

Pinch of Salt & Kohli's spice cook the Royal Challengers Bengaluru's victory

Phil's explosive 33-ball 65 laid the foundation and Virat's 100th T20 50 provided the finishing touch as Royal Challengers Bengaluru cruised to a dominant nine-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals

PTI, JAIPUR: Phil Salt's explosive 33-ball 65 laid the foundation and Virat Kohli's 100th T20 50 provided the finishing touch as Royal Challengers Bengaluru cruised to a dominant nine-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals in the IPL, here, on Sunday.

RCB's decision to bowl first paid off on a surface that stayed low and offered variable bounce, even as rising India opener Yashas-

vi Jaiswal's fluent 75 off 47 balls stood out in Rajasthan Royals total of 173/4.

On a slow, tacky Sawai Mansingh Stadium pitch where stroke-making was far from easy, Salt's counterattack stunned the hosts. He smashed six sixes and five fours in his fiery innings, putting RR's bowlers under

pressure from the start. He constantly signalled his intent from the outset, top-edging Jofra Archer for a six in the opening over and also survived a close lbw shout. Salt was eventually

dismissed for 65, bowled by Kumar Kartikeya, leaving RCB needing just 82 from 68 balls. From there, Kohli took charge, pacing his innings with 25 singles and picking off the boundaries with surgical precision. RCB's decision to bowl first paid off on a surface that stayed low and offered variable bounce, even as rising India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal's fluent 75 off 47 balls stood out in Rajasthan Royals total of 173/4.

TWISTS & TURNS

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off off 45 balls (4x4, 2x6), helped RCB chase down 174 with ease, finishing the job in just 17.3 overs. This was RCB's fourth win of the season -- all coming in away matches.

Salt signalled his intent from the outset, top-edging Jofra Archer for a six in the opening over and also survived a close lbw shout.

He constantly shuffled across the stumps to access the leg-side and raced to his second fifty of the season in just 28 balls, bringing the required target under 100 in the eighth over.

He had moments of fortune along the way. On 23, a powerful flick ricocheted

off Sandeep Sharma's outstretched hand in a tough return catch attempt.

Later, on 40, Jaiswal dropped a sharp low chance at cover, which also offered a run-out opportunity, but the stumps weren't hit. Salt made the Royals pay dearly for those lapses.

Meanwhile, Kohli was happy to play second fiddle, beginning cautiously with just seven off his first six balls. He too had an early life -- a miscue off Sandeep's slower ball was put down by Riyan Parag at mid-off, a straightforward chance. But the RCB's iconic batter regrouped quickly and settled into his anchor role.

SCOREBOARD

Rajasthan Royals: Yashasvi Jaiswal lbw b Hazlewood 75, *Sanju Samson st Sharma b Pandya 15, Riyan Parag c Kohli b Dayal 30, Dhruv Jurel not out 35, Shimron Hetmyer c Patidar b Kumar 9, Nitish Rana not out 4. **Extras:** 5. **Total:** 173-4. **Fall of wickets:** 49-1, 105-2, 126-3, 169-4. **Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-32-1, Yash Dayal 4-0-36-1, Josh Hazlewood 3-0-26-1, Krunal Pandya 4-0-29-1, Liam Livingstone 1-0-8-0, Suyash Sharma 4-0-39-0.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Philip Salt c Jaiswal b Kartikeya 65, Virat Kohli not out 62, Devdutt Padikkal not out 40. **Extras:** 8. **Total:** 175-1. **Fall of wickets:** 92-1. **Bowling:** Jofra Archer 4-0-36-0, Tushar Deshpande 2-0-21-0, Sandeep Sharma 2-3-0-29-0, Maheesh Theekshana 2-0-21-0, Kumar Kartikeya 3-0-25-1, Wanindu Hasaranga 3-0-33-0, Riyan Parag 1-0-10-0.

Man-of-the-match: Philip Salt



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli and Phil Salt during the Indian Premier League match against Rajasthan Royals, at Sawai Mansingh Stadium, in Jaipur, on Sunday

FROM PAGE 1

Churchill Bros withdraw from Super Cup tourney

Churchill Brothers also criticised the AIFF's refusal to award them the I-League trophy, citing Rule 14.4 of the I-League Regulations 2024-25, which they say mandates that the winner be declared at the end of the competition. They referenced national and international precedents that affirm champions must be named even when legal disputes are ongoing.

"These actions strike at the very foundation of fair play. The draw of lots lacks transparency, and applying different criteria to different teams is fundamentally unfair," the club stated.

Churchill insisted their protest goes beyond seeding issues and reflects a broader defence of fairness in Indian football. "We cannot, in good conscience, participate under these circumstances. Our decision is in defence of the rules, the integrity of competition, and every club that believes in fair play."

