

I am not retiring from ODI format, don't spread rumours: Rohit

Says when you do something different, you need backing of team management

PTI, DUBAI: India skipper Rohit Sharma on Sunday dismissed the speculations about his career after winning the ICC Champions Trophy, saying that he is not quitting the ODI format anytime soon.

Since the tour of Australia, speculations were rife about Rohit's future in team as well as his position as captain but a match-winning 76 in the final against New Zealand has given him a new lease of life.

"I am not going to retire from this (ODI) format. Going forward please don't spread rumours," Rohit said at the post-match press conference after India beat New Zealand by four wickets to clinch the trophy.

He was expectedly quizzed about his future plans and he said that things will remain as it is.

"No future plans. Jo ho raha hain, woh chalta jayega (Whatever is happening will keep continuing)," Rohit added.

Meanwhile, Rohit Sharma came to the Champions Trophy party when it mattered the most with his customary attack upfront approach in the final, which had the vote of the erstwhile team management helmed by Rahul Dravid and current one headlined by Gautam Gambhir.

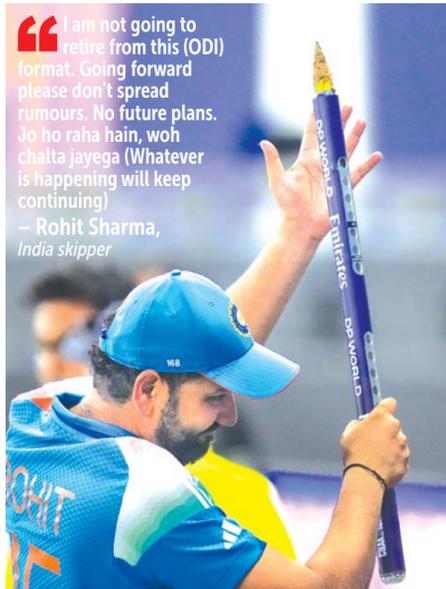
Rohit, who had a torrid time in the Test series in Australia, got back to form in his favourite format, and his 76 set the tone for India's four-wicket victory in the final against New Zealand here on Sunday.

"To have the result (going) our way is a great feeling," Rohit said after winning the player of the match award.

Asked about his attack-at-all-cost strategy since the last 50 over World Cup, Rohit explained the rationale behind the move.

"It was not natural to me, but something I really wanted to do. When you are doing something different, you have to have the backing of

"I am not going to retire from this (ODI) format. Going forward please don't spread rumours. No future plans. Jo ho raha hain, woh chalta jayega (Whatever is happening will keep continuing)" — Rohit Sharma, India skipper



the team and management." "I spoke to Rahul (Dravid) bhai earlier and now

Gauti (Gambhir) bhai as well. It is something I really wanted to do. I have played

all these years in a different style, and now we are getting the results with this," the 'Hit Man' said.

About playing multiple all-rounders, Rohit spoke about his understanding of the Dubai surface.

"The depth gives me the freedom and it helps. With Jadeja coming at 8, it gives you the confidence to go hard upfront. As long as I am clear in my mind, it is great," the skipper said.

He praised KL Rahul, who played a couple of clutch knocks in semi-final and final of the tournament.

"Very solid mind, never gets over-awed by the pressure around him, that's the reason we wanted to have him in the middle phase. There's a bit of calmness when he bats and picks the right shot to play to the situation, he gives the freedom to others to play freely

like Hardik."

Varun Chakravarty was his trump card with nine wickets in the tournament and no amount of praise was enough for the mystery spinner.

"He has got something different about him. When we are playing on such pitches we want the batters to do something different. He didn't start off in the tournament for us, but when he played against New Zealand and picked up a five-for. We wanted to maximise that. He has great quality in his bowling."

Rohit thanked the crowd for their constant support. "I want to appreciate everyone who came out and supported us. The crowd here has been magnificent, it is not our home ground but they made it our home ground. The number of people that came here to watch us play, to give them that win was satisfying," he said.



When you leave, you want to leave the team in better place: Virat

PTI, DUBAI: The peerless Virat Kohli on Sunday said his job is not just to win ICC trophies but also ensure that Indian cricket is at a better place when he walks into the sunset, as the team won a third Champions Trophy title with a four-wicket victory over New Zealand, here. India completed a chase of 252 with six balls to spare.

"When you leave, you want to leave the team in a better place, I feel we've a squad that's ready to take on the world for the next eight years," an ecstatic Kohli said after the end of the final.

While Kohli was out for 1 in the final, his match-winning hundred against Pakistan and a composed half-century against Australia in the semi-final went a long way in India's title triumph.

"It's been amazing, we wanted to bounce back after a tough Australian tour, and wanted to win a big tournament, so to win the Champions Trophy is amazing," Kohli told broadcasters "JioHotstar" with Shubman Gill by his side.

