

Bravo is Chile's hero in Confed Cup shoot-out win



Chile's Claudio Bravo saves from Portugal's Joao Moutinho during the penalty shootout —REUTERS

KAZAN (RUSSIA), JUN 29 /- Claudio Bravo was Chile's hero on Wednesday as they beat Portugal 3-0 in a penalty shoot-out in the Confederations Cup semi-finals. The Manchester City goalkeeper saved all three penalties from Portugal's Ricardo Quaresma, Joao Moutinho and Nani, while Arturo Vidal, Charles Aranguiz and Alexis Sanchez nailed their spot-kicks for the South Americans. "We are satisfied with the result and how we played, but we have still not won anything," warned the 34-year-old Bravo. Chile progress to Sunday's final in St Petersburg to face either Mexico or Germany, who meet Thursday in Sochi in the other semi-final.

Losers Portugal will contest Sunday's third-place play-off in Moscow. Chile almost settled Wednesday's match in the dying stages of extra-time when both Vidal and substitute Martin Rodriguez hit the woodwork as Portugal hung on to take the game to a shoot-out. The defeat in Kazan will be bitterly disappointing for Portugal's superstar forward Cristiano Ronaldo. The Real Madrid star, who is facing doubts about his future in Spain as he prepares to answer allegations of tax evasion in a Madrid court next month, had won man-of-the-match awards in all three group matches. Before kick-off in Kazan, Manchester City's new



Chile's Gary Medel celebrates with Claudio Bravo after winning the penalty shootout —REUTERS

signing Bernardo Silva shook off a foot injury he suffered in the 4-0 drubbing of New Zealand to make Portugal's starting line-up. With Pepe suspended, Jose Fonte partnered Bruno Alves at centre-back. Up front, AC Milan's 21-year-old striker Andre Silva partnered Ronaldo, but the pair endured a frustrating night at the hands of Chile's defence. Chile's coach Juan Antonio Pizzi named the same team-end which drew 1-1 with world champions Germany last Thursday as centre-back Gary Medel and midfielder Aranguiz both shook off knocks. The game got off to a frantic start which demanded early saves from both goalkeepers. With just six

minutes gone, Sanchez put a superb pass in behind the defence which landed just in front of Eduardo Vargas, but Portugal's goalkeeper Rui Patrício blocked the shot. At the other end moments later, a low Ronaldo cross put Andre Silva in space, but Bravo smothered the effort at close range. Aranguiz twice went close with efforts on the Portugal goal in the opening half and it was end-to-end stuff again after the break. Chile's Vargas forced Patrício into another reflex save, while Ronaldo fired at Bravo when Portugal counter-attacked immediately. Then Vidal's long-range effort went screaming high and wide of the Portugal

goal. Ronaldo sent a free-kick just over and had a shot blocked as both sides attacked relentlessly, but the scores remained goalless and the game went to extra time. There was no let up in the pace as Portugal's Andre Gomes went close while Sanchez headed Mauricio Isla's cross from the left just wide of the post. Joao Moutinho came on for Adrien Silva, who had worked tirelessly in midfield for Portugal. In the first period of extra time, with time almost up, Chile had a penalty appeal turned down when substitute Francisco Silva appeared to be fouled by Fonte in the area before Vidal, then Rodriguez rattled Portugal's woodwork.

India eye unassailable lead in third ODI

NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA), JUN 29 /- A formidable India will fancy their chances of taking an unassailable 2-0 lead against a weakened West Indies when the two sides lock horns in the third game of the ongoing five-match ODI series, here tomorrow. India lead the rubber 1-0 after winning the second one-day international in Port of Spain by 105 runs. The opening match of the series was rained off after only 39 overs of play at the Queen's Park Oval. World number three India showed their might in the second game with a 105-run drubbing of the hosts, which highlighted the gulf between the two teams. In the second match, the bowlers stifled the home steam with their impeccable line and length after India's top three batsmen - Ajinkya Rahane, Shikhar Dhawan and Virat Kohli - delivered their biggest ever victory in the West Indies. Rahane smashed his third ODI hundred, while Kohli and Dhawan notched up fluent half centuries, as India produced a dominating batting display to pile on 310 for five. The trio would look to continue the vein even as veterans like Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Yuvraj Singh would hope for a good hit in the middle.



