

Sidhu hails Indian team's performance

CHANDIGARH, JAN 30 / -- Punjab cabinet minister Navjot Singh Sidhu on Tuesday congratulated the India U-19 cricket team for reaching the final of the ongoing World Cup. The Indian team crushed arch-rivals Pakistan by 203 runs in the semi-final clash of the prestigious tournament in Christchurch. The minister extended his best wishes to the Indian team for the final against Australia to be played on Saturday. He credited the exceptional coaching skills of chief coach Rahul Dravid for the achievement. Sidhu said Dravid played a yeoman's role in the team and honing the skills of the Indian team, that delivered par excellence performance in batting, bowling as well as

fielding. Calling Shubman Gill, who was a century unbeaten 102 off 94 balls, the future of Indian cricket, Sidhu said the 18-year-old played a gem of an innings which paved the way for victory. The Indian team has so far been enjoying an unbeaten run in the U-19 World Cup. Earlier, in the quarter-finals the Indian team beat Bangladesh whereas in the league phase, the Indian team topped the group by defeating Australia, Zimbabwe and Papua New Guinea. India have won the tournament in 2000 (under Mohammed Kaif), 2008 (Virat Kohli), 2012 (Umakant Chaud) while losing two finals in 2006 (Cheteshwar Pujara) and 2016 (Ishan Kishan).

Gill has always been a dedicated cricketer: Father

CHANDIGARH, JAN 30 / -- India U-19 player Shubman Gill's father is elated at the performance of his son in the ongoing World Cup in New Zealand, saying the youngster has always been a dedicated cricketer. "Shubman has always been dedicated to the game of cricket. I am very happy and proud of my son's performance in the ongoing World Cup," Gill's father Lakhwinder Singh told PTI today. "We are elated with his century in today's match against Pakistan after defeating the Pakistani team," he said. Asked when Gill showed his inclination towards cricket, Lakhwinder said he had always been passionate about the game since the age of three. "Shubman never liked any other toy. He always loved playing with a ball and bat. He used to play with cricket bat and ball even during going to bed," he said. Gill belongs to a village in Fazilka in Punjab. "We fully supported him for achieving his dream and become a cricketer. We dedicated 15 years on him to enable him become a world class cricketer. We



Shubman Gill of India celebrates his century

Hit for a six: Shubman, Porel take India to 6th U-19 WC final



Ishan Porel of India (C) is congratulated by team mates after dismissing Ali Zaryab of Pakistan

CHRISTCHURCH, JAN 30 / -- India reaffirmed their supremacy in age-group cricket as they walloped arch-rivals Pakistan by an incredible 203 runs to make it to their sixth ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup final in Christchurch on Tuesday. This is India's biggest win against Pakistan at the age group level as the gulf in standard was way too visible. India have won the tournament in 2000 (under Mohammed Kaif), 2008 (Virat Kohli), 2012 (Umakant Chaud) and 2016 (Ishan Kishan). The immensely talented Shubman Gill hit classy unbeaten 102 off 94 balls to guide India to 272 runs in the first half and then seamer Ishan Porel (4/17 in 6 overs) scythed through the Pakistan top-order with a terrific opening

spell to help them bowl out for a mere 69 in 29.3 overs. "It was an outstanding performance from the bowlers as well as the batsmen. I am very satisfied with the performance. I am expecting an exciting contest against Australia in the final." I would also like to thank the crowd for their support," skipper Prithvi Shaw said. In the losing two finals in 2006 (Cheteshwar Pujara) and 2016 (Ishan Kishan). The immensely talented Shubman Gill hit classy unbeaten 102 off 94 balls to guide India to 272 runs in the first half and then seamer Ishan Porel (4/17 in 6 overs) scythed through the Pakistan top-order with a terrific opening



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four quick wickets with left-arm spinner Shiva skipper Shaw taking a couple of brilliant catches (2/6 in 4 overs) blowing away the opposition lower order to win the match in no time. (PTI)

