

India canter to 53-run win, break NZ jinx to go 1-0 ahead

NEW DELHI, NOV 1 /--/ India finally tasted success against the team that has been their Achilles heel for long in this format when they outplayed butter-fingered New Zealand by 53 runs in the first Twenty20 International here tonight. At the end of the lopsided game that was also veteran seamer Ashish Nehra's last in competitive cricket, hosts India sauntered to a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. Fittingly, Delhi players Virat Kohli and Shikhar Dhawan carried Nehra on their shoulders after the win. This was India's first win against the Kiwis in six T20 outings. New Zealand innings ended at 149 for eight. The game was marked by openers Shikhar Dhawan and Rohit Sharma's blazing half-centuries, during which they produced an Indian record of 158-run partnership to power the team to a formidable 202 for three, and Nehra's last waltz, of course. And, any attempt to decorate with superlatives Hardik Pandya's catch to dismiss Martin Gupthill, would be an understatement. When India batted, both Dhawan and Sharma were dismissed after scoring 80 runs, before skipper Virat Kohli (26 not out off 11 balls) and Mahendra Singh Dhoni (7 not out) guided India past 300 with their power hitting. Set a daunting target of 203 in the allotted 20 overs, New Zealand were off to a poor start as they lost Gupthill in the second over. It was a stunner from Pandya, who sprinted from long-off into what looked like a no man's land and pulled off the unbelievable catch with a full-length dive and outstretched hands, and a slide that continued for a while even after the ball was in his safe hands. Starting the proceedings for India with the ball, Nehra came close to picking up a wicket in his farewell game, but Pandya could not latch on to this one after making a valiant attempt running backwards from cover.

Eventually, Nehra, also bowling the day's final over, returned respectable figures of none for 29 in his four-over spell. Not able to control his emotion, an excited fan held the end of his ground to touch Nehra's feet. Leg-



All smiles at the sight of magical timing

spinner Yuzvendra Chahal and left-arm spinner Axar Patel finished with two wickets apiece. Earlier Dhawan and Sharma struck scintillating half-centuries during a record partnership to power India. This is India's biggest partnership for any wicket, eclipsing the previous best of 138 held by Kohli and Sharma, against South Africa in 2015. Invited to bat after the coin landed in New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson's favour, India were off to a brisk start and upped the tempo as overs passed by in veteran seamer Ashish Nehra's final competitive game. The packed crowd at the Forus Shah Kotla Stadium was treated to some delightful as well as unorthodox cricketing shots by Dhawan and his opening partner Rohit Sharma. Sharma, who got a reprieve on 16, slammed six sixes and four boundaries in his 55-ball knock. While the left-handed Dhawan, who represents Delhi in the domestic circuit, blazed his way to 80 off only 52 balls, hitting 10 fours and two sixes. While Dhawan nearly lost his wicket while going to his fifty, Sharma brought up the landmark with a six straight over the top of left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner. Dhawan started the innings with a flurry of boundaries flicking one through mid-wicket, hit Trent Boult for boundaries on either side of the wicket and then sliced Tim Southee for same result. Dhawan was offered a life when he was dropped at point off Boult, and luck also smiled on Sharma who was dropped on long off by Southie.

The Munnaikar was batting on 16 then, and if his eventual score was any indication, the visitors paid a huge price. Even as Dhawan found the fence from the world go with consummate ease, Sharma switched gears after getting his eye in and then dealt in fours and sixes. Colin Munro was hit over long-on for a six and having gained in confidence, sat on one knee and smashed Boult as the ball sailed over the fence behind fine leg. Sharma's first big hit of the innings was a slashed six over third man off Southie.