He then explained that as one of the senior-most players in the team, he also



Virat Kohli celebrates with his wife Anushka Sharma after India won against New Zealand in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 final match, in Dubai, UAE, on Sunday

has to focus on grooming the Gen-Next.

"So much talent in the dressing room, they're trying to take their game further and we're just happy to be of help (role of the seniors), sharing our experience and that's what makes this Indian team so strong."

He loved that the final

went the distance. "These are the things you want to play (for titles), playing under pressure and putting your hand up."

He was happy that the title win was a fantastic team effort.

"The whole team, everyone has put their hands up sometimes or other (during

the course of the tournament), everyone has put up impactful performances, we've been part of an amazing team, the amount of work we've done in the practice sessions, it feels great (to win).

"Shubman has been outstanding, Shreyas has played some top knocks, KL has finished games and Hardik has been superb with the bat."

Graceful in triumph, Kohli didn't forget to praise the New Zealand side for the fight that they have put up.

"We've always been in awe with what they can do, the limited number of players in the talent pool, but they just execute plans so well, they keep playing the kind of cricket that keeps them very much in the game.

"They're always been attacking and supportive of the bowlers. Credit to them, easily the best fielding unit, sad to see a very good friend of mine to be on the losing side (on Kane Williamson)."

"But they're always so good and they keep doing the basics well. That's what makes them such a competitive unit," Kohli concluded.

We lost to a better side: Santner

PTI, DUBAI: New Zealand skipper Mitchell Santner had no qualms in admitting that his team lost to a "better" Indian side in the final of the Champions Trophy here on Sunday.

"It's been a good tournament. We have been challenged along the way and the way we have grown as a group. We lost to a better side today. Everyone contributed to the tournament and put their hands up at different times," Santner said at the presentation ceremony.

The New Zealand bowlers fought back well to take the game deep after Rohit and Shubman Gill powered India past 100 in quick time. But before that, it was the turn of the Indian spinners to stifle the Kiwis after a very encouraging start by Rachin Ravindra.

"It was good bowling. We lost a couple of wickets after the powerplay and they really got the squeeze on. Credit to how their spinners how they bowled. They are world-class bowlers. We were 20 or 25 under to what we were look-

ing for," Santner said.

Glenn Phillips produced an incredible piece of fielding as he sent back Gill with a leaping catch at cover, and Santner was full of praise for his teammate as well as for Rohit.

"That man (Phillips) he keeps doing it. The way Rohit and Gill went about it was great. Rohit going at almost run a ball on that wicket was outstanding. We knew the game could change quickly and that happened."

The New Zealand skipper also lavished praise on opener Ravindra, who once again showed his class with some fine

knocks in the tournament, including a century. "We have seen how he steps up in these tournaments. With the ball as well he stepped up. He understands the game at such a young age. He's got a massive future. Even today, he went over a run a ball." Speaking about leading the team in his first ICC tournament, Santner said, "It has been very enjoyable. Made easy by the group."



Salah fires Liverpool 16 points clear, Forest beat Man City

AFP, LONDON: Premier League leaders Liverpool needed two Mohamed Salah penalties to beat bottom-of-the-table Southampton 3-1 on Saturday, while Nottingham Forest took a giant step towards the Champions League with a 1-0 win over Manchester City.

Liverpool stretched their lead at the top to a massive 16 points, despite a lethargic first 45 minutes.

Fresh from a smash-and-grab 1-0 Champions League victory over Paris Saint-Germain, Liverpool boss Arne Slot made just three changes.

However, the Dutchman was forced into making three half-time alterations to kickstart the champions' elect.

"The manager was like going for us - but that's something you need sometimes. Because first half, the game was sloppy," said Salah.

Southampton have taken just nine points from 28 games all season, but stunned Anfield when Will Smallbone fired the visitors in front in first-half stoppage time.

Alisson Becker was Liverpool's hero at the Parc des Princes on Wednesday but the Brazilian and Virgil van



Liverpool's Egyptian striker Mohamed Salah celebrates after scoring the team's second goal from a penalty spot during the English Premier League match against Southampton at Anfield in Liverpool, England

Dijk got in each other's way to allow Smallbone to roll into an unguarded net.

Slot turned to Harvey Elliott, Alexis MacAllister and Andy Robertson at the break, and the changes had the desired effect with two goals in three minutes before the hour mark.

Darwin Nunez levelled with a sharp near-post finish from Luis Diaz's cross.

Nunez was then upended inside the area and Salah converted from the spot.

The Egyptian slotted home a second penalty two minutes from time to take his tally for the season to 32 goals.

