

VARMA DAZZLES FOR INDIA

Tilak (72*) cleverly uses the extreme pace of English bowlers to amass runs, singlehandedly takes India past the target, as hosts finish at 166 for 8 to take a 2-0 lead in the five-match series

PTI, CHENNAI: Tilak Varma's 50 of rare brilliance helped India survive a top-order meltdown against England pacers and register a two-wicket win in the second T20I and take a 2-0 lead in the five-match series here on Saturday.

Tilak (72 not out, 55b, 4x4, 5x6) cleverly used the extreme pace of English bowlers to amass runs, and singlehandedly took India past the target, as the hosts finished the night at 166 for eight.

It was a mini classic because the left-hander hardly had constant support from the other end and the England bowlers were cock-a-hoop lot after making serious inroads.

T20I: INDIA VS ENGLAND

Pacer Jofra Archer was his pet hunt of the night, slamming the Sussex man for a total of four sixes, the fourth one taking him past his fifty, as he leaked 60 runs in four overs for the wicket of Sanju Samson.

The left-hander's inside the line six off pacer Brydon Carse over deep fine leg (3/29) too was highly impressive. But India had to walk through the panic room before Tilak's solidity carried them home.

The in-form Abhishek Sharma got India off the block in a blistering fashion, carting Archer for three



India's batter Tilak Varma celebrates after India won the second T20 match against England, at MA Chidambaram Stadium, in Chennai, on Saturday

boundaries in the very first over. But a 148 kmph nip-backer by pacer Mark Wood pinged him on the back foot and even the DRS, which was taken more in hope than in any real conviction, could not save him.

The dismissal had India at a slightly shaky 15 for one which soon turned into

a more concerning 19 for two along with the wicket of Samson.

The nerves were eased when skipper Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak added 39 quick runs for the third wicket to take their side to 58, but the former dragged Carse on to his stumps to give England an opening.

From 58 for three, the English pacers crashed through that creek to bag the wickets of Dhruv Jurel and Hardik Pandya to reduce India to 78 for five.

But Washington Sundar, who was dropped on 10 by Adil Rashid at mid-off Wood, cashed in on that reprieve, hammering the

Durham man for a six and two fours in succession to bring down the mounting asking rate. However, Washington's attempt to run a 140 kmph thunderbolt from Carse to the third man saw the ball crashing onto his stumps.

India were 116 for six then. But they found a willing soldier in Tilak.

Earlier, Jos Buttler showed semblance of fight but other English batters didn't follow the skipper's suit while succumbing to Indian spinners.

Buttler (45, 30b, 2x4, 3x6) played some delectable shots, including a sequence of 4, 6, 4 off pacer Arshdeep Singh, who got rid of Phil Salt in the first

over itself.

Salt pulled the left-arm pacer, who was earlier on the day named as the ICC Men's T20 Player of the Year, but could not find the distance to get caught by Washington, who replaced injured Nitish Kumar Reddy in the XI, near the square leg boundary. Washington had a moment of success for himself when Ben Duckett's reverse sweep off him fell easily into the hands of Jurel, who came in for injured Rinku Singh.

However, the pull shot continued to haunt the English batters for the rest of the night as Buttler and later Liam Livingstone perished playing that shot.

SCOREBOARD

England: Philip Salt c Sundar b Singh 4, Ben Duckett c Jurel b Sundar 3, *Jos Buttler c Varma b Patel 45, Harry Brook b Chakravarthy 13, Liam Livingstone c (sub) Rana b Patel 13, Jamie Smith c Varma b Sharma 22, Jamie Overton b Chakravarthy 5, Brydon Carse run out (Bishnoi) 30, Jofra Archer not out 12, Adil Rashid c Samson b Pandya 10, Mark Wood not out 5. **Extras:** 2. **Total:** 165-9. **Fall of wickets:** 6-1, 26-2, 59-3, 77-4, 90-5, 104-6, 136-7, 136-8, 157-9. **Bowling:** Arshdeep Singh 4-0-40-1, Hardik Pandya 2-0-6-1, Washington Sundar 1-0-9-1, Axar Patel 4-0-32-2, Ravi Bishnoi 4-0-27-0, Varun Chakravarthy 4-0-38-2, Abhishek Sharma 1-0-12-1.