FIFA awaiting official communication from AIFF on Praful Patel issue

NEW DELHI, Nov 1 /--/ World football body FIFA on Wednesday said it was awaiting an official communication regarding the setting aside of the election of All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel. "FIFA is awaiting official communication from the AIFF concerning the said matter. We have no further comment for the time being," a FIFA spokesperson said. According to football experts, the FIFA may not act in haste as it is a decision by a court of



law and not a case of factionalism in the national federation or something arising out of government interference. The Delhi High court on Tuesday set aside the election of Patel in December 2016 for not following the National Sports Code. The court appointed former chief election commissioner S Y Quraishi as an administrator to look into the functioning of the AIFF while also directing that fresh elections be conducted within a period of five months. Patel, a former Union Minister, served as acting president of the AIFF for one year after long-time head Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi suffered a cardiac arrest in 2008. He took over as full time president in October 2009 before being re-elected for the top job in December 2012. He was re-elected unopposed as AIFF president for his third year in office in December last year. Meanwhile, with the detailed judgement awaiting, Quraishi is yet to take over as administrator. As soon as the detailed judgement is available, the AIFF top brass will meet to chalk out the future course of action.

Nehra one of the smartest cricketers I have played with: Kohli



Ashish Nehra is presented with a memento on the occasion of his final international match

Srikanth recommended for Padma Shri by ex Sports Minister Goel

NEW DELHI, NOV 1 /--/ Indian badminton's new superstar Kidambi Srikanth, whose stature has grown immensely following a phenomenal 2017, was today nominated for the prestigious Padma Shri award by former Sports Minister Vijay Goel. Srikanth became the first Indian and only the fourth shuttler in the world to win four Super Series tournaments in a calendar season when he clinched the French Open last week. Goel, who is now Parliamentary Affairs Minister, today wrote a letter to Home Minister Rajnath Singh, recommending Srikanth for the country's fourth highest civilian award. However, the deadline for Padma nominations had closed on the midnight of Septem-

ber 15. "In this scenario, it is imperative to motivate the young sportsman by acknowledging his contribution to this sport in India," Goel, who was succeeded by Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore in a Cabinet reshuffle, wrote in his letter. "He is an idol for the youth of the country and millions of people have aspirations to see his achievements being recognised. Many people have approached me in the capacity of ex-Sports Minister to recommend his name for this year's Padma Shri award. Accordingly in the spirit of reflecting the aspiration of people of India, I recommend name of Sri Srikanth Kidambi for the Padma Shri award," the letter read.

NEW DELHI, NOV 1 /--/ India captain Virat Kohli on Wednesday paid rich tributes to the retiring Ashish Nehra as "one of the smartest cricketers" he has ever played with. The first T20 International is Nehra's final international match of a career that started way back in 1999. "Nineteen years as a fast bowler is a great achievement. One of the smartest guys I've played with, always loves helping youngsters. He is someone who knew what to do in specific situations. Sad to see him go but it is happening at his home ground," Kohli said. During the pre-match training session, Kohli and MS Dhoni presented Nehra with a memento on behalf of team India. (PTI)



Sreyas Iyer receives his maiden international cap

Bumrah is fabulous, never thought he'll last long: Kapil

NEW DELHI, NOV 1 /--/ Legendary Kapil Dev was sceptical about Jasprit Bumrah's long-term survival in international cricket with such an awkward action, but the former captain today said he has been proven wrong by the pace bowler. "I termed Bumrah a 'fabulous' bowler and said the cricket pacer had completely changed people's perception about bowlers with unorthodox action."

"I said in my book that Bumrah is fabulous. When I saw Bumrah for the first time, I thought how would he play with such an awkward action. But this player has changed our thought process," the 1983 World Cup-winning skipper said today during an event here. "And today we feel players with awkward action will play for their country for long," he added. A stern advocate of fitness, the legendary all-rounder was full of praise for India skipper Virat Kohli for turning the current team as one of the fittest in world cricket. "Every captain has his thought process. This captain (Virat Kohli) has brought up an idea of fitness in the team and I think we should respect his decision," Kapil said. "You may be very talented but if you can't take catches and save extra runs for the team, it is of no use. A minimum level of athleticism is required. Yo-Yo test is not something which a player can't clear. I was also very fitness freak and it will be unfair if I don't stand by it. I feel fitness to zaruri hai (fitness is important). The message that goes to youngsters is that you have to maintain a



