



Shock Blow for India: Hardik Pandya Ruled Out of Afghanistan ODIs Due to Injury – Sources

Benaluru, 10 June : In a major setback for Team India ahead of the upcoming limited-overs series, star all-rounder Hardik Pandya has reportedly been ruled out of the three-match ODI series against Afghanistan due to a fresh injury, according to sources. The injury is believed to be a low-grade quadriceps strain that surfaced just days after Pandya was initially cleared fit by the BCCI's Centre of Excellence.

The setback has forced team management to withdraw him from the squad ahead of the series, which begins on June 13. Pandya was expected to play a key role in the series, offering balance to the side with both bat and ball. However, medical assessments reportedly advised rest and rehabilitation, ruling him out of the short series as a precautionary measure.



The development comes as a significant blow for India's plans, with Pandya considered central to the team's middle-order stability and pace-bowling options. Sources indicate that while the injury is not serious, the recovery timeline is estimated at a few weeks, making his participation in the series impossible. Team officials are yet to announce an

official replacement, though discussions are underway regarding squad adjustments ahead of the opening ODI in Dharamshala.

The selection committee is also expected to closely monitor Pandya's fitness with future international fixtures and upcoming ICC events in mind. The injury adds to a worrying fitness phase for Indian cricket, with several sen-

ior players undergoing rehabilitation or workload management in recent months. Pandya himself has had an interrupted run with injuries over the years, including setbacks during major tournaments that have previously impacted team combinations.

Despite the setback, team sources remain cautiously optimistic that the all-rounder will return to action soon, with his recovery expected to be closely supervised by the national medical staff. Further updates from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) are expected in the coming days as the squad is finalized for the series.

What This Means Going Forward If he maintains fitness, Pandya is likely to be managed carefully through rotation policies, especially given his history of injuries

and heavy workload demands across formats.

The incident has triggered widespread debate in international football circles, with critics pointing to the broader implications of restrictive immigration policies reportedly linked to former U.S. President Donald Trump.

According to reports, Artan—considered one of Africa's top referees and selected among the 52 match officials for the upcoming World Cup—was sent back despite carrying a diplomatic passport arranged through Somali authorities.

Artan, who has been serving as a FIFA-listed referee since 2018, was expected to make history as the first official from Somalia to participate in a World Cup tournament in an officiating role.



Cleared to play just hours ago, India all-rounder Hardik Pandya was on Wednesday, June 10, 2026, ruled out of the three-match ODI series against Afghanistan after picking up a fresh quadriceps strain. Pandya is seen reacting during an One Day International (ODI) cricket match, in Cuttack, Odisha, in this file photo dated Sunday.

Harry Brook Dethrones Joe Root to Become World No.1 Test Batter in ICC Rankings

London, 10 June : England's dynamic middle-order batter Harry Brook has climbed to the summit of world Test cricket, overtaking teammate and veteran star Joe Root to become the No.1 batter in the latest ICC Men's Test rankings update. The reshuffle at the top of the standings comes after a series of recent performances that saw Brook regain crucial rating points, pushing him ahead of Root in one of the closest battles for the top spot in recent months.

The latest update reflects a tight race between the two England stars, who have both dominated Test batting charts over the past few seasons. According to the revised rankings, Brook's consistent high-impact innings have once again elevated him to the No.1 position, continuing a recurring see-saw rivalry with Root, who had recently held the top spot following strong performances in earlier Tests.

The latest change underscores England's rare dominance in the format, with two of their batters occupying the top positions in world cricket. Analysts note that both players have been instrumental in England's strong Test performances, but Brook's aggressive style and recent big scores have given him the edge in rating points this time.

Root, one of the most prolific run-scorers of his



generation, had regained the top ranking earlier after a string of composed centuries, but slipped just behind Brook in the latest calculation cycle.

The gap between the two remains narrow, suggesting further changes are possible depending on upcoming Test performances. The updated rankings also reflect movement across the top 10, with several international batters shifting positions based on recent series performances worldwide. Cricket experts say the Brook-Root rivalry at the top of the rankings highlights the depth of England's batting lineup, with both players consistently outperforming global peers in the longest format of the game.

The ICC rankings, which are updated regularly based on a weighted algorithm considering match context, opposition strength, and individual performance, continue to serve as the official benchmark for Test batting excellence. With upcoming Test fixtures on the calendar,

the battle for the No.1 spot is expected to remain highly competitive, and further changes at the top cannot be ruled out.

Australia's Travis Head has moved up to second place in the rankings, while Joe Root has slipped to third ahead of the second Test between England and New Zealand at The Oval, scheduled from June 17.

There were several other notable movements in the rankings. India's Shubman Gill has risen two places to eighth after scoring a century against Afghanistan, while England's Ben Duckett has moved up three spots to 15th. Jamie Smith (up five places to 23rd) and New Zealand's Glenn Phillips (up 15 places to 40th) also made gains following their performances at Lord's.

