

PRESS RELEASE



India to Face Iran in Shillong Opener of Tri-Nation Women's Football Friendlies

Shillong, Oct 20, 2025: The Indian senior women's football team will kick off their Tri-Nation International Friendly campaign against IR Iran on Tuesday, October 21, at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Shillong. The match, scheduled for 6 PM IST, will be streamed live for free on plus.fifa.com.

For head coach Crispin Chettri, the fixture marks the start of India's key preparation phase ahead of the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026, serving as a platform to test new combinations and assess emerging talent.



“After our Asian Cup qualification, this will be our first match in nearly four months. We’ll try to play good football and give opportunities to several new players,” Chettri said at the pre-match press conference. “We’ve invited new faces from the Senior Nationals (Rajmata Jijabai Trophy) to build a stronger pool for the future.”

The Blue Tigresses will return to Shillong for the first time in nine years, last having played here during the 2016 South Asian Games. The Tri-Nation series will see Iran and Nepal face off on October 24, with India concluding the FIFA window against Nepal on October 27.

Expressing gratitude for the hospitality in Meghalaya's capital, Chettri said, “Shillong has been very welcoming. The facilities are excellent, and it's great to play here after such a long time. We'll give our best tomorrow.”

Acknowledging Iran's strength, Chettri noted that the visitors, ranked 70th in the world — seven places below India — would pose a tough challenge. The last meeting between the two sides in the 2022 Asian Cup ended goalless in Navi Mumbai, while India triumphed 1–0 in the 2019 Gold Cup in Bhubaneswar. Iran, who qualified for the 2026 Asian Cup by defeating Jordan, Bhutan, and Singapore, are known for their physical gameplay.

“Iran is a tricky team with strong, physical players. It'll be a good test for us in terms of physicality and composure,” the coach added.

Highlighting India's progress, Chettri credited domestic competitions like the Indian Women's League (IWL) and Khelo India ASMITA Leagues for nurturing young talent.

“These tournaments have helped us grow by creating a larger pool of players. Even though we're missing some senior players, this is an opportunity to test new ones. We want to expand our squad to at least 25 players before the Asian Cup,” he said.

On India's long-term goal, Chettri shared his optimism about qualifying for the FIFA Women's World Cup 2027.

“We'll face strong teams in Australia, but this is the time to show our strength. I truly believe we can reach the World Cup — that dream is already planted in our minds.”

Senior forward Grace Dangmei echoed her coach's sentiments, highlighting the responsibility of senior players to guide the younger ones while learning from them.



“The U17 and U20 teams have shown great progress. As seniors, we have to perform and set examples. The juniors bring new energy, and that balance helps the team grow,” the 29-year-old said.

Meanwhile, IR Iran head coach Marziyeh Jafaribaravati expressed appreciation for India's hospitality, confirming that her team has been training in Delhi and is prepared despite a tight schedule.



“We are ready for the match, even though our players are tired. India is a very good team, and we expect a strong, competitive game. All three teams in this tournament are good, and we will give our best to win,” Jafaribaravati said.