India: Sanju Samson c Carse b Archer 5, Abhishek Sharma lbw b Wood 12, Tilak Varma not out 72, *Suryakumar Yadav b Carse 12, Dhruv Jurel run out (sub) Ahmed 4, Hardik Pandya c Salt b Overton 7, Washington Sundar b Carse 26, Axar Patel c Duckett b Livingstone 2, Arshdeep Singh c Archer b Rashid 6, Ravi Bishnoi not out 9. **Extras:** 11. **Total:** 166-8. **Fall of wickets:** 15-1, 19-2, 58-3, 66-4, 78-5, 116-6, 125-7, 145-8. **Bowling:** Jofra Archer 4-0-60-1, Mark Wood 3-0-28-1, Brydon Carse 4-0-29-2, Adil Rashid 4-0-14-1, Jamie Overton 2-2-0-20-1, Liam Livingstone 2-0-14-1.

Man-of-the-match: Tilak Varma

T20I squad: Dube to replace Nitish

PTI, MUMBAI: Mumbai all-rounder Shivam Dube will replace Nitish Kumar Reddy in the Indian squad for the last three T20 Internationals against England after the young power-hitter sustained a side strain, the BCCI said.

Nitish sustained the injury during the nets session on Friday ahead of India's second T20I against England at Chennai.

He could require around four weeks of rest and rehabilitation to come back to competitive cricket.

India's updated squad for T20I series against England: Suryakumar Yadav (C), Axar Patel (VC), Sanju Samson (WK), Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Rinku Singh, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Mohammad Shami, Varun Chakaravathy, Ravi Bishnoi, Washington Sundar, Dhruv Jurel (WK), Shivam Dube, Randeep Singh.

Keys unlocks Australian dream

Upsets World No.1 Sabalenka 6-3, 2-6, 7-5 in the final to win first Grand Slam crown at 29



USA's Madison Keys celebrates with the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup after defeating Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka during their women's singles final match on Day 14 of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on Saturday

AFP, MELBOURNE: Underdog Madison Keys upset Aryna Sabalenka 6-3, 2-6, 7-5 in the Australian Open final on Saturday to win her first Grand Slam crown at the age of 29. The American ended World No. 1 Sabalenka's dream of becoming the first woman for 26 years to win a third successive Melbourne Park singles title. Keys yelled in delight and wiped away tears on securing the title after withstanding a fierce fightback from the Belarusian two-time defending

champion. Sabalenka, the 2023 and 2024 champion, buried her head in a towel after her 20-match win streak at Melbourne Park was ended. For 19th-seeded Keys it was the culmination of a 15-year journey from teenage prodigy to major winner. The American had been tipped as a future world number one after winning her maiden WTA Tour match at the age of 14.

She made her first major semi-final at Melbourne Park 10 years ago as a 19-year-old, but a decade on she can finally call herself a Grand Slam champion. Keys becomes the fourth oldest first-time winner of a major since the Open Era began in 1968.

Djokovic takes a jab at injury 'experts'

AP, MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic posted a scan of his injured left hamstring on social media early Sunday, more than 24 hours after being booed at the Australian Open when he quit playing one set into his semi-final because of what he said at his news conference was a torn muscle.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion put the picture of the MRI taken Saturday on X and wrote: "Thought I'd leave this here for all the sports injury 'experts' out there."

He did not offer any additional information, such as the exact diagnosis he might have received or any timeline for his recovery.

The 37-year-old Djokovic stopped his match against Alexander Zverev after dropping the opening set in a tiebreaker on Friday. After shaking hands with Zverev and the chair umpire, Djokovic gathered his equipment and started walking toward the locker room.

Sports Minister demands positive action as contingent prepares to leave for Nat Games

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PANJIM: Sports Minister Govind Gaude on Saturday vent his spleen at the sports associations and the coaches during the handover ceremony of the kits to the sportspersons selected to represent the State at the 38th National Games to be held in Uttarakhand.

The Sports Minister alleged lack of accountability from sports associations involved in the 37th National Games. Speaking on the issue, he claimed that the government had disbursed 80 per cent of advance funds to all associations to facilitate smooth operations during the Games.

However, even a year later, most of these associations have failed to submit their audited reports or fund utilisation certificates, he added.

He said, "Parents and players should not look at winning only at the State-level and should look to improve to levels at the National level."