Among bowlers, England pacer Gus Atkinson climbed seven places to reach 10th in the Test rankings and also moved up two spots to sixth among all-rounders.

“Very Few Bowlers Like Him”: Former India Coach Hails Jasprit Bumrah’s Rare Brilliance

Mumbai, 10 June : Though back spasms prevented him from bowling in the second innings of Sydney Test, Bumrah was named Player of the Series of the 2024/25 Border-Gavaskar Trophy, finishing with 32 wickets across five games.

“You have to give credit to Bumrah for the way he has evolved as a player. He is so focused. He is aware of his game. He has a constant need to improve. That's why he is number one. He's the best in the world in all three formats. Don't judge players by the number of games he's played, but also on the impact he's made in all three formats.”

“Very few bowlers in the world create that impact in all three formats. His numbers in T20s, ODIs and Tests speak about his work ethics. He's one of the few guys who enjoys playing Test cricket. He just doesn't leave the ball,” Mhambrey was quoted as saying by mmiemirates.com.

“He has taken a liking to captaining the team as well, and I am very happy about it. He doesn't just focus on his game, he is very inclusive. He understands his role is also about grooming, assisting others, which he has taken to very nicely. It's not just winning games for the

country. It's about leaving an impact on everyone.”

Mhambrey, currently in the UAE as Bowling Coach of MI Emirates, before he takes up the same role in IPL 2025, reflected on Bumrah's journey so far.

“I think if you just look back, he's had a phenomenal

players.”

Mhambrey signed off by saying he hopes to see more of Bumrah's bowling for at least the next five years, provided his body supports him in executing his unique bowling action. “You never know (on how much he can get better from here). I don't think



journey. As a rookie he was picked up at the IPL and he wasn't known at all. That's where the MI setup comes in, in terms of support staff and the scouts having an eye for a player like this.”

“John (Wright) was the guy who had a look at him and suggested his name to the management. It speaks a lot about the team that works here. Obviously the skills were there. It was important to give him the best of physios, trainers, having the right people to guide you, senior

he's a guy who looks at numbers. Just being able to win and contribute to the team's success is what he'll be looking at. Fingers crossed, I just hope his body supports him here.”

“His action saps up a lot of energy. My worry will always be the longevity of this individual. We have got to take care of him. It is easy to get away from the goal. He needs to be around for Indian cricket. I'm sure he wants to play, but we have to be smart on how to use him.”

PV Sindhu Cruises, Tanvi Sharma Stuns Fifth Seed Opponent As Indian Women Shine In Australian Open

Mumbai, 10 June : Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu led a strong show by Indian women with an easy victory while teenager Tanvi Sharma pulled off an upset win in the women's singles competition at the Australian Open Super 500 badminton tournament in Sydney on Wednesday. Third seed Sindhu, Tanvi, Malvika Bansod, Isharani Baruah and Tanya Hemant all progressed to the round of 16, but it was a disappointing day for the Indian men with Kiran George, Tharun Manneppalli and qualifier Saneeth Dayananth bowing out in the opening round. Sindhu barely broke a sweat in her opener, outclassing Peru's Ines Lucia Castillo Salazar 21-13, 21-11 in just 32 minutes.

The former world champion was in complete control throughout the contest, dominating the rallies and never allowing her opponent to settle into a rhythm. Sindhu will next face compatriot Isharani, who fought hard to overcome China's Han Qian Xi 22-20, 10-21, 21-14 in a one-hour three-minute battle.

The biggest result of the day came from 17-year-old Tanvi, who upset fifth seed and world No. 11 Chiu Pin-Chian of Chinese Taipei 21-12, 22-20 in 45 minutes.

World No. 36 Tanvi will now take on fellow Indian Malvika in the round of 16 after the latter recovered from a game down to beat Thailand's Tonrug Saeheng 15-21, 21-7, 21-13. Tanya also joined the winning brigade, defeating Ishika Jaiswal of the USA 21-17, 21-18 in 39 minutes.

Shubman Gill Now Highest Ranked Indian Test Batter, Displaces Yashasvi Jaiswal

Mumbai, 10 June : Shubman Gill is now the highest-ranked Indian in ICC Test rankings. The India captain climbed two places to eighth spot after hitting a century in the recent one-off clash against Afghanistan, which the side won by an innings and 300 runs. He is currently ranked eighth, one place above compatriot Yashasvi Jaiswal.

Overall, England batter Harry Brook leapfrogged teammate Joe Root to reclaim the No. 1 spot in the ICC Test rankings. His 56 was one of only two scores above fifty in the match, which was enough to push Root down to third spot after the senior batter managed just one and eight, with Australia's Travis Head climbing to second spot.

Brook had first risen to



the top spot in December 2024 and now regains the position ahead of the second Test starting at The Oval on June 17. Gill, meanwhile, moved up to eighth spot after making 126 against Afghanistan in New Chandigarh.

The England trio of Ben Duckett (up three places to

15th), Jamie Smith (up five spots to equal 23rd) and Glenn Phillips (up 15 places to 40th) also made progress in the batters' rankings.

