

in a six-match white-ball series. Their focus now shifts to the red-ball format as they gear up to take India and also prepare for the Ashes later this year. They will be without tearaway pacer Mark Wood, who has been ruled out of at least the first three Tests due to injury while fellow quick Jofra Archer will also miss the opening Test.

"There are some quality bowlers that are unavailable, but we have a nice, varied bowling attack with Chris Woakes, Sam Cook, Brydon Carse, Jamie Overton, Josh Tongue for the high-pace element. We have Shoaib Bashir, who is growing in Test cricket every day. We know we are going to be tested against India, and they will arrive prepared," McCullum said.

England all-rounder Jacob Bethel has been recalled and McCullum was all praise for the 21-year-old.

Hockey: Sloppy India undone by unforced errors as they go down 3-4 vs Argentina in another Pro League defeat

MUMBAI, JUN 12:

Argentina's first goal against India came in the 3rd minute of the FIH Pro League match in Amstelveen. The second goal came in the 17th – just two minutes after the start of Q2. The third came in 34th minute – not long after the second half started, and more relevantly, just within one minute of the restart after India made it 2-2. And the fourth – and decisive – goal came within 20 seconds of pushback at the start of the fourth quarter. The first two goals were completely avoidable unforced errors from India, and the next two came as they were caught on the back foot.

When Craig Fulton took over as India's coach, he made it clear that his mantra is 'defend to win'. After the last two matches – both close defeats against world No 1 Netherlands – captain Harmanpreet Singh said, "Our



first priority is to defend.' On both those counts, India were found wanting as they lost 3-4 against Argentina to suffer their third straight defeat of this European leg.

Unlike the two matches against Netherlands where they made the better start, India were slow to get off the blocks in the opening

exchanges on Wednesday. Argentina began with a couple of circle entries, moving the ball at speed. A move down the right flank saw Krishan Pathak deal with a cutback but Amit Rohidas, collecting the ball right next to the byline, with barely any pressure on him, attempted an aerial ball that was mishit.

NEW DELHI, JUN 12:

Tricity-lad Umed Kumar made his professional debut in style as he shot a three-under 61 to jointly lead the opening round along with Bengaluru's Mari Muthu R. at the fourth event of the PGTI NexGen season being played at the Forest Hill Golf & Country Club in S.A.S. Nagar, Punjab on. The Forest Hill Golf & Country Club is a par-64 nine-hole course where the nine holes are played twice to comprise a round. Umed Kumar, a winner of two amateur titles, including the Eastern India Amateur in 2023, made a dream start to his pro career thanks to his exceptional short game. He sank a couple of birdies from a range of 12 to 15 feet and also chipped in for birdie on the fourth hole.

"I'm delighted to make a good start in my first-ever professional event. This gives me a lot of confidence going



ahead. I negotiated the windy conditions well and played some solid golf as I found all fairways and missed just three greens," Umed said.

"I'm quite familiar with this golf course as I have playing rights here, so that is an added advantage for me. I know where to land my approaches and which

side I can afford to miss the greens, if at all," he said.

Mari Muthu, the co-leader, was outstanding with his wedge shots and chipping as he landed it within five feet on four occasions to set up birdies. Kolkata's Khokan Molla made a hole-in-one on the 18th during his round of 78.

Morkel 'blown away' by Jasprit Bumrah's energy ahead of England series

NEW DELHI, JUN 12:

India bowling coach Morne Morkel has expressed his excitement over Jasprit Bumrah's impressive form in the lead-up to the five-Test series against England, saying he has been "blown away" by the pace spearhead's rhythm and energy during the initial training sessions. However, Morkel emphasised the need to be cautious with Bumrah's workload through the summer.

Ahead of the team's departure, head coach Gautam Gambhir had indicated that Bumrah is likely to feature in only three of the five Tests, given his history of back injuries. The decision on which matches he will play is still pending and will depend on both the progress of the series and Bumrah's physical condition.

"Bumrah knows how to get himself ready, he knows how to prepare. I was blown away to see the energy on the ball the last three days. That's very exciting to see. I'm happy his body is in good shape at the moment," Morkel said.

"We'll manage him with that. We'll be smart with him because he's obviously key for us, but in terms of the first three net sessions, lot to be excited watching him bowl with the Dukes ball," he added. India's preparation for the series opener at Headingley, Leeds, starting June 20, includes a three-day intra-squad match in Beekingham. The fixture, likely to be held behind closed doors, will feature players from the main Test squad and the India A side, which recently played two four-day games against the England Lions. Apart from Bumrah, with several pace options at their disposal, including Mohammed Siraj, Arshdeep Singh, Prasidh Krishna and Akash Deep, India's bowling combination will be closely monitored ahead of the first Test. The team also has seam-bowling all rounders Shardul Thakur and Nitish Kumar Reddy in the mix.

Nitish can bowl magical balls, he's keen to work on bowling consistency, says Morkel

NEW DELHI, JUN 12:

India's bowling coach Morne Morkel said Nitish Kumar Reddy can bowl magical balls, adding that the seam-bowling all-rounder is keen to work on his bowling consistency and bowl more overs in the upcoming Test series against England, starting on June 20 in Leeds. Reddy made his Test debut on the tour of Australia last year and scored a Test hundred at the MCG in last year's Boxing Day Test. As of now, he is fighting for a seam bowling all-rounder's slot in the playing eleven alongside Shardul Thakur. In two red-ball games against England Lions, Reddy bowled 26.5 overs, though he didn't outrightly nail the all-rounder's slot. "For sure, the more bowling options we can have, that's great. He's skilful. He's a guy who can bowl that magical ball, so for him it's about creating that consistency, it's something we want to work on, and it's important for his game as well. I've had conversations where I've challenged him to bowl a bit more." "I want to see the ball more in his hands. We all know what he can do with the bat. For a team, if we can have the bowling options, especially in these conditions, I think he'll be exciting and can complement this bowling attack," said Morkel to reporters on the sidelines of India's training session.

Asked what would be the balance of India's bowling combination, Morkel said, "In terms of the balance, we've been very happy with that. But for us as a bowling unit, finding that gear that we're going to need in Test matches is going to be important." "We've spoken a lot about how we're going to go about playing and match-up with England. But I think so far we're on the right way in terms of doing the preparation. For us, like you say, when it comes to match day, with the ball, it's about execution."