Gaude added, "The Sports Authority of Goa and the Government of Goa is supporting the athletes and we have given maximum grants to our



Sports Minister Govind Gaude launches Goa jersey for the 38th National Games to be held in Uttarakhand along with other officials, on Saturday

athletes but it is about working hard and achieving results. You cannot get success by practicing for a few days or being part of a camp but it has to be continuous training over a lengthy period of time. Coaches have to be dedicated and do justice to their jobs for which they are selected and should not be seen loitering in the market."

This rant by the Minister cast a bit of a downer on the occasion which was organised to distribute kits to the 76 athletes selected for the Games.

The Goa Football Association (GFA) President Caitano Fernandes said that he was confident the team would do well in the football tournament and win the gold medal for the State.

When asked for the reason

for his confidence, he said, "They have prepared very well in the short time they had and are all in good form. The head coach is Charles Dias, who will be assisted by Anthony 'Khambo' Pereira."

Goa will play their first game on January 30, against Assam. Uttarakhand, Assam and Mizoram are the other teams in the group.

"I am confident of a good performance. The captain of the football team Clive Miranda, a stopper back is looking forward to winning the gold medal because they are playing very well and even though they felt every team would be tough in the group," Fernandes said.

The Chief of Mission Irwin Cardo said, "The contingent be participating in 19 sports

and he expected to win medals in football, taekwondo, beach volleyball, wushu, archery, triathlon, pentathlon and swimming, which depend on the performance on that day."

He said the contingent would win medals for sure because they had put in the hard work. Irwin, who will be flying to Uttarakhand later Saturday night, said the contingent would be travelling by flight, train and bus depending on their destination.

Sharendra Naik, secretary of Goa Athletic Association said that two athletes would be going with a male athlete in the 100 metres and a female in the 1,500 metres. The female athlete had stood fifth in the finals at the nationals and the association is hoping for a medal from her.

Sreejesh chosen for Padma Bhushan; Ashwin, Vijayan among 4 in sports to get Padma Shri

PTI, NEW DELHI: Former men's hockey captain P R Sreejesh was chosen for the Padma Bhushan, while recently-retired cricket star Ravichandran Ashwin was among the Padma Shri winners as four athletes and a para-athletics coach figured in the list of 139 that was unveiled for the coveted civilian awards on Saturday.

Legendary Indian footballer I M Vijayan and India's first Paralympic gold medal-winning archer Harvinder Singh too were named for the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian honour.

Para athletics coach Satyapal Singh, who mentored Paris Paralympics gold-winning and Khel Ratna-awardee high-jumper Praveen Kumar, would also be bestowed with the Padma Shri.

"It's (award) because of the faith reposed in me by so many people. I have been associated with Praveen Kumar since 2018 and a lot of credit goes to my ward for this award," Satyapal told PTI.

The five were picked for the Padma awards by President Droupadi Murmu on the eve of the 76th Republic Day.

The 36-year-old Sreejesh, who retired after winning a second successive Olympic bronze with the national team in Paris Olympics, is currently the head coach of the junior men's team.

Considered one of the greatest hockey goalkeepers of all times, Sreejesh had a stellar role in India's Olympic resurgence. He played a whopping 336 games in his career that spanned 18 years and also yielded two Asian Games gold medals.

Australia put one foot in semis; New Zealand rally to beat USA

PTI, BANGI (Malaysia): Australia moved one step closer to the semifinals with a dominant performance on their way to a seven-wicket victory over a listless West Indies in the U-19 Women's T20 World Cup, here, on Saturday.

After winning the toss, Australia opted to field and immediately applied pressure, reducing the West Indies to 16-3 by the

U-19 WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

end of the powerplay. The West Indies batters struggled to settle as Australia kept striking at regular intervals, eventually bowling them out for just 53 runs in 16.3 overs.

Eleanor Larosa, Caoimhe Bray, and Tegan Williamson were the standout bowlers, each taking two wickets. Eleanor Larosa was named Player of the Match for her brilliant bowling performance, finishing with figures of 2/6. Australia's chase was swift

and efficient. Despite a brief rain delay, they comfortably reached the target in 10.5 overs, with skipper Lucy Hamilton leading the way with 28 runs off 29 balls.

This victory brought Australia closer to a spot in the semifinals, while the West Indies find themselves in trouble, sitting at the bottom of Super Six Group 1. In another match, New Zealand made a remarkable comeback as they successfully defended a measly total of 97 to beat USA by 18 runs in their Super 6 Group 2 match.

