

King Kohli hits 51st ton, India seal semis spot with thumping win over Pakistan

Chasing a tricky 242, India rode on Virat's 51st ton, Shreyas' classy 67-ball 56 and Shubman's brilliant 46 off 52 balls to overhaul the target with more than seven overs to spare; India top Group A with four points

PTI, DUBAI: Virat Kohli showcased his penchant to lord over Pakistan in ICC tournaments once more as the batting icon's glittering unbeaten 100 helped India claim an authoritative six-wicket win over their traditional rivals and all but seal a semi-final spot in the Champions Trophy, here, on Sunday.

The victory should be enough for India, who are now on top of Group A with four points, to make the last four. However, Pakistan are staring at early elimination from the eight-team event after their second successive loss.

Chasing a tricky 242, India rode on Kohli's 51st ODI ton, Shreyas Iyer's classy 67-ball 56 and Shubman Gill's brilliant start of 46 off 52 balls to overhaul the target with more than seven overs to spare.

Kohli rebelled against his own modest recent form and a dangerous opposition to peel off a memorable knock that took 111 balls and was punctuated with seven fours.

Pakistan, on the other hand, are on their way out of the tournament of which they are the hosts.

Once again, they ran into their old nemesis Kohli. The 36-year-old had several demons of his own to tame a lean run, recurring form of dismissals and struggles against spin.

Pakistan might have hoped to hustle him a bit

PTI



India's Virat Kohli celebrates his century with Axar Patel after scoring the winning runs during a One Day International (ODI) match of the ICC Champions Trophy against Pakistan, at Dubai International Cricket Stadium, in Dubai, UAE, on Sunday

through pacers Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf. But Kohli drove them on the up with elan or pulled them with audacity as Pakistan's premier pacers

transformed into dejected figures after the early high of Afridi casting Rohit Sharma (20 off 15 balls) with a peach of a yorker.

Perhaps, the biggest hope

Pakistan harboured against Kohli would have been leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed, considering the Indian's recent travails against England's Adil Rashid.

Kohli did have a couple of tough moments against Ahmed but none big enough to put him in distress. He largely dealt with him in singles, cutting down risks.

But the Pakistan quicks offered him enough chances to free his arms.

SCOREBOARD

Pakistan: Imam-ul-Haq run out (Patel) 10, Babar Azam c Rahul b Pandya 23, Saud Shakeel c Patel b Pandya 62, *Mohammad Rizwan b Patel 46, Salman Agha c Jadeja b Yadav 19, Tayyab Tahir b Jadeja 4, Khushdil Shah c Kohli b Rana 38, Shaheen Afridi lbw b Yadav 0, Naseem Shah c Kohli b Yadav 14, Haris Rauf run out (Rahul) 8, Abrar Ahmed not out 0. **Extras:** 17. **Total:** 241-10. **Fall of wickets:** 41-1, 47-2, 151-3, 159-4, 165-5, 200-6, 200-7, 222-8, 241-9, 241-10. **Bowling:** Mohammed Shami 8-0-43-0, Harshit Rana 7-4-0-30-1, Hardik Pandya 8-0-31-2, Axar Patel 10-0-49-1, Kuldeep Yadav 9-0-40-3, Ravindra Jadeja 7-0-40-1. **India:** *Rohit Sharma b Afridi 20, Shubman Gill b Ahmed 46, Virat Kohli not out 100, Shreyas Iyer c Imam-ul-Haq b Shah 56, Hardik Pandya c Rizwan b Afridi 8, Axar Patel not out 3. **Extras:** 11. **Total:** 244-4. **Fall of wickets:** 31, 100-2, 214-3, 223-4. **Bowling:** Shaheen Afridi 8-0-74-2, Naseem Shah 8-0-37-0, Haris Rauf 7-0-52-0, Abrar Ahmed 10-0-28-1, Khushdil Shah 7-3-0-43-1, Salman Agha 2-0-10-0.

