

**Rohit calming influence reflected in his captaincy, says Shastri**

**DUBAI, SEP 29** /-/ India coach Ravi Shastri is impressed by skipper Rohit Sharma's "calming influence", which reflected in his leadership during India's triumphant Asia Cup campaign. In the absence of regular captain Virat Kohli, Rohit led India to its seventh Asia Cup title on Friday night, defeating Bangladesh in a test-ball thriller in a low-scoring final here. Rohit's captaincy is like a breath of fresh air for Team India which now has a second line of leadership in the limited overs format.

"Rohit was a calming influence and it showed in his captaincy. To keep his intensity going even after the start they (Bangladesh) had, showed he was really cool in every aspect of captaincy," Shastri said after India retained the Asia Cup title. "The bowling changes he made were really good, to concede just around 100 runs in the last 10 overs, I thought it was brilliant," he added. The coach said India's biggest gain from the Asia Cup was the high standards of fielding the players have displayed all throughout the tournament. "I liked the intensity with which we played, we were in a bit flat against Hong Kong in the first match, but pulled up afterwards. The biggest plus was the fielding, game after game, we saved around 30-35 runs in these overseas conditions," Shastri observed. "We took wickets consistently and during the middle-overs, the bowlers were outstanding, we bowled well with the new ball in tough conditions and then the spinners took to the party," he added. Shastri reiterated that the eventual scoreline was reflective of how well India played in England. "It's a different format, but I think everyone knows how well we played in England, the scoreline really doesn't show it," he said. "This is a different format and we needed to start afresh." (PTI)

**Let's not lie, my goal was better than Salah's, says Ronaldo**

**MILAN, SEP 29** /-/ Cristiano Ronaldo believes the overhead bicycle kick he scored for Real Madrid against his current club Juventus last season was better than Mohamed Salah's which won the FIFA goal of the year award. "Salah deserved to win the Puskas award, it was a good goal. But let's be honest, let's not lie to ourselves, my goal was the best," Ronaldo told his 142 million Instagram followers. The 33-year-old Portuguese star lost out to former Real Madrid teammate Luka Modric for the FIFA best player award and to Liverpool's Salah for the Puskas Award for the best goal. Salah won the award for his curling strike against Everton in the Premier League in December. "I'm not disappointed, life is like that, sometimes you win and others lose, what interests me is that in 15 years of career I managed to maintain the same levels of performance," Ronaldo said. "Awards are awards... I already have a lot. I play to win and not to win awards." Five days after the awards ceremony in London, which he did not attend, five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo hailed his former Real teammate saying, "Congratulations to everyone, to Modric, best player of the year according to FIFA. He also scored his acrobatic goal in the Champions League quarter-finals against Juventus before joining the Serie A giants just months later. The reigning seven-time Italian champions take on Napoli in a top-of-the-table clash. Salvatore Schuster's Juventus lead Napoli by three points after six games. "It will be a good game, we want to win against a great team, it's an important day," added Ronaldo.

# Will be ready for captaincy when opportunity comes: Rohit

## Jadeja has proved himself in limited chances

**DUBAI, SEP 29** /-/ His record as stand-in captain has been quite impressive and Rohit Sharma today made it clear that whenever the opportunity comes along, he would be "ready" for full-time captaincy. Under Rohit, India have won two close multi-nation tournaments - the T20 tri-nation in Sri Lanka and now the Asia Cup 50-over tournament. A three-time IPL winning captain of Mumbai Indians, Rohit was asked if he is ready for a long-term leadership role in future.

"Definitely we have just won so I will surely be ready (for captaincy). Whenever the opportunity comes, I will be ready," a smiling Rohit told reporters after India's Asia Cup triumph.

"I understand the challenges of a stand-in captain, Rohit admitted, adding that the main objective is to allow players to play freely without thinking about their places in the team. "It's a challenge for any team when few of your senior players are rested. Obviously they will make a comeback and few of the guys have to miss out. Every team is doing that and also guys understand that. It's up to them whenever they make it big and make it captain but for us - myself as a captain and our coach, we have to make sure that they have the liberty to go out and play their game without feeling any pressure," said Rohit.



**India beat Bangladesh by three wickets to win their seventh Asia Cup title**

how you make players. If you know after two games you are going to get dropped, it's not easy for a player.