The slow bowlers, led by leg-spin talent Rishika Jaswal (2/14), pulled off the seemingly impossible task, grinding USA's run chase to a halt and triggering a batting collapse. After bowling out the Kiwis for 97, the United States were dismissed for 79.

USA's superb effort in the field placed them in a prime position to start their Super Six campaign with a win.

sportspopup

Pakistan's Noman claims hat-trick before West Indies fight back

(MULTRAN) Pakistan: Pakistan's Noman Ali claimed a hat-trick as wickets tumbled on the opening day of the second Test against West Indies in Multan on Saturday. West Indies were bowled out for 163 in the first session and Pakistan were dismissed for 154 shortly before the close of play. West Indies bowlers Gudakesh Motie and Kemar Roach made early inroads into Pakistan's batting line-up with two wickets apiece but Pakistan fought back thanks to a 68-run partnership between Mohammad Rizwan (49) and Saad Shakeel (32) for the fifth wicket. Spinner Jomel Warrican picked up four wickets. He dismissed Shakeel caught by a diving Roach in the deep and Rizwan fell just short of his half-century, outsmarted by Warrican's flight and turn to be stumped. Noman edged to short leg for a duck, leaving Pakistan reeling at 130/7. Salman Ali Agha (9) was Motie's third victim, Abrar Ahmed (2) was bowled by Warrican and Kashif Ali was run out without facing a ball on his debut.

Mandhana, Richa, Deepti named in ICC Women's T20I Team of the Year

DUBAI: Star opener Smriti Mandhana, wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh and all-rounder Deepti Sharma were on Saturday named in the ICC Women's T20I Team of Year 2024 which was dominated by the Indians. Besides the three Indians, the ICC team has two South Africans, and one player each from Sri Lanka, England, West Indies, Australia, Ireland and Pakistan. ICC Women's T20I Team of 2024: Laura Wolvaardt (c), Marizanne Kapp (both SA); Smriti Mandhana, Richa Ghos (wk) and Deepti Sharma (all Indians); Chamari Athapaththu (SL); Hayley Matthews (WI); Nat Sciver-Brunt (England); Melie Kerr (Australia), Orla Prendergast (Ireland) and Sadia Iqbal (Pakistan).

Arshdeep named ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year

DUBAI: Indian left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh was on Saturday crowned the ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year 2024 for his influential role in the team's World Cup title triumph, which cemented his reputation as one of the leading short format bowlers. The 25-year-old took 36 wickets in 18 matches last year. He was also named in the ICC T20I Team of the Year 2024 earlier in the day alongside Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya. In the T20 World Cup in the Americas, Arshdeep showcased his mastery in both powerplay and death bowling and ended the tournament as the joint highest wicket-taker alongside Afghanistan's Fazalhaq Farooqi with 17 scalps at an average of 12.64 across eight matches.

Verna Sports Club organises Sao Minguel Festival Cup 2025

on 26th January 2025 from 7 pm onwards.

Venue:- Kings Turf Futsal Ground Verna, near Verna Church.

Womens Exhibition Football match Verna Sports Club vs Moonlanders

followed by Mens Exhibition Match between Verna Sports Club Veterans vs Marc Caterers Veterans, Nuvem

Felicitation of Master Elrich Mark D'silva for representing Goa sub-Junior football team 2024.

Chief Guest- Shri Tiago Fernandes (Football Legend of Verna).

Guest of Honour: Shri Rafael Mendes (Ex-Player of Churchill Bros and Verna Sports Club).

Special Invitees:

1. Rev. Fr. Dnyel Dias (Assistant Parish Priest of Holy Cross Church, Verna).
2. Rev. Fr. Royal Raposo (Assistant Parish Priest of Holy Cross Church, Verna).
3. Shri Justino Rebello (Ex-President of Verna Sports Club).
4. Shri Alvirto Rodrigues (Ex-Player of Verna Sports Club)
5. Shri Bonny Fernandes (Ex-Verna Sports Club Player).
6. Mr. Santana Rego (Tarzan)

(Ex-Player of Dempo Sports Club & Verna Sports Club).

Sancon Fernandes (President), Agostinho Barreto (Vice President), Noel D'silva (Sports Secretary), Julian D'silva (General Secretary), Meliston Barreto (Asst. Sports Secretary), Francisco Nazareth (Treasurer), Savio Fernandes (Organising Secretary), Cristiano Savio Dias (Youth Co-ordinator)