Meanwhile, the I-League 2024-25 title remains undecided, as the AIFF Appeals Committee met in New Delhi on Saturday for what was expected to be the final hearing in the dispute between Inter Kashi and Namdhari FC. However, only Inter Kashi was heard, after Namdhari's legal representative informed the panel that he was unwell and could not attend the in-person hearing.

Namdhari is appealing the disciplinary committee's decision to deduct three points and award a match to Inter Kashi, following a ruling that the club had fielded an ineligible player in a 2-0 win. Shivam Singh, Namdhari's lawyer, requested a brief adjournment, stating that his absence would significantly prejudice the club's case.

Despite this, the committee—chaired by retired High Court Justice Rajesh Tandon—proceeded with submissions from Inter Kashi. The club, represented by a team of lawyers including one from Europe, argued that the disciplinary ruling was based on "undisputed facts and the competition's rules."

"The delay in resolving the case is adversely affecting the completion of the competition. It is of paramount importance to Indian football that a final

decision is reached quickly," Inter Kashi stated.

Inter Kashi finished the season one point behind Churchill Brothers. If the appeals committee upholds the disciplinary ruling and restores the three points, Kashi would finish with 42 points—two ahead of Churchill—potentially altering the final standings.

The I-League concluded last Sunday without an official champion being declared for the first time in the competition's history. Promotion to the ISL remains on hold pending the appeals committee's verdict.

In another development, six I-League clubs—including Churchill Brothers—have written to the AIFF Disciplinary Committee, raising serious concerns about refereeing standards and ethical conduct within the league. The letter was jointly signed by Churchill Brothers, Real Kashmir, Delhi FC, Sreenidi Deccan, Namdhari FC, and Aizawl FC.

"While we understand that refereeing is overseen by an independent body and that the AIFF does not have direct control over referee appointments or in-game decisions, the recurring pattern of glaring officiating errors—most, if not all, disproportionately favouring one club, Inter Kashi FC—raises serious questions about the integrity and impartiality of match officiating," the clubs stated.

To support their claims, the clubs submitted a compilation of video clips and match incidents that they say clearly and objectively demonstrate officiating inconsistencies and their impact on match outcomes. The letter also included a serious allegation that "a senior official from Inter Kashi has been in indirect communication with various clubs as well as AIFF officials, allegedly seeking unethical favours to benefit Inter Kashi."

"Such actions, if proven, would represent a grave violation of the principles of fair play and could irreparably damage the integrity and credibility of the I-League," the clubs warned. "We trust the AIFF and its Disciplinary Committee will treat this representation with the seriousness it deserves."

sportspopup

Lukas Martens sets new swimming world record in men's 400-metre freestyle

STOCKHOLM: Olympic champion Lukas Martens of Germany has broken the men's 400-meter freestyle record at the Swim Open Stockholm. Martens became the first swimmer to break the 3 minute, 40 seconds



barrier, finishing Saturday's race with a time of 3:39.96. That was 0.11 seconds better than the previous record set by fellow German Paul Biedermann in 2009, according to Olympics.com. Biedermann's mark had been set wearing the drag-reducing "super suits" that were eventually banned in 2010. The 23-year-old Martens won the 400-meter freestyle gold medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics with a time of 3:41.78.

India settle for silver in men's recurve team event at Archery World Cup Stage 1

AUBURNDALE (USA): India clinched a silver medal in the men's recurve team event at the Archery World Cup Stage 1 after the trio of Dhiraj Bommadevara, Tarundeep Rai, and Atanu Das went down 1-5 to China in the final, here, on Sunday. This was India's third medal of the season-opening event, with a fourth one still in sight as Dhiraj remained in contention in the men's recurve individual event slated later in the day. Earlier, India had secured a gold in the compound mixed team event and a bronze in compound men's team. Abhishek Verma narrowly missed out on a podium, finishing fourth in the compound men's individual section. In the recurve team gold medal clash, both India and China began evenly, sharing the first set 1-1 with identical scores of 54. The Indian trio had two 10s and two 9s, but faltered with a pair of 8s that proved costly.

Alcaraz beats injured Musetti to win in Monte Carlo for his 6th Masters 1000 title

MONACO: Carlos Alcaraz defeated an injury-stricken Lorenzo Musetti 3-6, 6-1, 6-0 to win the Monte Carlo final on Sunday and secure his sixth Masters 1000 career title. Alcaraz cruised to his first Monte Carlo trophy and his 18th tour-level victory. The 21-year-old Spaniard will reach No. 2 in the world rankings following the triumph in Monaco. Musetti started showing signs of a right-leg injury in the third set and received treatment at 0-3. Playing in his first Masters 1000 final, the 23-year-old Italian had trouble moving and keeping up with Alcaraz toward the end of the match. "This is not the way I want to win a match, I really feel sorry for him," Alcaraz said. "Just really happy to have won the Monte Carlo for the first time. It's been a really difficult week, with a lot of difficult situations, I'm really proud of myself how I dealt with everything."



