

India aim for semis, Pakistan eye survival in Sunday showdown

PTI, DUBAI: Hyped as a marquee showdown but mostly lopsided on the field, India and Pakistan lock horns in the ICC Champions Trophy, here, on Sunday with Rohit Sharma's men aiming to seal a semi-final spot and Mohammad Rizwan's team desperate to avoid early elimination from the tournament.

While India are on a high after claiming a measured six-wicket win over a sprightly Bangladesh, Pakistan are evidently tense after the 60-run loss in the tournament-opener against New Zealand.

PREVIEW

The sub-continental rivals' last Champion Trophy clash was the 2017 final in which Pakistan walked away with the win and the trophy. Rizwan and Co. would look to draw inspiration from that triumph in London but would also need to scale up their performance in every department.

Though the buzz surrounding the match is nowhere close to being what it used to be at the peak of diplomatic tensions between the two countries, there is an air of quiet anticipation for the Group A clash at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

India will have a distinct advantage in every aspect. The side has settled in nicely while Pakistan have flown in a couple of days ago after the drubbing handed by the Black Caps in Karachi.

More often than not, an India-Pakistan clash is as much a battle of nerves as cricketing abilities and India would be in a much better space on both counts come Sunday afternoon.



Indian cricketers during a practice session ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy match against Pakistan, in Dubai, UAE, on Saturday

For starters, skipper Rohit seems to be getting back to his best if the lucid stroke-making against Bangladesh was anything to go by. The man who is feeling the heat in the Indian team right now is Virat Kohli after yet again failing to convert a fairly decent start. His focus hasn't looked the same for a while but Kohli does have the knack of coming up

with special efforts against Pakistan.

India have a fit-again and in-form Mohammed Shami, who is being brilliantly backed up by Harshit Rana. Shami's fifer against Bangladesh ensured that India did not miss injured talisman Jasprit Bumrah just yet.

A l l - r o u n d e r Hardik Pandya has always turned up with his best

against Pakistan in major ICC tournaments. He will be hoping to make up for the 2017 Champions Trophy final disappointment where he fought as a lone warrior for India but failed to take his team over the line.

India are likely to continue with their winning combination and remain unchanged. The spin trio of Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja, and Axar Patel will be included once again on the tweaker-friendly surface to

exploit the conditions.

Pakistan would also be hoping to prove a point by getting the better of India, who refused to travel across the border for the tournament which is otherwise wholly scheduled in Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi.

SQUADS

India: Rohit Sharma (captain), Shubman Gill (vice captain), Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (wicketkeeper), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Rishabh Pant (wicketkeeper), Ravindra Jadeja, Varun Chakravarthy.

Pakistan: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Salman Ali Agha (vice captain), Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Kamran Ghulam, Saud Shakeel, Tayyab Tahir, Faheem Ashraf, Khushdil Shah, Usman Khan, Abrar Ahmed, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Hasnain, Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi.

Match starts at 2.30 pm (IST)

TOSS WON'T BE A FACTOR AS THERE IS NO DEW, 300-325 A VERY GOOD SCORE IN DUBAI: GILL

DUBAI: Anything in excess of 300 is a "very good" total considering the conditions in Dubai and with no dew around, the team batting second will be under more pressure, said India vice-captain Shubman Gill on Saturday ahead of the marquee clash against arch-rivals Pakistan in the Champions Trophy.

Though India have dominated Pakistan in the world events and also in the recent past, the match continues to generate plenty of hype.

"We definitely want to play positive and aggressive cricket. 300-325 will be very good score on this wicket. The team batting

well in the middle overs will have a better chance of winning," Gill told reporters on the eve of the game.

India won their tournament opener against Bangladesh but Pakistan lost to New Zealand in their first match, putting them in a must-win situation on Sunday.

Dew has played a big role in Dubai in the past but Gill said it won't be a factor in the clash between the arch-rivals and the team batting second will face the heat more.

"Toss won't matter as there is no dew. Team batting second will have more pressure," added Gill, who scored an unbeaten hundred against Bangladesh.

Josh tames Three Lions

Inglis tears into England's attack hammering six sixes and eight fours in an 86-ball 120 not out

PTI, LAHORE: Josh Inglis played the innings of his life, smashing his maiden ODI century (120 not out) to overshadow Ben Duckett's masterclass 165, as world champions Australia pulled off a record chase to beat England by five wickets in their Champions Trophy Group B opener here on Saturday.