"I wanted to give everybody a fair run and play more games. That's how you understand a player's capabilities. One odd game, you can't judge a player," said Rohit. He agreed that No's 4 and 6 are still not settled and the picture would be clearer closer to the World Cup. "Numbers four and six need to get more games as the World Cup comes closer. Right now is not the time. Come the World Cup, we will get a clearer picture. The next few tournaments, that will be ideal for us to judge as management where they stand as players. Rohit was more happy with the fact that a young team achieved so much. "It was very young team that we brought here. Not many boys had the experience of playing in these conditions. It was hot. It wasn't easy for the boys to adapt because they had come from England. It was very important to get used to the conditions. "But I think overall, our preparation for this tournament was good. Seven-eight guys came here early while the other boys from England landed here a day before the tournament."

said the skipper. Fitness was an issue in gruelling conditions, admitted Rohit. "The message was to focus on the fitness because we haven't played in conditions like this before. I think this was a big challenge for us. The conditions here were quite slow and there was help for the slow bowlers. The skipper also praised the spinners for their consistent show. "Even today, if you see, the way Bangladesh started in the first 10-15 overs and after that the way our spinners brought us back in the game, our spinners did performance in the last six-eight months has been consistent. It's been a

cricket. Jadeja too agreed that he wanted to prove himself rather than anyone else. "I was almost out for 15 months and I wasn't feeling good. I want to play white-ball cricket. I just wanted to prove myself and improve on my game," he said after helping India lift the Asia Cup title on Friday night with a three-wicket win over Bangladesh in the final. "You need to prove yourself when you get the opportunity, you need to show you are good enough. I just wanted to play my natural game, try and hit the ball well and win the game for my country," Jadeja said. In the four matches he played in the Asia Cup, including the final, Jadeja picked up seven wickets besides playing 200 balls. "I think he has proved himself in this tournament that he is much better than what he was before. His batting, batting and fielding abilities are very crucial to the team," he added. Jadeja made his regular return to the ODI side and immediately made an impact with figures of 4 for 29 from his 10 overs against Bangladesh in a Super 4 match earlier in the tournament. "Jadeja made his return to the playing eleven exactly after 442 days with his last game coming against the West Indies at Sabina Park on July 6, 2017. Desperate to make his comeback in white ball

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## Last year's final right at the start

**BENGALURU, SEP 29** /-/ It's the first Super Sunday of the Hero Indian Super League new season as last year's finalists, Bengaluru FC and Chennaiyin FC, renew hostilities in their opening match at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium, Bengaluru. Bengaluru FC and Chennaiyin FC are the two best teams in the league. Bengaluru FC has some engaging matches. Whenever the teams played at the Kanteerava, it were Chennaiyin who emerged victorious, including the final. Interestingly, both the teams were up and running in the final season. Chennaiyin FC's Carlos Cuadrat helped Roca perfect set-piece routines which brought in eight goals for the Blues, while more than 50 per cent of the goals scored by the Marina Machans came from set pieces.

The rivalry between Chennaiyin and Bengaluru is something experienced for the first time last year. All three games against them were hard-fought. They had an outstanding team last year and it is going to be no different this year. It is going to be a very tough match," said Chennaiyin FC coach John Gregory. Gregory takes the same team to Bengaluru that he had last year, except for midfielder Dhanpal Ganesh who is nursing an injury and has been ruled out for some time. "Obviously, we will miss Ganesh. But we feel other people will have opportunities to get themselves a place in our team. Twelve months ago, Ganesh himself was on the bench but took his chance when he got it. It is time for the others in the squad to take their chances. But he (Ganesh) is a big miss for us in terms of his character and personality. Not to mention the important goals he has scored for us last season," said Gregory. For Bengaluru FC, this is Carlos Cuadrat's first stint as a head coach and the Spaniard will be looking to get off to the best possible start. The Blues dominated the league stages last season, finishing eight points clear of Chennaiyin FC. Much of that was down to the scorching pace they set at the start of the season, winning four of their first five matches. Cuadrat will be hoping his side gets off to a similar start this time around as well and is not fazed that they will be up against the champions.

"We have to begin the season against someone, and if that someone is Chennaiyin FC, so be it. What's important is that we go out there each time and put on a good performance. What matters is not who the opposition is, but that we focus on what we can do well," said Cuadrat, who will be helped by new international signings like midfielder Xisco Hernandez, defender Albert Serran and winger Chencho Gylseth. On Sunday as the two teams face each other, the fans will be left on the edge. (EOIC)

## Selectors await update on Kohli's wrist injury, Bhuvneshwar-Bumrah may be rested

**NEW DELHI, SEP 29** /-/ The national selection committee is awaiting an update on India skipper Virat Kohli's injured wrist as they get ready to announce the squad for the two Test series against the West Indies. "Virat is carrying a wrist niggle. Tests have been done and selectors are awaiting the medical update from the National Cricket Academy's support staff. It's not clear how he sustained the wrist injury. It could have been during the England Test matches or training sessions," a senior BCCI official said. However, there was some good news for the Indian camp as senior spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has cleared the fitness test and is available for selection. "Ashwin is fit and has completely recovered from the hip injury," he added. One of the major decisions will be whether Shikhar Dhawan, a fantastic player on flat sub-continental tracks is selected with the Australia tour ahead. Pritivi Shaw is expected to be in the squad while Mayank Agarwal has sent a timely reminder with another 90 for Board President's XI against West Indies. (PTI)