Man-of-the-match: Virat Kohli

VIRAT BECOMES QUICKEST BATTER TO SCORE 14,000 RUNS IN ODI

Virat Kohli is now only the third batter in ODI cricket to have scored 14,000 runs, after the legendary Indian Sachin Tendulkar (18,246 runs) and Sri Lanka's Kumar Sangakkara (14,234 runs). Kohli is the quickest-ever to the milestone, having completed his 14,000 ODI runs in 287 innings. Before him, Tendulkar had taken 350 innings to reach the feat while Sangakkara took 378 outings. Coincidentally, both Kohli and Tendulkar scored their 14,000th ODI run against Pakistan

tember 2023 against Pakistan in Colombo during the Asia Cup.

Kohli already holds the record for scoring most ODI centuries (50), having gone past Tendulkar during the 2023 World Cup semi-final against New Zealand in Mumbai.

Earlier in the game against Pakistan, Kohli had gone past former captain Mohammad Azharuddin's record of most catches by any Indian fielder when he took his 157th catch in his 299th ODI.

Azharuddin had taken 156 catches in his 334 ODIs for India between 1985-2000.

Kohli took a forward diving catch after running in from long on to dismiss Pakistan's Naseem Shah off Kuldeep Yadav. He then took his 158th catch when he grabbed his second of the match at deep midwicket to dismiss Khushdil Shah off Harshit Rana.

only 15 runs on Sunday to reach the milestone, which he did with a four through covers off Haris Rauf in the 13th over of the run chase.

The 36-year-old modern day great was also the fastest to 13,000 runs, which he had completed in Sep-

Our campaign as good as over: Rizwan

PTI, DUBAI: Pakistan captain Mohammad Rizwan on Sunday conceded that his team's Champions Trophy campaign is as good as over following the loss to India here.

The six-wicket defeat to India was Pakistan's second in as many games. From Group A, India and New Zealand are expected to reach the semi-finals. Pakistan's last league game is against Bangladesh.

"We can say that our campaign is as good as over. We have to depend on results of other matches. There is hope as there is one more game left. As a captain, I don't like this scenario (depending on other teams). We should have fate in our hands," said Rizwan at the post-match press conference.

"As far as the match is concerned, we are obviously disappointed. We made mistakes in all three departments. We were not able to take wickets in the middle overs," he added.

sportspopup

Confident New Zealand aim for semis spot; Bangladesh fight for survival

RAWALPINDI: A confident New Zealand side will be eager to seal their semifinal spot when they take on Bangladesh, who will be fighting for survival, in their Champions Trophy Group A match, here, on Monday. The Black Caps are at the top of Group A with a healthy net run rate of 1.200. A win on Monday will put them within touching distance of a semi-final berth. Bangladesh, on the other hand, currently sit third in the group with a net run rate of -0.408. They must secure a victory to stay in contention for the knockout stage. New Zealand looked clinical in their opening match, and their recent triumph in the tri-series has further helped them adapt to the conditions in Pakistan. However, they now face a selection dilemma with the potential return of Rachin Ravindra from a head injury. In his absence, Devon Conway and Will Young opened the innings. Initially, Young was expected to make way for Ravindra, but the right-hander's century against Pakistan has complicated the decision in a positive way. Match starts at 2.30 pm IST.

Bumrah receives ICC awards for 2024 during India-Pakistan match

DUBAI: India pacer Jasprit Bumrah on Sunday received his ICC honours, including the Men's Cricketer of the Year and Men's Test Cricketer of the Year awards, before the start of the Champions Trophy match between India and Pakistan here. Bumrah is not playing in the Champions Trophy as he has been sidelined with a back issue. The 31-year-old was present here to collect the awards, which also includes a place in the Men's Test and T20I Teams for 2024. The ICC posted photographs of Bumrah with each of his four awards — including two caps — and wrote on X, "Jasprit Bumrah receives his #ICC Awards and Team Of The Year caps for a stellar 2024."

