

Gill, Iyer and Axar's batting guides India to victory

Rana dazzle with the ball on debut along with Jadeja

PTI, NAGPUR: Vice-Captain Shubman Gill orchestrated India's chase with grace, while debutant Harshit Rana dazzled with the ball as the hosts registered a four-wicket win against England in the series opener, here, on Thursday.

Gill (87), Shreyas Iyer (59), and Axar Patel (52) rose to the occasion, guiding India to a commanding chase after Rana (3/53 from 7 overs) and the seasoned left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja (3/26 from 9) shared six wickets between them, dismantling England for a below-par 248.

1ST ODI: INDIA VS ENGLAND

Rana's fourth over, which claimed the twin wickets of Ben Duckett and Harry Brook, decisively stifled the England innings, putting India firmly in control as the visitors never managed to rebuild despite fifties by skipper Jos Buttler (52) and Jack Bethell (51). Chasing a below 250 score, Gill anchored the innings, forging key partnerships with Iyer and Axar that became the backbone of India's chase.

He adapted perfectly to the match situation, playing the perfect foil to Iyer when the Mumbai batter was in full flow, then stepping up as the mainstay, steering India towards victory.

Iyer, walking in at 19/2, unleashed a counter-attacking knock, filled with sizzling shots, including back-to-back sixes -- one a pull shot over deep mid-wicket off Jofra Archer and the other a reverse switch-hit four off Adil Rashid.

On the back of a stellar domestic season, Iyer

PTI



India's Shreyas Iyer and Shubman Gill run between the wickets during the first One Day International match against England at Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium, in Nagpur, Maharashtra

played with confidence, finding gaps effortlessly and taking on the aggressor's role, with Gill remaining steady at the other end.

But once Iyer, trapped LBW by Bethell after being struck flush on the front pad, was dismissed, Gill seamlessly took charge, with an able ally in Axar,

who was promoted up the order. Gill continued to exude confidence, as he smashed 14 fours, while Axar too brought up a memorable fifty. England took a flurry of wickets, causing some nervous moments for the hosts but India managed the win with 68 balls remaining. Earlier,

SCOREBOARD

England: Philip Salt run out (Rahul) 43, Ben Duckett c Jaiswal b Rana 32, Joe Root lbw b Jadeja 19, Harry Brook c Rahul b Rana 0, *Jos Buttler c Pandya b Patel 52, Jacob Bethell lbw b Jadeja 51, Liam Livingstone c Rahul b Rana 5, Brydon Carse b Shami 10, Adil Rashid b Jadeja 8, Jofra Archer not out 21, Saqib Mahmood st Rahul b Yadav 2. **Extras:** 5. **Total:** 248-10. **Fall of wickets:** 75-1, 77-2, 77-3, 111-4, 170-5, 183-6, 206-7, 220-8, 241-9, 248-10. **Bowling:** Mohammed Shami 8-1-38-1, Harshit Rana 7-1-53-3, Axar Patel 7-0-38-1, Hardik Pandya 7-1-37-0, Kuldeep Yadav 9-4-0-53-1, Ravindra Jadeja 9-1-26-3.

India: Yashasvi Jaiswal c Salt b Archer 15, *Rohit Sharma c Livingstone b Mahmood 2, Shubman Gill c Buttler b Mahmood 87, Shreyas Iyer lbw b Bethell 59, Axar Patel b Rashid 52, KL Rahul c and b Rashid 2, Hardik Pandya not out 9, Ravindra Jadeja not out 13. **Extras:** 13. **Total:** 251-6. **Fall of wickets:** 19-1, 19-2, 113-3, 221-4, 225-5, 235-6. **Bowling:** Jofra Archer 7-1-39-1, Saqib Mahmood 6-4-0-48-2, Brydon Carse 5-0-52-0, Adil Rashid 10-1-49-2, Jacob Bethell 3-0-18-1, Liam Livingstone 5-0-29-0, Joe Root 2-0-10-0.

Man-of-the-match: Shubman Gill

England blazed out of the blocks with electrifying intent after opting to bat, but India's disciplined bowling and razor-sharp fielding orchestrated a remarkable fightback.