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## We didn't capitalise when we had it under control: Mortaza

**DUBAI, SEP 29** /-/ Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza rued his team's inability to capitalise on a good start but at the same time was proud of their performance after giving India run for their money in the title clash of the Asia Cup. "Opting to bat, a depleted Bangladesh (without Tamim Iqbal and Shakib Al Hasan) got off to a great start as Liton Das and Mehidy Hasan stitched a 129-run stand for the opening wicket before losing their plot to be restricted to a modest 222. Bangladesh bowlers, however, made a match of the low total before India sneaked home with a nervy three-wicket win in a last-ball thriller. "Our boys should feel proud. I think we have to learn so many things. Every time we play a tournament like this, we are struggling somewhere or the other. Today we made a good start but couldn't get through. We had it under control, but we couldn't capitalise," Mortaza said after the game. "Mortaza praised his bowling department but said the script could have been different had the spinners bowled well in the middle overs. "In the last few matches, we lost early wickets but managed to score 240-250. I think the bowlers did a good job in the tournament. We are proud



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but we have to move forward. Not having Shakib (Al Hasan) and Tamim (Iqbal) was a big blow, but I think boys have done a really good job," he said. "If our off-spinners bowled well, the scenario would have been so different," Mortaza said. He, however, said he can't blame his bowlers after his batsmen squandered a great opportunity to put up a big score on the board. (But) You would always back the spinners when you see the ball turning in the first innings. Mehidy has bowled well throughout the tournament. Mahmudullah was good in the last game. "We needed to get 10 overs from them, but we were struggling to do that. Apu (Nazmul Islam) could have bowled better. But you cannot blame the bowlers when the target is 223. I think all of you thought in the half-time that we won't be winning," Mortaza said. The skipper said he would have ideally wanted one of the pacers - Rubel Hossain

or Mustafizur Rahman - to bowl at the death but said situation didn't permit him to do so. "Mustafiz (Rahman) and Rubel (Hossain) bowled so well that if we could have given them the ball from the 46th over, I think even 25 runs could have been defended. But it wasn't ideal situation," he said. "I told (Mahmudullah) Riyadh that the only chance we will have is when they mis-hit one. We wanted Kuleep (Vadiv) to mis-hit one, because (Kedar) Jadhav is a recognised batsman. He would have better calculations. The inside edge of the fifth ball could have gone to the stumps. Actually, you need luck in these situations." The skipper said Bangladesh were 30-40 runs short of what could have been a winning score on this wicket. "To be honest, we needed a partnership when (Mahmudullah) Riyadh and Mushfiq (Mushfiqur Rahim) were batting. We were 120 in the 21st over. If we had scored low-risk cricket for the next 14-15 overs, we could have added 60-70 runs for the loss of one wicket," Mortaza said. "Mushfiq couldn't execute well. The run-outs also hurt. Intent doesn't mean getting out playing big shots. You have to look after the batting after the good start. We should have scored 250-260 on this wicket." (PTI)

## ICC announces updated version of DLS System

**DUBAI, SEP 29** /-/ The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Sunday released the updated version of the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) System along with the new ICC Code of Conduct and ICC Playing Conditions. These will come into effect from September 30, when the first ODI between South Africa and Zimbabwe will be played in Kimberley, according to an ICC statement. This is the third version but second update of the DLS System since its introduction into international cricket in 2014 and has been carried out following a detailed ball-by-ball analysis of scoring patterns, including in the Powerplays, in all limited overs international matches played during the previous four years. This means the current analysis is based on information from 700 One Day Internationals and 428 Twenty 20 Internationals, which comprise over 240,000 outcomes of individual deliveries. The latest analysis has revealed that teams have been able to extend their acceleration patterns for longer periods, and the average scores in ODIs have continued to increase. This means that par score calculations will assume that teams will be able to score a slightly higher proportion of their runs towards the end of an innings. In finalising the updated version, the scoring patterns between men's and women's international matches. The study has confirmed that in both cases, while overall scoring rates are obviously different, wicket-adjusted resource utilisation rates are essentially identical. As such, it has again been confirmed that a single version of the DLS System is compatible with all formats. Meanwhile, the new Code of Conduct offences and the change in level of some existing offences in the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which will also be introduced from Sunday, 30 September. These were approved by the ICC Board during the Dublin Annual Conference on July 2. The maximum sanction for a Level 3 offence has been increased from eight suspension points to 12 suspension points (equivalent to 6 Test matches or 12 ODIs). Match referees will now hear Level 1, 2 and 3 charges with a judicial Commissioner only hearing Level 4 charges and appeals.



Sanjiv Goenka, Saurav Ganguly, Neeta Ambani and Abhishek Bachchan at the inauguration of Indian Soccer League at Yuba Bharati Krirangan...EOI pic