Own goal helps Liga leaders Barca beat Leganes

LEGANES: Barcelona needed a Jorge Saez own goal to edge Leganes 1-0 and move seven points clear of Real Madrid at the top of La Liga on Saturday. Second-placed champions Madrid face Alaves on Sunday and have to play catch-up after Hansi Flick's side scraped their way to a narrow but vital win on the road. The Catalan giants are fighting for a potential quadruple this season and took another small step towards the league title at Butarque stadium. Despite Barca's display lacking the style and danger in front of goal they have shown for much of the season, the players celebrated vehemently at the end. Results: Osasuna 2 (Budimir 38, Ibanez 79) Girona 1 (Asprilla 90+6). Saturday: Real Sociedad 0 Real Mallorca 2 (Larin 20, Darder 47), Getafe 1 (Alderete 19) Las Palmas 3 (Silva 53, 74, McBurnie 61), Celta Vigo 0 Espanyol 2 (Fernandez 28, 63), Leganes 0 Barcelona 1 (Saez 48-og). Friday: Valencia 1 (Guerra 45+4) Sevilla 0.

Ganguly re-appointed as chairperson of ICC men's cricket committee

DUBAI: Former India captain Sourav Ganguly has been re-appointed as the chairperson of the ICC men's cricket committee and his longtime national teammate VVS Laxman too has been picked again as one of the panel members, the game's global governing body said on Sunday. Ganguly, who led the Indian team with distinction for five years from 2000 to 2005, was first appointed as the committee's chair in 2021. Ganguly, 52, had replaced compatriot Anil Kumble, who stepped down after serving a maximum of three, three-year terms. Besides Ganguly and Laxman, former Afghanistan player Hamid Hassan, West Indies batting great Desmond Haynes, South Africa's Test and ODI skipper Temba Bavuma, and ex-England batter Jonathan Trott were appointed to the committee.

ICC forms task force for displaced Afghan women cricketers

DUBAI: The ICC on Sunday announced the formation of a dedicated task force to support displaced Afghan women cricketers, many of whom are now living in exile in Australia, and for this the game's apex body has collaborated with BCCI and cricket boards of England and Australia. In a landmark initiative, the ICC has joined hands with the sport's three most influential boards -- BCCI, England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), and Cricket Australia (CA) to "assist these talented athletes in both their cricketing and personal development journeys". As part of the initiative, the ICC will establish a dedicated fund to provide direct monetary assistance, ensuring these cricketers have the resources they need to continue pursuing the game they love. This will be complemented by a robust high-performance programme offering advanced coaching, world-class facilities, and tailored mentorship to help them reach their full potential, the ICC said in a press release.

Dhoni is not a soothsayer, he hasn't got a magic wand: CSK Head Coach Fleming

LUCKNOW: Five-time title-winning captain MS Dhoni doesn't have a magic wand and can't change the fortunes of Chennai Super Kings overnight, Head Coach Stephen Fleming said as the side endures a horror run in the ongoing IPL. CSK are languishing at the bottom of the points table following a string of disappointing performances, and the onus is now on Dhoni to revive the team's campaign after taking over the captaincy from the injured Ruturaj Gaikwad. "His (Dhoni's) influence will be always prominent but he's not a soothsayer, he hasn't got a magic wand," Fleming told reporters. "He can't just rub it over the side otherwise he would have brought it out earlier. It's a case of us working very hard along with MS to turn it around and certainly in both of our cricketing careers, we've been in situations that require a lot of energy and we've got to make sure that the energy is put in the right place."

Karn overshadows Karun's brilliance

Chasing a target of 206, Nair's brilliant 40-ball-89 went in vain as Delhi Capitals ended on 193 in 19 overs

PTI, NEW DELHI: Mumbai Indians' 'forever captain' Rohit Sharma's tactical call was executed to perfection by 'Impact Substitute' Karn Sharma as they made a comeback for the ages with a 12-run victory over Delhi Capitals, here, on Sunday, to bring their IPL campaign back on track.

Chasing a target of 206, Karun Nair's brilliant 40-ball-89 went in vain as Delhi Capitals, who were cruising along at 119 for one just after the halfway stage, ended on 193 in 19 overs after an eventful penultimate over which saw three run outs and two boundaries.

Rohit, the tactician par excellence, indicated to his coach Mahela Jayawardene to bring in Karn and also asked for a ball change after the 11th over.