Making his ODI debut, Rana endured a baptism by fire. His first over proved costly, as the explosive Phil Salt (43) feasted on his deliveries, plundering 26 runs in a ruthless display of power-hitting.

Kohli's sore knee raises concerns

PTI, NAGPUR: A sore right knee forced Virat Kohli out of the first ODI against England here on Thursday but the extent of the problem was not immediately clear.

With the ongoing series, India entered the final phase of its Champions Trophy preparations and the side is already grappling with the lingering doubts around pace talisman Jasprit Bumrah's availability.

The management would hope that Kohli's knee injury is not too serious and he is good to go in the remaining two matches of the showdown against England. The second game is in Cuttack on February 9, followed by the series-finale in Ahmedabad on February 12.

"Unfortunately Kohli not playing, a right knee problem that happened last night," skipper Rohit Sharma said at the toss, surprising everyone.

The BCCI, known for divulging only the bare minimum, came up with a one-line statement, which added nothing more to what Rohit had revealed.

Oz all-rounder Stoinis announces shock retirement from ODIs

To be replaced in CT squad, the 35-year-old will continue to be available for selection in T20Is, Australia has time till Feb 12 to unveil final squad

PTI, MELBOURNE: Australian all-rounder Marcus Stoinis, who was named in the country's Champions Trophy squad, on Thursday announced a shock retirement from ODIs to "fully focus on the next chapter" of his career, creating a fresh selection headache for the side that is already dealing with injuries to key players.

The 35-year-old will, however, continue to be available for selection in T20 Internationals.

Australia has time till February 12 to unveil their final squad for the Champions Trophy that will be held in Pakistan and Dubai from February 19.

His sudden decision to call it quits might be a result of a hamstring injury that he sustained during the ongoing SA20, where he has been playing for Durban Super Giant.

"Playing ODI cricket for Australia has been an incredible journey, and I'm grateful for every moment I've had in the green and gold. Representing my country at the highest level is something I'll always cherish," said Stoinis in a media release issued by Cricket Australia.



“Playing ODI cricket for Australia has been an incredible journey, and I'm grateful for every moment I've had in the green and gold. Representing my country at the highest level is something I'll always cherish. This wasn't an easy decision, but I believe it's the right time for me to step away from ODIs and fully focus on the next chapter of my career,” he declared without elaborating any further. I've got a fantastic relationship with Ron (head coach Andrew McDonald) and I've hugely appreciated his support. I'll be cheering the boys on in Pakistan – Marcus Stoinis, Australian all-rounder

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CUMMINS, HAZLEWOOD RULED OUT OF CHAMPIONS TROPHY

PTI, GALLE (Sri Lanka): Australia were on Thursday dealt more blows with captain Pat Cummins and senior pacer Josh Hazlewood being ruled out of the ICC Champions Trophy owing to injuries.

Cummins has not recovered from the ankle niggle that plagued him towards the end of the recent Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test series against India, while Hazlewood is still recuperating from a calf strain. Hazlewood's last competitive outing was against India in the drawn third Test at Brisbane.

The development came close on the

heels of all-rounder Marcus Stoinis' shock retirement from ODIs and Mitchell Marsh's withdrawal from the global tournament due to his failure to recover from a back injury.

“Unfortunately Pat, Josh and Mitch are managing some ongoing injuries and haven't come up in time for the Champions Trophy,” national selection panel chairman George Bailey said. “While disappointing, it does present a great opportunity for other players to perform for Australia in a world event,” said Bailey.

In the absence of Cummins, either

Steve Smith or Travis Head could lead the reigning ODI World Cup winners in the Champions Trophy.

Cummins and Hazlewood, both world-class fast bowlers in their own right, will need an extended period of rehabilitation before they receive the green signal to return to play, putting their involvement in the Indian Premier League, which follows the mega ICC event, also in doubt.

Cummins is set to lead Sunrisers Hyderabad while Hazlewood was bought by Royal Challengers Bengaluru for Rs 12.50 crore from the player auction.

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