Second-placed Arsenal have two games in hand on the leaders, the first of

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS
Chelsea 1 (Cucurella 60) Leicester 0, Tottenham 2 (Sarr 67, Son 84-pen) Bournemouth 2 (Tavernier 42, Evanilson 65). Saturday: Brentford 0 Aston Villa 1 (Watkins 49), Brighton 2 (Van Hecke 41, Pedro 90+8-pen) Fulham 1 (Jimenez 35), Crystal Palace 1 (Sarr 82) Ipswich 0, Liverpool 3 (Nunez 51, Salah 55-pen, 88-pen) Southampton 1 (Smallbone 45+1), Nottingham Forest 1 (Hudson-Odoi 83) Manchester City 0, Wolves 1 (Munetsi 40) Everton 1 (Harrison 33).

which comes away to Manchester United on Sunday.

But it appears a matter of when not if Liverpool will clinch just their second league title in 35 years.

Forest pulled four points clear of City in third thanks to Callum Hudson-Odoi's late winner at the City Ground.

The former Chelsea winger fired past Ederson on 83 minutes from Morgan Gibbs-White's pass to spark jubilant scenes of celebration as Forest beat the English champions for the first time since 1997.

Two-time European champions, Forest have not experienced the continent's top competition since 1980.

But they are closing in on the Champions League with a top-five finish almost certain to be enough thanks to the strong performance of English teams in Europe this season.

City remain fourth and are looking over their shoulders after a ninth league defeat of the season.

Pep Guardiola's men are likely to be overtaken by Chelsea, when they host struggling Leicester on Sunday.

Aston Villa closed to within two points of the top four as Ollie Watkins came

back to haunt Brentford once more in a 1-0 win in west London.

Brentford goalkeeper Mark Flekken let the England striker's effort fly through his legs on 49 minutes as Watkins struck for the sixth time in six games against his former club.

Brighton boosted their own Champions League hopes courtesy of Joao Pedro's 98th-minute penalty to beat Fulham 2-1.

Raul Jimenez's strike opened the scoring for Fulham, but Jean Paul van Hecke levelled before half-time. Pedro's spot-kick lifts the Seagulls to sixth and within one point of City.

Crystal Palace shrugged off the loss of top scorer Jean-Philippe Mateta to a serious ear injury to beat Ipswich 1-0 thanks to Ismaila Sarr's winner.

The Eagles have won nine of their last 11 games in all competitions and climb to 11th.

Wolves edged six points clear of the relegation zone after a 1-1 draw against Everton.

Marshall Munetsi cancelled out Jack Harrison's opener for the visitors at Molineux as Everton extended their unbeaten league run to eight games.

SCOREBOARD

New Zealand: Will Young lbw b Chakravarty 15, Rachin Ravindra b Yadav 37, Kane Williamson c and b Yadav 11, Daryl Mitchell c Sharma b Shami 63, Tom Latham lbw b Jadeja 14, Glenn Phillips b Chakravarty 34, Michael Bracewell not out 53, *Mitchell Santner run out (Rahul) 8, Nathan Smith not out 0. **Extras:** 16. **Total:** 251-7. **Fall of wickets:** 57-1, 69-2, 75-3, 108-4, 165-5, 211-6, 239-7. **Bowling:** Mohammed Shami 9-0-74-1, Hardik Pandya 3-0-30-0, Varun Chakravarty 10-0-45-2, Kuldeep Yadav 10-0-40-2, Ravindra Jadeja 10-0-30-1, Axar Patel 8-0-29-0. **India:** *Rohit Sharma st Latham b Ravindra 76, Shubman Gill c Phillips b Santner 31, Virat Kohli lbw b Bracewell 1, Shreyas Iyer c Ravindra b Santner 48, Axar Patel c O'Rourke b Bracewell 29, KL Rahul not out 34, Hardik Pandya c and b Jamieson 18, Ravindra Jadeja not out 9. **Extras:** 8. **Total:** 254-6. **Fall of wickets:** 105-1, 106-2, 122-3, 183-4, 203-5, 241-6. **Bowling:** Kyle Jamieson 5-0-24-1, William O'Rourke 7-0-56-0, Nathan Smith 2-0-22-0, *Mitchell Santner 10-0-46-2, Rachin Ravindra 10-1-47-1, Michael Bracewell 10-1-28-2, Glenn Phillips 5-0-31-0.

Man-of-the-match: Rohit Sharma
Man-of-the-Series: Rachin Ravindra

Remember 2017 very closely, couldn't finish that time: Hardik

PTI, DUBAI: As his teammates basked in the glory of India's success in the Champions Trophy here on Sunday, star all-rounder Hardik Pandya remembered the heartbreak in the 2017 edition of the tournament. Back then India had lost to traditional rivals Pakistan in the final in England, where Hardik was part of the team.