certain level of fitness. I support Virat in that," he said on sidelines of the launch of 'Wonder Cement Saath: Cricket Mahotsav'. Kapil backed the Indian team management's decision to test young players in different positions in order to develop him as a fine all-rounder. "The team management knows better. We can have views sitting outside but they know better. We should let Hardik Pandya do better. Surely the team management is thinking something good about him," he said about Hardik, who already has attracted comparisons with Kapil for his exploits in his short, little career. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has introduced a number of changes in playing conditions, which includes restriction on dimensions of the bat, the introduction of player send-offs for misconduct and changes to the Decision Review System among others, on September 29. Asked Kapil about the new rules, he said, "The changes in the rules are always introduced for the betterment of the game. There should be changes but rules should be modified as well. Only time will tell the impact of the new rules. (PTI)

RP-SG Indian Sports Honours announces Jury and nominations for 2016-17



(From L to R) - Sharp shooter Anjali Bhagwat, tennis ace Mahesh Bhupathi with Sanjiv Goenka, Chairman RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group holding the trophy which will be handed over to winners of RP-SG Indian Sports Honours 2016-2017 along with Pulella Gopichand, Chief National Coach for the Indian Badminton team and former All-England Champion and former Indian Hockey Captain Arjun Halappa at the announcement of the Jury and the nominations for 2016-2017 for the first edition of the RP-SG Indian Sports Honours in Kolkata today-Arijit Ganguly

EOI CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA, NOV 1 /--/ The RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group, in association with the Virat Kohli Foundation, announced the Jury and the nominations for the first edition of the distinguished RP-SG Indian Sports Honours. Virat Kohli, Indian Cricket Captain and Sanjiv Goenka, Chairman, RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group, have come together to create this platform to honour exceptional performances and achievements by Indian sports persons. Today, it was announced that Mr. Goenka and Pulella Gopichand, Chief National Coach for the Indian Badminton team and former All-England Champion, will chair an eminent Jury comprising Tennis ace and multiple Grand Slam winner Mahesh Bhupathi, legendary athlete P.T. Usha, former world number one, sharp shooter Anjali Bhagwat and former Indian Hockey Captain Arjun Halappa. The membership of the Jury, the trophy, which will be handed over to the winners during the inaugural RP-SG Indian Sports Honours ceremony to be held in Mumbai on Saturday, 11 November, 2017. The ceremony will be a black-tie, red-carpet event, with members of the Jury, fraternity, celebrities and fans in attendance. Mr. Goenka, Chairman, RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group, said, "The Indian Sports Honours have been enhanced and enriched by the direct involvement of the premier stakeholders of Indian sports -

the sports persons themselves, living legends and the sports journalists. The fans will get to voice their opinion by voting online for the six popular choice awards. Not only will an initia-

- | Honours (Main Segment) | |
|---|--|
| 1. Sportsman of the Year (Individual Sport) | |
| 2. Sportsman of the Year (Team Sport) | |
| 3. Sportswoman of the Year (Individual Sport) | |
| 4. Sportswoman of the Year (Team Sport) | |
| 5. Emerging Sportsman of the Year | |
| 6. Emerging Sportswoman of the Year | |
| 7. Coach of the Year | |
| 8. Team of the Year | |
| 9. Differently Able Sports person of the year | |
| Jury Honours | |
| 10. Lifetime Achievement Honour | |
| 11. Inspire Honour | |
| 12. Spirit of Sport | |
| Popular Choice Honours | |
| 13. Breakthrough Performance of the Year | |
| 14. StarSports 'Believe' Honour | |
| 15. Play of the Year | |
| 16. Club of the Year | |
| 17. Fan Club of the Year | |

tive like this inspire the youth and prospects of the future to work harder, but it will also motivate them to take up sports as a career and excel at the highest level."