And suddenly the ball started to grip and turn with Mitchell Santner's dream delivery disturbing Nair's off-stick and Karn picking up three for 36 on a day ruled by wrist spinners.

Once KL Rahul, not known for handling pressure situations on slightly slowish track, was fooled by a classic leg-break by Karn, which lobbed up, the DC batting started to crumble.

In the end, MI's brilliant ground fielding showed its effect as three run outs ended Delhi Capitals's brilliant streak of wins.

This is the kind of victory that lifts the spirit and Rohit's observation on the changing nature of the track and initiation of spinners on a day when Jasprit Bumrah was off-colour did the trick.

For DC, Nair, one of India's only two Test triple centuries but who was down and out till the start of the 2024-25 domestic season, became the proverbial phoenix, rising from the ashes with stupendous performance on the day.

The pick-up pull off Bumrah over square-leg and a



Mumbai Indians' Karn Sharma celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of Delhi Capitals' Tristan Stubbs during an Indian Premier League match, at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, in New Delhi, on Sunday

■ Captain Rohit Sharma, the tactician par excellence, indicated to his coach Mahela Jayawardene to bring in Karn and also asked for a ball change after the 11th over. And suddenly the ball started to grip and turn with Mitchell Santner's dream delivery disturbing Nair's off-stick and Karn picking up three for 36 on a day ruled by wrist spinners

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break by Karn, which lobbed up, the Delhi Capitals batting started to crumble

■ Kuldeep Yadav's artistry was well complemented by young leg-spinner Vipraj Nigam's happy knack of picking wickets before Tilak Varma's attractive half-cen-

tury took Mumbai Indians to 205 for 5 in 20 overs. The two spinners actually reduced the pace of their deliveries, allowing them to slightly grip off the surface and some of the MI batters perished while going for risky shots

SCOREBOARD

Mumbai Indians: Rohit Sharma lbw b Nigam 18, Ryan Rickelton b Yadav 41, Suryakumar Yadav c Starc b Yadav 40, Tilak Varma c Porel b Kumar 59, *Hardik Pandya c Stubbs b Nigam 2, Naman Dhir not out 38, Will Jacks not out 1. **Extras:** 6. **Total:** 205-5. **Fall of wickets:** 47-1, 75-2, 135-3, 138-4, 200-5. **Bowling:** Mitchell Starc 3-0-43-0, Mukesh Kumar 4-0-38-1, Vipraj Nigam 4-0-41-2, Kuldeep Yadav 4-0-23-2, *Axar Patel 2-0-19-0, Mohit Sharma 3-0-40-0.

Delhi Capitals: Jake Fraser-McGurk c Jacks b Chahar 0, Abishek Porel c Dhir b Sharma 33, Karun Nair b Santner 89, KL Rahul c and b Sharma 15, *Axar Patel c Yadav b Bumrah 9, Tristan Stubbs c Dhir b Sharma 1, Ashutosh Sharma run out (Rickelton) 17, Vipraj Nigam st Rickelton b Santner 14, Mitchell Starc not out 1, Kuldeep Yadav run out (Rickelton) 1, Mohit Sharma run out (Sharma) 0. **Extras:** 13. **Total:** 193-10. **Fall of wickets:** 0-1, 119-2, 135-3, 144-4, 145-5, 160-6, 180-7, 192-8, 193-9, 193-10. **Bowling:** Deepak Chahar 3-0-24-1, Trent Boult 2-0-21-0, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-42-1, Mitchell Santner 4-0-43-2, *Hardik Pandya 2-0-2-1, Karn Sharma 4-0-36-3.

Man-of-the-match: Karn Sharma

Karn Sharma showed a lot of heart: Pandya

PTI, NEW DELHI: A relieved Hardik Pandya credited 'impact sub' Karn Sharma for showing a lot of heart to fashion Mumbai Indians' 12-run win against Delhi Capitals here on Sunday, a result that helped the visitors get their IPL campaign back on track.

It was skipper Rohit Sharma who suggested to coach Mahela Jayawardene to bring Karn into the at-

tack and also requested a ball change after the 11th over.

"Absolutely. Winning is always special. Especially in games like this. You have to keep fighting and it means a lot," said Pandya at the post-match presentation when asked if he felt relieved after MI secured only their second win of the season.

"(Karn was) Fantastic. Coming in and bowling the way he bowled,

showed a lot of heart, especially at a small ground like that."

Karun Nair's whirlwind 89 went in vain, and Pandya admitted the knock took them by surprise.

"We were running out of options regarding what to bowl at him. The way he took on our bowlers, took his chances, and the way he executed it shows the hard work he has put in. I think he took us by surprise."