Disappointing that India are not playing in Pakistan: PCB chief Mohsin Naqvi

KARACHI: chairman Mohsin Naqvi has reiterated his disappointment over India's decision to play their Champions Trophy matches at a neutral venue but remains confident that Pakistan's first ICC event in 29 years will leave a lasting legacy for the sport in the country. "We are focussed on delivering a world class event but it is undoubtedly disappointing that India is not playing in Pakistan," Naqvi told PTI. "It is disappointing- not just for the PCB, but also for cricket fans worldwide, the ICC, its commercial partners and the other participating countries that India is not playing in. Pakistan," he said.

LOCAL BEAT

Salgaocar FC, Cortalim Villagers share spoils

RAIA: Salgaocar FC held Cortalim Villagers SWSC 1-1 in the Goa Football Association U-15 Division I League match played at Cansaulim sports complex ground, on Sunday. Macwyn Silva gave lead to Cortalim Villagers, which was later cancelled by Andreas Furtado for Salgaocar FC.

Curtorim Gymkhana enter quarters

RAIA: Curtorim Gymkhana edged past Uguem RAIA: Rising Club 4-2 to enter the quarter-finals of Vaidya Family Inter-Village football tournament played at Cuncolim school ground, on Sunday. Anslam Fernandes scored a hat-trick for Curtorim Gymkhana, while Aslam Shah of Uguem Rising Club scored a self-goal. For Uguem Rising Club, Ashley Carvalho and Handlee Carvalho scored a goal each. Anslam Fernandes was adjudged as the man-of-the-match, which was presented by Arnald Costa.

Benaulim Vetetans in next round

RAIA: Benaulim Veterans got the better of Carmona Veterans 7-4 via tie-breaker to move into the next round of Benaulim Constituency Veterans Football Tournament played at Varca ground, on Sunday. Benaulim Veterans netted two goals through Casmiro, while Luis scored one. For Carmona Veterans Neil netted a brace and Danny netted a goal. At the end of regulation time, both teams were held to a 3-3 draw. In the resultant tie-breaker, Benaulim Veterans proved to be the better shooters.

At 36, it takes a lot out of me to put in that much effort: Kohli

PTI, DUBAI: Virat Kohli said his plan was to attack the pacers and take less risk against the spinners in the high-pressure Champions Trophy clash against Pakistan here on Sunday and having steered the team home with a sparkling hundred, his 36-year-old body is happy to get a week-long break before the next game.

India's six-wicket win against arch-rivals has almost sealed a semifinal spot for the side and all but knocked the hosts out of the tournament.

Kohli got majority of his runs from running the quick singles and doubles as he collected only seven fours in his 100 not out off 111 balls. "At 36, a week off is very good. It takes a lot out of me to put in that much effort," said the superstar referring to the last group A clash against New Zealand on March 2.

"It feels good to bat in that manner in an important game, where a spot for semis was there

At 36, a week off is very good. It takes a lot out of me to put in that much effort. It feels good to bat in that manner in an important game, where a spot for semis was there to be taken, after Rohit (Sharma) fell (20 off 15 balls). My job was clear - to control the middle overs, not take risks against spinners and take on pacers. I was happy with the template, it's how I play in ODIs

— Virat Kohli

to be taken, after Rohit (Sharma) fell (20 off 15 balls). My job was clear - to control the middle overs, not take risks against spinners and take on pacers."

"I was happy with the template, it's how I play in ODIs," said Kohli at the post-match presentation after scoring his fourth hundred

against Pakistan. When asked about his approach in the innings, Kohli said: "I have a decent understanding of my game. It's about keeping the outside noise away, take care of my energy levels and thoughts."

"It's easy for me to get pulled into expectations and frenzy around games like these (India-Pakistan). I kept telling myself I'll give my 100 per cent while fielding. It's why I take pride in it. When you put your head down and go about your work, things work out."

He also credited Rohit, Shubman Gill (46) and Shreyas Iyer (56) for taking on the pacers on a tricky pitch.

"Clarity is important, when there is pace on the ball, you have to get scoring. Shubman and Shreyas have been excellent. Everyone's got a decent knock in these conditions, that'll augur well in the coming matches," he said.