"Always amazing to win an ICC event. I remember 2017 very closely, couldn't finish that time. Very pleased to have done it here," Hardik, who contributed significantly to India's title triumph on Sunday, told the official broadcaster. Hardik was the lone ranger for India in the 2017 final as he smashed a 43-ball 76, but the knock could not prevent his team from suffering a heavy defeat.

The all-rounder was also full of praise for KL Rahul, another contributor to the team's triumphant march and who made an unbeaten 34 in the final.

"KL was calm, he took his chances at the right time. He has immense talent, no one can time it as well as him."

The Karnataka cricketer said he was always confident of getting the job done.

"As confident as I could be that I could get over the line. Keeping composure is all that matters, happy to have done it this time. I've batted in times like this in three out of the five games," Rahul said.

"Hard to put in words, but the team has pure skill.

The way we've all had to play cricket growing up, we faced pressure from the time we became professional cricketers. The BCCI have groomed all of them and we've challenging ourselves to get better," the soft-spoken batter said.

Mystery spinner Varun Chakravarty, Rohit's trump card in the tournament with nine wickets in three matches, called it a dream-come-true moment for him.

"It was a sudden inclusion (on being part of the XI from the league match against New Zealand), I didn't expect to turn out like this, a dream come true. The spin was less in the first innings and I had to be disciplined, just stick to the basics," Chakravarty said.

Opener Shubman Gill, who started the tournament with a century against Bangladesh, expressed his awe for his skipper's free-flowing batting that has often set the tempo for the team.

"Felt amazing. For the most time, I sat back and enjoyed Rohit's batting. He told me doesn't matter how the scoreboard gap is, the aim was to bat till the end. We missed out in 2023, happy to win eight ODIs back to back."

"Seeing the intensity with which he plays with is amazing. He keeps telling us to give it everything and backs it up. New Zealand are very consistent and execute plans accurately. We know they give it their all. They showed it tonight with the consistency," Gill said.

sportspopup

Chennaiyin FC end league season resoundingly

CHENNAI: Chennaiyin FC defeated Jamshedpur FC 5-2 in the Indian Super League match played at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, here, on Sunday. Chennaiyin FC thus finished their league campaign with 27 points from 24 matches, placed eighth right now, whereas Jamshedpur FC are set to enter the play-offs having already qualified. Jamshedpur FC will head into the play-offs, whereas Chennaiyin FC's campaign ends with this match. Result: Chennaiyin FC 5 (Daniel Chima Chukwu 25' 90+6', Lukas Brambilla 45+3', Irfan Yadav 57' 90') Jamshedpur FC 2 (Rei Tachikawa 18', Mohammed Sanan 62'). ISL Fixture: Punjab FC vs Mohammedan SC at the Kishore Bharati Krirangan, Kolkata, at 7.30 pm

Wade joins Gujarat Titans' support staff

NEW DELHI: Gujarat Titans have named former Australia wicketkeeper Matthew Wade as the team's assistant coach ahead of the IPL 2025. Wade was with GT for two seasons as a player-- in 2022 and in 2024 -- but was not part of the IPL mega auction following his retirement from international cricket. "Champion. Fighter. Now our Assistant Coach! Welcome back to the GT Dugout, Matthew Wade," Gujarat Titans wrote on X. Wade, who had a short career of 15 matches in the IPL, played 12 of them for GT and was part of the title-winning squad in 2022 under Hardik Pandya's leadership. Wade will join head coach Ashish Nehra, batting coach Parthiv Patel, and assistant coaches Aashish Kapoor and Narender Negi in GT's coaching staff.

Djokovic crashes out at Indian Wells as Alcaraz sails through

INDIAN WELLS: Five-time champion Novak Djokovic tumbled out of the Indian Wells ATP Masters on Saturday, falling in his first match to lucky loser Botic van de Zandschulp as two-time defending champ Carlos Alcaraz advanced. "No excuses for a poor performance," 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic said after 37 unforced errors in a 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 defeat. "It doesn't feel great when you play this way on the court," he added. "But congratulations to my opponent -- just a bad day in the office, I guess, for me." Djokovic is just the latest in van de Zandschulp's string of superstar victims. Italian Matteo Arnaldi sprung another upset, beating seventh seed Andrey Rublev 6-4, 7-5. Alcaraz, trying to join Djokovic and Roger Federer as the only men to win three straight Indian Wells titles, eased into his defence with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over France's Quentin Halys. Women's World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka opened her campaign with a 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 victory over rising US talent McCartney Kessler. Madison Keys, who denied Sabalenka a third straight Australian Open title as she claimed her long-awaited first Grand Slam in Melbourne, subdued hard-hitting Russian Anastasia Potapova 6-3, 6-0 in her first match since then.