In the bowling chart, England pacer Gus Atkinson gained seven slots to break into the top 10 Test bowlers at tenth spot, while moving to

Revenge On Their Minds, Greatness In Sight: France's FIFA World Cup 2026 Mission

Mumbai, 10 June : It is extremely rare for a footballer to score a hat-trick in a FIFA World Cup final. What is even rarer is the hat-trick to end up on the losing cause. Such was the distance between Kylian Mbappe and a second consecutive World Cup title. In 2022, the footballing world was left emotional by Lionel Messi finally lifting the coveted title with Argentina but in the final, France showed resilience of epic proportions before going down eventually in penalties.

In 2026, France are back with a team that boasts of superstars and players who have already won the title—under a manager who knows exactly how to make the team click on the grandest occasion. The likes of Mbappe, Ousmane Dembele and Michael Olise are already celebrated around the world and coach Didier Deschamps is just one World Cup win away from achieving something that has not been done since the 1930s.

In the past decade, every French

team stood out for one specific reason—squad depth. Before every World Cup, some analyst ended up creating 2-3 different French squads just to show the sheer talent on offer. When players like Eduardo Camavinga and Randal Kolo Muani do not even find a place in the squad, it is no exaggeration to think that the talent on offer is on another level.

However, the thing that will be driving this team is more mental - an urge to avenge their loss in 2022.

They won the title in 2018 and even in 2022, they were just inches away from completing a stunning double. However, while Messi completed his fairytale, the French were left to wait for 4 more years. However, they look ready with an unbeaten qualification campaign that saw the team secure 16 points and Mbappe leading the charge with 5 goals.

The trio of Mbappe, Olise and Dembele is enough to strike fear in the heart of any team but where France stand apart is the bench strength. At 21, Desire Doue has already won the UEFA Champions

League with PSG twice and is hailed as one of the most exciting talents in the world.

Add the likes of Rayan Cherki, Marcus Thuram, Jean-Philippe Mateta and Bradley Barcola to the mix and Deschamps have an embarrassing amount of riches at his disposal when it comes to his attackers. However, attack wins you games but defence wins you tournaments - so goes the saying.

William Saliba and Dayot Upamecano provide the solid centre-back partnership that has become the rock of the back-line. Theo Hernandez and Lucas Hernandez provide more solidity as full-backs and the likes of Lucas Digne, Ibrahima Konate and not to forget, the goalkeeper Mike Maignan has the perfect mix of youth and experience that can prove to be crucial. Italy's Vittorio Pozzo was the only person to win the World Cup twice as a head coach. He won the World Cup as captain in 1998 and then, coached the national side to the 2018 trophy.

Messi vs Ronaldo at FIFA World Cup 2026: 3 Possible Scenarios Explained

New Delhi, 10 June : Football fans around the world are once again dreaming of a historic showdown between Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, as the 2026 FIFA World Cup could finally set up a long-awaited meeting between the two legends—possibly for the last time on football's biggest stage. With Argentina and Portugal both expected to feature in the expanded 48-team tournament, analysts say there are three realistic scenarios in which Messi and Ronaldo could face each other during the competition.

Quarter-Final Clash (Most Direct Route) If both Argentina and Portugal top their respective groups, they would be placed on the same side of the knockout bracket. After winning their Round of

32 and Round of 16 matches, the two teams could meet in the quarter-finals. This is considered the most straightforward and widely discussed possibility.

Round of 16 Meeting If both teams finish second in their groups, the draw structure could pit them against each other as early as the Round of 16. However, this scenario is seen as less likely due to the expected strength of both squads in their group-stage matches. Dream Final Showdown If one team tops its group while the other finishes second, their paths would remain separated throughout the knockout rounds. In that case, Messi's Argentina and Ronaldo's Portugal could only meet in the World Cup Final in New Jersey—a dream scenario for



fans worldwide.

According to tournament structure reports and draw analysis, Argentina and Portugal are placed in separate groups, ensuring they will not meet before the knockout stage begins. The 2026 World Cup, jointly hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, will feature a 32-team knockout phase after the expanded

group stage, increasing the number of possible high-profile clashes deep into the tournament.

For fans, this tournament may represent the final opportunity to witness two of football's greatest icons face each other in a World Cup setting—making every group match and knockout tie crucial in shaping a potential Messi vs Ronaldo blockbuster.

While Argentina have been placed in Group J of the World Cup this time, Portugal are in Group K. While Messi's Argentina have been tasked with facing the likes of Algeria, Austria, and Jordan, Ronaldo's Portugal will be up against DR Congo, Uzbekistan, and Colombia. In total, there are three scenarios that could lead to an Argentina vs Portugal, or Messi vs Ronaldo situation in the World Cup:

Scenario 1: If both Argentina (Group J) and Portugal (Group K) win their groups, they will end up on the same side of the tournament bracket. If they both win their respective Round of 32 and Round of 16 matches, they will end up playing each other in the quarter-finals of the tournament.