The five-wicket win marked the highest-ever chase by any team at an ICC white-ball tournament, the previous best being Pakistan's 345 against Sri Lanka at the 2023 men's World Cup.

Duckett's career-best knock from 143 balls that had 17 boundaries and three sixes had propelled England to 351/8 - the highest total of the Champions Trophy, surpassing New Zealand's 347/4 against USA way back in 2004.

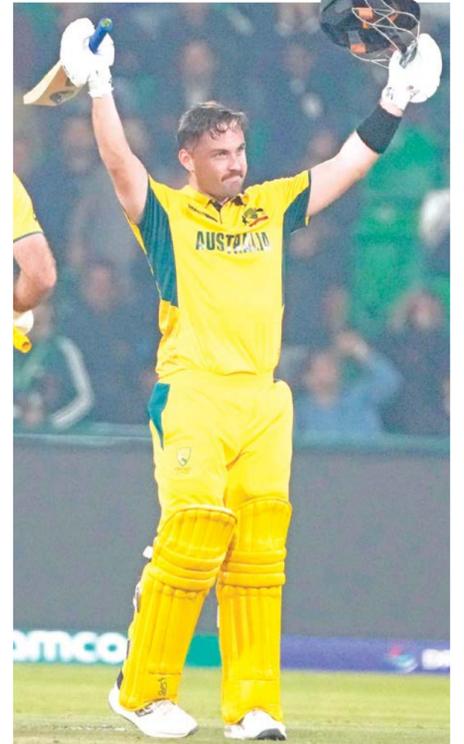
But on a flat Gaddafi Stadium pitch with a lightning-quick outfield, no target was safe as two-time champions Australia cruised home in 47.3 overs.

Inglis tore into England's attack, hammering six sixes and eight fours in an 86-ball 120 not out. His match-winning 146-run fifth-wicket stand with Alex Carey (69 off 63 balls, 8x4) turned the game on its head.

Carey was dismissed in the 42nd over with 70 needed from 50 balls but Glenn Maxwell (32 not out off 15 balls) gave a fine support.

Inglis sealed the chase with 15 balls to spare in a befitting manner, hitting Mark Wood for a six over deep midwicket.

Inglis reached his maiden ODI hundred in his 28th appearance in emphatic fashion, launching Jofra Archer deep into the mid-wicket stands. Archer struck early to dismiss the dangerous Travis Head (6) in the fourth over, while Duckett plucked a sharp slip catch to remove stand-in skipper Steve Smith (5), leaving Australia wobbling at 27/2.



Australia's Josh Inglis celebrates after scoring a century during the ICC Champions Trophy match against England, in Lahore, Pakistan, on Saturday

SCOREBOARD

England: Philip Salt c Carey b Dwarshuis 10, Ben Duckett lbw b Labuschagne 165, Jamie Smith c Carey b Dwarshuis 15, Joe Root lbw b Zampa 68, Harry Brook c Carey b Zampa 3, *Jos Buttler c Ellis b Maxwell 23, Liam Livingstone c Ellis b Dwarshuis 14, Brydon Carse c and b Labuschagne 8, Jofra Archer not out 21, Adil Rashid not out 1. **Extras:** 25. **Total:** 351-8. **Fall of wickets:** 13-1, 43-2, 201-3, 219-4, 280-5, 316-6, 322-7, 338-8. **Bowling:** Spencer Johnson 7-0-54-0, Ben Dwarshuis 10-0-66-3, Nathan Ellis 10-0-51-0, Glenn Maxwell 7-0-58-1, Adam Zampa 10-0-64-2, Matthew Short 1-0-7-0, Marnus Labuschagne 5-0-41-2. **Australia:** Matthew Short c and b Livingstone 63, Travis Head c and b Archer 6, *Steven Smith c Duckett b Wood 5, Marnus Labuschagne c Buttler b Rashid 47, Josh Inglis not out 120, Alex Carey c Buttler b Rashid 69, Glenn Maxwell not out 32. **Extras:** 14. **Total:** 356-5. **Fall of wickets:** 21-1, 27-2, 122-3, 136-4, 282-5. **Bowling:** Mark Wood 9.3-0-75-1, Jofra Archer 10-0-82-1, Brydon Carse 7-0-69-1, Adil Rashid 10-1-47-1, Liam Livingstone 7-0-47-1. Joe Root 4-0-26-0.

Man-of-the-match: Josh Inglis

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