BCCI to announce cash award for U-19 World Cup cricketers

NEW DELHI, JAN 30 / -- The BCCI will announce cash award for the Indian players for reaching the final of the U-19 cricket World Cup and also felicitate them, congratulating the team for beating Pakistan in the semifinals in Christchurch in New Zealand today, Khanna said. "I would like to congratulate the entire team and coach Rahul Dravid for this performance. Rahul's contribution in guiding the Gen Next cricketers has been immense. Because of him we now have a talented pool of U-19 cricketers." The BCCI will announce cash awards and also felicitate the team," he told PTI. The Lakhwinder Singh thrashed arch-rivals Pakistan by 203 runs in the semifinals to enter the final for the sixth time. They will take on Australia in the summit clash on February 3. (PTI)

EB miss penalty, hold Minerva for a 2-2 draw

BARASAT (WB), JAN 30 / -- East Bengal goal back from a two goal deficit to hold table leaders Minerva Punjab FC to a 2-2 draw in a thrilling top of the table I-League match here today. Sukhdev Singh put Minerva ahead in the 19th minute, scoring from a deflection off East Bengal goalkeeper CK Ubaid at the Barasat Stadium. The visitors doubled the lead with Bhutanese sniper Chencho Gyeltshen fooled the East Bengal defenders for a calm and composed finish. East Bengal's tale of missed chances continued as their star Japanese Katsuno Yusu failed to convert a penalty in the 50th minute with Minerva's goalkeeper Kiran Limbu pulling off a fine save to be adjudged hero-of-the-match. Down and virtually out, East Bengal managed to fight back in an exciting second half with Joby Justin heading home a corner kick in the 70th minute. Brandon Vanlaremdika finding the equaliser two minutes before stoppage time. Meanwhile, coming off from four matches without a goal, the Punjab outfit dropped points for the second time as they are now on 26 points from 11 matches. East Bengal now have 20 points from 12 matches and remain put at third place with six games left. The result



Action shot from the I-League match between East Bengal and Minerva Punjab FC.

letting Chencho find the back of the net enroute his sixth goal of the season. The Bengal side had their best chance just at the stroke of halftime when Duet Ombembi got the ball inside the goalmouth but Minerva's Limbu pulled off a quality save under the bar. East Bengal also seemed unlucky to have been denied a penalty in the first-half injury time when Yusu was brought down inside the box by Guy Eric Dano. In the 50th minute, Laldanmawia Ralte was brought down by Kassim Aidara inside the box but it hardly mattered as Yusu failed to convert from the ensuing spotkick. East Bengal then went to dish out an exciting half an hour's play beginning with Yusu's perfect corner with Justin finding a flange to pull one back. Having replaced Cavin Lobo, Brandon scored the equaliser from Yusu's pass, in a move that began from Ralte's cross from the right as the Japanese header kept the ball in play. In full throttle, East Bengal looked to go ahead but were unfortunate as Ralte's 90+3rd minute shot came from the top. Minerva also had their chances from a counter attack but the ball went over the bar as the Punjab outfit ended their frustrating away campaign, dropping points for only the second time in 11 matches. (PTI)

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Delhi Daredevils appoint James Hopes as bowling coach

NEW DELHI, JAN 30 / -- Delhi Daredevils on Monday appointed former Australia allrounder James Hopes as their new bowling coach ahead of the coming season of the Indian Premier League (IPL). Delhi Daredevils CEO Hemant Dua confirmed that Hopes has been appointed as the new bowling coach, ex-Assam and Railways cricketer Subhadre Ghosh will take over as the fielding coach. The duo will now join the staff led by head coach and former Australian captain Ricky Ponting. The rest of the coaching staff, however, will continue to be the same with former cricketers Pavin Amre and Srirang Sriram as assistant coaches. Sunil Valsan is the team manager, whereas Paul Close continues in his role as physiotherapist along with Rajinikanth Sivagannam as the fitness coach. Hopes featured in 84 ODIs and 12 Twenty20 internationals for Australia, apart from representing Queensland for close to 15 years. He has also played in the IPL for three teams, including Delhi Daredevils in 2011. He retired from all forms of cricket in 2016 before moving into a coaching role for both Queensland and Sri Lanka Heat in the Big Bash League (BBL). "Once our auction strategy paid off, it was time to also appoint key personnel in the coaching staff. Ricky (Ponting) has had great inputs in both the selection of players and the selection of players and the coaching staff. We are absolutely delighted to welcome both James and Subhadre to the Delhi Daredevils family," Dua said in a statement. "For James, it is a sort of homecoming as he has played for Delhi Daredevils earlier.