Bhuvneshwar Kumar during his training session

the attack with Pandya coming in as first change, while the spin responsibility is likely to be shouldered by Ashwin and Kuldeep Yadav. Yadav, a chinaman bowler, was impressive in the second ODI, returning figures of three for 50 in nine overs and earning accolades from skipper

Kohli. For a change, Yuvraj too rolled his arms over after a while, and it remains to be seen whether the team management opts for an extra slow bowler in Ravindra Jadeja. Seamer Bhuvneshwar

Kumar was miserly, claiming two wickets while giving away just nine runs in his five overs. Besides the usual practice sessions, the likes of Kohli, Yuvraj, Dhawan and Pandya looked happy while

sweating it out in the gym ahead of the match. Though they are playing a weak and inexperienced opposition, it is important from India's perspective to finish the series on a positive note ahead of the tougher tours to Sri Lanka and South Africa in the future. Trailing 0-1 in the series, the West Indies have brought in two fresh faces - Kyle Hope and Sunil Ambris - for the remaining three ODIs. Hope and Ambris replaced Jonathan Carter and Kevrick Williams in the 10-man squad. Hope, brother of current West Indies wicketkeeper Shai Hope, leads Trinidad and Tobago in domestic cricket while Ambris plays as a wicketkeeper-batsman for Windward Islands. **Teams (from):** India: Virat Kohli (captain), Shikhar Dhawan, Rohit Sharma, Yuvraj Singh, MS Dhoni (wk), Kedar Jadhav, Hardik Pandya, Ravichandran Ashwin, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Kuldeep Yadav, Umesh Yadav, Iqbal Singh, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Shami, Rishabh Pant. West Indies: Jason Holder (captain), Sunil Ambris, Devendra Bishoo, Roston Chase, Miguel Cummins, Kyle Hope, Shai Hope, Alzarri Joseph, Evin Lewis, Jason Mohammed, Ashley Nurse, Kieran Powell, Rovman Powell. (PTI)

Match starts at 6.30 pm IST.

Shikhar Dhawan 'stronger person, sportsman' after comeback to Team India

NEW DELHI, Jun 29 /- Indian opener Shikhar Dhawan has been in an exceptional form ever since he made a comeback to Team India. Dhawan scored a total of 338 runs in the five matches of the recently concluded ICC Champions Trophy which included the best score of 125, while in the ongoing series against West Indies, he has smashed 87 and 63 in two appearances. The left-handed batsman said that he worked on himself before making a comeback to the Indian team. "Past months were quite unfortunate for me. That's why I was out of the team. I went back and worked on myself, and am a stronger person and sportsman now. I knew I have those skills and capabilities to perform at the international level. I have been working hard and I never lost hope," he said. "When I wasn't doing well, I knew I will get out of the team. I went back and started enjoying domestic cricket. There was less pressure as compared to the international. That's how I relaxed myself and started calm. But, at the back of my mind, I always knew I had to perform good and make a comeback and serve my country and achieve my goal," he added. Commenting on the ongoing controversy relating to Anil Kumble's stepping down as the head coach of Team India, Dhawan said, "I didn't play much under Anil Kumble, so cannot comment on that. Moreover, I just focus on the game. Everyone has their own individuality and character. Anil Bhai, Dhoni Bhai and Virat, of course, are all different." Meanwhile, India, now with a 1-0 lead in the five-match series, will play their third ODI against the Caribbean side at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on June 30.



Mixed team would increase India's Olymedal chances: Karmakar

KOLKATA, JUN 29 /- Former Olympian Joydeep Karmakar is upset that his pet 50m rifle prone event has been dropped from 2020 Tokyo Games but said overall India's medal chances at Olympics would only increase with mixed team events. Tokyo Olympics will see four men's only shooting events such as the 50m Prone Rifle and Pistols competitions removed and replaced with mixed-gender events such as the 10m Air Pistol and Rifle. "Personally I feel very upset. The federation could not do much to retain the prone events but overall India's medal chances will definitely increase," the London 2012 Olympian who missed a bronze medal in the 50m prone event by less than two points said at the Calcutta Sports Journalists' Club. "We always dominate in the air weapon events so it's a good prospect," he added. The 37-year-old who runs a shooting academy in his name, will be organising fourth West Bengal Inter-School Shooting Championships, a four-day event beginning tomorrow at the New Town School. Over 100 students from 40 schools across the state will compete in the competition which will be held in 13 events and three special events. (PTI)



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