Hamstring's okay at moment: Rohit allays fears around fitness

PTI, DUBAI: India captain Rohit Sharma on Sunday played down concerns around his fitness that were triggered by an unscheduled break that he took during his team's six-wicket win over Pakistan in a crucial group A match of the Champions Trophy here.

Rohit was seen struggling while fielding and it seemed he had pulled his hamstring. However, the skip-

per, who also left the field for a brief period during the Pakistan innings, said he was "okay" when asked about his hamstring in the presentation ceremony.

"Hamstring's okay at the moment," the 37-year-old said in the presentation ceremony following the win that has almost clinched a semi-final slot for India.

Rohit was effusive in his praise for his longtime In-



India teammate.

"Virat Kohli loves representing the country, do-

ing what he does the best, which is what he did today. People sitting inside the dressing room aren't surprised with what he did," Rohit said.

As India closed in on victory with Kohli less than 10 runs away from his hundred, Rohit was seen gesturing to the star batter to go for the landmark with a couple of big hits. Rohit said all the players did what was

required of them.

"We started superbly with the ball. We knew wicket could get slower but backed our experienced batters to go out there and get 240. Credit goes to Kuldeep, Axar, Jadeja who have played a lot."

"(Mohammad) Rizwan and Saud (Shakeel) stitched a good stand, it was important not to let the game drift. Not to forget how (Moham-

med) Shami, Hardik (Pandya), and Harshit (Rana) bowled as well. It was a good performance from the entire unit. Boys understand what kind of job is required out of them."

"It's tricky at times because not all will get to bowl. I try to figure out who's creating the most problems to the batters and make decisions," Rohit said.

Salah-inspired Liverpool beat Man City to open up 11-point lead

AFP, MANCHESTER: Liverpool took a giant stride towards the Premier League title on Sunday as a 2-0 win over Manchester City opened up an 11-point lead at the top of the table over Arsenal.

Mohamed Salah was again Liverpool's star performer as he opened the scoring with his 30th goal of the season before setting up Dominik Szoboszlai to double the lead before half-time.

Just days after exiting the Champions League to Real Madrid, this was another sobering defeat for the dethroned English champions, who are now 20 points adrift of the leaders. So often during Pep Guardiola's glorious reign, Liverpool have come up just short in English football's great rivalry of recent years.



Liverpool's midfielder #08 Dominik Szoboszlai celebrates scoring the team's second goal with striker #11 Mohamed Salah during the English Premier League match against Manchester City at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester

However, their time to match Manchester United's record of 20 English top-flight titles now appears just months away in Arne Slot's first season in charge.

Arsenal's shock 1-0 home defeat to West Ham on Saturday had eased the pressure on Liverpool, that had built after dropping points in two of their last three games at Everton and Aston Villa.

A trip to the Etihad has for so long been the stiffest test of all, but City's defensive frailties were easily exposed and they also badly missed the presence of the injured Erling Haaland in attack. Liverpool, by contrast, had their talisman fit and firing as Salah took his staggering tally this season to 25 goals and 16 assists in 27 Premier League appearances.

EPL RESULTS

Manchester City 0 Liverpool 2 (Salah 14, Szoboszlai 37). **Newcastle 4** (Miley 23, Murphy 25, Isak 33-pen, 34) **Nottingham Forest 3** (Hudson-Odoi 6, Milenkovic 63, Yates 90). **Saturday: Arsenal 0 West Ham 1** (Bowen 44), **Aston Villa 2** (Asensio 57, 89) **Chelsea 1** (Fernandez 9), **Bournemouth 0 Wolves 1** (Cunha 36), **Everton 2** (Beto 19, Doucoure 33) **Manchester United 2** (Fernandes 72, Ugarte 80), **Fulham 0 Crystal Palace 2** (Andersen 37-og, Munoz 66), **Ipswich 1** (Hutchinson 36) **Tottenham 4** (Johnson 18, 26, Spence 77, Kulusevski 84), **Southampton 0 Brighton 4** (Pedro 23, Rutter 56, Mitoma 71, Hinshelwood 82). **Friday: Leicester 0 Brentford 4** (Wissa 17, Mbeumo 27, Norgaard 32, Carvalho 89)