Shubman Gill: New 'Yuvraj' of Punjab cricket

NEW DELHI, JAN 30 / -- A heady mixture of silk grace and dollops of brute power has always defined Punjab school of batting and the latest to have emerged from that stable is 18-year-old Shubman Gill. With an aggregate of 341 runs in the ongoing U-19 World Cup, the teenager from nondescript town of Fazilka in Punjab's Ferozepur district has been the centre of attention, even more than the highly-rated skipper Prithvi Shaw. Strapping with sinewy wrists, Shubman's exciting strokeplay has earned him eyeballs and no wonder he went to Kolkata for a Rs 1.8 crore at the IPL auction. It was around 10 days before the senior World Cup against Zimbabwe at Mount Maungani, Shubman pulled rival pacer N Nungu for a six over deep mid-wicket. It was a short-arm jab but more interestingly there was an eerie similarity with a stroke that Virat Kohli had hit during his innings of 150 against England in an ODI in Pune, last January. In fact, the BCCI's official website compared both the strokes and it spoke about the skill and swagger which have been the hallmark of all great players hailing from North India. During the days of Mohinder Amarnath and Kapil Dev, Punjab was more about grit and power but Yuvraj Singh married both. And now it seems that Shubman is ready to carry that legacy forward. And none other than his senior Punjab team captain Harbhajan Singh, who feels that he has got everything to succeed at the highest level. "Obviously, the more he plays quality bowling, he will improve. He will play in different conditions, go through phases where he would know how to score runs in difficult conditions. But make no mistake, I have seen 16-year-old Yuvraj Singh from close quarters. Shubman is as talented as Yuvraj," Harbhajan gave a fair assessment about the youngster. "His biggest advantage is that he has strokes that all modern day players would like to have. He can hit Dilscop (the lap shot) more famous by TM Dilshan), he can hit the ramp shot (guiding over thirdman), inside out lofted shot. "And the toughest of them all -- the pull in front of square. Pulling through



Shubman Gill in action during a match.

Time to see if IPL is in interest of cricket: Bombay HC

MUMBAI, JAN 30 / -- The Bombay High Court on Tuesday said the IPL has made people familiar with phrases like "betting and fixing" and in view of the alleged violations of foreign exchange rules it was time to see if the tournament was in interest of the game of cricket. The scathing remarks were made by a division bench of justices SC Dharmadhikari and Bharati Dhanraj while passing an order on a petition filed by former Indian Premier League (IPL) chairman Lalit Modi challenging a July 2015 order of the adjudicating authority of

the Enforcement Directorate (ED) refusing him the permission to cross-examine witnesses in a FEMA case. The ED has alleged violations of foreign exchange rules during the 2009 edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) held in South Africa. The court allowed Modi's petition and permitted his legal counsels to cross-examine the witnesses but made strong observations on the tournament. "IPL has led to serious violations then it is high time the organisers realise whether what has been achieved by conducting the tournament since the past ten years can be termed as a sport or game...for it is full of illegalities and breaches of law," the court said. "IPL has made us familiar with phrases like betting and fixing of matches. It is in the interest of the game of sport," the court said in its order. The bench while allowing Modi's petition said the impugned order grossly violates the principles of natural justice as the adjudicating authority was going to rely on the statements of the witnesses against Modi. The court also